

Bob Moore's Concerns with Sealed Book of Mormon

Bob Moore was one of the original 8 witnesses from the United States to see and handle the Gold Plates from Brazil. Although he handled them multiple times, he didn't feel comfortable with the actions initiated by Joseph F. Smith. So he reviewed the translation and came up with reasons that he felt would support his rejection of that as a translation supported by God. He produced three PDF documents, *Testimony*, *Lehi and Elasah*, and *Book of Moses*. I will respond to the issues he raised in those three documents and some additional comments to me.

Before I begin I should mention that it is easy to criticize scripture. On my mission in Georgia I met a man that gave us a book he had written, "The Wildest Story Every Told." In his 144 page book he cited scriptures from Genesis to John that he thought were inconsistent or ridiculous. He talked about the same animals being killed more than once starting in Exodus 9:6 where "all the cattle of Egypt died" and then in verse 10 "a boil breaking forth with blains upon man, and upon beast," then in verse 19 the animals are killed again, "the hail shall come down upon them, and they shall die."

Some people mention the testimony of Paul when Christ appeared to him. Two times in Acts the experience is mentioned, but they don't agree. Acts 9:7 "And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, **hearing a voice**, but seeing no man." 22:9 "And they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid; **but they heard not the voice** of him that spake to me."

The Title Page of the Book of Mormon warns us against this very practice of looking for mistakes in the scriptures.

And now, if there are faults they are the mistakes of men; wherefore, condemn not the things of God, that ye may be found spotless at the judgment-seat of Christ.

And Moroni instructs us further in Mormon 9:

31 Condemn me not because of mine imperfection, neither my father, because of his imperfection, neither them who have written before him; but rather give thanks unto God that he hath made manifest unto you our imperfections, that ye may learn to be more wise than we have been.

We can fill books full of what we consider errors all day long, but it is a fool's errand. It doesn't uplift or enlighten nor give us to understand the message for us that the scriptures contain.

Bob wrote in Testimony:

All factors concerning the plates in Brazil boil down to the translation. The artifacts may or may not be genuine. The miracles associated with them may or may not be true. [He bore a strong testimony at one time] The testimonies given may or may not be inspired. The witch of Endor conjured Samuel for King Saul, by which the king received the word of God (1 Sam 28:12-19). Balaam, who prophesied for reward (2P 2:15, Jude 1:11) and "cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel" (Rev 2:14), was sent to curse the Hebrews, but ended up blessing them (Num 24:5-10). The Holy Ghost may or may not confirm events from Brazil, but the real issue is whether the Sealed Book of Mormon is of God.

As much as I had hoped it would be, I do not believe the translation is true. Although there are many things that I wished it would have included, it must be judged by what it contains. The Bible is very clear: "To the law and to the testimony; and if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no

light in them” (Is 8:20). This principle is especially true when someone presents certain words as God’s words, even if miraculously obtained. They must agree with the Word of God already received or they are false. [Of course, this is a correct principle – if we have a correct understanding of the scriptures]

Before reviewing his concerns, let us first review: Who was Zedekiah that reigned at the time of Lehi?

History of Kingdom of Judah at the time of Lehi (These dates verified from Bible and Babylonia)

608 BC King Jehoiakim begins.

Egypt Pharaoh Necho had placed Jehoiakim on the throne (2 Kgs 23:34, 2 Chr. 36:4)

It is normal for a foreign leader to give the new king a name. It is very likely that this king was given the name Zedekiah, just as his brother Mattaniah was so named by Nebuchadnezzar in 597 BC. (See discussion of Jeremiah 27:1 below)

Prophets predict captivity and destruction. (Jer. 26:9, 20) People mocked the prophets. (Jer. 26:21-24)

605 BC Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon defeats Necho and assumes control of Judah.

604, 603, 602 BC Jehoiakim pays tribute to Babylon.

601 BC He rebels against Babylon. “destroy it [Judah] according to ... prophets” (2 Kings 24:1-2)

598 BC Jehoiakim again refused to pay tribute. Jehoiakim bound and killed (2 Chr. 36:6) (Jer. 22:18-19)

598 BC Nebuchadnezzar chooses the son Jeconiah as king, named him Jehoiachin, took 3000 captives

597 BC March 10, removed Jehoiachin and “all Jerusalem” was deported (2 Kings 24:14-17)

597 BC Nebuchadnezzar chooses Jehoiakim’s brother Mattaniah to be king named him Zedekiah

597 – 587 BC Zedekiah reign over the poor (poor figs) who were left (Jer. 24:1-10, 2 Kgs 24:17-20)

587 BC, June – Jerusalem falls to siege of Nebuchadnezzar.

From the first two chapters of Nephi:

We learn that in the first year of Zedekiah many prophets came telling the people to repent. The people had gold, silver and many precious things and did not believe that Jerusalem could be destroyed. (1 Nephi 1:4, 18; 2:11, 13)

The Savior was to be born 600 years after Lehi left Jerusalem. (1 Ne. 10:4; 19:8; 2 Ne. 25:19)

Jerusalem was destroyed “immediately after my father left Jerusalem” (2 Ne. 25:10)

The only king that fits the events as outlined in Nephi is Jehoiakim (608 – 597 BC). In Jeremiah 27:1 the name is translated both as Jehoiakim (KJV, ASV) and Zedekiah (NIV, NAS). Therefore we must accept the very real possibility that there are two king Zedekiahs around 600 BC. The Book of Mormon text forces us to realize that the Zedekiah mentioned is the one that ruled from 608 BC to 598 BC.

Therefore Lehi’s Zedekiah reigned from 608 – 597 BC

Mettaniah (or 2nd Zedekiah) reigned from 598 – 587 BC

Concerns by Bob Moore:

According to my memory, the following are some items that are taught in the Sealed Book of Mormon, but are contradicted by the scriptures:

1. The translation states that Elasa is Lehi, who left Jerusalem in the first year of Zedekiah’s reign. Jeremiah says [Jer. 28:1] that Elasa took his letter to the exiled Jews in the fourth year of Zedekiah’s reign. The item is fully discussed in an attached article – “Lehi and Elasa.”

Response to 1:

The article mentions Mormon's preface to 3rd Nephi . It says, "Nephi who was the son of Lehi, who came out of Jerusalem in the first year of the reign of Zedekiah, the king of Judah." 1 Nephi 1:4 says that they left Jerusalem 600 years before the birth of Christ. As we can see above there is **no king of Judah that started his reign 600 years before Christ**. There is no way for Mormon's statement to be accurate. The first year for 1st Zedekiah's was 608 BC and the first year for 2nd Zedekiah was 598 BC.

Words of Moroni (From the Sealed Book of Mormon)

9 And it came to pass in the **first days of the reign of Zedekiah, for how much Lehi returned from Babylon** together with Gemariah, the son of Hilkiyah, when they were jointly commissioned by the king of Judah to go to Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, and **they took with them a letter from Jeremiah the prophet destined for the elders, the priests and the prophets, and all the people exiled in the land of Sinear, that the LORD appeared to him in a pillar of fire and after that event he was no longer called by the birth name Elisah. But he became known by the name that God called him, Lehi,** which corresponds to an abbreviation of Eliasib, whose meaning is, "by means of whom God restores".

30 Thus, Lehi had been commissioned by the Lord to protect this record of Moses, and directed to cross the great waters soon after returning from Babylon, **when in the early days of the reign of Mattaniah, which had been given the name of Zedekiah,** he was sent with Gemariah, son of Hilkiyah, to Nebuchadnezzar with a message from the king of Judah. It was at this time that Jeremiah the prophet sent to the **care of Elisah, that is, by Lehi, a letter to the chief elders of Judah and Jerusalem who were exiled** in the land of Babylon.

Jeremiah 28:1

1 And it came to pass the same year, in the **beginning of the reign of Zedekiah king of Judah, in the fourth year, and in the fifth month,** that Hananiah the son of Azur the prophet, which was of Gibeon, spake unto me in the house of the LORD, in the presence of the priests and of all the people, saying,

Jeremiah 29:1-3

1 Now these are the **words of the letter that Jeremiah the prophet sent from Jerusalem unto the residue of the elders** which were carried away captives, and to the priests, and to the prophets, and to all the people whom Nebuchadnezzar had carried away captive from Jerusalem to Babylon;

2 (After that Jeconiah the king, and the queen, and the eunuchs, the princes of Judah and Jerusalem, and the carpenters, and the smiths, were departed from Jerusalem;)

3 **By the hand of Elisah** the son of Shaphan, and Gemariah the son of Hilkiyah, (whom Zedekiah king of Judah sent unto Babylon to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon) saying,

As explained in the Words of Moroni verse 30, it was while on the trip to/from Babylon "that the LORD appeared to him in a pillar of fire," and after that his name was changed to Lehi. So although prophets had been testifying since the beginning of the first year, Lehi didn't start preaching until the 4th year of Zedekiah. Then Lehi and his family left four years later.

Once we make the correction to the Zedekiah time period as being from 608 to 597 BC, the problems raised by Bob disappear. Lehi (or Elasa) would have taken the letter in the year 604 BC.

The preface to 3rd Nephi was written by Mormon and he would have relied on information that was passed down. It is understandable that some of that information would not be precise. (See Morm. 9:31) Moroni also would be depending on information hundreds of years old when he said that Lehi was sent, "in the early days of the reign of Mattaniah, which had been given the name of Zedekiah." Mormon and Moroni both may not have realized that there were two Zedekiahs.

2. The translation states that angels took humans for wives and produced giants. The Inspired Version says that the sons of men took the daughters of the righteous to wife. This item is thoroughly reviewed in the second attached article entitled Book of Moses. [I will refer to this as BM-Bob]

Let us review the points that Bob makes in his Book of Moses article.

1. "Although the Bible calls the lost book, which Hilkiyah found, Shaphan read to Josiah, and Huldah interpreted, the Book of the Law, it also calls it the Book of Moses." (BM-Bob, p. 1)
2. According to the Bible, a significant part of the lost book's contents are statutes that were not obeyed, the laws concerning the Jewish feasts, at least the Passover, and God's devastating judgments that would befall the Hebrews if they disobeyed them. That information caused great fear when the book was read. None of those subjects comprise the content of the Book of Moses as contained in the Sealed Book of Mormon. (BM-Bob, p.1-2)
3. The lack of similarity between what is contained in the translation's Book of Moses and what the Bible says was in the lost book is too drastic to accept the Book of Moses as written in the translation as the lost book found in the days of Josiah. (BM-Bob p. 2)
4. The inspired Version eliminates any link between the Biblical account and this falsehood. It says, "Noah and his sons hearkened unto the Lord, and gave heed; and they were called the sons of God. And when these men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, the sons of men [disbelievers] saw that their daughters were fair, and they took them wives even as they chose. And the Lord said unto Noah, The daughters of thy sons have sold themselves, for behold, mine anger is kindled against the sons of men, for they will not hearken to my voice" (Gen 8:2-3). Acceptance of the Book of Moses as scriptures requires people to believe that angels could lust after women and copulate with them. Those are the beliefs of pagans who repeat myths about the gods bearing children with earthly women. The inclusion of the account of the Watchers in the Sealed Book of Mormon is another significant indication that it is not divine. It disagrees with the Inspired Version and is repugnant to Christian theology and morality. (BM-Bob p. 2)
5. He spends many pages to show that "the Book of Enoch, regardless of how it existed at Qumran or among the Christians, could not have been a part of the Bible." (BM-Bob p. 3)

Response to 2:

- **Law of Moses vs. Sealed Book of Moses**

Bob suggests (#1, #2, #3) that what is contained in the Sealed Book of Mormon is not correct because it should contain "statutes that were not obeyed, the laws concerning the Jewish feasts, at least the Passover, and God's devastating judgments that would befall the Hebrews if they disobeyed them." But

the Sealed Book of Mormon never claims to contain the Law of Moses. It contains the “Sealed Book of Moses” which is separate from the Law of Moses. Notice how they are described as two separate books:

Shaphan was the scribe secretary of king Josiah in the days when Hilkiah the high priest found under the altar of the temple in Jerusalem the ancient records of Moses, and among them the [1]book of the law and the [2]sealed book itself of the things that Moses saw when he was snatched to Heavenly Zion. (Words of Moroni, 1:8)

Shaphan the father of Lehi, whom the high priest Hilkiah said: See, [1]I found the book of the law of Moses in the house of the Lord, for how much is together to him, [2]a part of the parchment that remains sealed by Moses' own ring of seal. (Words of Moroni 2:2)

- **The Sealed Book of Moses is false [#4] since it mentions Watchers (angels) uniting with women**
We have to be careful to correctly understand the terminology used. "Heaven" was defined as the City of Enoch at that time (before it was removed from the Earth), so the Watchers were heavenly beings. But they were also men because they were translated beings like John the Revelator. It doesn't matter if you call them "Sons of God" or Watchers, the story is still the same and is supported in the *Bible (IV Gen. 8:9)*, *Book of Moses (Moses 8:21)* and the *Sealed Book of Moses(4:28)*.

- **The Book of Enoch is not valid scripture [#5]**
Apparently Bob does not accept the Book of Moses from Joseph Smith and those parts of the Book of Enoch that it contains. In the Book of Moses, Joseph Smith restored portions of the Book of Enoch that were totally unknown to Biblical scholars until 1976. (See August 1977 Ensign, "[A Strange Thing in the Land](#)" by Hugh Nibley) The fact that Joseph is restoring an ancient record known as The Book of Enoch, would give me cause to hesitate in claiming that the Book of Enoch is not even a valid ancient text. [Christ also quoted extensively from the Book of Enoch.](#)

3. The translation states that Moses organized the church on the day that he led the Hebrews out of Egyptian bondage. It adds that it happened on the same day that the Pascal Lamb was sacrificed. The lamb was not sacrificed on the day that the Hebrews left Egypt. The Pascal Lamb was sacrificed on the 14th day of the first month (Ex 12:6; Ex 12:18). Each day on the Jewish calendar began after sundown, when evening was over and the first star appeared. The Passover was during the night, which was the next day. It was the same day that the Hebrews left Egyptian bondage, which was the fifteenth day of the month (Num 33:3).

Response to 3:

According to Mark (15:33, 37) Christ was crucified (died) at 3pm. According to Josephus, the Passover lamb was killed between 3-5pm. Exodus 12:6 specifies that the lamb be kept until the 14th and "shall kill it in the evening." They are to put the blood on the door posts and "eat the flesh in that night"(12:8) and then "let nothing of it remain until the morning; and that which remaineth of it until the morning ye shall burn with fire." (12:10) It is reasonable that "evening" could be 3-5pm, that they would then eat the lamb after sunset (which would be the next day 15th). They would then leave Egypt on the 15th.

I don't see a conflict here. The Sealed Book of Moses says, "the church that had been organized on the day of the Passover, before Israel left Egypt. (16:1)" So the church is organized on the 14th and they leave on the 15th.

4. The translation says that the church should observe every new moon by baptizing the repentant who were converted during the previous lunar month. Christians do not observe moons or sabbaths. Isaiah warned, *“Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth; they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them”* (Is 1:13-14). Paul explicitly states that the requirements of the Mosaic Law were nailed to Jesus’ cross: *“Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross”* (Col 2:14); and commands, *“Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days”* (Col 2:16).

Response to 4:

The translation does not specify baptism for that time, but a special banquet for new members.

Except in new moon, for how much the sacrament is to be offered at the end of the day, when the first moon appears in the heaven of every month, every month of the year, on any day of the week, as a special day of adoration; yea, on this day my people will hold a special banquet; in regard to the newly baptized members of my Church, so that, they can for the first time share my body which has been given for the benefit of their sins in the flesh and of my blood for the sake of an everlasting life, just as it was done among my disciples and the Nephite people, so that on this new moon day you must be filled by the Holy Spirit in a true spiritual banquet in honor of those who repent and are baptized in my name. (Acts of the Three Nephites 12:25)

Isaiah lists many things that were part of worship. To suggest that God wants all of them done away and never practiced is a mischaracterization of what Isaiah is telling us. It wasn’t that God wanted all “oblations” done away with, but “vain oblations.” He wasn’t requiring no more assemblies or solemn meetings or feasts. The fact that God says, “when ye make many prayers, I will not hear” does not mean that we are not to pray anymore. I believe that the Matthew Henry commentary gives us a better picture of the meaning of these words in Isaiah 1:10-15:

Judea was desolate, and their cities burned. This awakened them to bring sacrifices and offerings, as if they would bribe God to remove the punishment, and give them leave to go on in their sin. Many who will readily part with their sacrifices, will not be persuaded to part with their sins. They relied on the mere form as a service deserving a reward. The most costly devotions of wicked people, without thorough reformation of heart and life, cannot be acceptable to God. He not only did not accept them, but he abhorred them. All this shows that sin is very hateful to God. If we allow ourselves in secret sin, or forbidden indulgences; if we reject the salvation of Christ, our very prayers will become abomination.

See the last page for a discussion of Col. 2:16

5. The translation calls the sabbath day the Lord’s Day and commands that it be observed as such. The sabbath day is the seventh day of the week. The Hebrew word *sabbath* comes from the Hebrew word meaning *seven*. The Lord’s Day is Sunday, the First day of the week. Those are two different days. The phrase *Lord’s Day* comes from the fact that Jesus rose from the dead on the first day of the week (Matt 28:1, Mk 16:2, 8, Lu 24:1, Jn 20:1). The disciples celebrated the resurrection on every Sunday by partaking of the Communion (Acts 20:7). During that service they received the oblation as Paul decreed (1 Cor 16:1-2). The Lord commanded the latter-day church to observe the Communion on Sunday (D&C 119:5b, 7b). That day is the same time that the oblation should be received (D&C 59:2h).

Response to 5:

If you look at the original Greek that is translated “first day of the week” you will find that the Greek word is sabbaton or Sabbath. Yes, the Lord’s Day is Sunday the first of the week, but the Christians also referred to it as the Sabbath. In all the verses recommended (Matt 28:1; Mk 16:2, 9; Lu 24:1; Jn 20:1) the Greek word that is translated in the King James Version as “first day of the week” is actually the Greek word *σαββάτων* (sabbaton) or Sabbath. I think the translators were wrong to ever translate sabbaton as “day of the week.” There are many translations of the Bible that retain the word Sabbath for these verses such as Apostolic Bible, Young’s Literal Translation, Julia Smith, Godbey, Worrell, CLV, LITV, ECB, EJ2000, JMNT, and Martin Luther’s 1545 German version which Joseph Smith said was the best translation of the Bible.

6. The translation claims that Jonas, one of the Lord’s disciples in America, visited Paul “above fourteen years ago” (2 Cor 12:2) to warn him not to resist Peter at the conference described in Acts 15. Paul wrote his second epistle to the Corinthians about 56 AD. Fourteen years before then is 42 AD. The conference happened about 50 AD. Paul was preaching at Tarsus at the time. He did not join Barnabas at Antioch until at least 44 AD. The two were not ordained apostles until about 46-48 AD. If the translation’s assertion is true, then Jonas appeared to Paul in 42 AD. four to six years before he became an apostle and about 8 years before the first dispute with Peter.

Response to 6:

“In view of this, **after had passed fourteen years since we were caught up** and equipped with these good news, who from the heavens Jesus took me privately among my other two companions, and set me before one of his disciples in Jerusalem, who was about to enter into a debate with the chief apostles of Christ because of the circumcision of the Gentiles” (Acts of the Three Nephites 5:4)

The three Nephites would have been caught up in AD 34. Adding 14 years will equal AD 48. That year fits well with Paul’s time and a couple years before the conference in AD 50.

7. According to the translation, Alma ordained evangelists in the church. *Evangelist* is a Greek word meaning *missionary of the gospel*. Whom did Alma’s evangelists evangelize? The translation states that they taught the gospel to the people of Alma. Those people were already baptized. The work of evangelists is to preach the gospel to unbelievers. A patriarch is an “*evangelical minister*” and “*a revivalist*” (D&C 122:3a). Patriarch not only better describes the role of these ministers supposedly provided, but it is a Hebrew word that more aptly fits the culture from which the Nephites came.

Response to 7:

How does the Bible use the term “evangelist?” Notice that it calls Philip an evangelist.

8 And the next day we that were of Paul’s company departed, and came unto Caesarea: and we entered into the house of **Philip the evangelist**, which was **one of the seven**; and abode with him. (Acts 21:8)

Why were the “seven” chosen? It was to provide “daily ministrations” to members of the church. It was not a missionary calling.

Acts 6:1-5)

1 And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, **because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations.**

2 Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, **It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables.**

3 Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you **seven men** of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.

4 But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.

5 ¶ And the saying pleased the whole multitude: **and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip**, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch:

The usage of the word evangelist (the Greek word) in the Bible is not contrary to those working with Alma. Conversion is an ongoing process, even for those already baptized.

8. The last chapter of the part of the Seal Book of Mormon that is being published is Jesus' interpretation of Zenos' parable. It states that the other three spots of ground in which three other branches were grafted were in the orient and that these graftings were Israelites placed among the "astrologers and magicians" in these three spots. It seemed to also imply that the graftings happened at the time of the Babylonian Captivity, when the fourth branch came to America. Nebuchadnezzar put Daniel and the three children with Babylon's astrologers. Was that one of the graftings? Israelites from the northern kingdom, who had not already migrated into Europe at that time, resided primarily in Scythia. They had refused to return to their Promised Land before the captivity, when Jeremiah extended King Josiah's invitation, and afterwards, when Ezra invited them to join the Jews in returning. They migrated into Europe, instead, where they were sown among the Gentiles (Hos 8:8) and lost their identity. Any Israelites traveling further east into central Asia would have been pushed west by the expansion that forced the Turks and Huns westward. That leaves only Egypt and Greece for the other possible spots. The translation adds that the other three plantings coalesced into three people, a person from Greece, Joseph of Arimathea, and Lazarus, for the purpose of aiding the Savior during His earthly ministry. This assertion is contrary to the parable as contained in Jacob, which does not place the gathering of the branch until the time of restoration, when all Israel is gathered.

Response to 8:

It is easy to be a critic and somewhat harder to trust God and develop faith. In John Pratt's analysis of *The Sealed Book of Mormon*, he also was bothered by this last section of the book for essentially the same reasons. But he humbled himself and decided to study it out in his mind to see if he could understand the meaning. He said, "There was a huge "aha moment" when the irony hit me that the Lord was using the same symbolism explained in my own articles!" He went on to explain that after he understood the meanings of the locations and the fruit, "Suddenly this book's interpretation has become a relief to find a plausible interpretation of meaning of the branches rather than being a stumbling block to accept the volume." https://johnpratt.com/items/docs/2019/sealed_book.html

9. The translation also teaches that the original olive tree in Zenos' parable became so corrupt after the Restoration in 1830 brought the branches together that the tree was cut down. Another was planted in its place. This claim is contrary to the parable as contained in Jacob, but it can be used to justify restructuring the church today.

Response to 9:

No such claims are made in The Acts of the Three Nephites. There is one place where it mentions that other trees were cut off. This was not a cutting down of the original olive tree.

37 But these last grafted branches, that is, Gentiles brought to this land overseas, will also surmount the seed of Lehi and his brethren and the branch of the seed of his brethren will dry up and die; and the Lord will cry for his loss, because all the fruit of his vineyard will perish except these; but now are also corrupted, and all the trees of his vineyard are of no avail except to be cut down and cast into the fire.

14:38 But, behold, the Lord of the vineyard cut off the trees that obstructed this piece of land, and planted another tree in his place, fulfilling the promise which Joseph the son of Jacob had obtained from God the Father, when he told him that he would raise from his loins a "fair branch" to the house of Israel; and being righteous, though he is Gentile, will be counted as being part of the natural olive tree; for he will be truly a descendant of Joseph; not the Messiah, but that "graft" of which Lehi prophesied, which is to come in the fullness of the Gentiles in the last days, when your descendants have degenerated, fallen into unbelief, yea, for the space of many years and for many generations after the Messiah manifests himself in person to the children of men, then the fulness of my gospel shall come to the Gentiles; and of the Gentiles, to the remnant of your descendants.

Additional Concerns from Bob

After I mentioned to Bob that I thought there were answers to his concerns, he explained further why he didn't feel he could support Joseph F. Smith in his efforts.

I accepted the instruction and testimonies that we received in Brazil and avidly repeated them after our return. There were some apparent contradictions in what we were told, which after prayer I realized would not be so if the Lord fulfilled His promises in certain ways. All those ways were incompatible with Joseph's attempt to immediately restructure the church.

Unfortunately, in my mind, Joseph was over anxious to restructure the church. Part of the reason may have been because Mauricio was urging him to do so. Mauricio has actually laid the ground work for the failure of what he wanted to accomplish in what he calls "the land of Zion." [of course your concerns would not be there if you knew that Joseph was following God's directions]

I tired to convince Joseph that his immediate desire to restructure the church in Missouri was incompatible with the instructions that we receive, some of which Mauricio claimed came from Moroni. Joseph's intransigent instance to proceed as he wanted, including his refusal to acknowledge the divinity of the office of high priest, began a division between Mauricio and Joseph. Mauricio tried to correct Joseph and I quietly supported Mauricio in that effort. The matter came to a head in August and Joseph proceeded without my support. At the time, I thought that Mauricio opposed what Joseph was doing, too. Mauricio threatened to withhold the translation from Joseph until he relented from his private interpretations.

To my surprise, Mauricio invited Joseph to come to Brazil in late October. He convince Joseph (or Joseph would say that the Lord convinced him) that the office of high priest is divine. At that point, Mauricio ignored all the other differences and ordained Joseph as prophet. [You have heard Joseph's testimony. He makes a very strong case that it was God's will that he be ordained a high priest]

That is the turning point in my support of Mauricio and the belief that he was acting under divine direction. Mauricio does not have the keys of the Melchizedek priesthood and cannot ordain Joseph as prophet. Further, I do not believe that Moroni ordained Mauricio. [Your belief could be wrong] Those keys were given to Peter, James, and John. They committed them to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery. Those keys were restored for the last time and do not need another restoration. Mauricio privately confessed to me in an email that was shared with the witnesses that Peter, James, and John did not visit him to his knowledge and give him the keys.

What if the keys restored by Peter, James and John are lost? This sounds like a tradition held by Bob that could be wrong. Why do you think that you can command God and specify that only way that is allowed for keys or authority to be restored?

In November, I was willing to accept Mauricio's teachings and testimonies up until November 2018. That meant that I could accept the translation as true and approached it as such. Unfortunately, as I read it, I found statements that I knew were not true and/or contradicted the scriptures. I immediately realized that Mauricio used the Ethiopian Book of Enoch, which I read many years ago. I do not believe the account of the Watchers. The similarity between the two texts is too great for me to believe the translation is divine. Nevertheless, I laid that objection aside and tried to read it without prejudice.

We have dealt this this above in the response to #2.

I read it in three sessions. The turning point came at the end of the 2nd session. I think it is the 13th chapter of the Acts of the Three Nephites. In that chapter, it called for the observance of the new moon. I think it also spoke of the observance of the Sabbath. I do not believe that teaching. I am thoroughly Christian and embrace Paul's teachings. He said that Jesus erased the ordinances that were against us so that no one would be able to judge us about our observance of moons and Sabbaths (Col 2:14-16). That was such a contradiction to the scripture that I could not accept the translation.

See response to #4. I can't go into a full analysis of Col 2:14-16, let me just quote from a couple commentators. The main issue is: Will an interpretation of one scripture (that might be wrong) influence whether you will accept other scripture?

"This passage, probably more than any other in the Bible, is interpreted by those who reject God's festivals as confirmation that the biblical feast days are unnecessary observances. Regrettably, such reasoning is based on poor scholarship and misleading translations from the original wording of Paul's instructions. . . In the Millennium the custom of making the arrival of each new moon a special occasion will again be restored (Isaiah 66:23), but no biblical command exists now that requires their observance."
[Bible Study Tools](#)

"16,17 Therefore links the two sections together. In view of Christ's triumph over all spiritual adversaries, it would be foolish to allow anyone to pass judgment over such matters as food and festivals. Paul is here referring to any system which makes salvation dependent on the observance of certain food taboos or rigid adherence to the observance of certain days as sacred. The Jews were guilty of doing this and such an approach may well have been shared by the false teachers. Paul thinks of the contrast between a shadow and its substance as a fitting illustration of the relationship between a ritual religion and Jesus Christ. Whatever symbols are used, they must never be mistaken for the real thing." (The New Bible Commentary Revised, Eerdmans, 1970, p. 1148)

I finished it out of a sense of duty and with the thought that if there was any redeeming value to the translation, the Lord could show it in the third reading. That is where I read Jesus' supposed

interpretation of Zenos' parable. It misquotes the parable and produces an interpretation that is unacceptable. That interpretation also supports Mauricio belief that the Restoration Movement as started by Joseph Smith, Jr. must begin anew through him. This concept is also contradicted by latter-day revelation as already noted.

As explained in the answer to #9, the translation NEVER says that the original tree was cut down. It only talks about cutting down the tree [the Jaredites] exactly like it does in the allegory in Jacob.

I suppose that the final event came on March 10, 2018. Just after my normal time of fasting and prayer, the Lord instructed me to search the Bible about when Elashah went to Babylon as an ambassador for King Zedekiah. Until that time, I had accepted the statement in the translation that the trip happened in the first year. I had no reason to doubt that statement. My study showed that it happened in the fourth year of Zedekiah's reign. I would not have discovered that contradiction with the Bible if the Holy Spirit had not instructed me.

Yes, Elalah took the letter from Jeremiah in the 4th year of the reign of Zedekiah. The Words of Moroni doesn't say he went in the first year, but they do say that Lehi went, "in the first days of the reign of Zedekiah" (WofM 1:9) Notice that Jeremiah calls the 4th year the "beginning of the reign"
"And it came to pass the same year, in the **beginning of the reign of Zedekiah king of Judah, in the fourth year, and in the fifth month**" (Jeremiah 28:1) This is not a good reason to reject *The Sealed Book of Mormon*. But many times we are not necessary looking for a good reason, sometimes we accept even poor reasons.