

Biblical Variant Readings in the *Book of Mormon*

The *Book of Mormon* claims that the Nephites brought the Bible with them as it existed by 600 BCE, already assembled as a single sacred book, and translated into Egyptian on brass plates. The BoM text quoted extensively from these Biblical materials on the Brass Plates, especially Isaiah, but also other materials, including the Sermon on the Mount, which Jesus delivered again when he visited the New World after his resurrection, to make the Nephites and Lamanites Christians, at least for two centuries, after which people started falling away from the “truth.” The Biblical materials in the *Book of Mormon* are primarily the King James text. According to Mormon scholars, its wording was used in translating the gold plates because people were used to it. According to these reverent scholars, it differs from the King James wording only when the original text required different wording to be a correct translation (cf. 1 Nephi 13:24-29). But according to the critics, the variants were devised to make it look as though the inclusions are not just a rote copy of the King James Version, pure and simple.

These variants, which are supposed to be the correct, divine translation of the original text of Isaiah and other Biblical texts, have been a focus of apologist research. The claim is that some ancient Biblical manuscripts occasionally agree with the *BoM* variants, and since Smith et al. had no access to these manuscripts, and did not know the languages, they could not have come up with variants that enjoy this ancient manuscript support.

The present study has tried to be exhaustive, although that is always an unattainable ideal. The Biblical passages in the *Book of Mormon* that were gleaned for examination are very close to exhaustive, and certainly include all passages of any significant length.

The insertion of Biblical passages was tricky business. This was supposed to be a divine translation, and so these passages would be expected to be perfect translations of the original text, including much of Isaiah, and the words of Jesus on the Mount. Yet the authors dared not depart too far from the accepted text that their prospective audience knew and cherished. They opted to insert primarily the following (with both Biblical and the BoM references, the latter in parentheses):

Table 9. KJV Inclusions

Longer passages:	
Isaiah 2-14 (<i>2 Nephi 12-24</i>)	Isaiah 48-49 (<i>1 Nephi 20-21</i>)

Isaiah 50:52:2 (2 Nephi 7 & 8) Isaiah 54 (3 Nephi 22) Matthew 5:3–7:27 (3 Nephi 12:3–14:27)	Isaiah 53 (Mosiah 14) Malachi 3 & 4 (3 Nephi 24 & 25)
Other passages	
Exodus 20:4-17 (Mosiah 13:12-24) Exodus 20:2-4 (Mosiah 12:34-36) Isaiah 29:3-5 (2 Nephi 26: 14-19) Isaiah 29:6-18 (2 Nephi 27:2-6, 25-29) Isaiah 29:13-23 (2 Nephi 27:25-35) Isaiah 52:1-3 (3 Nephi 20:36-38; note v. 39) Isaiah 52:7-10 (Mosiah 12:21-24; 13:12-24)	Isaiah 52:11-15 (3 Nephi 20: 41-45) Isaiah 52:8-10 (3 Nephi 16:18-20) Micah 4:12-13 (3 Nephi 20:18-19) Micah 5:8-14, 15 (3 Nephi 21:12-18, 21) Matthew 3:2 (Helaman 5:32) Matthew 3:10 (Alma 5:52) Acts 3:23 (1 Nephi 22:20)

There are other Biblical verses interwoven into the text here and there. These passages are often reworded and blended into the text to the point that they can be thought of as paraphrases. It is not possible to determine what might be a variant of the KJV text and what might be simply due to the BoM composition into which the paraphrase has been inserted.

The Distribution of the Variants

The process of identifying the *Book of Mormon* variant readings in the longest Biblical inclusions revealed that they vary in importance. Moreover, they did not occur randomly. The BoM translation is said to have come from God. Therefore, the claim that the Biblical passages were written in “reformed Egyptian” on the gold plates is irrelevant: the translation is of divine origin and would be a revelation of the best English wording of the original text. For Isaiah, that would be his Hebrew composition. A *Book of Mormon* variant that simply changes the spelling of an English word does not imply any difference between the King James wording and Isaiah’s original text. A variant that adds a phrase of several or many words does imply that the underlying Hebrew text had this phrase, which is missing in the King James text. These are extreme cases; other variants may or may not imply a discrepancy between the original text and the King James.

To study their distribution, I first divided the variants into the following categories:

I (first order): variants that presuppose at least some sort of difference in the source document (i.e., the wording of the original text required this change).

Ia: first order variants consisting of at least three words.

III (third order): variants that are totally English-language based, and do not raise the presumption of a difference in the underlying text, mostly very minor changes.

II (second order): those that cannot be readily assigned to either order one or three.

The four largest texts listed above were selected for analysis since they are long enough to develop a distribution pattern that can be meaningfully analyzed. The numerical results are found in the following table. I then graphed out the variants according to the categories, as found in Figure 1, below.

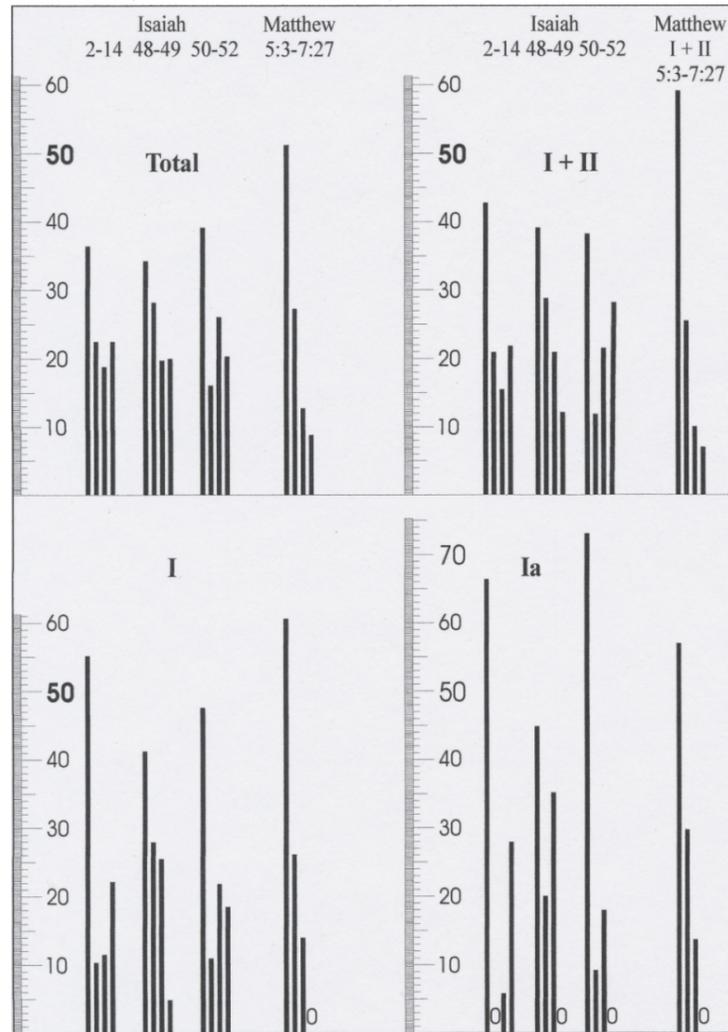
Table 10. Distribution of *Book of Mormon* Variants

Orders: I, Ia, II & III Quarters: 1, 2, 3, 4										
Ia: order I variants that exceed three words in length										
Passage	Group	Total	Frequency				Per Cent			
			1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Isaiah 2:1 to 14:32	Total	374	136	84	70	84	36.4	22.5	18.7	22.5
	III	183	54	44	42	43	29.5	24.0	23.0	23.5
	II	124	45	33	20	26	36.3	26.6	16.1	21.0
	I+II	191	82	40	28	41	42.9	20.9	14.7	21.5
	I	67	37	7	8	15	55.2	10.4	11.9	22.4
	Ia	18	12	0	1	5	66.7	0.0	5.6	27.8
Isaiah 48:1 to 49:26	Total	141	48	40	29	28	34.0	28.4	20.6	19.9
	III	64	18	18	13	15	28.1	28.1	20.3	23.4
	II	38	14	11	6	7	36.8	28.9	15.8	18.4
	I+II	77	30	22	16	9	39.0	28.6	20.8	11.7
	I	39	16	11	10	2	41.0	28.2	25.6	5.1
	Ia	20	9	4	7	0	45.0	20.0	35.0	0.0
Isaiah 50:1 to 52:2	Total	113	44	18	29	22	38.9	15.9	25.7	19.5
	III	55	22	11	16	6	40.0	20.0	29.1	10.9
	II	31	9	4	7	11	29.0	12.9	22.6	35.5
	I + II	58	22	7	13	16	37.9	12.1	22.4	27.6
	I	27	13	3	6	5	48.1	11.1	22.2	18.5
	Ia	11	8	1	2	0	72.7	9.1	18.2	0.0
Matthew 5:3 to 7:27	Total	176	89	48	23	16	50.6	27.3	13.1	9.1
	III	74	29	23	13	9	39.2	31.1	17.6	12.2
	II	36	20	8	1	7	55.6	22.2	2.8	19.4
	I + II	102	60	25	10	7	58.8	24.5	9.8	6.9
	I	66	40	17	9	0	60.6	25.8	13.6	0.0
	Ia	37	21	11	5	0	56.8	29.7	13.5	0.0

The most obvious observation is that it is always the first quarter of a passage that has the most variants. The probability of this happening, if the distribution should be expected to be random, is a very simple calculation, expressed mathematically as $.25 \times .25 \times .25 \times .25 =$

.00390625, or only four chances in a thousand.¹ Note that this distribution feature becomes more acute with the more serious variants and that in the case of the Sermon on the Mount the variants in the first quarter outnumber those in the last three quarters combined.

Figure 1. Distribution of *Book of Mormon* Variants²
(Percent in Each Quarter)



¹ Based on A. Chris Eccel, *An Analysis of the Distribution of the BOM Variants* (Chicago: unpublished paper, 1972).

² Eccel, *An Analysis of the Distribution of the BOM Variants*.

The explanation for this distribution is equally obvious. Changes were made for the purpose of calming suspicions regarding the use of the King James Version. Making these changes was both tedious and time-consuming. Once it was thought that the reader had accepted the passage as normal, it was no longer necessary to make as many changes. The process seems to be governed either by a time-efficiency principle, a laziness principle or both. In either case, this pattern is not consistent with the claim that the variants occur because the Bible had been changed (cf. 1 Nephi 13:24-29), and that the *Book of Mormon* is correcting the King James in accordance with the original text divinely revealed in the process of translating the gold plates.

And upon all the ships of the sea

Having a B.A. in Classics (Greek and Latin) and an M.A. in the Semitic languages, I found the study of *Book of Mormon* variants to be especially fascinating, although the research was long and tedious. I not only used the standard critical editions for the Bible (Rudolf Kittel's *Biblia Hebraica*, Alfred Rahlfs' Greek *Septuaginta*, Eberhard Nestle's *Novum Testamentum Graece*, and Alberto Colunga & Laurentio Turrado's *Biblia Sacra iuxta Vulgatam Clementinam*), but also the principal editions of the Old and New Testaments in Aramaic, Coptic, Ethiopic, pre-Vulgate (Italic) Latin and Arabic.³ Most of these editions are actually rendered unnecessary by the use of the critical editions.

We do not have Isaiah's original manuscript, or a copy of it. What actually exists is a number of ancient Isaiah manuscripts in Hebrew, and these have differences among them, variant readings. An editor, such as Kittel, selects the manuscript that he considers to be the most reliable as his base text. He then compares it with every other source, not only the other Hebrew manuscripts, but Aramaic, Greek, Latin, Coptic and Ethiopic. At times he will decide that a reading in another Hebrew manuscript is more probable than the reading in his base edition, and will make the substitution. When he does, he lists what his base edition originally said as a footnote, as a variant. When he decides in favor of his base edition, the variant from the other manuscript is listed as a footnote as well. In the end, he produces his edition, called a recension, that is thought to be an improvement over the base manuscript, but in the footnotes (critical apparatus) he lists all other readings from all the

³ These are found in Bibliography 1 of *Mormon Genesis*, first edition.

manuscripts used that could reasonably be important. In this manner, he produces a resource that provides the user all significant evidence from all ancient manuscripts. So no one is required to accept Kittel's decisions. Scholars are able to examine the other possibilities listed in the critical apparatus.

Now, let us consider the Mormon apologists' *pièce de résistance*:⁴

Isaiah 2:16	2 Nephi 12:16	Greek Septuagint
And upon all the ships of Tarshish,	and upon all the ships of Tarshish	And upon all the ships of the sea
	And upon all the ships of the sea	
and upon all pleasant pictures.	and upon all pleasant pictures	And upon every sight of ships of beauty

Defenders of the *Book of Mormon* have been delighted to find that the Greek Septuagint has a phrase that the *Book of Mormon* added: "And upon all the ships of the sea." Joseph Smith, a farmer's son, knew no Greek, and did not have access to the Greek text. This can only be explained, they say, by the fact that the *Book of Mormon* text is a divine translation of Isaiah's original, which must have had this phrase.

For our analysis, first, note the Biblical context is using a style called *parallelismus membrorum* (parallel members). The larger passage is in Isaiah 2:12-17, where the first member is given on the left, and its parallel is to its right:

12	For the day of the Lord of hosts shall be upon	
	every one that is proud and lofty	and upon every one that is lifted up and he shall be made low:
13	And upon all the cedars of Lebanon that are high and lifted up	and upon all the oaks of Bāshan
14	And upon all the high mountains	and upon all the hills that are lifted up
15	And upon every high tower	and upon every fenced wall
16	And upon all the ships of Tarshish	and upon all pleasant pictures
17	And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down	and the haughtiness of men shall be made low
	and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day.	

⁴ Sidney B. Sperry, *Our Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1950), 172-73. John Tvedtnes, "Isaiah Variants in the *Book of Mormon*" (1984; transcript accessed on 12/04/2015, at <http://www.publications.mi.byu.edu/people/john-a-tvedtnes/>).

The parallelism is partly obscured by the fact that a single word or two words in Hebrew can be best translated by a clause in English. Allowing for that, the parallelism is in the paired items: *ones proud and lofty* parallel with *ones lifted up*; *cedars of Lebanon* parallel with *oaks of Bāshan*; *high mountains* parallel with *lifted up hills*; *high tower* parallel with *fenced wall*; *ships of Tarshish* parallel with *pleasant pictures*; and *loftiness of man* parallel with *haughtiness of men*. The parallelism of verse 16 is also obscured by a KJ mistranslation. Instead of “pleasant pictures,” the translation should be “ships of delight (or pleasant ships).” See Table 9.

The addition of a member in the *Book of Mormon* version of verse 16, increasing the members from two to three, violates this parallelism. This alone makes it improbable.

Furthermore, while the *Book of Mormon* adds the phrase, “and upon all the ships of the sea,” the Greek does not; rather, it translates Tarshish as meaning “of the sea.” So the Greek does not provide support.

The Alexandrian translator, a native speaker of Greek, Hebrew then being already a dead language, knew that Tarshish was a foreign word. He could treat it as a proper name, possibly an unknown toponym as others had done, or he could try to figure out what language it came from, and thereby its meaning. To understand his situation, we must bear in mind these characteristics of Hebrew writing in his day:

1. For the most part, only the consonants were written, although three characters came to do double duty (*matres lectionis*). Initially, *aleph* (א, transliterated as *ʾ*) was used for the glottal stop (like the pronunciation of *t* in bottle [boʹl] in cockney English), but came also to indicate a long *ā* vowel; *waw* (ו, transliterated as *w*) was used to indicate *w* but came also to indicate a long *ū* vowel; and *yōd* (י, transliterated as *y*) was used to indicate *y* but came to also indicate a long *ī* vowel (pronounced like *e* as in ‘delete’) or a long *ē* vowel (pronounced like *a* as in ‘snake’).
2. Double consonants were not indicated, so *s* could be one *s* or two.
3. The Hebrew alphabet, borrowed from Aramaic, did not have characters for all the Hebrew sounds in use at the time. One example is *t* (ת), which could represent either *t* or *th* (as in thin).
4. Hebrew has an “extra” sibilant. Sibilants are consonants with a bit of a whistling sound (sibilant being Latin for hissing or whistling). These are:

ש	<i>sh</i> (later written with a dot over the right-hand “prong”)
ס	<i>S</i>
ז	<i>Z</i>

ש a sound that is today unknown, and which came to be pronounced like *s* as a matter of convenience (later written with a dot over the left-hand “prong”)

5. Ever since the conquest of Alexander the Great, or even earlier, Greek words had been entering into Hebrew, and when they did, there was often a bit of distortion, much like foreign words adopted by English. One possible source of distortion was the common sound shift, *l/r*. This is because the *r* was pronounced by the end of the tongue, in roughly the same position as *l*. This correspondence is also epigraphically possible since a badly made Hebrew *r* can look like a Hebrew *l*.

The Hebrew word Tarshish is ש י ש ר ת. It is written right to left. Changing the characters to Greek order (the same as English order), and applying the possibilities listed above, we have:

Hebrew letters:	ת	vowel	ר	vowel	ש	י	ש
Possible sounds:	<i>t/th</i>		<i>r/l</i>		<i>s/sh</i>	<i>ī/ē</i>	<i>s/sh</i>

The Greek speaking Jewish translator would know that others had simply transliterated Tarshish as Θαρσις (Tharsis, an unknown place name). He however, spotted a Greek word, which he settled on as the best rendition:

Hebrew letters:	ת		ר		ש	י	ש
Greek letters:	Θ	α	λ	α	σ	η	σ/ς
English letters:	<i>th</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>l</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>s</i>	<i>ē</i>	<i>s</i>

So, the word is Θαλασσης (*thalassēs*). Θαλασσα (*thalassa*) means sea, and the *-ης* ending is genitive, like our apostrophe *s*. Just as “Bob’s book” means “the book of Bob,” so *thalassa* with the ending *-ēs* means “of the sea.” For our Hellenistic translator, the presence of what can pass for a Greek genitive ending may have promoted his translation from “highly probable” to “quite certain.” A ship “of the sea” may have been a vessel for the open sea, bringing treasures from afar.

By translating Tarshish as “of the sea” (rather than a totally unknown place name) he got a meaningful phrase, “all the ships of the sea.” He did not add this phrase; he just translated “Tarshish,” at least to his satisfaction. His version is totally faithful to the Hebrew original, which was transliterated into English letters by the King James translation. The icing on the cake is the fact that it is a nice parallel to “all pleasant ships,” the correct translation instead of “all pleasant pictures.” The *Book of Mormon* authors, by contrast, added a whole new

element, violating the parallelism in the context, and finding no support at all, in any ancient manuscript, neither in the Greek as an additional member, nor in language versions translated from the Greek. In the BoM, “all the ships of the sea” is nothing more than a common English phrase suggested to the BoM authors by the context.

Examples of Variant Analysis

Before proceeding further, a word about Hebrew. The Semitic languages are what I call “Me Tarzan, you Jane” languages. That is to say, Hebrew does not use the verb “to be” unless it is needed. So “He is David” is “He David”, (*Hū Dawīd*, where the *w* is pronounced *v* in later Hebrew). The King James translators were determined to be as literal as possible, and when they had to add a word to make good English, such as the verb *is* in this example, they wrote it in italics. It is important to note that *Book of Mormon* variants often occur where one finds italicized words or phrases. It is clear that the authors thought that italics were a sign that there is something a bit odd here, so it is a good place to throw in a variant. This phenomenon will be evidenced here and there throughout the remainder of this presentation, and the portion of the study found in Appendix 1.

The original language of the Old Testament books is Hebrew (except, primarily, for the stories of Daniel, and part of Ezra, which were originally in Aramaic). The original language of the New Testament is Greek. With respect to the biblical passages in the *Book of Mormon*, all other language sources are translations. The Greek Septuagint is translated from the Hebrew, as is the Aramaic. But the Ethiopic, Coptic and Arabic texts are mostly translations of the Septuagint, and so are translations of translations. Therefore, these are not direct evidence for the Hebrew. Scholars use them to evaluate variant readings in the Septuagint. Unless one is faced with two or more variant readings for the same word or phrase in Hebrew for the Old Testament, or in Greek for the New Testament, the Hebrew text trumps all translations of the OT, and the Greek text trumps all translations of the NT. Even so, a perusal of “Bibliography 1” in the first edition of *Mormon Genesis* will show that every language tradition has been extensively examined.

To start off, an interesting variant is Exodus 20:11: “For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them *is*, and rested the seventh day:” Incredibly, the *Book of Mormon* omits “and rested the seventh day.” All versions have this clause, but there is a note in one critical apparatus indicating that only one Arabic manuscript

omitted it.⁵ So, is there a manuscript that supports this huge omission? Indeed, there is. But effectively, there is absolutely no support for it.

Isaiah 53:9 has a variant: “violence” (KJ) versus “evil” (BoM). The Hebrew uses a noun that means violent treatment, whereas the Greek uses the noun *anomia*, which essentially refers to unlawful behavior, transgression. The *Book of Mormon* receives no support here.

Matthew 5:36 has: “white or black” (KJ) versus “black or white” (BoM). The Greek original agrees with the KJ, while the Syriac translation of the Greek agrees with the BoM. Greek trumps Syriac; furthermore, this is just a simple change in order, with no change in meaning.

Isaiah 10:23 has the phrase “in the midst of all the land” where the *Book of Mormon* omits “midst of.” The meaning is the same. The omission occurs also in Greek, Syriac, Latin and Arabic manuscripts. This is an example of a change that better fits a language into which the text is being translated. Hebrew rules.

In Isaiah 9:3 “Thou hast multiplied the nation *and* not increased the joy,” “not” was deleted (2 Nephi 19:3). In a number of Hebrew manuscripts, “the nation and not” is absent, producing “Thou hast multiplied; Thou hast increased the joy.” In a sense, one can say that “not” was deleted, but the change is more than that. In Isaiah 29:17 “*Is* it not yet a very little while, and Lebanon shall be turned into a fruitful field,” “not” is also deleted, a change that finds some non-Hebrew manuscript agreement, but the change has only slight difference in meaning, and Isaiah 29 is not quoted word-for-word, but has been rewritten into part of a preachment. These verses are of no significance.

In Isaiah 2:21, “glory of his majesty” is changed to “majesty of his glory” with agreement only in the Arabic text of the *Biblia Sacra Polyglotta Complotentia* (London, 1657), for what it is worth.

An interesting rewording, with no meaning change, occurs in Isaiah 2:20 and 2 Nephi 12:20:

In that day a man shall cast his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which they made *each one* for himself to worship... (KJV Isaiah)

In that day a man shall cast his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which he hath made for himself to worship,.. (2 Nephi)

⁵ Robertus Holmes, ed., *Vetus Testamentum Graecum cum Variis Lectionibus*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1798), vol. 1.

In Hebrew, the pronoun is part of the verb (although separate pronouns also exist), and in a couple of Hebrew manuscripts ‘*āsū* (they made) is changed to ‘*āsā* (he made), providing agreement for the 2 Nephi version. The BoM change was a result of the deletion of the italicized words *each one* thereby requiring “he hath made” to make the verb agree with “for himself.”

A similar case is Isaiah 4:3 where “*that he that is* left in Zion, and *he that* remaineth in Jerusalem” is changed to read “they that are left in Zion and remain in Jerusalem” (2 Nephi 14:3). There is no meaning change, but even so, a couple of Coptic manuscripts translate with wording that involves “they that are” similar to the 2 Nephi version. Again, Hebrew trumps Greek, which trumps Coptic, and the italics prompted the *Book of Mormon* variant.

A less than straightforward variant is found respecting Isaiah 50:2, which reads, “their fish stinketh, because *there is* no water, and dieth for thirst.” The BoM reads “I make...their fish to stink because the waters are dried up, and they die of thirst.” The Great Isaiah Scroll reads, “their fish dry up for lack of water and die of thirst.” The Septuagint has the same. For Tvedtnes, the interesting point is that the latter uses the verb “to dry up” as does the BoM. But there is a critical difference. In the BoM, the waters dry up, but in the Scroll and Septuagint, the fish dry up. The confusion seems to derive from the similarity in the two verbs: *ybs̄*, to dry up, and *b’s̄*, to stink. In any case, the BoM reading does not occur in any manuscript.

A word switch occurs in Isaiah 3:1 (“whole stay of bread”) and 2 Nephi 13:1 (“whole staff of bread”). There is no manuscript support for this. The change may have been prompted by the English idea that bread is the staff of life.

A revealing case is the variant in Isaiah 5:30, where “if *one* look” is changed to “if they look.” In this case, after the removal of the italicized word, the authors mistakenly thought that ‘look’ is plural, but in reality it is a subjunctive singular. This grammatical misunderstanding prompted the addition of a plural pronoun for the verb. No meaning change is involved.

We should not omit Isaiah 50:2 (2 Nephi 7:2):

Wherefore, when I came, *was there* no man? when I called, *was there* none to answer? (Isaiah)

Wherefore, when I came there was no man; when I called, *yea, there was* none to answer. (2 Nephi)

This change again turns on King James italicization. But in this case, interrogative is changed to assertion. This change plays on the double meaning of the English word ‘wherefore.’ The Hebrew is unequivocally interrogative (*maddūa*‘), and most of the Septuagint manuscripts as well. But a couple change *ti hoti* to *dioi*, an obvious scribal error that produces the change above (since *h* had ceased to be pronounced in Greek). But the Latin Vulgate, following the Septuagint variant, introduces the verse with *quia*, because, and so agrees with the BoM variant. Here, meaning is involved, but Hebrew trumps Greek, and the majority Greek reading trumps Latin, especially when the Greek variant has an obvious linguistic explanation.

A variant with some support involves Isaiah 48:14, where the BoM adds ‘unto them.’ This prepositional phrase is found in the Septuagint and translations based on it (the Latin Vulgate, Targum Jonathan, Arabic mss, the Syriac Hexapla and Coptic). It is not found in any Hebrew ms, which trumps all else, and has little meaning change.

Another interesting case is Matthew 5:22: “whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment.” 3 Nephi 12:22 says: “whosoever is angry with his brother shall be in danger of his judgment.” The phrase “without a cause” is in some Greek manuscripts, but not all; but ‘his’ in ‘his judgment’ instead of ‘the judgment’ has no support.

The *Book of Mormon* also has variants with itself. Isaiah 52:1, as found in 2 Nephi 8:24, begins “Awake, awake, put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city...” while in Moroni 10:31 we read, “And awake, and arise from the dust, O Jerusalem; yea, and put on thy beautiful garments, O daughter of Zion;...” This complex rewording enjoys no agreement.

Some *Book of Mormon* passages are so reworked that they are difficult to evaluate. For example, 1 Nephi 10:8 (“he is mightier than I, whose shoe’s latchet I am not worthy to unloose”) is a composite of Mark 1:7, Matthew 3:11 and Luke 3:16.

Raising the Bar: The Longer Variants

When the *Book of Mormon* variants reach a certain length, and greater significance, there is no longer room for tortuous interpretation. These variants, some additions and others deletions, are as follows.

Table 11. The Longer *Book of Mormon* Variants

Additions
Isaiah 2:5 (2 Nephi 12:5): <i>yea, come, for ye have all gone astray, every one to his wicked ways</i>
Isaiah 2:11 (2 Nephi 12:11): <i>And it shall come to pass that</i>
Isaiah 2:14 (2 Nephi 12:14): <i>and upon all the nations</i>
Isaiah 2:14 (2 Nephi 12:14): <i>and upon every people</i>
Isaiah 13:22 (2 Nephi 23:22): <i>For I will destroy her speedily; yea, for I will be merciful unto my people, but the wicked shall perish.</i>
Isaiah 14:2 (2 Nephi 24:2): <i>yea, from far unto the ends of the earth; and they shall return to their lands of promise.</i>
Isaiah 14:4 (2 Nephi 24:4): <i>And it shall come to pass in that day</i>
Isaiah 14:11 (2 Nephi 24:4): <i>is not heard</i>
Isaiah 29:6 (2 Nephi 27:2): <i>And when that day shall come</i>
Isaiah 29:4 (2 Nephi 26:15): <i>low in the dust</i>
Isaiah 29:4 (2 Nephi 26:15): <i>for the Lord God will give unto him power, that he may whisper concerning them, even as it were</i>
Isaiah 29:9 (2 Nephi 27:4): <i>all ye that doeth iniquity</i>
Isaiah 29:10 (2 Nephi 27:5): <i>because of your iniquity</i>
Isaiah 29:16 (2 Nephi 27:27): <i>But behold, I will show unto them, saith the Lord of Hosts, that I know all their works</i>
Isaiah 29:17 (2 Nephi 27:28): <i>But behold, saith the Lord of Hosts: I will show unto the children of men that</i>
Isaiah 29:20 (2 Nephi 27:31): <i>assuredly as the Lord liveth they shall see that</i>
Isaiah 48:1 (1 Nephi 20:1): <i>or out of the waters of baptism</i>
Isaiah 48:2 (1 Nephi 20:2): <i>who is the Lord of Hosts</i>
Isaiah 48:3 (1 Nephi 20:3): <i>and they came to pass</i>
Isaiah 48:5 (1 Nephi 20:5): <i>and I showed them for fear</i>
Isaiah 48:7 (1 Nephi 20:7): <i>they were declared unto thee</i>
Isaiah 48:11 (1 Nephi 20:11): <i>I will not suffer</i>
Isaiah 48:14 (1 Nephi 20:14): <i>yea, and he will fulfill his word which he hath declared by them</i>
Isaiah 48:22 (1 Nephi 20:22): <i>And notwithstanding he hath done all this, and greater also</i>
Isaiah 49:1 (1 Nephi 21:1): <i>And again: Hearken, O ye house of Israel, all ye that are broken off and are driven out, because of the wickedness of the pastors of my people; yea, all ye that are broken off, that are scattered abroad, who are of my people, O house of Israel</i>
Isaiah 49:8 (1 Nephi 21:8): <i>O isles of the sea</i>
Isaiah 49:8 (1 Nephi 21:8): <i>my servant</i>
Isaiah 49:12 (1 Nephi 21:12): <i>And then O house of Israel</i>
Isaiah 49:13 (1 Nephi 21:13): <i>for the feet of those who are in the east shall be established</i>
Isaiah 49:13 (1 Nephi 21:13): <i>for they shall be smitten no more</i>
Isaiah 49:14 (1 Nephi 21:14): <i>but he will show that he hath not</i>

Isaiah 50:1 (2 Nephi 7:1): *Yea, for thus saith the Lord: Have I put thee away, or have I cast thee off forever?*

Isaiah 50:1 (2 Nephi 7:1): *Yea, to whom have I sold you?*

Isaiah 50:8 (2 Nephi 7:8): *and I will smite him with the strength of my mouth*

Isaiah 51:7 (2 Nephi 8:7): *I have written*

Isaiah 51:11 (2 Nephi 8:11): *and holiness*

Isaiah 51:20 (2 Nephi 8:20): *save these two*

Isaiah 52:6 (3 Nephi 20:39): *Verily, verily, I say unto you, that*

Isaiah 52:11 (3 Nephi 20:41): *And then shall a cry go forth*

Isaiah 54:4 (3 Nephi 22:4): *and shalt not remember the reproach of thy youth*

Micah 5:8 (3 Nephi 21:12): *my people who are*

Micah 5:10 (3 Nephi 21:14): *Yea, wo be unto the Gentiles except they repent*

Micah 5:15 (3 Nephi 21:21): *them; even as upon*

Matthew 5:3 (3 Nephi 12:3): *who come unto me*

Matthew 5:6 (3 Nephi 12:6): *with the Holy Ghost*

Matthew 5:12 (3 Nephi 12:12): *ye shall have great joy*

Matthew 12:13 (3 Nephi 12:13): *Verily, verily, I say unto you, I give unto*

Matthew 12:14 (3 Nephi 12:14): *Verily, verily, I say unto you, I give unto*

Matthew 5:19 (3 Nephi 12:19): [total change] *And behold, I have given you the law and the commandments of my Father, that ye shall believe in me, and that ye shall repent of your sins, and come unto me with a broken heart and a contrite spirit. Behold, ye have the commandments before you, and the law is fulfilled.*

Matthew 5:20 (3 Nephi 12:20): *Therefore come unto me and be ye saved.*

Matthew 5:20 (3 Nephi 12:20): *ye shall keep my commandments, which I have commanded you at this time*

Matthew 5:21 (3 Nephi 12:21): *and it is also written before you, that*

Matthew 5:23 (3 Nephi 12:23): *shall come unto me, or shall desire to come unto me*

Matthew 5:24 (3 Nephi 12:24): *unto thy brother, and*

Matthew 5:24 (3 Nephi 12:24): *unto me with full purpose of heart, and I will receive you*

Matthew 5:26 (3 Nephi 12:25): *And while ye are in prison can ye pay even one senine? Verily, verily, I say unto you, Nay.*

Matthew 5:29 (3 Nephi 12:27): *Behold, I give unto you a commandment, that ye suffer none of these things to enter into your heart.*

Matthew 5:30 (3 Nephi 12:30): *ye should deny yourselves of these things, wherein ye will take up your cross, than that ye*

Matthew 5:46 (3 Nephi 12:46): *Therefore those things which were of old time, which were under the law, in me are all fulfilled)*

Matthew 5:47 (3 Nephi 12:47): *Old things are done away, and all things have become new.*

Matthew 6:1 (3 Nephi 13:1): *Verily, verily, I say that I would that ye should do alms unto the poor*

Matthew 6:25 (3 Nephi 13:25): *Remember the words which I have spoken. For behold, he are they whom I have chosen to minister unto this people*

Mark 1:7 (1 Nephi 10:8): *among you whom ye know not; and he is*
Acts 3:24 (3 Nephi 20:24): *Verily, I say unto you*
Acts 3:25 (3 Nephi 20:25): *and ye are of the house of Israel*
Acts 3:26 (3 Nephi 20:26): *and this because ye are the children of the covenant*
1 Corinthians 12:8 (Moroni 10:9): *of God, that he may teach*
1 Corinthians 12:8 (Moroni 10:10): *that he may teach*
1 Corinthians 12:9 (Moroni 10:11): *exceeding great*
1 Corinthians 12:10 (Moroni 10:13): [replacing “prophecy”] *that he may prophesy concerning all things*
1 Corinthians 12:10 (Moroni 10:16): *languages and of divers kinds of*

Omissions

Isaiah 5:8 (2 Nephi 15:8): *that lay field to field*
Isaiah 9:4 (2 Nephi 19:4): *as in the day of Midian*
Isaiah 13:8 (2 Nephi 23:8): *they shall be in pain as a woman that travaileth*
Isaiah 29:7 (2 Nephi 27:3): *the multitude of*
Isaiah 29:7 (2 Nephi 27:3): *even all that fight against her and her munition*
Isaiah 48:10 (1 Nephi 20:10): *but not with silver*
Isaiah 49:7 (1 Nephi 21:7): *and the Holy One of Israel, and he shall chose thee*
Isaiah 50:10 (2 Nephi 7:10): *let him trust in the name of the LORD, and stay upon his God.*
Isaiah 51:1 (2 Nephi 8:1): *ye that seek the LORD*
Isaiah 51:2 (2 Nephi 8:2): *and increased him*
Isaiah 51:9 (2 Nephi 8:9): *in the generations of old*
Isaiah 51:15 (2 Nephi 8:15): *that divided the sea*
Isaiah 54:9 (3 Nephi 22:9): *nor rebuke thee*
Micah 5:15 (3 Nephi 21:21): *in anger*
Matthew 3:11 (1 Nephi 10:8): *that cometh after me*
Matthew 5:18 (3 Nephi 12:18): *Till heaven and earth pass away*
Matthew 5:20 (3 Nephi 12:20): *your righteousness shall exceed *the righteousness* of the scribes and Pharisees*
Matthew 5:23 (3 Nephi 12:23): *bring thy gift*
Matthew 5:24 (3 Nephi 12:24): *Leave there thy gift before the altar*
Matthew 5:25 (3 Nephi 12:25): *the adversary deliver to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison*
Matthew 5:27 (3 Nephi 12:27): *Ye have heard that*
Matthew 5:29 (3 Nephi 12:27): *And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of the members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.*
Matthew 5:30 (3 Nephi 12:30): *And if thy right had offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee*
Matthew 5:30 (3 Nephi 12:30): *one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body*
Matthew 5:33 (3 Nephi 12:33): *ye have heard that*
Matthew 5:35 (3 Nephi 12:33): *neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King*

Matthew 5:38 (3 Nephi 12:38): Ye have heard that
Matthew 5:43 (3 Nephi 12:43): Ye have heard that
Matthew 5:45 (3 Nephi 12:45): and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust
Matthew 5:46 (3 Nephi 12:46): For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?
Matthew 6:10 (3 Nephi 13:10): Thy kingdom come
Matthew 6:11 (3 Nephi 13:11): Give us this day our daily bread
Matthew 6:32 (3 Nephi 13:32): (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek)
1 Corinthians 12:5 (Moroni 10:8): but the same Lord
1 Corinthians 12:6 (Moroni 10:8): And there are diversities of operations
1 Corinthians 13:4 (Moroni 7:45): charity vaunteth not itself
1 Corinthians 13:5 (Moroni 7:45): Doth not behave itself unseemly

Note that the addition to Isaiah 2:5 (2 Nephi 12:5: yea, come, for ye have all gone astray, every one to his wicked ways) was created by inserting wording based on the famous Isaiah verse 53:6, “And we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.”

Analyzing Isaiah 13:22, where the BoM adds “For I will destroy her speedily; yea, for I will be merciful unto my people, but the wicked shall perish” (2 Nephi 23:22), Tvedtnes states that the Septuagint adds, “quickly shall it be done, and shall not be delayed” offering some sort of support to the BoM addition. In fact, the Septuagint does not *add* this. It *translates* the KJV clause “and her time is near to come” with “quickly it will come,” and the KJV clause “and her days shall not be prolonged” with “and it shall not be delayed.” Indeed, a Septuagint variant reading has “and her days shall not be drawn out.” The BoM addition finds neither parallel nor support in any version.

Analyzing Isaiah 14:2 where the BoM adds “yea, from far unto the ends of the earth; and they shall return to their lands of promise” (2 Nephi 24:2), Tvedtnes suggests that there is partial support in the Great Isaiah Scroll, which, instead of the KJV phrase “to their place” one finds “to their land and to their place.” The BoM variant has “lands of promise,” but after “to their place,” and after an intervening clause. This is scraping the barrel for lean pickins.

Analyzing Isaiah 48:11 “how should my name be polluted?” where the BoM has “I will not suffer my name to be polluted” (1 Nephi 20:11), Tvedtnes states that there has been a change in the verb, from third person singular to first person singular, with support in the Great Isaiah Scroll, the Septuagint and one Targum. Although this is true of the verb “to pollute,” the change in the BoM is in the verb “to suffer” while “to pollute” is an infinitive. No version agrees with the BoM.

An awkward situation exists with respect to the variant involving Isaiah 51:9, where the BoM omits “in the generations of old” (2 Nephi 8:9). Tvedtnes states that some Hebrew mss omit “generations” providing partial support. No Hebrew manuscript omits it according to Kittel’s *Biblia Hebraica* or *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*, or any other source that I have been able to examine.

Kennicott does have variant spellings for “generations” (*drt/drwt*, both plural of *dwr*).

These larger, and significantly more substantive variants find no agreement in any ancient manuscript. Sperry and Tvedtnes were of course aware of these much more substantial variants. Their rationale for themselves to ignore them, as well as others, was to assert that these passages are BoM paraphrases, and not taken from the Isaiah of the Brass Plates. On the contrary, they cannot be explained as being simply scribal glosses, explanatory insertions, since the *Book of Mormon* version is not supposed to be a translation of a text produced by a scribal tradition, but Isaiah’s text translated by the power of God. As we have seen in the case of the four long Isaiah inclusions, it is clearly stated that Nephi is simply reading from the Brass Plates. All of the inclusions are commented upon separately, following the reading. The claim that these longer variants are Nephi’s glosses is nothing more than a tacit admission that LDS apologetics can do nothing with them. Furthermore, the gloss argument cannot apply to the nearly forty omissions.

BoM Isaiah Fails to Correct King James Mistranslations

The King James translation was begun in 1604 and completed in 1611. Several teams (companies) produced it. The First Oxford Company translated from Isaiah to Malachi. They were John Harding (Professor of Hebrew at Oxford; died in 1610), John Rainolds (Reynolds; 1549-1607; a Greek scholar, educator and Puritan protagonist), Thomas Holland (1539-1612; Calvinist scholar and theologian), Richard Kilby (1560-1620; Regius Professor of Hebrew, responsible for translating the latter part of the Old Testament), Miles Smith (1554-1624; Calvinist scholar, accomplished in the Biblical languages), Richard Brett (1567-1637; clergyman and student of Latin, Greek, Aramaic, Arabic, Hebrew and Ge’ez), Daniel Fairchough (1582-1645; a chaplain and theological disputant, especially in debates against the Jesuits) and William Thorne (1569?-1630; a chaplain and orientalist who had been Regius Professor of Hebrew at Oxford). The translation of the Old Testament was based primarily on the Masoretic text of *The Second Rabbinic Bible*, edited by Jacob Ben Chayyim and printed by Daniel Bloomberg in 1525, but for some passages not present in this edition, recourse was had to *First Rabbinic Bible* edited by Felix Praetensis in 1517-18.

The lay believer often assumes that the KJV translation is so good that one can argue from it, word for word, as though it were the Hebrew original. In fact, there are many problems in the translation. The

following table presents some of the mistranslations in the book of Isaiah, and compares them with the Jewish Aramaic Targum translation and the Septuagint Greek translation. One must bear in mind that the Hebrew is the original and trumps all else. The translations are important only when they can shed light on Hebrew words or phrases that are still poorly understood, especially the *hapax legomena*. At times, both the Aramaic and Greek indulge in a bit of translator's license, and even some exegesis (theological interpretation). The Aramaic in particular seems to be concerned to say what the reader should understand Isaiah to have meant, rather than word for word what he actually wrote. The KJ translators used Masoretic Hebrew manuscripts, and also consulted the Greek and Aramaic when found useful.

The Masoretes were a famous family working in Palestine (Tiberias and Jerusalem) and Iraq (Babylon) that was dedicated to preserving the scriptural tradition (*masorah* means "handing down, transmission, tradition," in Aramaic). Their text did not change the consonantal text, but added marks, a form of diacritics, above or below the consonants to indicate vowels (vocalization) and other marks for liturgical intonation. The timeline is approximately the Great Isaiah Scroll (1QIsaa, carbon-14 dated several times with the following results: 335-324 BCE and 202-107 BCE), the Greek Septuagint (possibly as early as late 2nd century BCE), the Aramaic Targum Jonathan (Yonatan, early 1st century CE) and the Masoretic text of the prophets (c. 900 AD). The antiquity of the Great Isaiah scroll is hugely important, as this text confirms the accuracy of the Masoretic text, and shows the great care the rabbis have exercised in passing Isaiah's text down to us. Although it is the best preserved of the Dead Sea Scrolls, it does have some small damaged parts, resulting in occasional lacunae in the text.

The *Book of Mormon* Isaiah inclusions are held to be a divine translation, restoring lost or poorly transmitted scriptures. "...they have taken away from the gospel of the Lamb many parts which are plain and most precious" (1 Nephi 13:26). The BoM text is claimed to differ from the King James Version only when such differences were needed to correct errors in the KJV. These BoM emendations are quite numerous. Therefore, the obvious question is: when the King James translation is wrong, or poor, do the BoM "corrections" correct or improve upon it?

The following table reports some of the KJV mistranslations. There are many more in Appendix 2. The concerned reader may wish to check these against the published literal translations of the Hebrew Masoretic text, Aramaic Targum Jonathan and Greek Septuagint: Jay P. Green, editor & translator, *The Interlinear Bible, Hebrew-Greek-English*;

Lancelot Brenton, *The Septuagint with Apocrypha: Greek and English*; and J. F. Stenning, *The Targum of Isaiah* [Targum Jonathan], Edited with a translation. These may be found in the bibliography. Linguists will find numerous lexical resources in Bibliography 2 of the first edition of the current work. There too, Bibliography 1 has an extensive annotated list of the published texts used in this study. Even though the Greek and Aramaic texts are interesting in their own right, since the original was in Hebrew, the bottom line is: Hebrew rules.

Table 12. Mistranslation in the King James Version of Isaiah

<p>HM: the Hebrew Masoretic text Q: the Great Isaiah Scroll found at Qumron =Q indicates orthographic differences to HM T: the Aramaic Targum Yunatan (Jonathan; Sperber edition) S: the Greek Septuagint (edited by Rahlfs) Editions and Dictionaries are listed in the bibliographies. Transliteration: in keeping with the early date of Isaiah, b, g, d, k, p & t are nt aspirated after vowels.</p>	
Texts at Issue with Chapter & Verse	Translation & Comments
<p>2:16: pictures (in: "pleasant pictures") HM: <i>šakīyōt</i> (=Q) T: <i>kol dā-šāran bā-bīrānyāt šiprā</i> S: <i>πᾶσαν θεῶν πλοίων κάλλους</i></p>	<p>HM: ships (so in prominent lexica; for the KJ version, one must posit a root based on Aramaic) T: on all those dwelling in beautiful palaces S: every appearance of beautiful ships</p>
<p>3:2: the prudent (one) HM: <i>qōsēm</i> (=Q) T: <i>mištāʿēyl</i> S: <i>στοχαστήν</i></p>	<p>HM: the verb means to tell the future, practice divination, and this active participle means a soothsayer or a diviner T: diviner S: diviner</p>
<p>3:18: bravery HM: <i>tipʿeret</i> (=Q) T: <i>tūšbāhāt</i> S: <i>δόξαν</i></p>	<p>HM: the root meaning is glorification, and this word means beauty, glory, ornament T: praise, glory S: glory</p>
<p>4:1: to take away HM: <i>ʿēsōp</i> (=Q) T: <i>kāpōš</i> S: <i>ἄφελε</i></p>	<p>HM: take away! (the form is imperative rather than the infinitive: <i>ke-ʿēsōp/le-ʿēsōp</i>) T: sweep away! (imperative) S: take away! (imperative)</p>
<p>4:5: every dwelling place of mount Zion HM: <i>kol makōn har-šiyōn</i> (=Q) T: <i>kōl miqdaš tūrā dā-šiyōn</i> S: <i>ρᾶς τόπος τοῦ ὄρους Ζιων</i></p>	<p>HM: <i>makōn</i> means "place": "every place of ..." T: every sanctuary of Mount Zion S: every place of Mount Zion</p>

<p>5:15: the mean man shall be brought down, and the mighty man shall be humbled HM: <i>way-yiṣṣah ʿādām way-yiṣpal ʿiṣ</i> (=Q, except Q lacks way-) T: <i>yimʿak ʿanāšā wə-yihlaš təqōp gūbrīn</i> S: <i>καὶ ταπεινωθήσεται ἄνθρωπος καὶ ἀτιμασθήσεται ἄνθρω</i></p>	<p>HM: both ʿādām & ʿiṣ mean "man" or "a man" so that one has "a man shall be bowed low, and another shall be abased"; there is no word in the text to be translated "mean" or "mighty" (words introduced by the KJ translators) T: man shall be debased and the might of men shall grow weak S: man shall be brought low and man shall be dishonored</p>
<p>5:25: their carcasses were torn in the midst of the streets HM: <i>wat-təhī niblātām kas-sūhā bə-qereb hūṣōt</i> (Q reads: <i>w-thyh</i>; no meaning difference) T: <i>wa-hwaʿā nābīlathōn māšuggarā kə-sihūtā bə-gō šūqayā</i> S: <i>ἐγενήθη τὰ θνησιμαῖα αὐτῶν ὡς κοπρία ἐν μέσῳ ὁδοῦ</i></p>	<p>HM: <i>sūhā</i> is a noun probably meaning rubbish, sweepings, or possibly faeces; so that the verse should be "their carcasses are like rubbish in the midst of the streets [for <i>sūhā</i>, note its usage in Psalms 80:16 (80:17 in Kittel) & cf. Arabic <i>suwāh</i>, mire) T: "their corpses were cast out like offal in the midst of the streets" S: "their corpses were like dung in the midst of the street"</p>
<p>5:30: in the heavens thereof HM: <i>ba-ʿarīpeʿhā</i> (=Q) T: <i>min qədām bištā</i> S: <i>ἐν τῇ ἀπορία αὐτῶν</i></p>	<p>HM: "by its [the land's] clouds" unless emended: ʿarīpiyā (in cloud); there is nothing that can mean "heavens" T: "from before the shame [or evil]" S: "in their distress (perplexity)"</p>
<p>6:13: shall be eaten HM: <i>w ə-hāyatā lə-bāʿēr</i> (Q: <i>w-hyyth l-bʿr</i>; no meaning difference) T: <i>w-ihōn lə-šārābā</i> S: <i>ἔσται εἰς προνομίην</i></p>	<p>HM: <i>bāʿēr</i> means "to kindle" and thus ([the tenth that returns] "shall be to kindle") and like the mighty trees shall sow the holy seed (certainly, this tenth will not be eaten!) T: "it will be for burning" (the remnant) S: "it will be for plunder"</p>
<p>8:3 Mahēr-shalal-hash-baz HM: <i>mahēr-shālāl-hāš-baz</i> T: <i>mōhē-lə-mībaz bizzā ul-miʿdē ʿādāʿā</i> S: <i>ταχέως σκύλευσον ὀξέως προνόμευσον</i></p>	<p>HM: Isaiah went into (had intercourse with) the prophetess to produce an oracle son. Yahweh named the son, and his name is the oracle: <i>be quick, take booty, hasten, take plunder</i> T: Hasten to take booty and to carry off the plunder S: swiftly take booty, quickly take plunder</p>

<p>9:5: for every battle of the warrior is with confused noise HM: <i>kī kol səʔōn sōʔēn bə-raʿaš</i> (=Q) T: <i>kol miʿsabbəhōn we-mittanhōn bi-ršaʿ</i> S: <i>ὅτι πᾶσαν στολήν ἐπισυνηγμένην δόλω</i></p>	<p>HM: "for every shoe (boot) of the wearer (marcher) is with noise (tumult, din)"; <i>səʔōn</i> occurs only here in the whole OT but is common in Aramaic (Syriac: <i>səʔūnā</i>, where the verbal root means "to wear a shoe") and Jewish Babylonian Aramaic (<i>səʔnā</i>); while <i>raʿaš</i> means a din or noise (not necessarily "confused") T: "all their taking and giving is with wickedness" (v. Jastrow, p. 777) S: "for every garment gathered by treachery"</p>
<p>10:4: without me HM: <i>biltī</i> (=Q) T: <i>bar min</i> S: <i>τοῦ μὴ</i></p>	<p>HM: "except"; this is a negative or privative particle, often meaning "not" and "lest"; the -<i>î</i> ending is part of the negative particle, and not the first person suffix (as the KJ mistakenly thinks); note that in 48:9 it is rendered "that ... not" T: "outside of" (your land) S: "to not (lest)..." this is part of and completes the previous sentence</p>
<p>10:18: a standardbearer fainteth HM: <i>məsōs nōsēs</i> (=Q) T: <i>təbīr wa-ʿārīq</i> S: <i>ὁ φεύγων ὡς ὁ φεύγων ἀπὸ φλογόσκαιομένης</i></p>	<p>HM: "an invalid pines away (despairs)." <i>nōsēs</i>, a <i>hapax legomenon</i>, was interpreted by the KJ based on <i>nēs</i> (flag) and <i>hitnōsēs</i> (to rally about the flag). Taking <i>nōsēs</i> to mean "standardbearer" is pure KJ guesswork, over against T, S & the lexica. The root <i>nss</i> (<i>nōsēs</i> is the active participle) is found in post-Biblical Hebrew & Jewish Aramaic (<i>nāsīs</i>, grieved), Syriac (<i>nassīs</i>, frail, sick) and Akkadian <i>nasāsu</i> (to lament, bewail). T takes <i>nōsēs</i> from <i>nws</i>, "to flee." <i>məsōs</i> is a better attested root, meaning "to melt, dissolve," and hence "to pine away, despair, become faint." T: "a lame [broken] person and a fugitive"; as if putting "and" between <i>məsōs</i> and <i>nōsēs</i>, (T & S derive from Hebrew <i>nās</i> (<i>nws</i>), to flee S: "the fugitive like one fleeing from burning flame"</p>

<p>10:26: slaughter HM: <i>makkat</i> (=Q)</p> <p>T: <i>maḥḥat</i> S: <i>πληγήν</i></p>	<p>HM: "blow (or defeat)"; the root means to strike; slaughter is a totally different root T: "smiting (blow)" S: "blow"</p>
<p>10:28: carriages HM: <i>kēlā'w</i> (=Q)</p> <p>T: <i>yəmannē' rabbānē' mašrāyātē'h</i> S: <i>σκεύη</i></p>	<p>HM: "his weapons (vessels? baggage?)"; the word primarily means "vessels", bowls, used often of the vessels of the temple, altar, sanctuary or tabernacle, but can mean vessels (ships), equipment, instruments (musical) and weapons T: "he appoints the heads of his camps, troops" S: "equipment"</p>
<p>11:1: a Branch shall grow out of his roots HM: <i>nēšer miš-šorāšā'w yipre</i> (=Q)</p> <p>T: <i>māšihā miḥ-bnē' bānōhī yitrabbē</i> S: <i>ἄνθος ἐκ τῆς ρίζης ἀναθήσεται</i></p>	<p>HM: "a shoot from his roots shall bear fruit (be fruitful)"; <i>yipre</i> comes from the common word for fruit, <i>pari</i>; while the phrase "shall grow" would come from "<i>yiprah</i>" and the two can be easily confused in orthography (but note: Q also has <i>yipre</i>) T: "the Messiah shall be reared from the sons of his sons" S: "a flower shall come up from the root"</p>
<p>11:8: cockatrice HM: <i>šip'ōnī</i> (=Q)</p> <p>T: <i>ḥiwē' ḥurmān</i> S: <i>ἀσπίδων</i></p>	<p>HM: "a poisonous snake"; not specifically identified, while the cockatrice is a mythological serpent or dragon born of a cock's egg with a power to kill with its look (the lore is rich re its physical characteristics, and supernatural powers) T: "poisonous snake" (for <i>ḥurmān</i> [poisonous] v. Dalman, p. 161) S: "asps "</p>
<p>13:12: golden wedge of Ophir HM: <i>ketem 'ōpīr</i> (=Q)</p> <p>T: <i>masannānā dā-'ōpīr</i> S: <i>ὁ λίθος ὁ ἐκ Σουφίρ</i></p>	<p>HM: "gold of Ophir"; no word for wedge here T: "refined [gold] of Ophir" S: "the stone from Souphir"</p>
<p>13:14: roe HM: <i>šabī</i> (=Q)</p> <p>T: <i>ṭabē'</i> S: <i>δορκάδιον</i></p>	<p>HM: "gazelle" T: "gazelle"; possibly also deer S: "fawn" of the gazelle in the Middle East, & deer in Europe</p>

<p>13:21: owls HM: <i>bānōt ya^anā</i> (=Q) T: <i>bānāt na^aāmyāʿn</i> S: <i>σειρῆνες</i></p>	<p>HM: "ostriches"; an unclean animal T: "ostriches" S: "sirens" or rather, demon ghosts of the desert</p>
<p>13:2a: high mountain HM: <i>har nišpe</i> (=Q)</p> <p>T: <i>ʿal karkā yātēʿb šēlēʿwā zəqūpū ʿāā</i> S: <i>ὄρους πεδινού</i></p>	<p>HM: "wind-swept (bare) mountain"; other words from this root mean to clean off, polish off, while a form in later Hebrew means to make smooth, and roots from cognate languages have similar meaning, and never mean "high" (cf. Jewish Aramaic, Samaritan Aramaic, Syriac, Mandaic & Arabic) T: "on the fortified place standing at ease, set up the sign" S: "a mountain of a plain"</p>
<p>13:22: the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses HM: <i>wə-ʿānā ʿīyīm bə-ʾalmānōtāʿw</i> (=Q)</p> <p>T: <i>w-inaššəpūn ḥātōlīn bə-bīrānyāthōn</i> S: <i>ὄνοκένταυροι ἐκεῖ κατοικήσουσιν</i></p>	<p>HM: ""the jackals shall dwell among their widows"; or "the islands shall sing a dirge among their widows; " <i>ʿānā</i> has other meanings (to answer, to be afflicted, to be occupied, preoccupied, to dwell; the KJ version is unjustified T: "and cats are crying in their palaces" S: "donkey-centaurs dwell there"</p>
<p>14:4: golden city HM: <i>madhēbā</i> (Q reads: <i>marhēbā</i>)</p> <p>T: <i>sāp təqōp ḥayyābā</i> S: <i>ἐπιπουδαστής</i></p>	<p>HM: mss. differ, some having <i>madhēbā</i> and Q has <i>marhēbā</i>; <i>madhēba</i> does not mean "golden" in Hebrew (much less golden city), the word for gold being <i>zāhāb</i>, and no "m" preformative from this root exists to read "golden"; while <i>marhēbā</i> comes from a root meaning "to assault, storm, act insolently"; so that we can read with Q: "the insolence (insolent one) has ceased" T: "the strength of the guilty has ceased" S: "compeller"; of labor gang drivers</p>
<p>14:22: son, and nephew HM: <i>nīn wā-neker</i> (=Q) T: <i>bar wə-bar bar</i> S: <i>κατάλειμμα καὶ σπέρμα</i></p>	<p>HM: "offspring and progeny" T: "son and son's son" S: "offspring and seed (progeny)"</p>

<p>14:23: bittern HM: <i>qīppōd</i> (=Q) T: <i>qūppādīn</i> S: <i>ἐχίνους</i></p>	<p>HM: "hedgehog" (earlier *<i>qīnpođ</i> = Arabic <i>qunfuđ</i>, hedgehog) T: "hedgehogs" (Dalman, Levy) S: "hedgehogs"</p>
<p>48:3: from the beginning (also 48:7) HM: <i>mē ʾāz</i> (=Q) T: <i>mīb-bə-kēʿn</i> S: <i>ἔτι</i></p>	<p>HM: "from then , in advance"; note <i>mē-ʾāz</i> is rendered "from that time" in 48:8 T: "from there on"; with the sense of prior time (v. Dalman, p. 201) S: "already"</p>
<p>51:6: abolished HM: <i>tēhāt</i> (=Q) T: <i>u-zkūtī lā titʿakkab</i> S: <i>δικαιοσύνη μου οὐ μὴ ἐκλίπη</i></p>	<p>HM: "to be broken"; this is the passive of a common verb meaning "to break" T: "and my judgment (the judgment in my favor) will not be delayed [var.: broken] " S: "fail"</p>
<p>51:9: Art thou not it HM: <i>h^alō ʾat hī</i> (=Q) T: <i>h^alā bādīlīk</i> S: οὐ σὺ εἶ</p>	<p>HM: "Art thou not she"; ʾat ("thou"), hī ("she") and the verb are feminine (also in 51:10; all referring to Jerusalem) T: "is it not for thy sake" (feminine sing.) S: "Is [it] not thou"; Greek does not indicate gender in verbs or these pronouns</p>
<p>51:15: divided HM: <i>rōga^c</i> (=Q) T: <i>nāzēʿp</i> S: <i>ταράσσω</i></p>	<p>HM: "stirred up"; a number of passages involving the sea and requiring a meaning such as this have brought some lexicographers to separate the verb in these instances from the more common root having to do with calm and quiet T: "rebuke" S: "one who stirs up (troubles)"</p>
<p>51:20: wild bull HM: <i>tō³</i> (Q: <i>tō</i>) T: <i>mīzraqēʿ māsādaw</i> S: <i>σεντλίον ἡμίεφθρον</i></p>	<p>HM: "antelope"; possibly the oryx, or the ibex (a species of wild goat) T: "those thrown into nets" (v. Dalman, p. 248) S: "beet"; both words together "half-boiled beet"</p>

In spite of the fact that the rationale for the changes made in the KJ Isaiah text was to correct it, the BoM text retains all of the KJ mistranslations verbatim, except three, where its version is equally incorrect. In Isaiah 51:9, the KJV says “Art thou not it,” while the BoM says “Art thou not he,” and the Hebrew says “Art thou not she.” In Isaiah 51:15, the KJV says “that divided the sea,” while the Hebrew says “that stirs up the sea” and the BoM omits the clause. In Isaiah 51:17 the KJV says “wrung *them* out,” while the BoM says “wrung out,” and the Hebrew says, “drained [it].” Apart from the fact that “wrung out” is the mistranslation, the BoM does tangentially delete “them,” not present in the Hebrew text, while the KJV has it in italics, which the BoM frequently deletes.

Isaiah 8:3 is a special case. Most Hebrew names have meaning, and they are not usually translated. But the carnal intercourse of Isaiah and the prophetess was to produce an oracle. Yahweh himself speaks, telling Isaiah to name the boy “Hurry, take booty; hasten, take plunder.” This is the text of the divine oracle itself, and the whole purpose of the story. It was a revelation that the enemies of Israel were soon to be defeated, and is usually taken to refer to the expected Messiah, the long-awaited new David. Yahweh only rarely speaks to his prophet, and when he does, his oracle must be translated. Note that it was translated in both the Aramaic Targum Jonathan and the Greek Septuagint.

The passages in the above table are part of a larger study of KJV translation deficiencies in the relevant Isaiah passages. The total included in this study is 108. Table 9 has 30. The remaining 78 can be found in Appendix 2. By far the majority are clear mistranslations, but there are some included that are most probably mistranslations, and a few that are simply very weak. This study has arrived at the following observations:

1. The King James translation is seriously defective.
2. These tables contain numerous opportunities for correction or improvement by a totally or nearly perfect, divine translation of Isaiah.
3. In 105 of 108 cases, the version of Isaiah in the *Book of Mormon* retains the KJV wording *verbatim*. The BoM version introduced some change in only three cases (above), which neither correct a KJV mistranslation, nor improve upon an improbable translation..
4. The BoM Isaiah text has numerous variant readings. These do not find support in the ancient manuscripts. Above all, as many as

they are, they do not correct KJ mistranslations or dubious translations. Not even once.

The division of the Isaiah text into chapters evolved over time. We do not know what this division might have been prior to the Great Isaiah Scroll (Q). The beginning and end points of the three long Book of Isaiah inclusions correspond with the chapter divisions in the King James. These divisions were determined by content, so it is not surprising to find that the divisions in Q largely correspond with those in the KJV, but not altogether. The KJV break between 51:23 and 52:1 does not exist in Q. Having all chapter breaks in agreement with KJV breaks is consistent with a nineteenth century origin for the BoM.

New Testament Intrusions

Old Testament material in the Nephite record is explained by the Brass Plates of Laban, presumably essentially most of the Bible through 1 Kings, along with Isaiah. Passages dating after Lehi's departure from Jerusalem are said to have been given to the Nephites by revelation. Remarkably, these even include New Testament material that appears hundreds of years before Christ, by *Book of Mormon* chronology. Phrases familiar to New England Christians occur throughout. The following table gives some of the passages.⁶

Table 13. Some Pre-Christian NT Passages in the *Book of Mormon*

ye must pray always, and not faint (2 Nephi 32:9)	men ought always to pray, and not to faint (Luke 18:1)
they shall depart "into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels." (Mosiah 26:27)	Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels (Matthew 25:41)
And then shall the righteous shine forth in the kingdom of God. (Alma 40:25)	Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father. (Matthew 13:43)
ye should be steadfast and immovable, always abounding in good works (Mosiah 5:15)	be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the good work of the Lord (1 Corinthians 15:58)
when my mortal shall put on immortality (Enos 1:27)	this mortal must put on immortality (1 Corinthians 15:53)
in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Enos 1:1)	in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4)

⁶ H. Michael Marquardt, *The Rise of Mormonism: 1816-1844: Second Edition, Revised and Enlarged*, (Maitland, FL: Xulon Press, 2013), 104-05.

he that fighteth against Zion, both Jew and Gentile, both bond and free, both male and female, shall perish (2 Nephi 10:16)	There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female (Galatians 3:28)
the Spirit is the same yesterday, today and forever (2 Nephi 2:4)	Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever (Hebrews 13:8)
the righteous...who have endured the crosses of the world, and despised the shame of it (2 Nephi 9:18)	Jesus...endured the cross, despising the shame (Hebrews 12: 2)

New Testament influence can be found in other ways. For example, when Jesus comes to the Nephites, he chooses twelve disciples. One of them is Timothy, a good New Testament name, which, however, happens to be a Greek name. It was only after the conquests of Alexander and the spread of Hellenism in the Middle East that Greek names occurred among the Jews, as can be readily observed in the Old Testament. Timothy should have had a good Nephite or Hebrew name.

These passages were worked over in private, with pen and ink, and display many types of variants. Still, the basic phenomenon is the same: some changes are clearly suggested by similarity between the KJ word and the BoM word. The *Book of Mormon* throughout reflects the linguistic and religious environment of its authors.

New Testament themes are also used. The story of Salome, with the dance of the seven veils, and the head of John the Baptist on a platter, is given new life in the Jaredite Book of Ether. The daughter of the king's son in exile, who is "exceeding fair," says "And now, therefore, let my father send for Akish, the son of Kimnor; and behold, I am fair and I will dance before him, and I will please him, that he will desire me to wife; wherefore if he shall desire of thee that ye shall give unto him me to wife, then shall ye say: I will give her if ye will bring unto me the head of my father, the king." (Ether 8:10)