

Bible Revision

The belief of Joseph Smith was that the gospel of Jesus Christ contained in the New Testament consisted of the same essential beliefs and ordinances practiced since the beginning of humankind. The sacred texts revealed through Joseph Smith explained that if it was necessary to believe in Jesus now, then Adam and other Old Testament patriarchs would have believed like the followers of Jesus in New Testament times. The same idea goes with the practice of the ordinances of Christian baptism, confirmation, and priesthood ordination.

As mentioned previously Joseph Smith was a student of the Bible. Smith was intensively interested in biblical themes. In his 1832 account he wrote about his search of the scriptures. Joseph recorded: “At about the age of twelve years my mind become seriously imprest with regard to the all important concerns for the welfare of my immortal Soul which led me to searching the scriptures believeing as I was taught, that they contained the word of God.”¹

The Book of Mormon commented on the plan of redemption:

therefore he [God] sent angels to converse with them, which caused men to behold of his glory. And they began from that time forth to call on his name; therefore God conversed with men, and made known unto them the plan of redemption, which had been prepared from the foundation of the world; and this he made known unto them, according to their faith and repentance, and their holy works.²

Joseph Smith’s additions to the early chapters of Genesis also illustrate the belief that the New Testament gospel was taught and practiced in Old Testament times. With additions to Genesis, such as the following, Smith in essence made that book a Christian document. “& thus the Gospel began to be preached from the begin[n]ing being declared by Holy Angels sent forth from the presence of God & by his own voice & by the Gift of the Holy Ghost & thus all things were confirmed & the Gospel preached & a decree sent forth that it should be in the World until the end thereof & thus it was.”³

In 1832 Joseph Smith revised the first part of John 1:1 to read, “In the begin[n]ing was the gospel preached through the son. And the gospel was the word.”⁴ This was a constant theme throughout Smith’s life. The Book of Mormon contains Christian ideas incorporated as prophetic insights into the life of Jesus such as his birth and baptism.⁵ Joseph Smith dictated the text of a

¹ “A History of the Life of Joseph Smith Jr.,” 1-2, CHL; Jessee, *Papers of Joseph Smith* 1:5.

² 1830 BOM, 257; LDS Alma 12:29-30; RLDS 9:48-50. The plan of redemption was faith, repentance, baptism, and the gift of the Holy Ghost.

³ OT 1, 10, (November 30, 1830), CCLA. At a later date the words “unto Adam by an holy ordinance” were added after the word “confirmed” onto OT 2, 14. See LDS Moses 5:58-59, Pearl of Great Price; and Genesis 5:44-45 (JST). Compare LDS D&C 29:42; RLDS D&C 28:12.

⁴ NT 2, folio 4, 105, CCLA, revision of John 1:1, ca. February 1832.

⁵ 1830 BOM, 24-25; LDS 1 Nephi 11:13-27; RLDS 3:52-73.

reported ancient vision that proclaimed that “many plain and precious things” had been removed from the Bible. As recorded in First Nephi an angel explained: “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; and they bear record according to the truth which is in the Lamb of God.”⁶

After the book is in the hands of the Gentiles the record of First Nephi stated the following: “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; and also, many Covenants of the Lord have they taken away.”⁷

The Book of Mormon was to help recover the gospel—“I will manifest myself unto thy seed, that they shall write many things which I shall minister unto them, which shall be plain and precious.” After being hidden the writings would come forth and contain “my Gospel, saith the Lamb, and my rock and my salvation.”⁸

As anyone knows who has tried to accurately copy a text, it is very easy to omit a line or two in the copying process. When ancient scribes copied manuscripts they often accidentally omitted words. The revision made by Joseph Smith attempts to make the wording of the KJV English clearer. The additions by Smith are a reflection of his encounter with the text in the context of revelatory messages as the latter-day gospel was being restored in 1830-33. Smith’s revision of the Bible was produced as a church text for those who accept the restored gospel.

Since Joseph Smith did not have knowledge of Hebrew or Greek during this period of Bible revision, we should not expect his revision to contain readings in ancient biblical manuscripts. Nor should we think that his revision is any kind of restoration of what was in the Hebrew Scriptures or in the Greek New Testament. Joseph Smith’s work is a revision rather than a translation, since church members knew that Joseph Smith had not studied Hebrew or Greek to produce his manuscript. But church members also thought that Joseph did not have to know Hebrew or Greek because he got his corrections via revelation.

In October 1829 Oliver Cowdery purchased a large leather-bound edition of the King James Version of the Bible (KJV) at Egbert B. Grandin’s Bookstore in Palmyra, New York. At the time Smith was residing in Pennsylvania.⁹ The Bible was published in Cooperstown, New York, by H. and E. Phinney Company in 1828. This printing included the Apocrypha. This KJV 1828 Bible became the textual basis for the revision. Inscribed on the fly leaf is the following:

The Book of the Jews And the property of

⁶ 1830 BOM, 30; LDS 1 Nephi 13:24; RLDS 3:165. The original BOM manuscript reads, “fulness of the Gospel” (CHL). The wording “planeness [plainness] of the Gospel” was written onto the Printer’s manuscript (CCLA).

⁷ 1830 BOM, 30; LDS 1 Nephi 13:26; RLDS 3:167-68. The original BOM manuscript reads, “formation of that great & abominable church.” The Printer’s manuscript has, “foundation of a great & abominable Church.”

⁸ 1830 BOM, 31; LDS 1 Nephi 13:35-36; RLDS 3:184, 186.

⁹ Joseph Smith arrived at Harmony, Pennsylvania, on October 4, 1829. Smith to Cowdery, October 22, 1829, in Joseph Smith Letterbook 1:9, CHL. See Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents* 1:7. The Joseph Smith Bible has markings (including strike through of italic words) starting at OT Genesis chapter 25 and NT John chapter 6.

Joseph Smith Junior and Oliver Cowdery
Bought October the 8th 1829 at Egbert B Grandins
Book Store Palmyra Wayne County New York¹⁰

It had been asserted, prior to the time of Joseph Smith, by European biblical scholars that Moses could not have been the writer of Genesis. In June 1830 Joseph Smith received a new revelation originally given to Moses, previously unknown, that refuted this theory. This revelation began, "The words of God which he <spake> unto Moses."¹¹ In the revelation, Smith said Moses was told:

And now Moses my Son I will speak unto you concerning this Earth upon which thou standest & thou shalt write the things which I shall speak & in a day when the children of men shall esteem my words as naught & take many of them from the Book which thou shalt write behold I will raise up another like unto thee [Moses] & they shall be had again among the Children of men among even as many as shall believe. . . . And now they are also spoken unto you [Joseph Smith] shew them not unto any except them that believe¹²

Joseph Smith's job was to recover the words that were removed from the Bible. The opening portion of chapter 1 of Genesis as revealed "to the Elders of the Church of Christ," circa June 1830, was rendered:

And it came to pass that the Lord spake unto Moses saying Behold I reveal unto you concerning this Heaven & this Earth write the words which I speak I am the beginning & the end the Almighty God by mine only begotten I created these things yea in the beginning I created the Heaven & the Earth upon which thou standest¹³

The text utilized is the KJV book of Genesis. This is evident since the revision follows the order of that text except for added material. Two examples of additional information are as follows:

in that day the Holy Ghost fell upon Adam which bore record of the Father & the Son saying I am Jesus Christ from the beginning henceforth & forever¹⁴

¹⁰ The Joseph Smith Bible purchased by Oliver Cowdery is in the CCLA.

¹¹ OT Manuscript 1, p. 1, CCLA, with two manuscripts of the Old Testament; LDS Moses 1:1; RLDS D&C 22:1.

¹² OT 1, 3; Compare LDS Moses 1:40-42; RLDS D&C 22:24-25.

¹³ OT 1, 3; LDS Moses 2:1; Gen. 1:1-3 (JST). Though there is no first-person account such as "I Moses," like the Book of Mormon, there still is an indication by Joseph Smith that Genesis had been dictated by inspiration in the words "I God" or "I the Lord God" in the first five chapters of Genesis. Compare OT 1, 3-10; OT 2, 4-9; LDS Moses 2:1-5:40; Gen. 1:1-5:25 (JST) with Gen. 1:1-5:25 (KJV).

¹⁴ OT 1, 8; LDS Moses 5:9; Gen. 4:9 (JST). Compare Gen. 3:24-4:1 (KJV). See "The Gospel," *The Evening and the Morning Star* 1 (April 1833):1, Independence, Missouri. This text was

A revision that reflected some concern for the Masonic fraternity when Joseph Smith dictated the revealed words includes these words:

satan saith unto Cain swear unto me by thy throat & if thou tell it thou shalt die & swear thy brethren by their heads & by the living God that they tell it not for if they tell it they shall surely die & this that thy father may not know it & this day I will deliver thy brother Abel into thine hands & Satan <swore> unto Cain that he would do according to his commands & all these things were done in secret & Cain saith truly I am Mahon the master of this great secret that I may murder & get gain Wherefore Cain was called master Mahon & he gloried in his wickedness.¹⁵

When Peter Bauder visited the town of Fayette, New York, in October 1830, he examined the ten-page manuscript of the revision of Genesis:

The manner in which it was written is as follows:—he [Joseph Smith] commenced at the first chapter of Genesis, he wrote a few verses of scripture, then added delusion, which he added every few verses of scripture, and so making a compound of scripture and delusion. On my interrogating him on the subject, he professed to be inspired by the Holy Ghost to write it.¹⁶

A revision with new material that included another reinterpretation of Genesis showed that baptism was being preached by Noah:

And it came to pass that Noah continued his preaching unto the people saying hearken and give heed unto my words <beleve [believe]> and repent of your sins and be Baptized in the name of Jesus christ the Son of God even as our fathers did and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost¹⁷

The majority of Christian concepts and ordinances added to the Old Testament of the Hebrew Scriptures occur in the first seventeen chapters of Genesis. This stops after chapter 17 and with no Christian material used for the remainder of Genesis or the rest of the Old Testaments with one exception. There is a brief mention of Christ in Isaiah 29:16 (JST).

included when copied onto OT 2, 10 and afterwards "Jesus Christ" was crossed out and "the only begotten of the father" added above the line.

¹⁵ OT 1, 9; LDS Moses 5:29-31; Gen. 5:14-16 (JST). When the text was copied "Mahon" was spelled "Mahan" (OT 2, 12). Compare Genesis 4:7-8 (KJV). See also OT 1, 10; Gen. 5:35 (JST); LDS Moses 5:49. On December 2, 1830 Joseph Smith wrote to his brother Hyrum, "Beware of the freemasons." In Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents* 1:22.

¹⁶ Peter Bauder, *The Kingdom and Gospel of Jesus Christ: Contrasted with That of Anti-Christ*, 37; Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents* 1:17-18.

¹⁷ OT 1, 20; LDS Moses 8:23-24; Gen. 8:11 (JST). Compare Gen. 6:5-6 (KJV). See "The Gospel," *The Evening and the Morning Star* 1 (April 1833):1.

Joseph Smith used the Book of Mormon text for part of Genesis 50 (JST) to include a prophecy of Joseph of Egypt.¹⁸ In Isaiah 29 (JST) there is a prophecy regarding the coming forth of the Book of Mormon from 2 Nephi that was incorporated into the biblical text.¹⁹ These textual additions are not supported by Hebrew manuscripts of Genesis or Isaiah.

A December 1830 revelation considered the Bible revision as a translation, saying, “it is not Expedient in me, that ye should Translate any more until ye shall go to the [state of] Ohio.”²⁰ As far as known, Smith did not consult a Hebrew text for Genesis. The Bible revision is better understood as an inspired correction, and where additions were made, as an expansion of the biblical text.

The revision by Joseph Smith proceeded as follows. He started with the OT book of Genesis (June 1830), then was interrupted at Genesis 5:32 (KJV) in December 1830 by preparations to move to Ohio. Smith briefly returned to the OT and in March 1831 began revising the NT. He revisited the OT revision about July 1832. At Kirtland, Ohio, on February 9, 1831, Joseph Smith revealed the Laws of the Church which included this statement with regard to his revision of the scriptures:

Thou shalt ask and my scriptures shall be given as I have appointed, and for thy salvation thou shalt hold thy peace concerning them till ye have rec[eived]. them, and then I give unto you a Commandment that ye shall teach them unto all men & they also shall be taught unto all nations kindreds, tongues & people²¹

Three manuscripts have the earlier reading: “for thy salvation thou shalt hold thy peace concerning them.” John Whitmer also copied these words and later the word “salvation” was crossed out and the word “safety” was added above the line (BCR, 66). This change and also the words “it is expedient that” are reflected in the Book of Commandments printing:

Thou shalt ask and my scriptures shall be given as I have appointed; and for thy *safety it is expedient that* thou shouldst hold thy peace concerning them, until ye have received them: Then I give unto you a commandment that ye shall teach them unto all men; *for* they also shall be taught unto all nations, kindreds, tongues and people.²²

In the 1835 D&C, a further explanation appears in the revision of this revelation:

¹⁸ Gen. 50:24-35 (JST). Compare 1830 BOM, 66-67; LDS 2 Ne. 3:5-18; RLDS 2 Ne. 2:6-37. See Gen. 50:24 (KJV) for traditional text.

¹⁹ Isa. 29:12-25 (JST). Compare 1830 BOM, 110-111; LDS 2 Ne. 27:7-23; RLDS 2 Ne. 11:126-145. See Isa. 29:11-13 (KJV).

²⁰ BCR, 49; LDS and RLDS D&C 37:1 (December 1830).

²¹ Marquardt, *Joseph Smith Revelations*, 109, from manuscript designated “Book of Commandments, Law and Covenants; Book B,” CHL. Compare with LDS D&C 42:56-58; RLDS D&C 42:15.

²² BC 44:43-44; italics added for emphasis on words not in manuscript Book B. With two words different, the text follows the early BCR text printed in *The Evening and the Morning Star* 1 (July 1832):1, and not the modified words.

Thou shalt ask, and my scriptures shall be given as I have appointed, and *they shall be preserved* in safety; *and* it is expedient that thou shouldst hold thy peace concerning them, *and not teach them* until ye have received them *in full*. *And* I give unto you a commandment, that *then* ye shall teach them unto all men; *for* they shall be taught unto all nations, kindreds, tongues and people.²³

At Kirtland during March 1831 Joseph Smith received a revelation to begin revising the New Testament. Concerning the teachings of Jesus in Matthew 24, he was instructed:

& now behold I say unto you it shall not be given unto you to know any further than this [Matthew 24] until the New Testament be translated & in it all these things shall be made known wherefore I give unto you that ye may now translate it that ye may be prepared for the things to come²⁴

With this as a background Joseph Smith perceived that the text he supplied would give a broader view of the teachings of Jesus. It appears that Smith himself intended his revision to be for the most part an accurate form of the original meaning of the text and perceived it as such. On March 8 Joseph Smith dictated to his scribe Sidney Rigdon the beginning of the gospel according to Matthew. The heading of the manuscript read: “A Translation of the New Testament translated by the power of God.”²⁵

Like the Book of Mormon which was revealed “by the gift and power of God,” the New Testament revision was a revealed text based upon the KJV Bible. Usually when working with the New Testament a person would use a standard text. In the case of revising Matthew 5 Smith used the KJV Bible and Third Nephi in the Book of Mormon.

Joseph Smith would read from the Bible purchased by Oliver Cowdery in 1829. Besides the Book of Mormon, Smith’s work on the Bible was his next largest project. A manuscript was written for most of Matthew (NT 1). The text was then recopied to form another manuscript known as NT 2. This later manuscript was completely written out by Sidney Rigdon and John Whitmer for the revision for the synoptic gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke). Rigdon and Whitmer wrote out in full the text of NT 2 for Matthew 1:1 through John 5:47. Starting with John chapter 6, the gospel passages were revised by Joseph Smith, with Sidney Rigdon recording the changes that were to be made, rather than having the complete text being written out. Various markings were made in the Smith Bible for verses to be corrected and to indicate at what place the corrections for NT 2 were to be placed. This was a faster method than having a scribe spend the time recording the complete text of John. Revisions for the remaining chapters (John 6-21) were recorded on four pages by using this short method as were those for the remainder of the New Testament.²⁶

Matthew 1:1-26:71 was recorded by scribe Sidney Rigdon as Joseph Smith dictated to Rigdon the words of the text during the months March through June 1831. The work was interrupted by a trip to Independence, Missouri, in the summer of 1831. John Whitmer served as

²³ 1835 D&C 13:15. Italics added for emphasis on wording not in BC 44:43-44.

²⁴ Marquardt, *Joseph Smith Revelations*, 123. Compare LDS D&C 45:60-61; RLDS D&C 45:11 (March [6-7], 1831).

²⁵ NT Manuscript 1, page 1, CCLA. There are two manuscripts of the New Testament.

²⁶ NT 2, folio 4, 115-18. NT Manuscript 2 contains four folios.

a scribe for Matthew 26:1 through Mark 9:1 in the fall of 1831. Whitmer left Ohio in November 1831 and moved to Missouri.

After returning from a trip to Independence, Missouri, former elder Ezra Booth wrote with some sarcasm concerning the understanding of church members:

The Bible is declared too defective to be trusted in its present form; and it is designed that it shall undergo a thorough alteration, or as they say, translation. This work is now in operation. The Gospel by St. Matthew has already received the purifying touch, and is prepared for the use of the church. It was intended to have kept this work a profound secret, and strict commandments were given for that purpose; and even the salvation of the church was said to depend upon it.²⁷

The February 9, 1831, revelation corroborates parts of Booth's letter concerning the church's salvation and keeping the revision a secret. Nine months later the minutes of a general conference held on October 25, 1831, at Orange, Ohio, report that Joseph Smith said, "except the church receive [receive] the fulness of the Scriptures that they would yet fall."²⁸

A revelation given on January 10, 1832, explained concerning the New Testament that "it is expedient to translate again . . . continue the work of translation untill it be finished."²⁹ In the next month, on February 16, 1832, Joseph Smith and his scribe Sidney Rigdon were working on John chapter 5 when they received what is termed the Vision; actually a series of visionary experiences relating to the afterlife. This is the Vision of three degrees of glory. They reported being in the Spirit when "our eyes were opened, and our understandings were enlightened." Smith and Rigdon give the following background:

for as we sat doing the work of translation, which the Lord had appointed unto us, we came to the twenty ninth verse of the fifth Chapter of John, which was given unto us thus: Speaking of the resurrection of the dead who should hear the voice of the Son of man, & shall come forth; they who have done good in the resurrection of the Just, & they who have done evil in the resurrection of the unjust. Now this caused us to marvel, for it was given us of the spirit; & while we meditated upon these things, the Lord touched the eyes of our understanding, & they were opened.³⁰

²⁷ Booth to Rev. Ira Eddy, October 2, 1831, *The Ohio Star* 2 (October 20, 1831):3, Ravenna, Ohio.

²⁸ Minutes copied into the "Far West Record." See Cannon and Cook, *Far West Record*, 23. The phrase "fulness of the Scriptures" refers to Joseph Smith's Bible revision. See Marquardt, *Joseph Smith Revelations*, 108; LDS D&C 42:15; 104:58; RLDS D&C 42:5; 101:10; and the revision of Luke 11:52.

²⁹ Marquardt, *Joseph Smith Revelations*, 183; LDS D&C 73:3-4; RLDS D&C 73:2.

³⁰ BCR, 135, 134; LDS D&C 76:12, 15-19; RLDS D&C 76:3. If the words "Speaking of the resurrection of the dead who should hear the voice of the Son of man" are considered a part of the revision of John, they were not added to the text of John 5:29 in NT 2, f. 4, 114. The words "and shall all be judged of the son of man" were added to the revision of John 5:29.

Shortly afterwards, Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon finished revising John, and by March they were revising Revelation. On March 20, 1832 a question was asked by Rigdon and Smith on whether they should “finish the translation of the New Testament” before going to Independence, Missouri, or wait until they return from the trip. The response was given: “It is expedient saith the Lord that there be no delays [in going] . . . Wherefore omit the translation for the present time.”³¹

Smith wrote a letter on July 31, 1832, to William W. Phelps in Missouri telling him that the manuscripts of the revision would:

not go from under my hand during my natural life for correction, revisal or printing and the will of [the] Lord be done therefore you need not expect them this fall, Broth[er] Frederick [G. Williams] is employed to be a scribe for me of the Lord—we have finished the translation of the New testament great and glorious things are revealed.³²

During December 1832 and January 1833 Sidney Rigdon and Joseph Smith reviewed the New Testament manuscript revision. To Frederick G. Williams a revelation of January 5, 1833 stated, “My servant Joseph [Smith Jr.] is called to do a great work and hath needs that he may do the work of translation for the salvation of souls.”³³ The review of the New Testament (going over the prior corrections) was finished on February 2, 1833, as recorded in the Kirtland Council Minute Book: “This day completed the translation and the reviewing of the New testament and sealed [it] up no more to be brokin [broken] till it goes to Zion [Independence, Missouri].”³⁴ NT 2 was completed and ready for publication. No lost writings were added to the New Testament during the nearly two year span when the revision was accomplished.

Work on the Old Testament continued and a revelatory message of March 8, 1833, said, “I give unto you a commandment that you continue in this ministry and presidency and when you have finished the translation of th[e] prophets you shall from thenceforth preside over the affairs of the Church and school” of the prophets.³⁵

On March 9, 1833, in answer to the question of whether to revise (translate) the Apocrypha, Joseph Smith said the Lord told him that “there are many things contained therein that are true and it is mostly translated correct.” Also, “there are many things contained therein that are not true which are interpelations [interpolations] by the hands of men.” There was no need to translate the Apocrypha.³⁶ As the text of this revelation indicated, there were “interpolations” (insertions into the text) by men rather than omissions. Joseph Smith did not identify any particular Apocrypha book as having this problem. The end result was that the

³¹ Marquardt, *Joseph Smith Revelations*, 207.

³² Smith to Phelps, July 31, 1832, CHL. The Bible manuscripts were kept by Joseph Smith at his home.

³³ Marquardt, *Joseph Smith Revelations*, 231. The correct date is January 5, rather than January 6. The year 1834 in the manuscript copy of the revelation is considered incorrect and should be the year 1833.

³⁴ Kirtland Council Minute Book, 8, CHL.

³⁵ Marquardt, *Joseph Smith Revelations*, 234-35; LDS D&C 90:12-13; RLDS D&C 87:5.

³⁶ KRB, 55; LDS D&C 91:1-3; RLDS D&C 88:1.

Apocrypha was not read and revised. If there were additions to the Apocrypha, they were neither removed nor identified but left in the KJV.

In a letter written the following month (April 1833) Joseph Smith gave instructions that “it is not the will of the Lord to print any of the new translation in the *Star* but when it is published it will all go to the world together in a volum[e] by itself and the new Testament and the book of Mormon will be printed togeth[er].”³⁷ Though the *Evening and the Morning Star* had published extracts from Smith’s revision of Genesis, the *Star* published in the July issue that “at no very distant period, we shall print the book of Mormon and the Testament, and bind them in one volume.”³⁸

In a revelation given on May 6, 1833, it was declared, “it is my will that y[ou] should hasten to translat[e] my script[ure]s.”³⁹ When reading the Old Testament books, Joseph Smith had his scribe write that seven books, viz., Obadiah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, and Malachi were “correct” as recorded on OT 2.

Further communications were given to church members in Missouri: “In regard to the printing of the New Translation it cannot be done until we can attend to it ourselves, and this we will do as soon as the Lord permit[s].”⁴⁰

The Church presidency, then consisting of Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, and Frederick G. Williams, wrote on July 2, 1833, “[W]e have finished the translating of the Scriptures.”⁴¹ Out of 929 chapters in the Old Testament 436 chapters (46.9%) were listed as “correct.” Though Genesis had many corrections and additions, thirteen of its chapters were recorded as being correct on OT 2.

On August 2, 1833, the church presidency was instructed to dedicate a lot in Kirtland where a house would be built to print the translation of the scriptures.⁴² Again the presidency wrote:

You will see by these revelations that we have to print the new translation here at Kirtland for which we will prepare as soon as possible [possible] . . . you are to print an Edition of the schriptides [scriptures] there at the same time we do here so that the two additions [editions] will be struck at the same time the one here and the other there.”⁴³

The Church presidency was not aware that on July 20, 1833, the *Evening and the Morning Star* press had been destroyed in Independence, Missouri. Oliver Cowdery brought this sad news to church leaders when he arrived at Kirtland on August 9.

³⁷ Smith to “Dear breth[ren] in Zion,” April 21, 1833, Joseph Smith Letterbook 1:35, CHL.

³⁸ “The Book of Mormon,” *The Evening and the Morning Star* 2 (July 1833):109.

³⁹ Marquardt, *Joseph Smith Revelations*, 239; LDS D&C 93:53; RLDS D&C 90:12.

⁴⁰ Joseph Smith Jr., Sidney Rigdon, Frederick G. Williams, and Martin Harris to “Brethren,” June 25, 1833, CHL; copied into Joseph Smith Letterbook 1:48.

⁴¹ Sidney Rigdon, Joseph Smith, and Frederick G. Williams to “Brethren,” July 2, 1833, Joseph Smith Letterbook 1:51; OT 2, 119, has recorded “Finished on the 2d day of July 1833.”

⁴² Marquardt, *Joseph Smith Revelations*, 244; LDS D&C 94:10; RLDS D&C 91:3.

⁴³ Sidney Rigdon, Frederick G. Williams, and Joseph Smith to “Beloved Brethern [Brethren],” August 6, 1833, CHL.

In an April 23, 1834, revelation Martin Harris, a member of the United Firm, was exhorted to “devote his moneys for the printing of my word as my servant Joseph [Smith Jr.] shall direct.” Firm members were told “for this purpose have I commanded you to organize yourselves, even to print my word, the fulness of my scriptures” and the revelations given to Joseph Smith. They were instructed to obtain copyrights for the Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, and one for the “new translation of the scriptures.”⁴⁴

A letter from Joseph Smith was written on June 15, 1835, appealed for money to print the New Translation:

We are now commencing to prepare and print the New Translation, together with all the revelations which God has been pleased to give us in these last days, and as we are in want of funds to go on with so great and glorious a work, brethren <we> want you should donate and loan us all the means or money you can that we may be enable[d] to accomplish the work as a great means towards the salvation of men.⁴⁵

Two years after Joseph Smith finished his NT revision and review of the manuscripts he commenced to study Hebrew and Greek. There is no evidence that his study of the Greek language led to changes in the NT 2. Warren Parrish recorded in Smith’s journal:

At Evening, President [Oliver] Cowdery returned from New York, bringing with him a quantity of Hebrew books for the benefit of the school, he presented me with a Hebrew bible, lexicon & grammar, also a Greek Lexicon and Webster[’s] English Lexicon.⁴⁶

On Joseph Smith’s thirtieth birthday, December 23, 1835, he was “stud[y]ing the greek Language.”⁴⁷

At Kirtland, besides printing the periodical the *Latter Day Saints’ Messenger and Advocate*, the church published the *Northern Times*, the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants, *A Collection of Sacred Hymns* in 1836, and the 1837 (second edition) of the Book of Mormon.⁴⁸

When settled at Nauvoo, Illinois, instructions regarding Smith’s Bible revision were given on January 19, 1841, to the newly appointed second counselor in the Church presidency

⁴⁴ Marquardt, *Joseph Smith Revelations*, 256, 258; Compare LDS D&C 104:26, 58; RLDS D&C 101:4, 10. These instructions were obscured as printed in the 1835 D&C. The 1835 text tells “Mahemson” [Martin Harris] to “devote his moneys for the proclaiming of my words.” 1835 D&C 98:4.

⁴⁵ Smith to “Dear brethren in the Lord,” June 15, 1835, CHL.

⁴⁶ Joseph Smith, Journal, 47, November 20, 1835; Jessee, *Papers of Joseph Smith* 2:87. In a third person account recorded by Warren A. Cowdery, part of the entry reads: “Also a Greek & English lexicon.” Jessee, *Papers of Joseph Smith* 1:144. This was probably a Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament.

⁴⁷ Jessee, *Papers of Joseph Smith* 2:120.

⁴⁸ Peter Crawley, *A Descriptive Bibliography of the Mormon Church, Volume One: 1830-1847* (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, [1998], 51-59, 66-68.

William Law. He was told to support the poor and “publish the new translation of my holy word unto the inhabitants of the earth.”⁴⁹

After Joseph Smith’s death in June 1844, the marked Joseph Smith Bible and the dictated and revised manuscripts of the New Translation were retained by his widow, Emma Smith, in Nauvoo. The beginning of an index for the revision of Genesis was kept among church records taken to Salt Lake City by historian Willard Richards.

In 1867, what became known as the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (now Community of Christ), published the revision by Joseph Smith. It was titled *The Holy Scriptures, Translated and Corrected by the Spirit of Revelation, by Joseph Smith, Jr., the Seer*. English is the only language the revision has been printed in. This Bible for over 140 years has been used in a variety of ways.

In both LDS and RLDS tradition, this Bible has endeared itself to believers in the mission of Joseph Smith. Comparing the latest manuscript (NT 2) with a number of printings shows that the printed text does not always follow the wording of the manuscript. Ten years later in September 1878 the RLDS church adopted a resolution affirming:

That this body, representing the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, does hereby authoritatively indorse the Holy Scriptures, as revised, corrected and translated by the Spirit of revelation, by Joseph Smith, Jr., the Seer, and as published by the church we represent.⁵⁰

In October 1880 the LDS church accepted as canonical *The Pearl of Great Price* which included Joseph Smith’s vision of Moses, together with the revisions and additions to Genesis 1:1-6:13 (KJV). For the New Testament, Matthew 23:39 and chapter 24 are the only textual revisions that have been canonized at present.⁵¹ *The Pearl of Great Price* contains writings of Joseph Smith and was published posthumously as a church booklet in 1851, with subsequent revisions in 1878, 1902, 1921, and 1981.

In making corrections and additions, Joseph Smith sometimes explains the text with the phrase “or in other words.” Philip Barlow, at the time, Associate Professor of Theological Studies at Hanover College, explains:

A third category is “interpretive additions,” often signaled by the phrase “or in other words,” which the Prophet [Joseph Smith] appended to a passage he wished to clarify. Thus, to Jesus’ counsel to turn one’s other cheek if smitten (Luke 6:29), Smith added “or, in other words, it is better to offer the other [cheek], than to revile again.” The interpretative phrase “or in other words” (often shortened to “in

⁴⁹ Marquardt, *Joseph Smith Revelations*, 307; LDS D&C 124:89.

⁵⁰ *World Conference Resolutions 2002 Edition Community of Christ* (Independence, MO: Herald Publishing House, 2003), 16.

⁵¹ An undated broadside was published at Kirtland, Ohio, titled: “Extract from the new translation of the Bible, It being the 24th chapter of Matthew; but in order to show the connection we will commence with the last verse of the 23rd chapter, viz. [At end:] Published for the benefit of the Saints.” The broadside mostly follows a text close to NT 1. See Crawley, *Descriptive Bibliography*, 60-61.

other words” or simply “or”) is common in Smith’s sermons as well as in the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the revisions of the Bible.⁵²

Examples of such interpreted phrases are included in Joseph Smith’s revision of the gospels. What follows was used by Joseph to interpret or clarify a particular passage:

or whose place I am not able to fill (Matt. 3:11; John 1:27)
or the destruction of the wicked (Matt. 13:39, 40; 24:3, 14; Mark 13:4, 10)
or the messenger sent of heaven (Matt. 13:39)
or in other words John the Baptist and Moses (Mark 9:4)
or in other words it is better to offer the other [cheek] than to revile again (Luke 6:29)
or in other words is afraid to lay down their life for my sake (Luke 14:26)
or in other words whithersoever the saints are gathered (Luke 17:37)
or thither will the remainder be gathered together (Luke 17:37)
or in other words the Gentiles (Luke 23:31)

More than anything else, the above listing shows Smith’s involvement with the KJV revision process. One of the purposes in making the Bible revision was for Joseph Smith to clarify difficult English passages and make the gospel texts clearer for church members. This type of revision was similar to the revelations that he gave for church instruction.

Some interesting readings and omissions are included in the revision of Matthew. In Matthew 5:22 the KJV has, “whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment.” Joseph Smith’s revision omits “without a cause.” The wording here is the same as the Book of Mormon. Some early Greek manuscripts support the exclusion of the phrase. John Wesley, founder theologian of the Methodist faith, commented on this passage:

Whosoever is angry with his brother—Some Copies add, *Without a cause*: But this is utterly foreign to the whole Scope and Tenor of our LORD's Discourse. If he had only forbidden, the being *angry without a Cause*, there was no manner of need of that solemn Declaration, *I say unto you*; for the Scribes and Pharisees themselves said as much as this. Even they taught, Men ought not to be angry *without a Cause*. So that this *Righteousness* does not *exceed* theirs. But *Christ* teaches, That we ought not *for any cause* to be so *angry*, as to call any Man *Raca*, or *Fool*. We ought not for any Cause to be angry at the Person of the Sinner, but at his Sin only.⁵³

New Testament scholars consider the ending of the Lord’s Prayer to be an early addition to the Gospel of Matthew. The text reads, “For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen” (Matt. 6:13). That this phrase was added is evident, since the wording appears in various forms, and is missing from the most reliable Greek manuscripts. The reading

⁵² Philip L. Barlow, *Mormons and the Bible: The Place of the Latter-day Saints in American Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 51-52. For the Old Testament revision, see Gen. 14:34, 36 (JST).

⁵³ John Wesley, *Explanatory Notes upon the New Testament* First American Ed. (Philadelphia: Joseph Cruikshank, 1791), 1:29, emphasis retained. Brought to my attention by Ronald Huggins.

was retained by Joseph Smith in Matthew after the words “and the glory, for ever,” the addition of two words “and ever.” Smith also rendered the Lord’s Prayer in Luke 11:4 like Matthew with the added words, “for thine is the kingdom, and power. Amen.”⁵⁴

Joseph Smith first retained the KJV wording of Matthew 13:30—“gather ye together first the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them.”⁵⁵ During the review process a pinned note was made for the revision of Matthew 13:30: “gather ye together first the wheat into my barn, and the tares are bound in bundles to be burned.”⁵⁶ The review of this verse reflects the wording of the revelation given to Joseph Smith on December 6, 1832, which states: “Ye shall first gather out the wheat from the among the tears [tares] and after the gathering of the wheat, behold and lo the tears [tares] are bound in bund[les], and the field remaineth to be burned.”⁵⁷ Two passages, Matthew 18:11 and 23:14, which are not found in early Greek manuscripts, were retained in the revision of Matthew. Smith also added to the text of Matthew 18:11.

Mark 9:44 and 46 are not part of the earliest Greek manuscripts. Joseph Smith omitted the reading of verse 46 while he retained verse 44. When Mark 13 was revised, verses 9, 11-12, 33-36 were omitted. The reason for these important omissions is because Smith substituted his previous revision of Matthew 24 for Mark’s text. Joseph Smith either presumed that Matthew preempted the writing of Mark or just wanted to use his prior revision of Matthew for the new text of Mark. This view is confirmed in the publication of the JST manuscripts:

In the Bible, Matthew's account of Jesus' great discourse to the Twelve on the Mount of Olives (Matthew 24) is much longer and more detailed than Mark's (Mark 13). Both were changed significantly in the Joseph Smith Translation.

A comparison of the Matthew and Mark accounts in the New Translation shows that when Joseph Smith and his scribe arrived at Mark 13, the Prophet decided to copy the corrected Matthew account from NT2.1 rather than to revise the existing verses in Mark.⁵⁸

Besides short phrases or sentence additions to the gospels, large blocks of text of more than fifty words each also appear in various places. These long texts appear to represent material that Joseph Smith believed were in the gospels anciently. For example, he added the following text to Luke 3:13:

For it is well known unto you, Theophelus,⁵⁹ that after the manner of the Jews, and according to the custom of their law, in receiving money in the treasury, that out of the abundince [abundance] which was received was appointed unto the

⁵⁴ NT 2, f. 3, 72.

⁵⁵ NT 1, 34. The same wording was copied onto NT 2, f. 1, 25.

⁵⁶ NT 2, f. 1, 25, pinned note to manuscript page.

⁵⁷ KRB, 32; LDS D&C 86:7; RLDS D&C 84:2.

⁵⁸ Scott H. Faulring, Kent P. Jackson, and Robert J. Matthews, eds., *Joseph Smith's New Translation of the Bible: Original Manuscripts* (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2004), 303-4.

⁵⁹ The name was spelled "Theophilus" in Luke 1:3 (KJV).

poor, every man his portion; and after this manner did the publicans also, wherefore John said unto them, exact no more than that which is appointed you.⁶⁰

This wording gives the impression that Joseph Smith is supplying a missing part to Luke. The wording shows that Smith is trying to present a better text rather than a commentary in this addition to Luke. The additional wording, though represented to be in the text, is not in Codex Vaticanus, Codex Sinaiticus, or papyrus fragment P4 (ca. 200), nor in any other Greek manuscript. A longer insertion in Luke 3:4 is also an addition not paralleled by Greek manuscripts.⁶¹

The passage of John 7:53-8:11 about the woman taken in adultery was retained by Joseph Smith. Early Greek manuscripts do not include these verses. The reading in John 20:17 “Touch me not” was rendered “hold me not.” Current versions of the New Testament read “Do not hold on to me.”⁶²

A good example of harmonization appears from the reading in John 20:12, “And seeth two angels in white.” The gospel accounts of an angel, a man, two men, or two angels at the tomb was revised in an interesting way. The KJV text of John 20:12 provided an influence for the revisions of Matt. 28:2; Mark 16:5; Luke 24:2; and John 20:1.

<u>KJV:</u>	<u>Revision:</u>
the angel (Matt. 28:2)	two angels
a young man (Mark 16:5)	two angels
two men (Luke 24:4)	moved to revision of Luke 24:2 - two angels
John 20:1	two angels (addition)
two angels (John 20:12)	two angels (remained the same)

It is of interest that some revisions, from "James the less" to "James the younger" (revision of Mark 15:40), are the same as edited in Alexander Campbell's *The Sacred Writings of the Apostles and Evangelists of Jesus Christ* published in 1826.⁶³

Campbell's New Testament also titled his gospels "The Testimony of . . ." This shows that others made similar changes in wording as Joseph Smith did. The changes involved correcting archaic English wording and at times omitting words printed in italics. These other revisions still retain wording similar to the KJV. They do not contain the additional words that Smith included.

The four gospels have a pattern like the revision of the Old Testament, of most of the text remaining the same as the KJV. Kurt and Barbara Aland, editors of the *Greek New Testament*, reported that they compared six printed editions of the Greek text with each other. They did not count variant spellings of names and “verses in which any one of the seven editions differs by a

⁶⁰ NT 2, f. 3, 52. Robert J. Matthews wrote concerning this addition: “By inference, at least, the reader is led to believe that he is expected to regard this information as a restoration of what Luke had originally written.” *A Plainer Translation: Joseph Smith's Translation of the Bible: A History and Commentary* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1975), 239.

⁶¹ See Matt. 3:3 and Mark 1:2.

⁶² See the New Revised Standard Version and the New International Version.

⁶³ Other readings like Smith's use of “imposture” in Matt. 27:64 and “empire” in Luke 2:1 use the same words as those employed in Campbell's 1826 publication.

THE RISE OF MORMONISM

single word. Within these parameters, many verses were found to be in general agreement with each other. Forty-five percent or more of the text is the same for each gospel. There is a difference of ten verses in the count of John. The following is their tabulation of verses that are variant-free:⁶⁴

Gospels	Total Number of Verses	Variant-Free Verses Total	Percentage
Matthew	1,071	642	59.9
Mark	678	306	45.1
Luke	1,151	658	57.2
John	869	450	51.8

This is an average of 53.5 percent of the gospels being variant-free.

Comparing Joseph Smith's revision with the KJV shows that over 39 percent of the verses in the gospels that were retained are variant-free:

Gospels	Total Number of Verses	Verses with No Revisions	Verses Omitted	Verses with Minor Revisions	Total Percentage close to KJV
Matthew	1,071	424 (39.6%)		479 (44.7%)	84.3%
Mark	678	262 (39.5%)	8	312 (46%)	85.5%
Luke	1,151	463 (40.2%)	1	598 (51.9%)	92.1%
John	879	646 (73.4%)		183 (20.8%)	94.2%

Over 44 percent of the revisions made to KJV verses have minor changes in upgrading the English or rearranging words in each verse. This comparison indicates that over 84 percent of the verses are identical or nearly identical to the KJV. This is the strongest evidence that the vast majority of corrections in the gospels are of little consequence.

The next chart shows the number of additions made by Joseph Smith to verses in the KJV gospels. Included are those additions of four or more words in a row (termed major additions).

Gospels	Total Number of Verses	Verses with Minor Revisions	Verses Omitted	Verses with Major Additions	Total Percentage Major Additions
Matthew	1,071	479		168	15.6%
Mark	678	312	8	96	14%
Luke	1,151	598	1	89	7.7%
John	879	183		50	5.6%

While the synoptic gospels have more changes than John, it will be noticed that the number of verses affected decreased as the revision progressed. The percentage of verses in Luke

⁶⁴ Kurt Aland and Barbara Aland, *The Text of the New Testament: An Introduction to the Critical Editions and to the Theory and Practice of Modern Textual Criticism*. Translated by Erroll F. Rhodes. (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1987), 29.

and John dropped over 6 percent. This chart indicates the small percentage of additions to the text. The following listing includes the major additions of words to KJV verses of fifty words or more:

<u>Over 50 words</u>	<u>Over 100 words</u>	<u>Over 200 words</u>
Matt. 2:23	Matt. 7:8	Mark 13:37
Matt. 3:7	Matt. 21:46	
Matt. 5:2	Mark 13:7	
Matt. 6:24	Mark 13:32	
Matt. 7:4	Luke 3:4	
Matt. 9:15	Luke 12:38	
Matt. 27:37	Luke 16:17	
Matt. 27:44	Luke 17:37	
Mark 8:38		
Mark 9:45		
Luke 3:13		
Luke 12:9		
Luke 14:33		

Using a Greek-English interlinear translation of the Greek New Testament, I compared the above additions with the readings in Codex Vaticanus, Codex Sinaiticus, and early papyri fragments. The Greek text shows no evidence that the added wording forms a part of the manuscripts of the gospels. Passages that have added wording in blocks of text give the impression that they are words recovered from the lost original. These textual additions include words ascribed to Jesus.

An important revelation to Joseph Smith on July 20, 1831, included the early teaching of the gathering of the saints (church members) to the Independence, Missouri, area. Especially significant is the interpretive phrase added to Luke 17:37, “or in other words whithersoever the saints are gathered.” This interpretation follows Joseph Smith’s teaching of the gathering which was a concept in the young church.⁶⁵ A portion of the revision of Luke 17:37 read: (italic words are added to KJV text):

And they answered, and said unto him, Where, Lord, *shall they be taken?* 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*⁶⁶

The above interpretation shows Joseph Smith’s concern for having the saints gather together in Jackson County as a group after his trip from the state of Missouri. Since this rendering reflects Smith’s concept of a gathered church, it is not surprising that it is not to be found in any Greek manuscript.

⁶⁵ See BCR, 93; LDS and RLDS 57:1. Independence, Jackson County, Missouri was the center place for the gathering and where the city of Zion (New Jerusalem) would be built.

⁶⁶ NT 2, f. 3, 88-89.

While some of the additional texts appear to be recovering what Jesus said, there are other places which give evidence of Joseph Smith's interpretive analysis such as when he used his earlier revision of Matthew 24 for the revision of Mark chapter 13.

Identify of "Elias" must have been of some concern to Joseph Smith. The proper name of Elijah is used in the Old Testament, and in the Greek New Testament the name appears as Elias. They are the same person. The New Testament KJV records that John the Baptist was to go before the Lord in the spirit and power of Elias [Elijah].⁶⁷ Jesus explained that, for those who understood, John the Baptist was the Elijah they were waiting for.⁶⁸ John the Baptist was understood by Christ's disciples as the Elias (Elijah) who would "restore all things."⁶⁹

Joseph Smith dictated his revision of Matthew 17 in the spring of 1831. It tells about Jesus being transfigured on a high mountain before Peter, James, and John. While Smith had the text refer to John the Baptist, he also had the name Elias used for "another which should come and restore all things." His scribe Sidney Rigdon wrote (italics are added words to the KJV):

and his disciples asked him [Jesus] saying why then say the Scribes that Elias must first come[?] and Jesus answered and said unto them Elias truly [truly] shall first come and restore all things *as the prophets have written and again* I say unto you that Elias is come already and they knew him not *and* have done unto him <whatsoever they> listed likewise shall also the son of man suffer of them

but I say unto you who is Elias[?] behold this is Elias who I send to prepare the way before me Then the Disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist *and also of another which should come and restore all things as they were written by the prophets*⁷⁰

In August 1831 Joseph Smith was told about the "day of transfiguration shall come when the earth shall be transfigured even according to the pattern which was shown unto mine apostles upon the mount of which account the fulness ye have not yet received."⁷¹ When Smith revised the Gospel of Mark in the fall of 1831, concerning the transfiguration, Smith interpreted the Elias who appeared before the four men not as the prophet Elijah but as John the Baptist. The King James Version reads, "And there appeared unto them Elias with Moses: and they were talking with Jesus."⁷² But Smith's revision, written by Sidney Rigdon, reads, "And there appeared unto them Elias with Moses, or in other words, John the baptist and Moses; and they were talking with Jesus."⁷³ The words "or in other words" help us to understand this is commentary by Smith.

⁶⁷ Luke 1:17.

⁶⁸ Matt. 11:14. This verse was revised in 1831 by Joseph Smith to have Jesus say that he was Elias.

⁶⁹ Compare Matt. 17:11-13; Mark 9:11-13.

⁷⁰ Revision of Matt. 17:11-13; NT 1, 42. See NT 2, f. 1, 32 for additional revision to this passage.

⁷¹ Marquardt, *Joseph Smith Revelations*, 156; LDS D&C 63:20-21; RLDS D&C 63:6 (Aug. [30-31], 1831).

⁷² Mark 9:4; cf. Matt. 17:3 and Luke 9:30.

⁷³ NT 2, f. 2, 24; revision of Mark 9:3.

The mention of Moses and Elias in Matthew means Moses and Elijah, representative of the law and the prophets.⁷⁴

When Joseph Smith first revised Matthew 11 in 1831, the manuscript had Jesus saying: "and if ye will receive me I am Elias which was for to come."⁷⁵ These words were afterwards copied onto NT 2. A number of changes were made to this manuscript and this reading was revised in December 1832 or January 1833 with the words "me I am Elias" crossed through leaving the passage now applying to John the Baptist.⁷⁶ Robert J. Matthews who has examined the manuscript wrote:

It is evident that the Prophet [Joseph Smith] was working with an idea that he developed and then discarded. He compared and contrasted John [the Baptist] with Jesus and then decided to speak only of John. He identified Jesus as Elias and then identified John as Elias. It is, however, interesting to note that the doctrinal ideas and identifications here introduced and then discarded were reintroduced in Matthew 17:9-14 on a partial basis and then more fully in John 1."⁷⁷

John 1 describes John the Baptist being questioned. Sidney Rigdon originally wrote in January or February 1832:

and he [John the Baptist] confessed and denyed [denied] not but confessed that I am not the christ and they asked <him> what then art thou Elias[?] and he saith I am not art thou that prophet[?] and he answered no . . . and they asked him and said unto him why baptisest thou then if thou be not the christ nor Elias neither that prophet[?] John answered . . . he it is *of whom I bear record he is that Prophet, even Elias*⁷⁸

This passage was further revised in December 1832 or January 1833 on a note pinned to the manuscript as follows:

And he [John the Baptist] confessed, and denyed [denied] not *that he was Elias*; but confessed, *saying*: I am not the christ. And they asked him, *saying*; *How* then art thou Elias? And he sai<d>; I am not *that Elias who was to restore all things*. *And they asked him, saying*; Art thou that Prophet? And he answered; No. . . . And they asked him, and said unto him; why baptisest thou then, if thou be not *the christ, nor Elias who was to restore all things*, neither that prophet?⁷⁹

Rather than a straightforward revision of the gospels we find many layers of working on a question that seemed to be of importance to Joseph Smith at the time.

⁷⁴ Compare with modern translations of Mark 9:4.

⁷⁵ NT 1, 28; revision of Matt. 11:14.

⁷⁶ NT 2, f. 1, 21.

⁷⁷ Matthews, *A Plainer Translation*, 217.

⁷⁸ NT 2, f. 4, 106, emphasis added. Compare John 1:20-21, 25-27.

⁷⁹ NT 2, f. 4, 106, emphasis of additional revision of John 1:20-21, 25.

In studying the four gospels I have placed emphasis first on a complete text for Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Codex Vaticanus and Codex Sinaiticus have been used as the base text. Earlier papyri fragments have also been utilized in comparing the additions to the KJV. The reason for this is that having one or more early manuscript helps establish a text at a certain point in time. After examining Greek manuscripts ranging from ca. 175 to 375 and considering the readings in Joseph Smith's revision of the gospels, it appears that the additions to KJV text (whether short phrases, sentences, or blocks of material) include no significant readings contained in these Greek manuscripts.

Passages that are omitted in Codex Vaticanus, Codex Sinaiticus, and early papyri show that Joseph Smith is correcting an English text and not a Greek text: For example, two recognized textual additions to New Testament manuscripts are the passages in Mark 16:9-20 and John 7:53-8:11. Joseph Smith retained these long passages in his KJV revision. At the end of John 8:11 Smith dictated the additional wording, "and the woman glorified God from that hour, and believed on his name."⁸⁰ Philip W. Comfort, professor of Greek and New Testament at Trinity Episcopal Seminary, and senior editor of Bible Reference at Tyndale House Publishers, has written concerning the pericope of the woman caught in adultery printed in the KJV:

The pericope about the adulteress woman (John 7:53-8:11) is not included in any of the earliest MSS (second-fourth century), including the two earliest, P66 and P75 . . . When this story is inserted in later MSS, it appears in different places: after John 7:52, after Luke 21:38, at the end of John; and when it does appear it is often marked off by asterisks or obeli to signal its probable spuriousness. The story is part of an oral tradition that was included in the Syriac Peshitta, circulated in the Western church, eventually finding its way into the Latin Vulgate, and from there into later Greek MSS, the like of which were used in formulating the Textus Receptus (Metzger).

The external evidence against the Johannine authorship of the pericope about the adulteress is overwhelming. The internal evidence against Johannine authorship is also impressive. . . . But there it stands—an obstacle to reading the true narrative of John's Gospel. Even worse, its presence in the text misrepresents the testimony of the earliest MSS, especially the papyri.⁸¹

Another such example of an addition is Mark 16:9-20. This passage was probably added to Mark during the second century. Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Vaticanus, both written in the fourth century, do not contain this addition. Most New Testament scholars, after examining early manuscripts that contain Mark 16, find that the early writings of the church fathers support the view that verses 9-20 were originally not part of Mark. George Eldon Ladd, Professor of New Testament at Fuller Theological Seminary, wrote concerning the ending of Mark:

The "long ending," consisting of verses 9-20 came into the text of the AV [King James Authorized Version] because it appears in the great majority of the

⁸⁰ NT 2, f. 4, 116.

⁸¹ Philip Wesley Comfort, *Early Manuscripts & Modern Translations of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1996), 115-16. See Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (Stuttgart, Ger.: German Bible Society, 2nd ed., 1994), 187-89.

minuscules and in most of the later uncials, and was therefore a part of the prevailing text known in the seventeenth century. It can be traced back to a very early date, for it appears in a Syriac harmony of the Gospels made in the second century by Tatian. Its earliest appearance in the Greek sources is from the fifth century. . . . the long ending is written in a non-Markan style. These facts, together with other considerations, have led most modern scholars to the conclusion that the long ending which appears in the AV is not authentic, but was produced by a copyist at an early date to smooth up the abrupt ending at 16:8.⁸²

The results of the foregoing comparisons support the position that the textual variants added by Joseph Smith were independent of the Greek text. There is no manuscript evidence to support the additional words in the new translation of the gospels. This confirms the position that the word “translation” is not the proper term to designate what occurred during the dictation of the text by Smith based upon his textual changes.

Joseph Smith’s “translation” for the most part does not reflect the early gospel text. Except for rearranged words in verses, omitting italic words, changing old spellings, and modernizing KJV English, the additions were a revelatory message relating to corrections of the KJV biblical text.

⁸² George Eldon Ladd, *The New Testament and Criticism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1967), 72, 74. See Bruce M. Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration* (Oxford, Eng.: Oxford University Press, Third, enlarged ed., 1992), 226-29. For the use of Mark 16:9-20 in other Restoration scriptures see 1830 BOM, 478, 537, 547; LDS 3 Nephi 11:33-34; RLDS 9:34-35; Mormon 9:22-24/RLDS 4:86-87; and Ether 4:18/RLDS 1:115. A part of Mark 16 was also incorporated in a revelation of September 1832. Marquardt, *Joseph Smith Revelations*, 214-15; LDS D&C 84:62-74; RLDS D&C 83:10-12.