

Joseph Smith's *Inspired Version* of the Bible

Joseph Smith began work on his *New Translation* of the Bible in 1830. But unlike his other scriptures, it was not published during his lifetime. It was first published by the RLDS church in 1867, although excerpts from it were published by the Mormon church in the *Pearl of Great Price* as early as 1851.

Historical Background

As you will recall from chapter 2, Joseph had submitted his Book of Mormon to the printer in March 1830, and formally organized his new church in April. In June he received a revelation purporting to be a dialogue between God and Moses which had once been a part of the Biblical record, but had since been removed. In this dialogue God tells Moses that he will “raise up another like unto you” to *restore* many such passages to the Bible. This revelation concludes with the following: “And now, Moses, my son, I will speak unto you concerning this earth upon which you stand; and you shall write the things which I shall speak. And in a day when the children of men shall esteem my words as naught and take many of them from the book which you shall write, behold I will raise up another like unto you and they shall be had again among the children of men, among even as many as shall believe.”¹ This revelation was interpreted to mean that Joseph was going to be used to revise portions of the King James Bible. Although Joseph soon began work on this *New Translation*, it did not move along very quickly until Sidney Rigdon appeared on the scene.

In chapter 1 we told of a group of missionaries which were sent from Fayette, New York to western Missouri in the fall of 1830. On their way they stopped near Cleveland, Ohio with the hopes of winning Sidney Rigdon to their new faith. It worked. And almost immediately after his baptism he began working with Joseph on the *New Translation*. While Sidney's only role was to be that of a scribe to Joseph, as Oliver Cowdery and others had been for the Book of Mormon, the actual degree of his involvement is uncertain. It is interesting to note, however, that Sidney had been involved with Alexander Campbell's own “Restoration Movement” over the previous nine years, and had been an official minister with them for the past two years. And in 1827 Campbell himself had published an alternative English translation of the New Testament.² Since Sidney was undoubtedly familiar with Campbell's version of the Bible, we can only speculate about the degree of his input into Joseph Smith's *New Translation*.

1. D&C 22:24.

2. Reid, *Dictionary of Christianity in America*, pp. 214–215; 1005–1008; 1017.

History records that Joseph and Sidney worked together on the *New Translation* for the next three-and-a-half years. During this time Joseph received a number of instructions regarding its translation and printing.³ It was seen as a most significant process, perhaps second only to the Book of Mormon. And when completion of the work was imminent, Joseph even received instructions to build a special house in Kirtland, Ohio for the express purpose of printing the book. “And again, verily I say unto you, The second lot on the south shall be dedicated unto me, for the building of an house unto me, for the work of the printing of the translation of my Scriptures, and all things whatsoever I shall command you.”⁴ Finally, on July 2, 1833 Joseph and Sidney issued a joint statement that the work was complete. “We this day finished the translating of the scriptures, for which we returned gratitude.”⁵

But despite all of this clear instruction, and despite many other publications his church would produce in the next eleven years, Joseph never published this *New Translation*. Upon his murder in 1844, his widow, Emma, became the custodian of the manuscript. Once her son, Joseph Smith III, became president of the RLDS church she relinquished the manuscript for publication, which was successfully completed in 1867. But the reasons why Joseph himself never published the book remain a mystery and this has given rise to much speculation.

Despite Joseph and Sidney’s clear statements to the contrary, the Utah Mormon church has taken the position that Joseph never completed his revision. They point to the fact that he never published it, and to the book’s internal contradictions as evidence that it was left unfinished. And since Joseph was told to not teach those scriptures until he had “received them in full,”⁶ they maintain that it is not appropriate to publish and use the entire book authoritatively, but only for historical interest.⁷

The RLDS church, on the other hand, relied on the statements of Joseph and Sidney, thereby concluding that the book actually was completed, and suitable for publishing. And besides, being able to publish his *New Translation* of the Bible lent additional credibility to their claim of being the real successor to Joseph’s original church. When first published in 1867, this book was titled a *New Translation* of the Bible. Over time it came to be called the *Inspired Translation*, and then later the *Inspired Version*, by which it is known today.

Relationship to the King James Version

Joseph Smith used the King James Version as the base for his *Inspired Version*. As a result, the two versions are very much alike. The chances are that if you picked up an *Inspired Version* and thumbed through it, and read some passages at random, you would most likely think you were reading a King James Version. That is because most of Joseph’s changes were fairly subtle. But there are a handful of places where Joseph inserted sizable additions to the Biblical text. Most of these larger additions were in the book of Genesis with one significant addition in Isaiah.

3. See D&C 34:5a,b; 42:15; 45:11; 73:2a; 87:5a; 91:3a. Later instruction on printing came in April 1834, (D&C 101:10c), and in 1841 (D&C 107:28b).

4. May 1833, D&C 91:3a.

5. T&S 6:802.

6. D&C 42:15.

7. Bruce R. McConkie, “Inspired Version of the Bible,” *Mormon Doctrine*, (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966), pp. 383–385.

We will look at the significance of some of these larger additions below. For those interested in a complete analysis of Joseph's revisions to the Bible, the RLDS church has published a columnar side-by-side comparison of the *Inspired Version* with the King James Version entitled *Joseph Smith's "New Translation" of the Bible* (Independence, MO: Herald Publishing House, 1970). (It should be noted that the only portions included in this book are those which Joseph altered or expanded, it does not include the full text of either the *Inspired Version* or the King James Version.) Selected passages of the *Inspired Version* have been presented in this comparative format and included in Appendix B and D for reference.

Was it Really a "New Translation?"

A number of new Bible translations have been produced since 1900, such as the New American Standard Version (NASB), Revised Standard Version (RSV) and New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) and the New International Version (NIV). These new versions have been produced by going back to the ancient Hebrew and Greek manuscripts and translating them afresh into contemporary English as opposed to the Elizabethan English of 1611 used in the King James Version. Hence, each one is a legitimate translation of ancient Hebrew or Greek into today's English.

Despite its claim of also being a "new translation," Joseph Smith's version cannot rightfully be considered as such. The reason for this is that Joseph quite simply did not translate anything during its production. Virtually the only text he used was the King James Bible itself. Beyond that, the only other contribution came from spiritual impressions, his own vivid imagination or from Sidney Rigdon's theological speculations. In chapter 2 we saw that Joseph produced the Book of Mormon by use of a "seer stone" placed in a hat. First hand witnesses say that the stone would tell him things which he then dictated to scribes. But Joseph and Sidney have given us no such insight to the process by which they produced the *Inspired Version*. The one thing we do know, however, is that it was in no sense a translation.

What Happened to Malachi?

In the last chapter we discussed Joseph Smith's inconsistent use of Malachi in his *Doctrine & Covenants*. There and in chapter 2 we discovered that a spiritual visitor supposedly came to him in 1823. This visitor quoted from the fourth chapter of Malachi "though with a little variation from the way it reads in our Bibles." Joseph recorded the details of this experience in 1838 while writing his official *History of the Church*. These variations affected three verses and substantially altered their meaning. In the last chapter I included a columnar comparison of Malachi 4 as quoted by this spiritual visitor, the King James Version and the three Malachi quotations from Joseph's *Doctrine & Covenants*. This comparison and accompanying discussion are included under the heading *Poor Malachi* in my *Survey of the Doctrine & Covenants*.

In his manuscript for the *Inspired Version*, however, Joseph labeled the book of Esther, Lamentations and seven of the minor prophets all as "*Correct*." These included Obadiah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai and—*Malachi*.⁸ All of this despite the variations brought

8. *Joseph Smith's "New Translation" of the Bible*, (Independence, MO: Herald House, 1970), p. 16.

to his attention in 1823.

If his 1823 experience actually happened, how could Joseph have possibly missed these revisions? After all, he was able to recall them *verbatim* five years later, in 1838. This obvious contradiction calls into question not only the creditability of his *Inspired Version*, but that of his 1823 experience as well.

“Jesus Christ” — in the Old Testament?

In our discussion above on the Book of Mormon, we explained the presence of *anachronisms*, or “things that are out of their proper time.” We explained that one of the anachronisms in the Book of Mormon is the specific identity of Jesus Christ as the Son of God and Savior of the world. This same anachronism is present in the *Inspired Version* as well. The name *Jesus Christ* appears four times in Joseph Smith’s revision of Genesis: 6:53 & 60, 7:57 and 8:11; *Christ* appears once, in Isaiah 29:16. Appropriately, these names are not found at all in the King James Old Testament. Again, since the name *Jesus Christ* comes into English directly from the Greek *Iesous Christos*, there is no possible way it could ever have been a legitimate translation of any Hebrew manuscript. If the equivalent names actually *had* been in a Hebrew manuscript as *Y’shua haMashiach*, they would have come through in English as *Jeshua the Messiah*.

A Survey of Some of the Revisions

As we mentioned above, Joseph’s larger insertions are included in Genesis and Isaiah. I have counted eight of what I consider to be these larger insertions in Genesis chapters 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 14, 50 and Isaiah chapter 29. Joseph’s revisions to Genesis chapters 4 through 7 were also published in the *Pearl of Great Price* which will be discussed next.

Genesis 4. This insertion is a philosophical/theological expansion of the early experience of Adam and Eve. Theological anachronisms are introduced which include the specific identification and delineation of Father, Son and Holy Ghost, animal sacrifice as “a similitude of the sacrifice of the Only Begotten of the Father, which is full of grace and truth” (v. 7), instruction to “call upon God, in the name of the Son” (v. 8) and concepts of redemption through “the Son” who is “the Only Begotten of the Father” (vv. 9, 11).

Genesis 5. Here Joseph substantially enlarges the account of Cain and ascribes to him the title of “Master Mahan” in consequence of his entering into league with Satan to murder Abel and sealing this agreement with a blood oath. This dubious distinction is then handed down to one of his descendants, Lamech, son of Methusael who is next to become “Master Mahan, master of that great secret which was administered unto Cain by Satan.” Cain is thus portrayed as the instigator of a system of “secret combinations” which began to pervade the earth. “Secret combinations” is also a prominent theme running through the Book of Mormon.

The theological anachronisms of chapter 4 are also further embellished by the formal introduction of “the Gospel” as unfolded in the New Testament through belief on God’s “Only Begotten Son” (vv. 43–45).

Genesis 6. The prominent feature of Joseph’s work here is the creation of an imaginary legend of Enoch, the father of Methuselah, which continues throughout chapter 7. It seems clear

that Joseph was relating part of his own experience through this legend, for at one point Enoch asks the Lord “Why is it that I have found favor in thy sight, and am but a lad, and all the people hate me...?” (v. 32). The people similarly begin referring to Enoch as a “seer” (v. 38). These parallels become even more apparent when we see Joseph actually referring to himself as “Enoch” in one of his own revelations (*D&C* 77:1,2).

During the unfolding of this legend of Enoch, the New Testament plan of salvation as described in the previous two chapters is further embellished by the introduction of *Jesus Christ* by name (vv. 53, 60), and by the claim that Christian baptism originated with Adam.

“And [God] also said unto [Adam], If thou wilt, turn unto me and hearken unto my voice, and believe, and repent of all thy transgressions, and be baptized, even in water, in the name of mine Only Begotten Son, who is full of grace and truth, which is Jesus Christ, the only name which shall be given under heaven, whereby salvation shall come unto the children of men; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, asking all things in his name, and whatsoever ye shall ask it shall be given you.

“And it came to pass, when the Lord had spoken with Adam our father, that Adam cried unto the Lord, and he was caught away by the Spirit of the Lord, and was carried down into the water, and was laid under the water, and was brought forth out of the water, and thus he was baptized. And the Spirit of God descended upon him, and thus he was born of the Spirit, and became quickened in the inner man. And he heard a voice out of heaven saying, Thou art baptized with fire and with the Holy Ghost; this is the record of the Father and the Son, from henceforth and for ever; and thou art after the order of him who was without beginning of days or end of years, from all eternity to all eternity. Behold, thou art one in me, a son of God; and thus may all become my sons. Amen.” (vv. 53, 67–71)

In addition to this introduction of Christian baptism, Joseph also portrays the “priesthood” as having been given to Adam (v. 7). It was in this way that Adam was “after the [priesthood] order of him who was without beginning of days or end of years, from all eternity to all eternity” (v. 70). Joseph had already “restored” this priesthood, since “This same priesthood which was in the beginning, shall be in the end of the world also” (v. 7).⁹

Genesis 7. As mentioned above, this chapter is a continuation of the legend of Enoch which began in chapter 6. The RLDS church printed the bulk of this chapter (vv. 1–78) in its *Doctrine and Covenants* in 1864 as section 36. This happened three years before their first published edition of the *Inspired Version* became available. Despite the subsequent publication of the entire *Inspired Version*, this chapter remains as section 36 in their *D&C*.

The combination of chapters 6 and 7, which should be seen as a single unit, is by far the largest of Joseph's insertions into the Bible and arguably the most significant. He added about 49 verses to chapter 6 and about 78 to chapter 7 for a total of about 128 verses. This would amount to perhaps 5 to 6 chapters of conventional length. Needless to say, it contains much important information.

9. Joseph's concept of a “restored priesthood” will be examined in detail in chapters 11–16.

As in chapter 6, Joseph's insertion here revolves completely around the experiences of Enoch. If the legend in chapter 6 was extravagant, in chapter 7 it becomes grandiose. Enoch here becomes larger than life.

“So great was the faith of Enoch, that he led the people of God, and their enemies came to battle against them, and he spake the word of the Lord, and the earth trembled, and the mountains fled, even according to his command. And the rivers of water were turned out of their course, and the roar of lions was heard out of the wilderness. And all nations feared greatly, so powerful was the word of Enoch, and so great was the power of the language which God had given him.

“There also came up a land out of the depths of the sea; and so great was the fear of the enemies of the people of God, that they fled and stood afar off, and went upon the land which came up out of the depths of the sea. And the giants of the land also stood afar off; and there went forth a curse upon all the people which fought against God.” (vv. 15–19)

Keep in mind that Joseph defined himself as a revived Enoch of the last days.

One of the most significant concepts that Joseph developed in this chapter is that Enoch built a city for his followers, coincidentally called “Zion” (v. 25). Because of its righteousness, this city was ultimately “translated” and taken up into heaven. From that point on, many other righteous people were similarly “caught up...into Zion” (v. 34). Just prior to the Lord's return to usher in the millennium, another city of “Zion” would be built on the earth, which would also be called “a New Jerusalem” (v. 70). Upon His second coming, Jesus would bring Enoch's heavenly Zion with Him and join it with the earthly Zion which had been established on the earth (vv. 71–72). This lengthy dissertation provided additional support for the city Joseph himself was trying to build in Missouri. This concept was examined in chapter 3, *Joseph Smith's Concept of Zion and Latter Day Israel*.

A number of other matters are discussed in this chapter which cover the entire course of history. They range from speculations regarding God's creation of the universe and the earth to events surrounding Noah and the flood, the coming of Jesus and the manner of His crucifixion, the tribulation of the last days and the ushering in of the millennium. Joseph also included two defining passages on blacks. The first describes a purported curse of God upon the descendants of Cainan, including “blackness” so that “they were despised among all people” (vv. 9–10). The second passage indicates that not even the mighty Enoch would therefore preach to them, “Enoch continued to call upon all the people, save it were the people of Cainan, to repent” (v. 14).

Genesis 9. Joseph's largest addition to this chapter is verses 21 through 24. There he again confirms the concept of Enoch's Zion returning to earth in the last days.

Genesis 14. Joseph's addition of 16 verses here develops another imaginary legend, this time of Melchizedek. Melchizedek is portrayed as a high priest in the same order as Enoch. Enoch's power and fame are again touted, and confirmation is given that his city of Zion would again come on earth in the last days. This legend of Melchizedek and his high priesthood lent support for Joseph's “restored” priesthood system. The legitimate Biblical role of Melchizedek and his priesthood will be examined in chapter 13.

Genesis 50. Here Joseph Smith apparently became fascinated with another Joseph, the son of Jacob who was sold into slavery. Adding to his fascination was the fact that his own father was named Joseph as well. Now here was something he could work with. He ended up creating a

“chapter of Josephs,” with all three getting into the act.

Joseph added 15 verses to this chapter. His addition portrays the Book of Mormon people as being descendants of Joseph, son of Jacob, “Out of the fruit of [Joseph’s] loins, the Lord God will raise up a righteous branch...[which] shall be broken off, and shall be carried into a far country” (vv. 24–25). A detailed prophecy is also given that an Israelite by the name of Moses would be raised up to deliver the Israelites from their eventual Egyptian slavery, and Aaron is specified as his spokesman (vv. 24, 29, 34–35). But the clear focus of this insertion is the “choice seer.”

Joseph (son of Jacob) is told that from his descendants the Lord would raise up a “choice seer” who would be “called Joseph...after the name of his father” (vv. 27, 33), an unmistakable reference to Joseph Smith and his own father, Joseph, Sr. In so doing Joseph Smith actually wrote himself in the Biblical text. This choice seer would be “esteemed highly” among Joseph’s descendants, and do “a work” for them by “bring[ing] them to the knowledge of the covenants which [God] made with [Joseph’s] fathers” (vv. 27–28). He would be “great like unto [Moses],” and “bring forth [God’s] word unto [Joseph’s descendants]” which shall “*bring my people unto salvation*” (vv. 29–30, 33). His work was to “go forth among all my people, which shall restore them, who are of the house of Israel, in the last days” (v. 32). And he would be invincible. “That seer will I bless, and they that seek to destroy him shall be confounded” (v. 33). This narrative gave Joseph Smith quite a job description.

Finally, verse 31 has Joseph (son of Jacob) prophesying of the writing of the Book of Mormon and its equal footing with the Bible in the last days.

“Wherefore the fruit of thy loins shall write [the Book of Mormon people were reportedly from the tribe of Joseph], and the fruit of the loins of Judah shall write; and that which shall be written by the fruit of thy loins, and also that which shall be written by the fruit of the loins of Judah, shall grow together unto the confounding of false doctrines, and laying down of contentions, and establishing peace among the fruit of thy loins, and bringing them to a knowledge of their fathers in the latter days; and also to the knowledge of my covenants, saith the Lord.”

Isaiah 29. The King James Version of Isaiah 29 has twenty-four verses. Joseph Smith inserted fifteen new verses and altered nearly all the rest. The entire text of Isaiah 29 in Joseph’s *Inspired Version* has been compared side-by-side to the King James Version and included in Appendix B for reference.

Most of Joseph’s revisions to this chapter revolve around Isaiah’s reference to a “sealed book [or scroll]” in the following passage. “For you this whole vision is nothing but words sealed in a scroll. And if you give the scroll to someone who can read, and say to him, ‘Read this, please,’ he will answer, ‘I can’t; it is sealed.’ Or if you give the scroll to someone who cannot read, and say, ‘Read this, please,’ he will answer, ‘I don’t know how to read’ ” (vv. 11–12).

Isaiah’s use of a “sealed book” is an allegory for the prophetic will of God which was soon to be executed upon unrepentant Israel. The content of this “sealed book” is the judgments which had just been described in the first 10 verses of chapter 29. Because of their continued rejection of Him, God had now blinded Israel from even understanding this prophecy of His impending judgment, “The LORD has brought over you a deep sleep: He has sealed your eyes (the prophets);

he has covered your heads (the seers)” (v.10). This impending doom would even be concealed from Israel’s so-called “learned” men.

In opposition to their original meaning, Joseph used these verses 11–12 as a springboard for the creation of an incredibly precise “prophecy” about the coming forth of the Book of Mormon—all after the fact, of course. This would be comparable to coming up with a weather forecast for last week. It would be pretty tough for the forecaster to fail!

Joseph changes Isaiah’s “sealed book” into a portion of another long-lost book of scripture which God would make known at some point in the future. We are not told who wrote the book, it just appears (v. 11). From here on the story follows the Book of Mormon production process quite nicely.¹⁰ The book “shall be delivered unto a man,” Joseph Smith, who “shall deliver the words of the book...unto another,” Oliver Cowdery, with the exception of a sealed portion of the book “but the words that are sealed he shall not deliver” (v. 14). This book was to be “hid from the eyes of the world” with the exception of “three witnesses [who] shall behold it by the power of God” and “a few” others “as seemeth him good” (vv. 17–19).

Joseph Smith revised this next portion to follow the story of Martin Harris’ visit to Professor Anthon *exactly*.

“But, behold, it shall come to pass, that the Lord God shall say unto him to whom he shall deliver the book [Joseph Smith], Take these words which are not sealed and deliver them to another [Martin Harris], that he may show them unto the learned [Professor Anthon], 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 [Martin Harris] shall say, I cannot bring the book for it is sealed. Then shall the learned [Professor Anthon] say, I cannot read it. Wherefore it shall come to pass, that the Lord God will deliver again the book and the words thereof to him that is not learned [Joseph Smith]; 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.” (*Inspired Version*, vv. 20–22)

The account even wraps up with the disappearance of the plates after the Book of Mormon was completed. “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” (v. 24).

In concluding our discussion of Isaiah 29, it is interesting to note that Joseph was careful to insert a warning to anyone who refused to believe his Book of Mormon. “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 woe be unto him that rejecteth the word of God*” (v. 19).

A Final Note. The apostle John also concludes the book of Revelation with a warning, as follows: “I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds

10. The *Book of Mormon* production process is discussed in chapter 2 *Beginnings: Myth and Reality*.

anything to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book. And if anyone takes words away from this book of prophecy, God will take away from him his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book" (Rev. 22:18–19).

When Christians hold this passage up as a defense against Joseph Smith's Inspired Version, RLDS will often point out that John's warning here was meant to apply only to the book of Revelation. And in that they are correct. But the fact is that Joseph altered the book of Revelation as well. His revisions there were not as massive as the ones we have just discussed, but are nonetheless significant. We will look at just one of these revisions in this final part of our survey.

Revelation chapter 12 opens with a most dramatic picture, "a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet and a crown of twelve stars on her head...She gave birth to a son, a male child, who will rule all the nations with an iron scepter. And her child was snatched up to God and to his throne. The woman fled into the desert to a place prepared for her by God, where she might be taken care of for 1,260 days" (vv. 1, 5–6).

While space will not permit a detailed discussion of the symbolism used throughout Revelation, many commentators have concluded that this woman represents the nation of Israel who gave birth to Jesus Christ "who will rule all the nations with an iron scepter" during His millennial reign.¹¹ This view interprets the woman's flight into the wilderness as the literally regathered nation of Israel fleeing her enemies mid-way through the final seven-year tribulation period just before Jesus' second coming. This is consistent with what Jesus said about the end of the age in Matt. 24:15–21. In this passage Jesus confirms the beginning of Israel's flight as "the abomination that causes desolation" as described in Daniel 9:27, 11:31 and 12:11. Since Israel flees her land halfway through this seven-year period God takes care of her in the desert for only the final three and a half years, or 1,260 days.

The next two verses describe a war in heaven between the forces of Michael and those of Satan, "And there was war in heaven, Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven" (Rev. 12:7–8). Here is where Joseph added his new text: "And there was war in heaven; Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought against Michael; And the dragon prevailed not against Michael, *neither the child, nor the woman which was the church of God, who had been delivered of her pains, and brought forth the kingdom of our God and his Christ*" (IV vv.6–7).

Joseph Smith's identification of the woman as "the church of God" and her child as "the kingdom of our God and his Christ" has led his followers into much ill-founded speculation in support of his new church. Once interpreted in this way they reason that the woman is the Christian church which Jesus founded and that the male child represent the children of the Kingdom, or the early Christian church members themselves. They then conclude that there must have been a total Christian apostasy very soon after Jesus' death. After all, the male child (all early Christians) were "snatched up to God and his throne," and the woman (the Christian church itself) was chased into the wilderness: both the Christian church along with all of its members were removed from the earth. Since the Christian church, along with all of its priesthood authority, was removed from the earth, there was absolutely no one left on earth with God-given

11. For example, see George W. Westlake, Jr., *Daniel and Revelation*, (Brussels, Belgium: International Correspondence Institute, 1987), pp. 220–223.

authority to represent Him. They further reason that this condition was to last for a span of “1,260 days,” which they interpret as 1,260 *years*, at which point there would be a restoring of the church to earth again. Looking at historical data relating to the Roman Empire, they then establish a starting point for this global apostasy in the year 570. Moving forward the stated 1,260 years brings them to—*the year 1830, the year Joseph started his church*.¹² In this way they convince themselves that their church was actually prophesied by the apostle John, down to the exact year in which Joseph Smith would be used to restore it.

This was a fairly small insertion on Joseph’s part, but with significant ramifications. And there are many others in the book of Revelation alone. I would call your attention back to the warning of the apostle John which we quoted above. Should we expect to see Joseph in the Holy City which is coming?

12. This whole system, and several others like it, are elaborately laid out in Daniel MacGregor in his *A Marvelous Work and a Wonder: the Gospel Restored*, (Lamoni, Iowa: Herald Publishing House, 1911). This line of scriptural reasoning was very popular in the RLDS church up until recent times—and still is among more “fundamental” groups. But as we discussed in chapter 1, many RLDS leadership have been steadily moving away from many of Joseph Smith’s original claims, and have also backed away from this kind of scriptural reasoning as well.