

# SHOW YOUR SHELF

**A library of questions sitting on the shelf, supplementing faith in the restored gospel. Show your shelf by adding your questions to the list.**

Last updated: September 2021 (Version 3.51)

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- How could Joseph Smith manage to write the Book of Mormon with all its complexity when contemporary critics admitted that he had limited education?
- Or create a book of a reading level around the eleventh grade?
- Doesn't Joseph Smith's ungrammatical 1832 account of the first vision show that he wasn't capable of writing the Book of Mormon himself?
- If Joseph Smith wrote the Book of Mormon, was he just pretending to not know the pronunciation of names that he selected or made up himself?
- If Joseph Smith wrote the Book of Mormon, why was its design and structure a surprise to him?
- If instead, the Book of Mormon was written by someone else with expertise in Hebraisms, Mesoamerica etc., then who was it and what is our evidence?
- Why would someone with expertise in Hebraisms, Mesoamerica etc., anonymously fabricate a long and complex story, then exclusively share it with a farm boy who isn't interested in books?
- If someone else wrote the Book of Mormon, then how did Joseph Smith memorize it before dictating? It's certainly not a short book.
- Isn't it even more impressive that the sentences are so long?
- Shouldn't our starting point be that it's "unlikely" a young man of Joseph Smith's limited education could produce such a lengthy book as a first-time author?
- And even more unlikely because there was no editor?
- If someone else wrote the Book of Mormon, did they also supply golden-looking plates or did Joseph Smith have to source them separately?
- If Joseph Smith did need to source them himself then is it likely he spent potentially 480 hours in a blacksmith shop hammering out the plates?
- And then spent around 450 hours engraving the characters on the Book of Mormon?
- Why has no-one ever come forward as the author?
- Why has no descendent of the author ever come forward now that the church has so much wealth?
- If Joseph Smith knew the Book of Mormon was a hoax, why would he dedicate his whole life for the cause and then die a martyr?
- Wouldn't Joseph Smith's mother be the best person to know if he could have written that Book of Mormon by himself?

- If we follow the evidence, then aren't the alternative explanations of the Book of Mormon only the most plausible on the prior assumption that God does not exist?
- If Joseph Smith created the Book of Mormon through "automatic writing", then where did all the words come from?
- If Joseph Smith wrote the Book of Mormon himself, why make it so long? Excluding Bible quotes it has 258,000 words (compared to 184,000 words in the New Testament). Why wouldn't Joseph just write a much shorter book and take less chances of being exposed?
- If Joseph Smith wrote the Book of Mormon himself, why did he make it so structurally complex rather than a simple collection of books like the Bible?
- How could Joseph Smith write Jacob 5 on his own? Was he an expert in olive horticulture? Most people can't even follow the storyline let alone understand the symbolism and intricate details.
- If the Book of Mormon was a hoax, then wouldn't Joseph Smith have been able to still translate when Martin Harris swapped out the seer stone?
- Why couldn't Joseph Smith translate the Book of Mormon after a quarrel?
- Why did Sally Conrad say that Joseph and Oliver were "exceedingly white and strange" during the translation?
- Why would Joseph Smith create extra work (revelations) for himself during the period of translation?
- Wouldn't Joseph Smith quickly get bored pretending to translate the Book of Mormon day after day? Isn't his persistence evidence that he thought it was a real translation?
- Why are there examples of the imperative request formula (politeness formula) in the Book of Mormon like in Near Eastern epistles?
- Where did Joseph Smith learn the Book of Mormon should include simile courses like in the ancient Near East?
- How did Joseph Smith manage to make Lehi's final words resemble discourses used by dying patriarchs in ancient testamentary literature?
- Did Joseph Smith know that King Benjamin's farewell address in the Book of Mormon resembles ancient Semitic discourse?
- How do we explain Abinadi's use of ancient Near Eastern concepts in his testimony of Christ?
- How did Joseph Smith know to put the title page of the Book of Mormon at the back, rather than the front?

- How did Joseph Smith manage to convince 8 witnesses that the gold plates, which they held, were genuine?
- Why would Joseph Smith take a chance on using witnesses? Wouldn't it be safer to avoid witnesses completely?
- Why did none of the Book of Mormon witnesses recant their testimony?
- Or the unintentional witnesses?
- Didn't the six witnesses who left the church and had personal animus against Joseph Smith have the perfect opportunity to expose him if they wanted to?
- Or any of the witnesses have the perfect excuse when their lives were threatened?
- Why should we dismiss Friar Diego de Landa's observations on the Yucatan as evidence for the Book of Mormon?
- How did Joseph Smith not get confused while dictating the Book of Mormon when the storyline started to include flashbacks within flashbacks?
- Or get confused keeping track of 206 different journeys?
- Is it a coincidence that Uto-Aztec languages share over 1,500 cognates with Semitic languages, in a pattern which correlates well with infusions from Lehi's group and the Mulekites?
- Did Joseph Smith know that none of the 188 names that are unique to the Book of Mormon included consonants that do not exist in Hebrew?
- Or included surnames?
- How did Joseph Smith know to include compound names?
- But not names compounded with the theophoric Baal element?
- How did Joseph Smith know to use patristic names?
- And know of the idiom of "calling" names?
- Wouldn't Joseph Smith have thought it odd to include Greek names in the Book of Mormon such as Timothy?
- Why believe the story of Mahonri Moriancumer is made up?
- Are the names of Lehi's sons completely random?
- Is it surprising that the names beginning "Pa-" are by far the most common type in late Egyptian history, and they sponsor the same institutions and engineer the same intrigues as their Egyptian namesakes did centuries before?
- How did Joseph Smith manage to pick a pair of pendant names for Laman and Lemuel?

- Why did Joseph Smith surprisingly use "Alma" as a male name in the Book of Mormon when it is traditionally female? Is it because it's consistent with ancient texts?
- Or why would Joseph Smith use "Sariah" as a female name?
- How did Joseph Smith manage to maintain such symbolic significance throughout the Book of Mormon regarding the sword of Laban?
- What is our evidence that Joseph Smith had amassed a vast frontier library of alleged sources of the Book of Mormon?
- How would Joseph Smith have afforded the money to borrow books from a library?
- If Joseph Smith copied the Book of Mormon from the View of the Hebrews, why did he use it as evidence for the Book of Mormon?
- Was Joseph Smith pretending to not know Jerusalem had walls around it?
- If Joseph Smith really was pretending to not know Jerusalem had walls around it, then how did he know Jerusalem's relative elevation and the region's topography?
- Did Joseph Smith know that he consistently described going "up" while moving toward Jerusalem, and going "down" while moving away from Jerusalem (exactly as the Hebrews and Egyptians did)?
- Why does 1 Nephi 6 say the pillar of fire "dwelt" on the rock, rather than sat or rested? Is it because the Hebrew verb "yashab" means to dwelt, inhabit or sit?
- Why does Alma 49:22 curiously say that arrows were "thrown"? Is it because the Hebrew verb "yara" means to throw, shoot or cast?
- Where did Joseph Smith learn about the names, relative amounts and functions of ancient weights and measurements?
- Why think it is a coincidence that there is evidence for a great destruction in the land northward at the time of Christ's death?
- How did Joseph Smith know about Christopher Columbus's self-described motivation for voyaging to the Americas, when it was relatively unknown at the time?
- How did Joseph Smith find out about sheum?
- Didn't Martin Harris and Charles Anthon fulfil a biblical prophecy made by Isaiah?
- Why would Joseph Smith say that Ammon cut off arms rather than heads?
- If Joseph Smith wrote the Book of Mormon himself, would we expect it to be so spiritually impactful for millions of people?

- Why does the Book of Mormon contain so many subordinate clauses which wouldn't be expected in English?
- Why do we see a repetition of the definite article throughout the Book of Mormon (like we would expect in Hebrew)?
- Or a repetition of possessive pronouns?
- Or the emphatic pronoun?
- Why are there so many prepositional phrases rather than adverbs in the Book of Mormon (consistent with Hebrew)?
- Why does the Book of Mormon contain examples of nouns missing after numbers (such as "Wherefore, by the words of three, God hath said, I will establish my word")? Did Joseph Smith know this was biblical Hebrew?
- Why does the Book of Mormon contain so many cognates that wouldn't be expected in English?
- Or so many construct states?
- Or compound prepositions?
- Why are there so many conjunctions in the Book of Mormon that we wouldn't expect in English?
- Are we surprised that Professor Haim Rabin, President of the Hebrew Language Academy thinks conjunctions are better illustrated in the Book of Mormon than the Bible?
- Why are there Hebraic conditionals (if/and) in the Book of Mormon?
- If Joseph Smith wrote the Book of Mormon himself, would we expect to see the archaic rhetorical device of enallages?
- Was Joseph Smith aware of all the repetitive resumption in the Book of Mormon (a technique commonly used by biblical authors to interject commentary)?
- Why do we see evidence of antenantiosis in the Book of Mormon?
- Why does the Book of Mormon contain the classical rhetorical device of merismus?
- Why is there gradation in the Book of Mormon just like the Old and New Testaments?
- Or examples of janus parallelism (found in the Hebrew Bible)?
- Would we expect "prophetic perfect" in the Book of Mormon if Joseph Smith wrote it himself?
- Or metalepsis?

- Why would Joseph Smith say that Moroni waved the "rent" of his garment? Could it be because that would make sense in Hebrew?
- How do we account for the Book of Mormon's frequent usage of "that" and "which", rather than "who" or "whom"?
- Did Joseph Smith include colophons in the Book of Mormon because they were used extensively in Egyptian documents?
- If Joseph Smith wrote the Book of Mormon himself, then why are there deep syntactic patterns that match the sixteenth century and are a poor fit for either the English of King James Bible or for eighteenth- and nineteenth-century imitations of biblical style?
- Or unusual word meanings and phrasing that are completely unattested in either Joseph Smith's time or in the eighteenth century, yet can be commonly found in the centuries before that time?
- How did Joseph Smith know about primordial monsters?
- Has anyone completed Hugh Nibley's Book of Mormon challenge yet?
- How did Joseph manage to include so many Hebrew wordplays in the Book of Mormon such as: Abish, Alma, Aminidab, Ammon, Benjamin, Cast out/give place, Enos, Ephraim, Garb of secrecy, Gideon, Hermounts, Iron rod as the word of God, Ishmael, Jared, Jershon, Joseph, Joy/boasting, Judah/Jews, Laman, Mary, Mormon, Moronihah, Mosiah, Nahom, Nephi, Noah, Obscurity and dust, Onidah, Rod/ruler, Sebus, Zarahemla, and Zeezrom?
- How could Joseph Smith know that the word "Rameumptom" has Hebrew roots meaning a high/holy stand?
- How did Joseph Smith know there were "chief marketplaces" in ancient Mesoamerican times?
- Or how did he know there were many prophets in Jerusalem when Lehi was preaching?
- How did Joseph Smith manage to create similarities and dissimilarities in the three accounts of Alma's conversion which are consistent with their having been written by a single individual, but in different settings and at different stages of his life?
- How did Joseph Smith (while dictating) manage to list a lengthy genealogy in Ether 1 and then discuss each person in reverse order throughout the rest of the book?
- How did Joseph Smith know the legal context for a curse of speechlessness?
- Or the punishment for falsely accusing blasphemy?



- Why does Jacob's sermon so closely resemble the ancient Near Eastern covenant/treaty pattern and the ancient Israelite autumn festival?
- If Joseph Smith wrote the Book of Mormon himself, would we expect it to show familiarity with the ancient Israelite Passover tradition but not explicitly name it?
- If Joseph Smith wrote the Book of Mormon, why would he include Nephi killing an unarmed man in the first few pages? Surely this would cause many to immediately reject the book so why include it right at the start?
- Yet how come Joseph Smith knew so much about Exodus 21:13 and Biblical law to make the story legally justifiable?
- If it was a fraud, would we expect the work of Joseph Smith to be one of the most translated and published books ever written?
- How did Joseph Smith know about the Near Eastern custom of chopping down the tree after a hanging?
- How would Joseph Smith have been educated on ancient warfare, including military exemptions?
- Or guerrilla warfare?
- Or total warfare?
- Or watchtowers?
- Or weapons such as cimeters?
- Or the difference between arrows and darts?
- And describing armies in 10,000's?
- Did Joseph Smith guess that there were extensive defensive fortifications used in Mesoamerican warfare?
- Where did Joseph Smith learn to describe armor consistent with patterns in the ancient Near East and Mesoamerica?
- More specifically, how could Joseph Smith guess that ancient Mesoamerican warriors wore heavy clothing as armor?
- Wouldn't it have been easy for Joseph Smith to mistakenly include descriptions of armor consistent with the Bible or Rome (such as helmets)?
- How come the accounts of war in the Book of Mormon occur at the exact seasonal times we would expect?
- Why does the Book of Mormon describe the ferocious Gaddianton robbers as wearing lamb-skin? Would we expect this rich symbolism if Joseph Smith wrote the book himself?

- Why did Joseph Smith choose to include a steel sword in Jerusalem when this was thought to be anachronistic in the 1820's?
- How did Joseph Smith know to only use imprisonment for prisoners to be held temporarily for further examination or trial?
- If Joseph Smith wrote the Book of Mormon himself would we expect to see in 1 Nephi two authentically preexilic religious symbols (Asherah and Wisdom)?
- How was Joseph Smith so educated on Israelite law and justice in the case of Seantum's confession?
- Where did Joseph Smith find the time to worry about the progressing symbolism of fine apparel?
- Or find time to maintain a chronological order of events in different parts of the book, such as Mormon's letter to Moroni?
- How impressive is it that the Book of Mormon phrases "bands of death" and "chains of hell" can't be found in the English translations of the King James Bible, yet they show up in the Bible's underlying Hebrew?
- Was Joseph Smith aware that 3 Nephi 19:24-26 alludes to the priestly blessing in Numbers 6:24–26?
- Would Joseph Smith have realized that the most common name heard in the Egypt of Lehi's day was the most common name heard among the Nephites?
- How did Joseph Smith know that a steel bow would require new arrows?
- Or that steel bows even break?
- Isn't it remarkable that the Book of Mormon introduces roughly 200 names not found in the Bible, with many now attested (such as Gidgiddoni)?
- Or names ending in "-(i)hah" such as Ammonihah found on seals dating to the seventh century BC?
- Isn't it equally remarkable that there are well over 100 named geographical references in the Book of Mormon? Would we expect this if Joseph Smith wrote it all himself?
- How did Joseph Smith manage to include a logically ordered expansion out from Zarahemla?
- What should we do with the evidence from the Popol Vuh?
- Why would Joseph Smith take a chance on Nephi using the "driven snow" description when it was contrary to popular belief that it snows in Israel and Jerusalem?

- Does the Book of Mormon's usage of proskynesis suggest that the author was sensitive to, and intimately familiar with, the nuances of this practice's ancient symbolism?
- Why are the works of Shakespeare, Tolkien, and Rowling used to explain away the Book of Mormon, when none of those authors claimed to dictate their work, use their first draft or that their book was true scripture?
- How was Joseph Smith so meticulous in the usage of sacred numbers such as Lehi's seven tribes?
- How do we explain the Book of Mormon's usage of the number 24?
- Or other symbolic numbers such as 10?
- And the significance of the number 12?
- Why are there no complex numeric forms in the Book of Mormon, like biblical Hebrew?
- How did Joseph Smith know about different types of hand gestures in Mesoamerica?
- Or hand gestures consistent with Near Eastern texts?
- What are we to make of the similarities between Moroni 2-6 and the early Christian document known as the Didache?
- How impressive is it that the four "Kish" names in the Book of Mormon are associated with features of "Kish" from ancient Mesopotamia (kings, conquerors, city-builders, and those who sought power)?
- Why would Joseph Smith, a patriotic American, frame the American revolution in the Book of Mormon as a story of deliverance rather than of resistance?
- How did Joseph Smith manage to use biblical content with such sophistication such as Isaiah and Micah in 3 Nephi?
- Where would Joseph Smith have read about codices in stone boxes?
- Or the use of engraved images in Mesoamerican culture?
- Why think that Book of Mormon ocean crossings are unlikely when new world figurines suggest ancient contact with Egypt?
- How did Joseph Smith know to dictate "Ramath" instead of the usual "Ramah" the Book of Mormon version of Isaiah 10:29?
- Or the additional "it" that does not appear in the Greek or Hebrew texts of Isaiah 48:11?
- Or the absence of "Ariel" in Isaiah 29:7?

- Is it a coincidence that 1 Nephi 7:11 confuses the words "how" and "what" just like in 1 Samuel 12:24?
- Or that 2 Nephi 6:8 and 33:4 confuse "things" and "words"?
- Why would Joseph Smith say that Zedekiah to Christ's birth was 600 years unless the Nephites used the "tun" calendar?
- Would we expect paired tricola in the Book of Mormon if Joseph Smith wrote it himself?
- How does the Book of Mormon manage to be so consistent in its doctrinal message, such as how Nephi formulates a set of principles that informs every major sermon in the rest of the book?
- Would we expect the Book of Mormon to include 68 sermons if Joseph Smith wrote it himself?
- Or 2,000 authorial shifts in the narrative?
- What are the odds that the only bow-wood obtainable in all Arabia only grows in the very region where Nephi's broken bow incident would have occurred?
- Would we expect the large and complex system of government and judges in the Book of Mormon to be so un-American and so far removed from Joseph Smith's own experience?
- If Joseph Smith wrote the Book of Mormon, wouldn't we expect it to be less favorable to kingship like the political climate in early 19th century America?
- Isn't it no longer possible to reserve interest in the Book of Mormon by wondering why no other Ancient Near Eastern book resembles it (Narrative of Zosimus)?
- Why would Joseph Smith take a chance on saying the Jaredites used iron?
- Or silk?
- Or thrones?
- And how did Joseph Smith know how to be specific and detailed as to the ornamentation and costly excess for the thrones, palaces, etc., without going overboard?
- How did Joseph Smith manage to correctly describe ore being "dug up" but brass being "made"?
- Should we think nothing of the pattern of time used in 4 Nephi when nothing is reported to have happened?
- How did Joseph Smith ensure that the Book of Mormon's use of "remember" and "forget" is "extensive, internally consistent, and strikingly similar" - in both frequency and range of meaning - to their use in the Bible?

- Why would Joseph Smith take a chance on saying an ancient book was written on metal plates?
- Do descriptions of the gold plates just coincidentally match materials used in ancient America?
- Would Joseph Smith have known an emphasis on preserving and hiding important texts has roots in the old and new world?
- Is it luck that the destruction of apostate cities is perfectly inline with the law given in Deuteronomy?
- Should we be surprised that the two types of heads used in the Book of Mormon find ancient precedent in Egyptian literary culture and scribal practice?
- Is it a coincidence that a form of communion was practiced in Mesoamerica in which food emblems representing the body of a savior deity were eaten?
- Or that Mesoamerican commanders made appointments for battle on an astrological basis?
- How would Joseph Smith have guessed this if no Indian tribe of the American Northeast had any such detailed astronomical knowledge?
- Did Joseph Smith know that the sealed portion of the gold plates fits within the many ancient traditions of sacred texts which are off limits for the unworthy or uninitiated?
- Should we consider as evidence for the Book of Mormon the fact that it, like other ancient documents, is "doubled, sealed and witnessed"?
- Why would Joseph Smith take the risk in saying that Irreantum means "many waters"?
- If Joseph Smith wrote the Book of Mormon himself, then would we expect even mundane details such as volcanic eruptions to be so detailed and accurate?
- Why is Abinadi's interpretation of Isaiah 52:7 the same as early Jewish and Christian texts which were unknown when the Book of Mormon was published?
- What do we think about the name "Aha" not being known from the Bible or other Hebrew-language sources, but new documents confirming that it was in use long before Lehi's day?
- Why would Joseph Smith go against the trend and say that one of King Zedekiah's sons survived, which has been supported by recent scholarship?

- Would Joseph Smith have known that there would be numerous examples of modified (or reformed) Egyptian characters being used to write non-Egyptian languages, when none of which were known in the 1820's?
- How did Joseph Smith know about a written "language of the fathers" which was not the common language?
- Or that Mesoamerican Indians had writing at all, when none of the Indian tribes known to Joseph Smith had it?
- Or even entire repositories of books?
- And go further by including the different writing systems Mesoamerican cultures used?
- Wouldn't it have been easy for Joseph Smith to mistakenly mention diamonds, rubies, and pearls when referring to "precious stones"?
- Is it just coincidence that Moroni delivered the plates to Joseph Smith during the Feast of Trumpets?
- Why does the Book of Mormon contain examples of plural amplification?
- What are we to make of the Seal of Mulek?
- Is it a coincidence that the Nephite interpreters are so similar to the Urim and Thummin?
- How did Joseph Smith manage to dictate the Book of Mormon whilst including three independent dating systems with remarkable accuracy?
- How did Joseph Smith know to include prayers after eating rather than before?
- Did Joseph Smith know that many ancient Near Eastern texts begin similar to "I, Nephi"?
- How did Joseph Smith get all the types of ancient Israelite sacrifice correct?
- Where would Joseph Smith have learnt about infant baptism in Mesoamerica?
- Is the Book of Ether, with all its unnecessary complexities and multiple source documents, the kind of output we would expect from Joseph Smith's dictation?
- Why is the list of supposed anachronisms in the Book of Mormon continually getting smaller? If it was written by Joseph Smith, wouldn't it look clumsier over time rather than being proved stronger?
- Why would Joseph Smith take a chance on mentioning barley in the Book of Mormon?
- Or bees?
- Or elephants?

- Or eating raw meat?
- Or that there were millions of people living in Mesoamerica?
- Was Laban's "fifty" just a random number or did Joseph Smith know about Old World customs?
- Are all the references to human sacrifices and cannibalism just randomly consistent with ancient practices?
- How did Joseph Smith know there needed to be a three-day journey before Lehi's sacrificial offering?
- Would we expect Joseph Smith to know about the ancient practice of reading out long scriptural texts in a public setting?
- How did Joseph Smith manage to maintain a complex and consistent geography consisting of over 500 references while dictating the Book of Mormon?
- Should we ignore the supporting evidence that the Lachish Letters provide to the Book of Mormon?
- How come Joseph Smith didn't commit a blunder when referring to thieves and robbers?
- Is it coincidence that there are Mesoamerican traditions of darkness and seismic events when Christ died?
- Where did Joseph Smith learn to write such varied forms of chiasmus?
- If Joseph Smith took the time to deliberately include potentially over 430 instances of chiasmus in the Book of Mormon (30 of which are at least 6 levels deep), then why didn't he ensure that someone actually noticed them?
- Why are there Hittite names in the Book of Mormon such as Akish?
- How would Joseph Smith have known about the "sod/mysteries" of God?
- Why think it is a coincidence that ancient Near Eastern traditions (not found in the Bible) agree with the Book of Mormon that a remnant of Joseph's coat survived?
- How are even Nephite and Jaredite courtships in the Book of Mormon so far removed from 19th century American notions of romantic love?
- Would Joseph Smith have known that imagery of planting a tree in your heart has deep Mesoamerican roots (pun intended)?
- Or that the symbol of the tree of life is supported by many other evidences from other ancient Near Eastern cultures, including Mesopotamia and Egypt?
- Where did Joseph Smith find out about execution practices of North and Central American cultures going back to pre-Columbian times?

- How did Joseph Smith know about droughts causing snake infestations?
- Why would Joseph Smith make dictation difficult for himself by including so many editorial promises in the Book of Mormon?
- Would we expect Joseph Smith's first ever book to include editorial previews and summaries?
- If Joseph Smith wrote the Book of Mormon himself, would we expect to see examples of subscriptio in the text?
- Did Joseph Smith take the time to subtly use white/light so consistently and in line with ancient tradition?
- Did Joseph Smith take the time to create Jacob's Decalogue?
- How come the story of crossing the ocean in Ether has such similarities to ancient documents found since the Book of Mormon was published?
- Why would Joseph Smith take a chance in saying that Shiz could walk around beheaded?
- Is it coincidence that the organization of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve (revealed in D&C 107:22-23) follows the same organization now discovered in the Dead Sea Scrolls?
- Why did Joseph Smith take a chance on mentioning the "great spirit" if it was believed to be anachronistic?
- Or take a chance on saying John the apostle didn't die?
- How would Joseph Smith have known about the bitter rivalry between Tyre and Sidon?
- And Lehi's favor towards Sidon?
- Wouldn't Joseph Smith have thought Nephi would consider himself a Jew?
- Did Joseph Smith even realise that the writers of the small plates followed meticulously the instructions of Nephi?
- How did Joseph Smith know there were swine in Mesoamerica?
- Why was the pattern of ritual and belief abruptly terminated in the first century AD, at least in southern Mesoamerica? Is it a coincidence that it corresponds in time, place, and in part in nature to Christ's appearance to the Nephites when he commanded that the observances of the law of Moses cease?
- How did Joseph Smith know about ancient practices regarding preservations of sacred texts?
- Why do other ancient documents support the Book of Mormon's idea that the ancient Joseph prophesied of Moses and Aaron?



- What should we make of the Book of Mormon's interesting use of the word "swallow"?
- Why would Joseph Smith risk mentioning the building of temples outside of Jerusalem before the discovery of the Jewish community at Elephantine?
- How did Joseph Smith know he had to make some passages in the Book of Mormon "wordy"?
- What should we make of Mesoamerican groups reporting that ancestors came to the Americas from across the seas?
- Why would Joseph Smith go to such effort to make realistic ancient items such as the Liahona only for them to disappear?
- Is it by chance that there are meaningful similarities between the stone box containing the Nephite relics, and the Israelite Ark of the Covenant?
- How did Joseph Smith know about ancient calendrical patterns?
- Why does the Book of Mormon mention 40 times the unbiblical phrase "the land of Jerusalem" rather than the Biblical phrase "the city of Jerusalem"? Is it anything to do with the phrase later found in the Amarna Letters and the Dead Sea Scrolls, both found after the Book of Mormon was translated?
- Why does the Book of Mormon use so many English words to describe what could have simply been translated as "the law"? Is it because of Hebrew which uses several words to express different semantic aspects and subtle nuances of our word "law"?
- If Joseph Smith wrote the Book of Mormon himself, would we expect the four Mayan functions of "and it came to pass" to all appear in the text?
- Why are there connections between the ancient alphabet of people in Arabia and that which appears on the Anthon Transcript?
- Would Joseph Smith have known about ancient traditions of shining stones?
- Would we expect Lehi's poetic couplet in 1 Nephi 2:9–10 to match several features of desert poetry used by the ancient Bedouin of Arabia?
- Where did Joseph Smith learn to create other profound examples of ancient Hebrew poetry, such as Ammon's majestic refutation of his brother's accusation of boasting?
- If the Book of Mormon was a product of Joseph Smith, would we expect it to be distinguished from other 19th century religious works by using 101 different names for Christ?
- Why would Joseph Smith include the use of cement in ancient America? If he was trying to win over a 19th century audience, wouldn't he have maintained the status quo?

- Or why would Joseph Smith go even further to say they were “exceedingly expert” in working it?
- How did Joseph Smith know so much about ancient Arabia if there were no library books available to him on the subject?
- How would Joseph Smith know even the basic facts about the exotic modes of social and economic organization that prevailed in Mesoamerican civilization?
- What is the best explanation for the Book of Mormon's claim (backed up by non-biblical Jewish and Samaritan traditions) that Moses was translated?
- Where did Joseph Smith read all about the traditions of ancient coronations?
- How did Joseph Smith know about the “without a cause” issue in 3 Nephi 12:22?
- If Joseph Smith was a clever multilingual researcher, then wouldn't his descriptions of Arabia have been wrong because contemporary expertise of his day was wrong?
- How would Joseph Smith know that a new bow would be a political statement?
- If Joseph Smith wrote the Book of Mormon, wouldn't he have just mentioned Mary by name?
- Would Joseph Smith have known the significance of the word "slippery"?
- Why would Joseph Smith take a risk in using metal plates when it was not known at the time that this was a well-established method of record keeping anciently?
- How easy would it have been for Joseph Smith to make Nephi's description of Laban authentic and realistic?
- If Joseph Smith knew the Book of Mormon was a fraud, why did he and Hyrum in their greatest (and last) hour of need find solace in a book which would brand them as imposters and charlatans until the end of time?
- Why did Joseph Smith pick the place name “Shazer”? Did he know its meaning would fit so well?
- How did Joseph Smith know of the huge cultural impact of Egypt on Israel in 600 BC?
- Where did Joseph Smith learn all about the nature and importance of Jewish oaths?
- Why would Martin Harris immediately agree to fund the Book of Mormon when he returned from showing Charles Anthon characters from the gold plates?

- Is it coincidence that population size and fluctuations in the Book of Mormon resemble patterns of known historical populations?
- Why would Joseph take the risk of saying the plates were buried in a stone box if at the time it would have been considered ridiculous?
- Are there any issues in what Hugh Nibley thinks is the most convincing evidence yet brought forth for the authenticity of the Book of Mormon (the Year-Rite)?
- How did Joseph Smith know about burning cities and killing the inhabitants in ancient Mesoamerica (contradicting old romantic notions of Maya pacifism)?
- And isn't it doubtful that Joseph Smith knew of any examples around him that could serve as a model for the practice of repopulating old or abandoned cities?
- Why did early critics of Joseph Smith consider him a "blockhead" but later critics consider him a "myth maker of prodigious talents"? If the Book of Mormon is a fraud, then which extreme view of Joseph is true?
- Would Joseph Smith have known about the significance of the great and spacious building being prideful and "high" in the air?
- How did Joseph Smith create multi-layered sermons such as Alma in Ammonihah with a repetitive play on remember/forget, a complex example of chiasmus, and references to the words of Lehi and Nephi all in the same verses?
- Why would Joseph Smith take the risk in mentioning a river that continually flows into the Red Sea?
- What are we to make of Nephi covering Lehi's story to compensate for the lost 116 pages?
- Wouldn't Royal Skousen have found something by now to prove the Book of Mormon is a fraud?
- If the Book of Mormon was plagiarized from another book, why didn't anyone flag this up during Joseph Smith's lifetime?
- What are we to make of the correspondences between the Kaqchikel Chronicles and the Book of Mormon?
- Or the Rabinal Achi and the Book of Mormon?
- What should we make of the possible connection between the Jaredites and ceramics in regions of Olmec influence?
- How did Joseph Smith know to use the word "nation" for the Jaredites but not for the Lamanites or Nephites?

- Is the city of Lamanai (an important city "occupied from earliest times" and one of the very few Maya sites for which the ancient name is recorded) a bullseye for the Book of Mormon?
- Wouldn't Joseph Smith only be familiar with kings handing over power when they died or were conquered?
- Why would Joseph Smith attribute the practice of feasting for political purposes (which was unusual for him) to the ancestors of the Indians?
- Do we know of any reason or existing historical model that would have led Joseph Smith to have correctly guessed that the doings of the kings were kept separately from the rest of the history of a people?
- How would Joseph Smith have known about native leaders being incorporated in power structure after subjugation, (if the only model he might conceivably have heard about was the Roman one, which was the opposite of the system used among the Maya and in the Book of Mormon)?
- Or known about hereditary priests (which was the opposite of frontier priests)?
- How likely is it that Joseph Smith would know the importance of belonging to a leading patrilineage, purely from reading the Bible?
- When it appears he probably didn't even have his own Bible until October 1829?
- Or how would Joseph Smith know the importance of tracing one's genealogy to a prominent ancestor (in democratic frontier America in the early 1800's)?
- And that histories were considered political weapons, with winners trying to eliminate the position of rivals by destroying their records?
- Would we expect the Book of Mormon to use the word "seating" to mean accession to political power?
- Or that subservient peoples are said to "possess" the land while ruled by a dominant power?
- Do we know of any contemporary practice or model in Joseph's Smith's world that put such emphasis on priests keeping a careful, written, long-term record of one's ancestors, a record handed down over centuries?
- How would Joseph Smith have guessed that the ancient Mesoamericans had strong elements of Christianity in their religious practices?
- How did Joseph Smith guess that covenants between God and man existed among ancient Mesoamerican Indians when in the conventional Christianity of Joseph's day, the importance of covenants was very much downplayed if not absent altogether?

- Why would Joseph Smith say that the ancient inhabitants of Mesoamerica had fine fabrics, textiles and elaborate clothing when the Indians of Joseph Smith's time and place wore clothing made primarily of animal skins?
- What are we to make of all the people who sincerely claim a witness from the Holy Ghost?
- Is the Narrative of Zosimus just an incredible coincidence?
- Did Joseph Smith pay attention to small details such as descriptions of highways being "cast up"?
- Would Joseph Smith have known that Nephi's garden tower (near a highway leading to a chief market) fits remarkably well into a Mesoamerican setting?
- Or large stones with engravings?
- How did Joseph Smith know about a random oasis in the Arabian peninsula that was believed to be nothing but desert?
- What are we to make of the Biblical verses which the early Saints such as Parley P. Pratt understood to reference the Book of Mormon?
- Was the name of NHM (Nahom) just a lucky guess?
- Or the valley of Lemuel?
- How did Joseph Smith know that Nahom is the only place you can turn eastward on the incense trail?
- Why did Joseph Smith say that Laman and Lemuel beat Nephi and Sam with a rod rather than using their fists? Did he know about the cultural significance of beating with a rod?
- Did Joseph Smith take the time to quote each of the farewell speeches from the small plates in Moroni's "verbal curtain call"?
- How do we explain the fulfilled prophecies written in the Old Testament? Were they all just lucky despite the outrageous odds?
- How seriously should we take all the myths of gods visiting ancient America?
- Weren't the New Testament accounts recorded much sooner than many other ancient historical events (which are assumed to be accurate)?
- How do we explain the evidence of the empty tomb and other minimal facts of the New Testament (that very soon afterwards, Jesus' followers had real experiences that they thought were actual appearances of the risen Jesus, that their lives were transformed as a result, even to the point of being willing to die specifically for their faith in the resurrection message, that these things were taught very early, soon after the crucifixion, that James, Jesus' unbelieving brother, became a Christian due to his own experience that he

thought was the resurrected Christ, that the Christian persecutor Paul also became a believer after a similar experience)?

- Isn't the New Testament too embarrassing to be false?
- What reason do we have to doubt the 30+ miracles that Jesus performed?
- Isn't it true that "One of the most certain facts of history is that Jesus was crucified on orders of the Roman prefect of Judea, Pontius Pilate"?
- Why would Joseph Smith claim to have been visited by so many angels? Such as God the Father and Jesus in the grove, Moroni's first visit at Joseph's home, Moroni's second visit at Joseph's home, Moroni's third visit at Joseph's home, and Moroni's fourth visit outside in the field, Adam, Abraham, Seth, Enoch, Isaac, Jacob, Raphael, Gabriel (Noah), Nephi, Mormon, Alma, the Three Nephites, John the Beloved, and a heavenly messenger. Isn't every claim just one more opportunity to expose him as a fraud?
- Or heard so many voices of angels?
- How about Joseph Smith's visions experienced with other people? Such as the angel with the Book of Mormon – with Oliver Cowdery, Martin Harris and David Whitmer, John the Baptist – with Oliver Cowdery, Peter, James and John – with Oliver Cowdery, Jesus at the Kirtland Temple – with Oliver Cowdery, Moses at the Kirtland Temple – with Oliver Cowdery, Elias at the Kirtland Temple – with Oliver Cowdery, Elijah at the Kirtland Temple – with Oliver Cowdery, Adam and Eve - with Oliver Cowdery and Zebedee Coltrin, the vision of the degrees of glory - with Sidney Rigdon, the plans for the Kirtland temple - with Sidney Rigdon and Frederick G. Williams, John the Beloved - with Oliver Cowdery and others, and Jesus - with Zebedee Coltrin and others. Were they all hallucinating or all lying together?
- Or the visions experienced by others, such as Heber C. Kimball and Orson Hyde's vision of the infernal world?
- How do we explain visions seen by thousands?
- Why think that none of the experiences of the three Nephites are genuine?
- How do we account for the miracles Joseph Smith performed by the power of Christ's priesthood, such as knowing David Whitmer's travels, healing Elsa Johnson's arm, healing the sick in Nauvoo, healing Joseph Smith's father, Angeline Works, the miracle reported by Fanny Stenhouse after her apostasy from the Church, and casting a devil out of Newel Knight?
- Or the miracles experienced or performed by the early Saints, such as Sidney Gilbert not being shot, David Whitmer's fields being ploughed, J. and Margaret Shamp's deaf daughter being healed, Amanda Barnes saving her son, Mary Fielding Smith's ox being healed, Don Carlos and George A. Smith healing the

sick, Elizabeth Crook and the dried meat, Ephraim Hanks's miracles, Ella Jensen called back from the dead, Henry Ballard and the Newbury Weekly News, Louisa Mellor Clark's pie, and the miracle of the quail?

- Why did witnesses remark that Sidney Rigdon was exhausted after seeing the vision of D&C 76 whereas Joseph Smith wasn't? Was it just to make the experience sound more believable?
- Why could no-one else write a revelation for the Doctrine and Covenants like Joseph Smith?
- Was it luck that Dr. Smith (who saved Joseph Smith's leg and potentially his life) was likely the only physician in the United States in 1813 who had the expertise to successfully deal with Joseph Smith's bone disease?
- And was luckily only 5 miles away at the time?
- And his expertise was 100 years ahead of his time?
- Why would someone try to assassinate Joseph Smith shortly before the first vision?
- What were the odds that Joseph Smith's name would be had for good and evil among all nations, kindreds, and tongues, and that it should be both good and evil spoken of among all people?
- Or that the church would fill the earth?
- How did Joseph Smith correctly predict the American Civil War (and many details) nearly 30 years before it happened?
- What reason do we have to doubt the testimony of the twelve apostles relating to the Doctrine and Covenants?
- Why believe it was a lucky guess when Joseph Smith said the Saints would be "driven to the Rocky Mountains...(and) become a mighty people in the midst of the Rocky Mountains"?
- How do we account for the Stephen A. Douglas prophecy?
- Or the 1833 Meteor Storm?
- What are we to make of Joseph Smith's other fulfilled prophecies?
- Would we expect the man responsible for the biggest fraud in history to preach a sermon on forgiveness after being tarred and feathered?
- How did Joseph Smith reveal a code of health in which many benefits did not become clear until the latter part of the twentieth century?
- Why did Joseph Smith's family believe his story? Wouldn't they be the first to see through the lies?

- Why does the Apocalypse of Abraham have so many similarities with the Book of Moses (which was published earlier)?
- How come we also find chiasmus in the Book of Moses?
- And synonymous parallelism?
- As well as synthetic parallelism?
- Or even inverted parallelism?
- If Joseph Smith wrote the Book of Moses himself would we expect to see other Hebraisms such as relative clauses?
- Or compound prepositions?
- And possessive pronouns?
- Like the Book of Mormon, would we expect to see resumptive repetition?
- Or figures of speech such as antenantiosis?
- And litotes?
- And polysyndeton?
- And synecdoche?
- Why didn't Joseph Smith bolster his case for the authenticity of the book of Moses by including the relevant verses about Enoch from Jude (which quote from 1 Enoch)?
- What evidence do we have that Joseph Smith had access to 1 Enoch?
- How did Joseph Smith know that Enoch made "rivers turn from their course"?
- Was it a lucky guess that the Book of Moses claims Enoch was a "lad" at 65?
- Why does the Book of Enoch support the Book of Moses claim that Enoch was given the right to God's throne?
- Why do ancient texts (unavailable to Joseph Smith) agree with the Book of Moses claim that Enoch was clothed in glory?
- How would Joseph Smith have known to mention the "son of man" in the Book of Moses?
- Why do ancient texts translated long after the Book of Moses agree that Enoch wept for the wickedness of mankind?
- Where would Joseph Smith have read that not only Enoch but his whole city were translated?
- How did Joseph Smith know about the wickedness of the gibborim?
- Or the use of the term "wild man"?
- How did Joseph Smith correctly guess Mahijuah/Mahujah?



- Or guess that Mahijah was sent to Enoch?
- Why does 1 Enoch also mention secret combinations just like the Book of Moses?
- Is it luck that the Book of Moses describes Enoch's home as a land of righteousness?
- Or that Enoch's vision occurred by the sea?
- Where did Joseph Smith get the idea that Enoch kept a book of remembrance?
- And that the book put fear into the people?
- And that the wicked people of Enoch's day conceived their children in sin?
- Is it luck that Joseph's Smith account of Enoch ends on a note of hope?
- How did Joseph Smith know of the defeat of the gibborim by Enoch?
- And roaring beasts following the battle?
- And the imprisonment of the gibborim?
- Why are the six characteristic features of the Old Testament narrative call pattern shown in the commissioning of Joseph Smith's Enoch?
- How did Joseph Smith know that Enoch was shown all generations?
- And their doings/deeds?
- How did Joseph Smith know that the Lord's House shall be called Jerusalem?
- Why do other ancient books (translated afterwards) agree with the Book of Moses that Enoch was in possession of Adam's Book?
- Is it a coincidence that the Book of Enoch also claims (like the Book of Moses) that Enoch's Book was to be restored?
- How did Joseph Smith know that Enoch saw the saints arise?
- Did Joseph Smith know that other books also claimed that Enoch saw the return of Zion from Heaven?
- Was it a lucky guess by Joseph Smith that Enoch saw the chains of Satan?
- Why is there a "blatant pun" on the name Moses in the Joseph Smith translation of the Bible, before the Egyptian meaning of Moses's name was known to scholars?
- How would Joseph Smith know of the expression "Behold I"?
- How do we account for the Egyptianisms in the Book of Abraham?
- Or Joseph Smith's correct observations of the facsimiles?

- If Joseph Smith had gotten names in the Book of Abraham from his environment, then why did he choose the name Shulem rather than Shillem?
- How did Joseph Smith know that Abraham wrote a book of scripture if ancient texts supporting this were only discovered later and it is not mentioned anywhere in the Bible?
- Why would Joseph Smith take a chance on disagreeing with creatio ex nihilo?
- Why do ancient texts unavailable to Joseph Smith also claim (like the Book of Abraham does) that Abraham was to be sacrificed?
- And that Abraham was saved by God before being sacrificed?
- How did Joseph Smith know that Terah worshipped idols?
- And that he sought to kill his son, Abraham?
- But that Terah repents afterwards?
- Why do The Book of the Cave of Treasures and the Book of Abraham agree about the pervasive nature of idolatry in Abraham's day?
- And why do The Ancient Conflict of Adam and Eve with Satan and the Book of Abraham agree that children were being sacrificed to idols?
- What should we make of the fact that the Book of Noah supports the Book of Abraham's claim that Abraham had access to sacred records from the patriarchs?
- Why do ancient texts not available to Joseph Smith agree with the Book of Abraham's claim that Abraham received the priesthood and was a High Priest?
- Why does The Story of Abraham our Father from What Appended to Him with Nimrod, agree with the Book of Abraham claim that Abraham preached against his fathers' idolatry?
- How did Joseph Smith know Abraham taught astronomy?
- Why do ninth-century Hebrew documents agree with the Book of Abraham that it was God who taught Abraham astronomy?
- Why do other books support the Book of Abraham's claim that Abraham was desirous to be one who possesses great knowledge?
- Why does the Genesis Apocryphon from the Dead Sea Scrolls (like the Book of Abraham) claim that God is the one who warns Abraham that the Egyptians will want to kill him to get his wife?
- Did Joseph Smith know that other books also claim that God showed Abraham the heavens and those in the premortal existence?

- Why does the midrashic Hebrew text, Tanna debe Eliyahu support the Book of Abraham's claim that Abraham was honored by kings – or on a throne?
- How did Joseph Smith know that Abraham experienced two famines during his life and not just one?
- How did Joseph Smith know about Libnah in the Book of Abraham?
- Or Mahmackrah?
- Or Korash?
- Or know that Abraham possessed the Urim and Thummim?
- Is the meaning of the eye symbol in Figure 3 of Facsimile 2 of the Book of Abraham a lucky guess?
- How did Joseph Smith know about Elkenah?
- Why wouldn't Joseph Smith just agree with the Bible that Abraham was 75 when he went into the land of Canaan?
- How did Joseph Smith correctly give the meaning of "Shinehah" in Abraham 3:13 (a word that applied during a narrow span of about 6 centuries comprising the likely time of Abraham's life)?
- Why are we finding Abraham's name in Egyptian texts, including lion couch scenes?
- Aren't the chances that Joseph Smith made up a fictional, outlandish place (Olishem) that turned out to be accurate in name, time, and location too astronomical even to be considered?
- Joseph Smith's claim that he was a prophet was either truthful, deceitful or delusional. Are there any other options?
- How did Joseph Smith manage to restore ordinances from the early Church (such as baptisms for the dead), when no major religions in Joseph's day believed in this doctrine?
- Or prayer circles?
- Or how did Joseph Smith manage to restore teachings from the early Church such as premortal life?
- And deification?
- Why are many aspects of contemporary Christian theology significantly converging in Joseph Smith's direction?
- Didn't Joseph Smith run for president on a platform to abolish slavery 17 years before the civil war?

- And didn't Utah give women the right to vote 50 years before the right was given nationally?
- Why would Joseph Smith publish revelations chastising him? Doesn't this meet the criterion of embarrassment?
- What should we do with over 150 accounts of Brigham Young's transfiguration of looking and sounding like Joseph Smith at conference in 1844?
- How do we explain the visions of the Latter-day prophets who have seen and spoken with the Savior? Are they lying or deceived?
- What are we to make of the special witnesses of Christ when they testify of Jesus and his divinity?
- Isn't it an enormous burden to carry, in claiming that every single "perception of God" is untrue?
- Isn't it more reasonable to believe that at least one perhaps is an actual experience of something bigger than us?
- If there isn't already something out there "bigger" than us, then isn't humanity likely to go extinct?
- If we trust in our own superhuman potential, then shouldn't we also trust that we have a compassionate creator?
- Isn't it true that "there are very probably civilizations that are superhuman, to the point of being god-like"?
- Aren't the chances that the universe was fine-tuned for life astronomically high?
- If nothingness doesn't scientifically exist, then doesn't that mean there was something before the Big Bang?
- What should we make of the Cambrian explosion?
- Is every single "miracle" just a lucky coincidence or is at least one partly due to something beyond us?
- Why are some of the greatest names in science believers in God?
- Why do "Atheists become emotionally aroused when daring God to do terrible things"?
- How do we explain near-death experiences?
- Isn't theism a good bet?
- Aren't religious people, on balance, happier than nonreligious people?
- And more likely to feel that life has a purpose?
- Aren't there pragmatic reasons for being a Latter-day Saint?

- Like lower cancer rates?
- And lower depression rates?
- Isn't it true that Latter-day Saints tend to live longer than the general population?
- And are the most likely to marry, and have children, and are less likely to divorce?
- And have a higher well-being?
- And are significantly more likely than the population overall to have some college education?
- And even have a "glow"?
- How come Latter-day Saints volunteer as much as seven times more than the average American?
- And donate more money to social causes?
- How come youth with stronger involvement in the Church have lower rates of delinquent and immoral behavior?
- Why think that the shift to home-centered learning before COVID-19 (and church closures) wasn't inspired?
- Or a home-centered children and youth programme before COVID-19?
- Why does statistical analysis show a correlation between higher education and loyalty to Latter-day Saint beliefs? If the gospel was a fraud, wouldn't the scholars and those who are more educated leave first?
- Can there be any valid criticisms of the church?
- Do we even need any evidence that God exists?

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