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Was Joseph Smith Sent of God?

Author(s): Orson Pratt

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Abstract: In this series, Pratt states that the Book of Mormon was revealed through Joseph Smith, that it contains the everlasting gospel and the writings of the tribe of Joseph. He explains Ezekiel 37:18-21 and Isaiah 29. The Book of Mormon explains that America is the land of promise of Joseph. Thousands and tens of thousands of witnesses have accepted the Book of Mormon and witness concerning its truthfulness. The third part covers Pratt's sixth and seventh evidences.

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HE THAT HATH AN EAR, LET HIM HEAR WHAT THE SPIRIT SAITH UNTO THE CHURCHES.—Rev. ii. 7.

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VOL. X.

WAS JOSEPH SMITH SENT OF GOD?

Sixth.—The perfect agreement between the prediction of Isaiah (chap. xxix.) and Mr. Smith's account of the finding and translation of the Book of Mormon, is another collateral proof that he was divinely commissioned. Mr. Smith testifies that the plates from which that book was translated were taken *out of the ground*, from where they were originally deposited by the prophet Moroni; that the box containing them was composed of stone, so constructed as to exclude, in a great degree, the moisture of the soil; that with the plates he discovered a Urim and Thummim, through the aid of which he afterwards was enabled to translate the book into the English language. Soon after obtaining the plates, a quantity of the characters were correctly transcribed, and sent to some of the most learned individuals in the United States, to see if they could translate them. Among the rest, they were presented to Professor Anthon, of New York city. But no man was found able to read them by his own learning or wisdom. Mr. Smith, though an unlearned man, testifies that he was commanded to translate them, through the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, by the aid of the Urim and Thummim, and that the "Book of Mormon" is that translation. Now, Isaiah says to Israel, "*Thou shalt be brought down, and shalt speak out of the ground, and thy speech shall be low out of the dust, and thy voice shall be, as of one that hath a familiar spirit, out of the ground, and thy speech shall whisper out of the dust.*"

Who cannot perceive the perfect harmony between Isaiah's prediction and Mr. Smith's testimony? Isaiah, as if to impress it upon the minds of those who should live in future generations, gives no less than four repetitions of the same prediction in the same passage, informing us, in the most definite language, that after Israel should be brought down, they should speak in a very familiar manner "*out of the ground*," and whisper "*low out of the dust.*" Mr. Smith has been an instrument in the hands of God of fulfilling this prediction to the very letter. He has taken "*out of the ground*" the ancient history of one half of our globe—the sacred records of a great nation of Israel—the writings of a remnant of the tribe of Joseph, who once flourished as a powerful and great nation on the Western hemisphere. The mouldering ruins of their ancient forts, and towers, and cities proclaim their former greatness, in mournful contrast with their present sad condition. They have been brought down like all the rest of Israel; but the words of their ancient prophets "*speak out of the ground*," and "*whisper out of the dust*" to the ears of the present generation, revealing in a very "*familiar*" manner the history of ancient America, which before was entirely unknown to the nations. Isaiah says, that Israel should "*speak out of the ground.*" Mr. Smith says, that he obtained the writings of Joseph from "*out of the ground.*" Now, if Mr. Smith had professed that he had got his book as Swedenborg obtained his, or as the Shakers obtained theirs; that is, if he had professed to have obtained this

book to usher in this last dispensation in any other way but "*out of the ground,*" we should have had reason to suppose him a deceiver, like Swedenborg and thousands of others. Again, Isaiah says, that "the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I cannot; for it is sealed: And the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I am not learned. Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honor me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precepts of men: Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, even a marvellous work and a wonder: for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid." All this was fulfilled before Mr. Smith was aware that it had been so clearly predicted by Isaiah. He sent the "*WORDS of a book*" which he found, as before stated, to Professor Anthon. But it was a sealed writing to the learned professor—the aboriginal language of ancient America could not be deciphered by him. He was as much puzzled as the wise men of Babylon were to interpret the unknown writing upon the wall. Human wisdom and learning, in this case, were altogether insufficient. It required another Daniel, which was found in the person of Mr. Smith. What a marvellous work! What a wonder! How the wisdom of the wise and learned was made to perish by the gift of interpretation given to the unlearned! If the "*Book of Mormon*" is what it professes to be—a sacred record—then it must be the very book mentioned in Isaiah's prediction; for the prophet Nephi, one of the writers of the "*Book of Mormon,*" who lived upwards of 2400 years ago, informs us that their writings should be brought to light in the last days in fulfilment of Isaiah's prediction; he also delivers a prophecy in relation to the same book, and predicts many events in connexion therewith, which are not mentioned by Isaiah. We here give an extract from his prediction, as also his quotations from Isaiah:—

Behold, in the last days, or in the days of the Gentiles; yea, behold all the nations of the Gentiles, and also the Jews, both those who shall come upon this land, and those who shall be upon other lands; yea, even upon all the lands of the earth; behold, they will be drunk with iniquity, and all manner of abominations; and when that day shall come, they shall be visited of the Lord of Hosts, with thunder and with earthquake, and with a great noise, and with storm and with tempest, and with the flame of devouring fire; and all the nations that fight against Zion, and that distress her, shall be as a dream of a night vision; yea, it shall be unto them, even as unto a hungry man, which dreameth, and behold he eateth, but he awaketh and his soul is empty; or like unto a thirsty man, which dreameth, and behold he drinketh, but he awaketh, and behold he is faint, and his soul hath appetite: yea, even so shall the multitude of all the nations be that fight against mount Zion: for behold, all ye that do iniquity, stay yourselves and wonder, for ye shall cry out, and cry, yea, ye shall be drunken, but not with wine; ye shall stagger, but not with strong drink: for behold, the Lord hath poured out upon you, the spirit of deep sleep. For behold, ye have closed your eyes, and ye have rejected the prophets, and your rulers, and the seers hath he covered because of your iniquity.

And it shall come to pass, that the Lord God shall bring forth unto you the words of a book, and they shall be the words of them which have slumbered. And behold the book shall be sealed: and in the book shall be a revelation from God, from the beginning of the world to the ending thereof. Wherefore, because of the things which are sealed up, the things which are sealed shall not be delivered in the day of the wickedness and abominations of the people. Wherefore the book shall be kept from them. But the book shall be delivered unto a man, and he shall deliver the words of the book, which are the words of those who have slumbered in the dust; and he shall deliver these words unto another; but the words which are sealed, he shall not deliver, neither shall he deliver the book. For the book shall be sealed by the power of God, and the revelation which was sealed, shall be kept in the book until the own due time of the Lord, that they may come forth: for, behold, they reveal all things from the foundation of the world unto the end thereof. And the day cometh that the words of the book which were sealed, shall be read upon the house-tops; and they shall be read by the power of Christ: and all things shall be revealed unto the children of men which ever have been among the children of men, and which ever will be, even unto the end of the earth. Wherefore, at that day when the book shall be delivered unto the man of whom I have spoken, the book shall be hid from the eyes of the world, that the eyes of none shall behold it, save it be that three witnesses shall behold

it, by the power of God, besides him to whom the book shall be delivered; and they shall testify to the truth of the book, and the things therein. And there is none other which shall view it, save it be a few, according to the will of God, to bear testimony of his word unto the children of men: for the Lord God hath said, that the words of the faithful should speak as if it were from the dead. Wherefore, the Lord God will proceed to bring forth the words of the book; and in the mouth of as many witnesses as seemeth him good, will he establish his word; and wo be unto him that rejecteth the word of God.

But behold, it shall come to pass that the Lord God shall say unto him to whom he shall deliver the book, take these words which are not sealed, and deliver them to another, that he may shew them unto the learned, saying: read this, I pray thee. And the learned shall say, bring hither the book, and I will read them: and now, because of the glory of the world, and to get gain, will they say this, and not for the glory of God. And the man shall say, I cannot bring the book, for it is sealed. Then shall the learned say, I cannot read it. Wherefore it shall come pass, that the Lord God will deliver again the book and the words thereof, to him that is not learned; and the man that is not learned, shall say, I am not learned. Then shall the Lord God say unto him, the learned shall not read them, for they have rejected them, and I am able to do mine own work; wherefore, thou shalt read the words which I shall give unto thee. Touch not the things which are sealed, for I will bring them forth in mine own due time: for I will shew unto the children of men, that I am able to do mine own work. Wherefore, when thou hast read the words which I have commanded thee, and obtained the witnesses which I have promised unto thee, then shalt thou seal up the book again, and hide it up unto me, that I may preserve the words which thou hast not read, until I shall see fit in mine own wisdom, to reveal all things unto the children of men. For behold, I am God; and I am a God of miracles; and I will shew unto the world that I am the same yesterday, to day, and for ever; and I work not among the children of men, save it be according to their faith.

And again it shall come to pass, that the Lord shall say unto him that shall read the words that shall be delivered him, forasmuch as this people draw near unto me with their mouth, and with their lips do honor me, but have removed their hearts far from me, and their fear towards me is taught by the precepts of men, therefore, I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people; yea, a marvellous work and a wonder: for the wisdom of their wise and learned shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent shall be hid. And wo unto them that seek deep to hide their counsel from the Lord. And their works are in the dark; and they say, who seeth us; and who knoweth us? And they also say, surely, your turning of things upside down, shall be esteemed as the potter's clay. But behold, I will shew unto them, saith the Lord of hosts, that I know all their works. For shall the work say of him that made it, he made me not? Or shall the thing framed say of him that framed it, he had no understanding? But behold, saith the Lord of Hosts, I will shew unto the children of men, that it is not yet a very little while, and Lebanon shall be turned into a fruitful field; and the fruitful field shall be esteemed as a forest. And in that day shall the deaf hear the words of the book; and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity and out of darkness; and the meek also shall increase, and their joy shall be in the Lord; and the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel. For assuredly as the Lord liveth, they shall see that the terrible one is brought to nought, and the scorner is consumed, and all that watch for iniquity are cut off; and they that make a man an offender for a word, and lay a snare for him that reproveth in the gate, and turn aside the just for a thing of nought. Therefore thus saith the Lord, who redeemed Abraham, concerning the house of Jacob, Jacob shall not now be ashamed, neither shall his face now wax pale. But when he seeth his children, the work of my hands, in the midst of him, they shall sanctify my name, and sanctify the Holy One of Jacob, and shall fear the God of Israel. They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding, and they that murmured shall learn doctrine.

Here it will at once be perceived that the "Book of Mormon" is actually the book predicted by Isaiah, or else it must be an imposture. The book mentioned by Isaiah was to have every characteristic which seems to accompany the "Book of Mormon." Did Isaiah predict that the "deaf should hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind see out of obscurity, and out of darkness?" It has been fulfilled by the coming forth of the "Book of Mormon." Did Isaiah say that in the day his predicted book should speak out of the ground, then those who "erred in spirit should come to understanding, and they that murmured should learn doctrine?" It has been fulfilled to the very letter through the instrumentality of the "Book of Mormon." Tens of thousands of honest men, who erred in spirit because of the doctrines and precepts of men, have come to understanding. Many points of doctrine which had been in controversy for ages are made perfectly plain

in the "Book of Mormon;" hence those who have murmured because of the darkness and obscurity thrown over the scriptures by human wisdom and learning, have "*learned doctrine.*" Did Isaiah prophecy that when the predicted book should make its appearance, that then "the house of Jacob should no longer be made ashamed, neither should the face of Jacob any more wax pale?" The Book of Mormon has come, declaring that the time is at hand for the gathering of the house of Jacob, no more to be scattered. Did Isaiah predict that in the day of the revelation of a certain book, "the terrible one should be brought to nought, the scorner be consumed, and all that watch for iniquity be cut off;" and finally that "all the nations who should fight against Mount Zion, should pass away as the dream of a night vision, and be destroyed by earthquake and the flame of devouring fire?" The Book of Mormon comes testifying that the hour of these judgments is at hand. And finally there is no circumstance mentioned by Isaiah, connected with the revelation and translation of the book he mentions, but what is connected with the "Book of Mormon." If Joseph Smith was an impostor and wished to palm himself off upon the world as the great prophet who was to usher in the preparatory dispensation for the coming of the Lord, how came he to discover all these minute particulars contained in Isaiah's prophecy, so as to so exactly and perfectly incorporate in his great scheme of imposture each and every one of them? If this illiterate youth was a deceiver, he has far outstretched all the learned divines or impostors of the last eighteen hundred years—he has made his great and extended scheme to harmonize in every particular not only with the ancient gospel but with the ancient prophecies, and this, too, so perfectly, that no one can detect the delusion. Reader, does not such a scheme savour very strongly of the truth? Does it not require a greater effort of mind to disbelieve such a scheme than it does to believe it? If such a scheme can not be credited, where is there a scheme or system in the whole world that can be credited? Can you find a scheme more perfect than the one introduced by Mr. Smith? Can you find one equal to it in perfection? Can you find one that contains the one-twentieth part of the truth which his system contains? If, then, you doubt the authority of Mr. Smith, how much more ought you to doubt the authority of every other man now on the earth? If Mr. Smith's perfect scheme should be rejected, surely all other schemes or doctrines, which can be shown to be ten times more imperfect, should also be rejected. If any are to be received, surely that one should be received which seems to contain all the elements of a true doctrine, and in which there cannot be detected the least evidence of imposture. To invent a scheme apparently every way suited to the last dispensation, or preparatory work for the second advent of our Lord—to have that scheme agree in every minute particular with the endless circumstances and numberless events predicted by the ancient prophets, bespeaks a wisdom far superior to that of man: it bespeaks the wisdom of God. This endless train of circumstances, all harmonizing—all combining—all concentrating, as it were, into one focus, carries with it such irresistible evidence of truth that it is almost impossible for the careful investigator to reject the divinity of Joseph Smith's mission. Like investigating the works of nature, the more he examines the more he perceives the wisdom of the Deity enstamped upon every sentence.

Seventh.—According to the "Book of Mormon," all of the great western continent, with all the valleys, hills, and mountains, riches and resources pertaining thereunto, was given to the remnant of Joseph, as their "*land of promise.*" The Almighty sealed this covenant and promise by an oath, saying that the land should be given unto them for ever. The western world, including both North and South America, is the "*land of promise*" to the remnant of Joseph, in the same sense that the land of Palestine is a promised land unto the twelve tribes of Israel. Now this testimony of the "Book of Mormon" agrees most perfectly with the prophetic blessing placed upon the head of Joseph by the Patriarch Jacob; who, just previous to his death, called together his sons, and predicted upon each what should befall them or their tribes "*in the last days.*" The blessing upon the tribe of Joseph is as follows:—(Genesis xlix chap.) "Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well, whose branches run over the wall: the archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him; but his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of

Jacob; (from thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel:) even by the God of thy father, who shall help thee; and by the Almighty who shall bless thee with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under, blessings of the breasts and of the womb: *the blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors, unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills*: they shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren." In the preceding chapter, when blessing the two sons of Joseph, he says, "let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth." And again, "his seed shall become a multitude of nations." From these predictions it will be perceived that Jacob prevailed with God, and obtained a greater blessing in behalf of the tribe of Joseph than what Abraham and Isaac, his progenitors, had obtained. While the blessing of Jacob's progenitors was limited to the land of Palestine, Joseph had confirmed upon him a blessing or country above, or far greater, than Palestine—a country at a distance, represented by "*the utmost bounds of the everlasting hills*." Some of the "*branches*" of the "*fruitful bough*" of Joseph were to spread far abroad from the parent tree—they were to "*run over the wall*" of the mighty ocean—they were to "*become a multitude of nations in the midst of the earth*." There, among the "*everlasting hills*," they were to be "*made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob*." It was to be there, among the "*multitude of nations*" of the posterity of Joseph, that the "*Shepherd—the Stone of Israel*" was to establish a kingdom, which should break in pieces all other kingdoms, and "*fill the whole earth*."

In America there is a "*multitude of nations*," called by us "*Indians*." These Indians evidently sprang from the same source as is indicated by their color, features, customs, dialects, traditions, &c.; that they are of Israelitish origin is also evident from their religious ceremonies—their language, their traditions, and the discovery of Hebrew inscriptions, &c. If America is not the land given to a branch of Joseph, where, or in what part of the globe shall that tribe receive the fulfilment of Jacob's prediction? where, if not in America, has a land been peopled by a multitude of the nations of Joseph? Can a multitude of the nations of Joseph be found in Europe, Asia, or Africa, or in any of the adjoining islands? If not, then America seems to be the only place where that great prediction could receive its accomplishment. The "*Book of Mormon*" testifies that America is "*the land of Joseph*," given to them by promise. Is not this an additional evidence that *Mr. Smith was sent of God*? If Mr. Smith was an impostor, how came he to discover that the tribe of Joseph was to be favored so much above all the other tribes of Israel? Perhaps it may be replied, that it was easy to discover *that* from the scriptures; but, we ask, why did not Swedenborg, Wesley, Irving, or some of the other impostors of former times make this scriptural discovery, and incorporate it in their pretended dispensations? It would be, at first thought, far more natural to suppose the American Indians to be the ten lost tribes of Israel; indeed, this is the opinion of many of the learned at the present day. Why did not this modern prophet, if a deceiver, form his deceptive scheme more in accordance with the opinions of the learned? or why should he choose a remnant of the tribe of Joseph to people ancient America? Out of the twelve tribes of Israel why did he select only a branch of one tribe to people that vast continent? All can now perceive why the "*Book of Mormon*" should profess to be the history of a remnant of one tribe, instead of being the history of the ten tribes. All can see, why America should be represented as a promised land to Joseph, instead of being given to Reuben, Simeon, or any of the other tribes. All can now see, though it was not seen at the first, that if the "*Book of Mormon*" was different from what it now is; that is, if it professed to contain a history of the ten lost tribes; or if it had given the great western continent to any other people or to any other tribe than that of Joseph, that it would have proved itself false—it would not have been the book or record which the prophets predicted should come forth to usher in the great work of the last days. An impostor would be obliged to take into consideration all these minute circumstances, many of which are in direct opposition to the established traditions of the day; yet none of them could be neglected, without proving fatal to his scheme. But Mr. Smith, with all the accuracy of a profound mathematician, has combined all the minute elements of both doctrine and prophecy in his grand and

wonderful scheme—nothing is wanting. Whatever department of his system is examined it will be found invulnerable. What an invaluable amount of evidence to establish the *divine mission of Joseph Smith!*

(*To be continued.*)

CONFERENCE MINUTES.

CARLISLE.

This conference was held at Newcastle-upon-Tyne on the 18th of June.—The meeting was opened by singing the first hymn, after which Elder Speakman engaged in prayer. It was then proposed, seconded, and carried, that Elder Speakman preside over this conference, and Elder Ebenezer Gillies act as clerk.

The President then made a few remarks upon the cheering prospect that lay before them, as a great work was being done about Newcastle, inasmuch as they laboured with faithfulness and diligence; for he thought, as there were now about half a dozen elders given up to the work in this region of country, they would surely do some good. He then called for the representation of the branches, which were as follows:—

Newcastle Branch—Represented by Elder Wanless, consists of 49 members, including 3 Elders, 4 Priests, 1 Teacher, and 1 Deacon. Baptized since last conference 10. All in good standing with the exception of three or four.

Sunderland Branch—Represented by Elder Lenox, consists of 53 members, including 2 Elders, 4 Priests, 1 Teacher, and 1 Deacon. Baptized since last conference 15. All in good standing.

North Shields Branch—Represented by Elder Robert Gillies, consists of 10 members, including 1 Elder, 1 Priest, and 1 Teacher. Baptized since last conference three. All in good standing.

Throphill Branch—Represented by Elder George Robinson, consists of 8 members, including 1 Elder and 1 Priest. All in good standing.

Allerton—Represented by Elder Thomas Child, consists of 22 members, including 4 Elders, 2 Priests, and 1 Deacon. Three cut off since last conference and one dead. In good standing.

Brampton Branch—Represented by Elder Child, consists of 25 members, including 1 Elder, 2 Priests, and 1 Teacher. One dead. One half of the branch in indifferent standing.

Carlisle Branch—Represented by Elder Child, consists of 79 members, including 4 Elders, 7 Priests, 5 Teachers, and 1 Deacon. Three removed, three received, and one dead. Out of these 16 are scattered and about thirty in indifferent standing.

Dalston Branch—Represented by Elder Child, consists of 24 members, including 1 Elder, 1 Priest, 1 Teacher, and 1 Deacon. One dead. Eight baptized since last conference. In very good standing.

Scattered Members at Thornley Colliery, seven. Total number of Members, including officers, 277.

The alterations necessary in the priesthood were next attended to. It was moved that Alexander Murray, John Gillies, and Andrew Walton, Priests, be ordained Elders, together with brothers Scott and Soulsby for the Newcastle branch. Seconded and carried unanimously.

For the Sunderland branch it was moved and seconded that brother Gales and Robert Hawkie be ordained Priests. Carried unanimously.

For Throphill branch it was moved that brother John Rawlinson be ordained Elder; brother Joseph Robinson, Priest; and brother Thomas Robinson, Teacher. Carried unanimously.

Moved by the President, and seconded by Elder Child, that Priest Graham of Carlisle branch be ordained Elder, and that he preside over the streets of Maryport. Carried unanimously.

The President then made a few remarks on the very large and extensive fields that lay before them, and closed the meeting by prayer.

The afternoon service commenced at two o'clock. After the sacrament was ad-