

# TESTIMONY OF BOB MOORE

I am a witness to the metal plates that are in the possession of Mauricio Berger in Brazil. I saw them when Joseph F. Smith and I visited his home in Caxius Du Sol, Brazil during October 2017. The plates have the appearance of gold and are engraved on both sides with unknown characters. I also saw one interpreter stone, which was broken in two pieces. It, too, had curious characters on it, but much smaller than on the plates. The plates were divided into two sections, one sealed and one unsealed with 66 plates. I do not believe that Mauricio or his associates have the skill or resources to have made either.

Joseph and I returned with the following testimony: that there was no one in the land of Zion whom the Lord could use to bring revelation that would unite the saints; that soon God would bring forth the sealed portion; and that God would both pour His righteousness on those who believed our testimony and unify His people. The artifacts that we saw and held were so spectacular and stunning that they affirmed that testimony. More important, the Holy Spirit confirmed it. I believed this testimony then and still do.

I am also a witness, along with Joseph F. Smith and six others, to the breaking of the seals and the opening of part of the sealed portion in March 2018. It consists of 42 plates. The rest of the plates remained sealed. The cover of the unopened part of the sealed portion is a lustrous and detailed engraving of the heavenly city descending to Jesus on earth in Zion. The experience of opening and seeing the plates was astonishing, so much so that every witness independently affirmed that they must be the plates from which Joseph Smith, Jr. translated the Book of Mormon.

I am disappointed to confess that since the witnesses returned in late March 2018, little or no effort has been made to unite the saints. Instead, attention was given to restructuring the church, something that I cannot endorse. Meanwhile, Mauricio Berger was translating what is now called the Seal Book of Mormon into both Portuguese and English. Only part of the translation was sent for publication.

Joseph F. Smith brought the translation from Brazil about November 1, 2018. He formed a study group to review and prepare it for publication. I withdrew from the study group, along with another. We were replaced by two other men at the suggestion of Mauricio Berger. During the preparation of the translation, I was asked if I would allow my name to be printed as a witness. I asked permission to read it. They graciously allowed me that privilege. It was projected on a screen. I took no notes. Now that the translation is being published, I believe that it is my duty as a witness to state my testimony. I use the word *translation* and its title, *The Sealed Book of Mormon*, interchangeably.

I do not believe that the content of the Sealed Book of Mormon was translated from the Book of Mormon plates once in the possession of Joseph Smith, Jr. I believe few saints will think otherwise. I find several troubling things in the translation, some of which contradict scripture. I pointed them out to the other witnesses.

I affirm that all the original eight witnesses still involved with Joseph F. Smith are honest men who truly desire to do what God wants. I do not believe that any of them, including Joseph, are willfully trying to mislead the saints. My concerns are entirely directed at the tenets that are being taught and the content in the book. My comments are not intended to impugn the character or devotion of anyone associated in the printing or defense of the Sealed Book of Mormon.

# CONCERNS ABOUT THE TRANSLATION

Mauricio Berger said that the characters on the back plate, which is not only the back of the entire book, but the back of the remaining sealed book, were made with an iron tool. He also said that the opened plates, including the ones that were unsealed in March 2018, were engraved with an obsidian tool. He testified that he could not read the characters made with the iron tool and specifically said that he could not read the back plate. Since Mauricio claimed that his interpreter stone was the same that Joseph Smith used, we understood that Joseph could not have read the back plate either. At the time, none of the witnesses realized the similarities between the back plate and the description that Professor Anthon gave of the characters that Martin Harris brought him in 1828.

Martin Harris said that he took a copy of the characters with a translation of them to Professor Anthon. Some of the eight witnesses brought copies of the Whitmer transcript in March 2018. Mauricio said that he recognized some of them, but knew no place where they were in that order. Some found many throughout the opened plates, as well as on the back plate. None recalled Professor Anthon's statement about the arrangement of the characters nor the presence of the circular diagram. The professor accurately described the back plate that we saw. We saw no other plate in either the unbound plates nor the ones just unsealed with a round diagram. If the plates in Mauricio Berger's possession are the Book of Mormon plates, then the only plate from which Joseph could have copied the diagram that Professor Anthon described is the back plate.

Martin Harris' testimony is as follows: *"I went to the city of New York and presented the characters which had been translated, with the translation thereof, to Professor Anthon, a gentleman celebrated for his literary attainments. Professor Anthon stated that the translation was correct, more so than any he had before seen translated from the Egyptian. I then showed him those which were not yet translated, and he said that they were Egyptian, Chaldaic, Assyriac, and Arabic, and he said that they were the true characters. He gave me a certificate certifying to the people of Palmyra that they were true characters, and that the translation of such of them as had been translated was also correct."*<sup>1</sup> Joseph Smith said that he copied a considerable number of characters and translated them. In his history, he does not definitely state that he gave the translation to Martin Harris, only that he gave the characters: *"I copied a considerable number of them, and by means of the Urim and Thummin I translated some of them, which I did between the time I arrived at the house of my wife's father in the month of December, and the February following. Sometime in this month of February the aforementioned Mr. Martin Harris came to our place, got the characters which I had drawn off the plates, and started with them to the city of New York."*<sup>2</sup> Both agree that Joseph translated some characters that Martin Harris took to Professor Anthon.

If the copy of the characters that Professor Anthon certified came from the back plate of the metal plates in Mauricio Berger's possession, then Joseph Smith could translate them. Mauricio testified that he could not, meaning that if Joseph Smith copied from the back plate, Mauricio Berger does not have the same gift that Joseph Smith had.

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<sup>1</sup> *History of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints*, Vol. 1 (Independence, MO: Herald House, 1967) 19.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 18-19.

# PROBLEMS WITH THE TRANSLATION

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

As much as I had hoped it would be, I do not believe the translation is true. Although there are many things that I wished it would have included, it must be judged by what it contains. The Bible is very clear: “*To the law and to the testimony; and if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them*” (Is 8:20). This principle is especially true when someone presents certain words as God’s words, even if miraculously obtained. They must agree with the Word of God already received or they are false.

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

1. The translation states that Elasah is Lehi, who left Jerusalem in the first year of Zedekiah’s reign. Jeremiah says that Elasah took his letter to the exiled Jews in the fourth year of Zedekiah’s reign. The item is fully discussed in an attached article.
2. The translation states that angels took humans for wives and produced giants. The Inspired Version says that the sons of men took the daughters of the righteous to wife. This item is thoroughly reviewed in the second attached article entitled Book of Moses.
3. The translation states that Moses organized the church on the day that he led the Hebrews out of Egyptian bondage. It adds that it happened on the same day that the Pascal Lamb was sacrificed. The lamb was not sacrificed on the day that the Hebrews left Egypt. The Pascal Lamb was sacrificed on the 14th day of the first month (Ex 12:6; Ex 12:18). Each day on the Jewish calendar began after sundown, when evening was over and the first star appeared. The Passover was during the night, which was the next day. It was the same day that the Hebrews left Egyptian bondage, which was the fifteenth day of the month (Num 33:3).
4. The translation says that the church should observe every new moon by baptizing the repentant who were converted during the previous lunar month. Christians do not observe moons or sabbaths. Isaiah warned, “*Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth; they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them*” (Is 1:13-14). Paul explicitly states that the requirements of the Mosaic Law were nailed to Jesus’ cross: “*Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross*” (Col 2:14); and commands, “*Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days*” (Col 2:16).
5. The translation calls the sabbath day the Lord’s Day and commands that it be observed as such. The sabbath day is the seventh day of the week. The Hebrew word *sabbath*

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

6. The translation claims that Jonas, one of the Lord's disciples in America, visited Paul "*above fourteen years ago*" (2 Cor 12:2) to warn him not to resist Peter at the conference described in Acts 15. Paul wrote his second epistle to the Corinthians about 56 AD. Fourteen years before then is 42 AD. The conference happened about 50 AD. Paul was preaching at Tarsus at the time. He did not join Barnabas at Antioch until at least 44 AD. The two were not ordained apostles until about 46-48 AD. If the translation's assertion is true, then Jonas appeared to Paul in 42 AD, four to six years before he became an apostle and about 8 years before the first dispute with Peter.
7. According to the translation, Alma ordained evangelists in the church. *Evangelist* is a Greek word meaning *missionary of the gospel*. Whom did Alma's evangelists evangelize? The translation states that they taught the gospel to the people of Alma. Those people were already baptized. The work of evangelists is to preach the gospel to unbelievers. A patriarch is an "*evangelical minister*" and "*a revivalist*" (D&C 122:3a). Patriarch not only better describes the role of these ministers supposedly provided, but it is a Hebrew word that more aptly fits the culture from which the Nephites came.
8. The last chapter of the part of the Seal Book of Mormon that is being published is Jesus' interpretation of Zenos' parable. It states that the other three spots of ground in which three other branches were grafted were in the orient and that these graftings were Israelites placed among the "*astrologers and magicians*" in these three spots. It seemed to also imply that the graftings happened at the time of the Babylonian Captivity, when the fourth branch came to America. Nebuchadnezzar put Daniel and the three children with Babylon's astrologers. Was that one of the graftings? Israelites from the northern kingdom, who had not already migrated into Europe at that time, resided primarily in Scythia. They had refused to return to their Promised Land before the captivity, when Jeremiah extended King Josiah's invitation, and afterwards, when Ezra invited them to join the Jews in returning. They migrated into Europe, instead, where they were sown among the Gentiles (Hos 8:8) and lost their identity. Any Israelites traveling further east into central Asia would have been pushed west by the expansion that forced the Turks and Huns westward. That leaves only Egypt and Greece for the other possible spots. The translation adds that the other three plantings coalesced into three people, a person from Greece, Joseph of Arimathea, and Lazarus, for the purpose of aiding the Savior during His earthly ministry. This assertion is contrary to the parable as contained in Jacob, which does not place the gathering of the branch until the time of restoration, when all Israel is gathered.
9. The translation also teaches that the original olive tree in Zenos' parable became so corrupt after the Restoration in 1830 brought the branches together that the tree was cut down. Another was planted in its place. This claim is contrary to the parable as contained in Jacob, but it can be used to justify restructuring the church today.

# CONCLUSION

I have shown that Mauricio Berger does not have the same gift that Joseph Smith, Jr. had and that the translation that he has written is not of God. No logical conclusion about the plates can be drawn from only these two premises. If the plates are not the plates from which Joseph Smith translated the Book of Mormon, then the purported translation could not be from the sealed portion, but the converse is not necessarily true. The translation could be false, but the plates still genuine.

I have also shown that God has used falsehoods to manifest His will. If He did that in the past, He can do that now. The Holy Spirit will confirm the truth wherever it springs forth. The sun will shine of both the flower that sprouts in a well tended garden and the one in the trash heap. The testimony that soon God will unify His people and bring forth the sealed portion is a truth that the Holy Spirit will confirm regardless of who states it.

Although I do not believe that the Sealed Book of Mormon is of God, I believe the testimony that Joseph and I brought back from Brazil is true. The Lord desires His saints to be one and is wearied by the continuing contention. Zion cannot arise when these conditions exist among the saints. They actually are the reasons that the saints polluted their inheritance in 1833 and suffered divine chastisements (D&c 98:3a-b). The same is true today. Will the saints come together, if for nothing more than to pray for the Lord to pour His righteousness on them, unite them, and bring forth the sealed portion?