



Lesson 20: Joseph Smith Translates the Bible and Other Scriptures



Purpose

To help the children understand Joseph Smith's role in bringing forth the scriptures and to encourage them to study the scriptures.



Search, Ponder, and Pray

I love to read the holy scriptures,
And, ev'ry time I do,
I feel the Spirit start to grow within my heart—
A testimony that they're true.

So, prayerfully I'll read the scriptures
Each day my whole life through.
I'll come to understand.
I'll heed the Lord's command
And live as he would have me do.

Chorus

Search, ponder, and pray
Are the things that I must do.
The Spirit will guide, and, deep inside,
I'll know the scriptures are true.

Words: Jaclyn Thomas
Milne, b. 1949. © 1986 IRI
Music: Carol Baker Black,
b. 1951. © 1986 IRI



**OUR OPENING PRAYER
WILL BE GIVEN BY**



(ENTER NAME HERE)



Let's Communicate

- ✔ We are going to try an experiment.
- ✔ I will whisper to the 1st person, a message.
- ✔ That person will tell the second person, and so on.
- ✔ Here's the message for the first person.



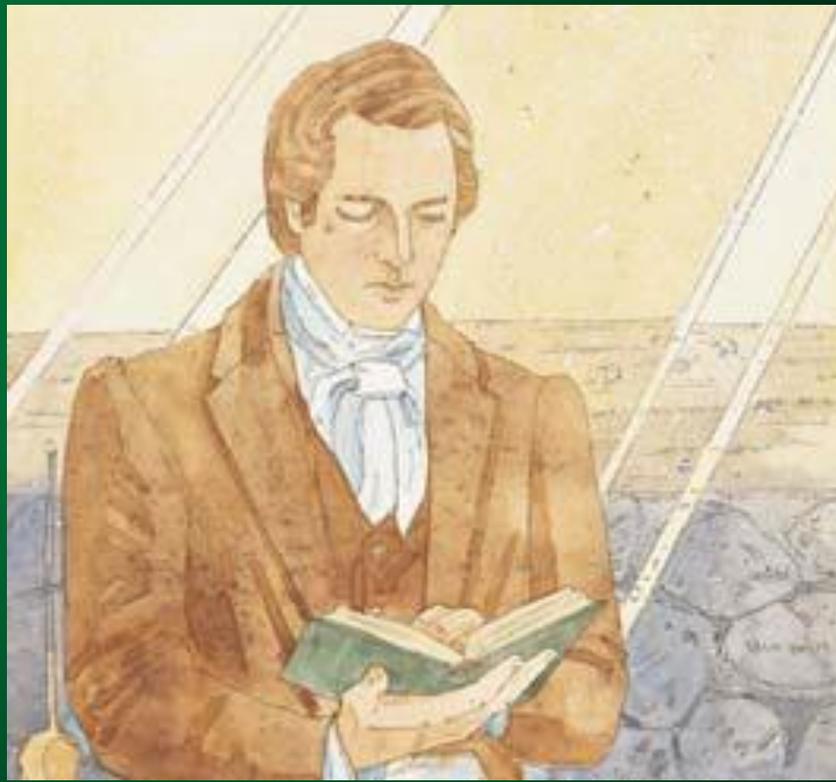
Attention activity



- ✔ Would the last person please say the message they heard?
- ✔ How had the message changed by the time it reached the end of the line?
- ✔ What was left out?
- ✔ What was added?
- ✔ Why do you think the message changed as it passed from person to person?

- 
- ✔ Just as their message changed as it was passed from person to person, over many years some of the scriptures in the Bible had been changed as people translated the Bible and made copies of it by hand.
 - ✔ Mistakes were made: some incorrect teachings had been added to the Bible, and some important teachings had been left out.





- ✔ The Lord commanded Joseph Smith to prepare a translation of the Bible that would restore the correct teachings.
- ✔ This is what today's lesson is about.



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- While translating the Book of Mormon, Joseph Smith learned that over the years many “plain and most precious” parts of the Bible had been taken away or lost ([1 Nephi 13:26](#)).



- ✔ The Bible is a sacred book that contains the word of God, but mistakes were made as it was copied and translated into different languages.

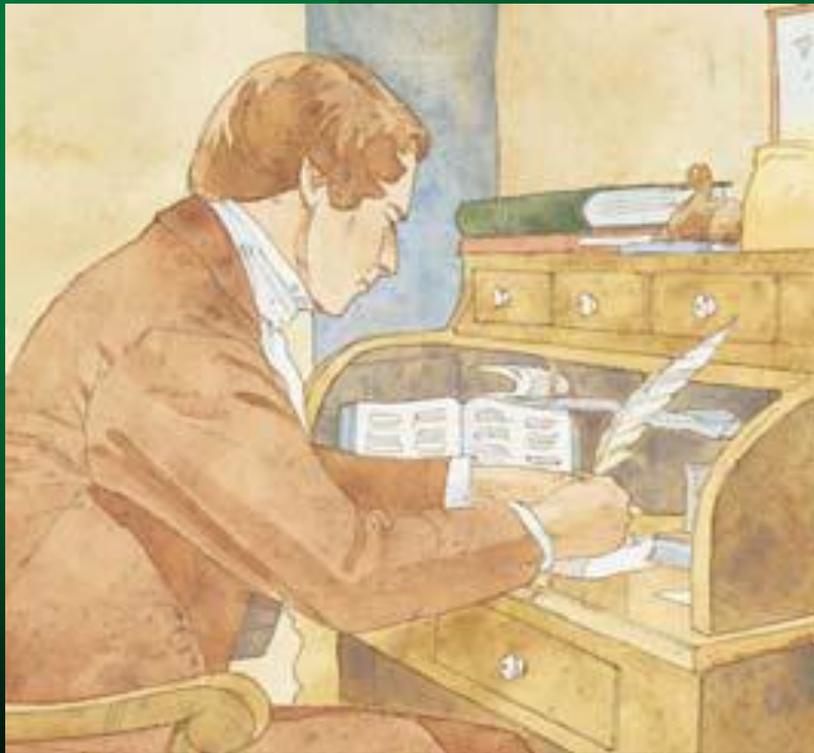


- ✔ Words were left out, changed, or added, changing the meaning of some of the scriptures.



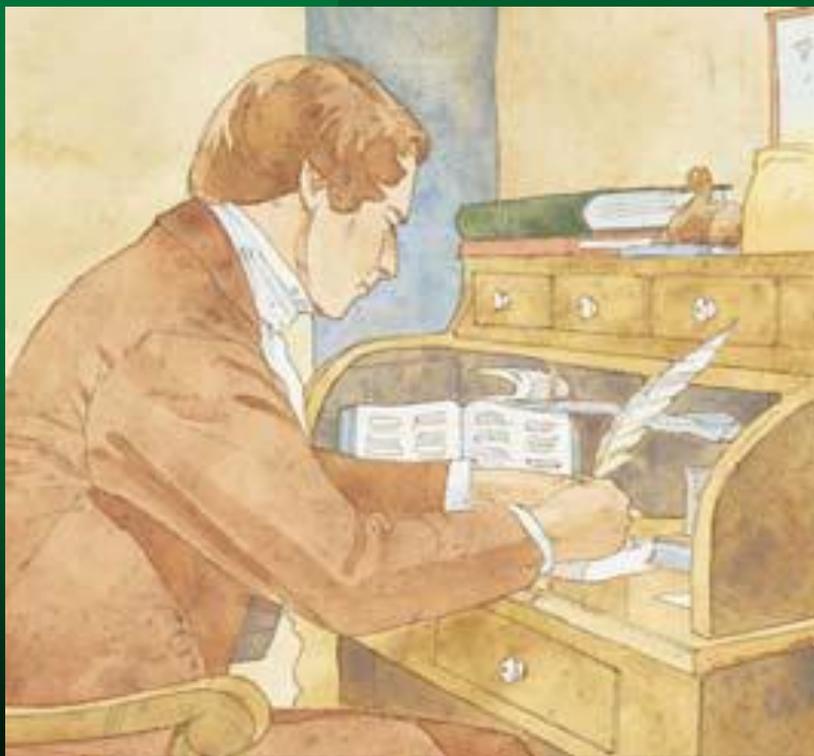
- ❖ During the apostasy following Jesus Christ's death, there were no prophets or apostles to make sure the scriptures were copied and translated correctly.
- ❖ Joseph Smith was instructed to prepare a new translation of the Bible that would restore and correct these plain and precious parts.

- 
- ▼ Shortly after the translation of the Book of Mormon was completed and the Church was organized, Joseph Smith received a revelation commanding him to study the Bible (see [D&C 26:1](#)).



- ▼ As he was studying the book of Genesis, Joseph had many questions, and he prayerfully asked Heavenly Father to help him understand the Bible.

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- ▼ In answer to his prayer the Lord revealed important information about the gospel of Jesus Christ and the creation of the earth.



- ▼ This information is published in the book of Moses in the Pearl of Great Price.

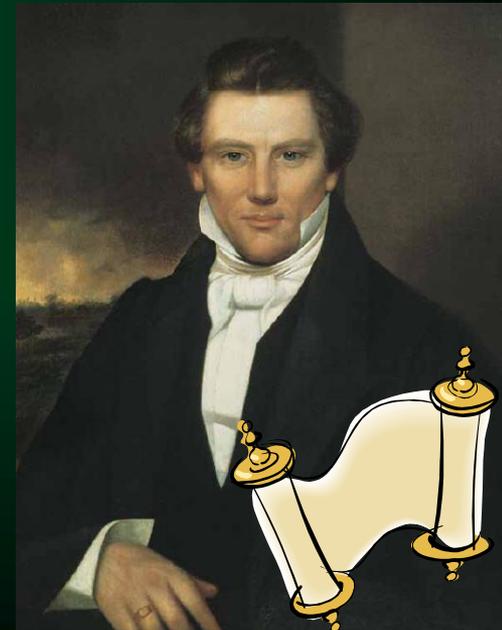


- ✔ Look at the heading to the book of Moses in the Pearl of Great Price.
- ✔ Now look at the heading to Genesis in the Bible and note that it is also called “The First Book of Moses.”



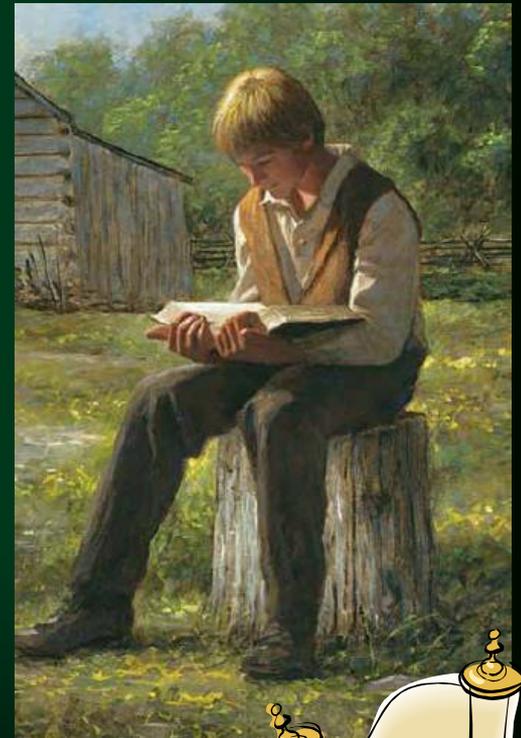
- ✔ In 1830 Joseph Smith began working on a correct translation of the Bible.
- ✔ Sidney Rigdon was his scribe.
- ✔ In preparing this translation of the Bible, Joseph was not translating from an ancient language, as he did with the Book of Mormon, but was restoring the Bible to its original meaning.

✔ As Joseph studied and pondered the Bible, he was inspired through the power of the Holy Ghost to correct errors in it.





- ✔ As Joseph Smith worked on his inspired translation of the Bible, his knowledge of the gospel grew, and he was blessed by the Holy Ghost.
- ✔ Many revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants are answers to questions about statements in the Bible that Joseph did not understand.





- Some of the information revealed to Joseph Smith while he was studying the Bible is published in the Pearl of Great Price as the book of Moses.
- Also published in the Pearl of Great Price is the book of Abraham, Joseph Smith's inspired translation of some ancient Egyptian writings.



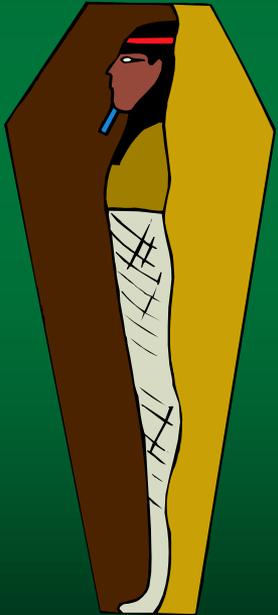


✔ In the late 1820s an Italian explorer named Antonio Lebolo obtained eleven mummies from an ancient tomb in Egypt.

✔ When Lebolo died the mummies were shipped to the United States.

✔ A man named Michael Chandler came into possession of the mummies in 1833.

✔ He opened the coffins and was disappointed not to find jewels or valuable treasures.





- Attached to some of the bodies of the mummies were linen cloths containing rolls of papyrus, a type of paper made from plants.
- These papyrus rolls had Egyptian writing on them. Mr. Chandler took the rolls to Pennsylvania, where he tried to find some educated men to tell him about the writings, but even the most educated of these men were only able to understand a little of the writings.





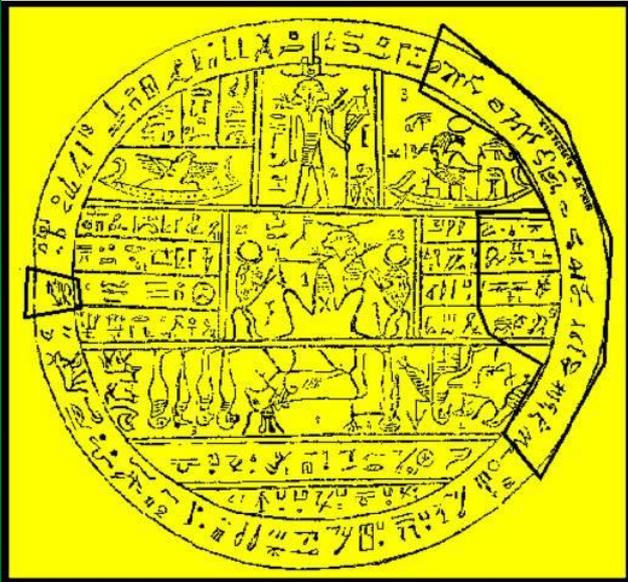
- ✔ Mr. Chandler decided to travel around the country showing people the mummies, and in the summer of 1835 he came to Kirtland, Ohio.
- ✔ There he met with Joseph Smith, who told him that the writings could be interpreted.
- ✔ Later some friends of the Prophet bought four mummies and the rolls of papyrus from Mr. Chandler.





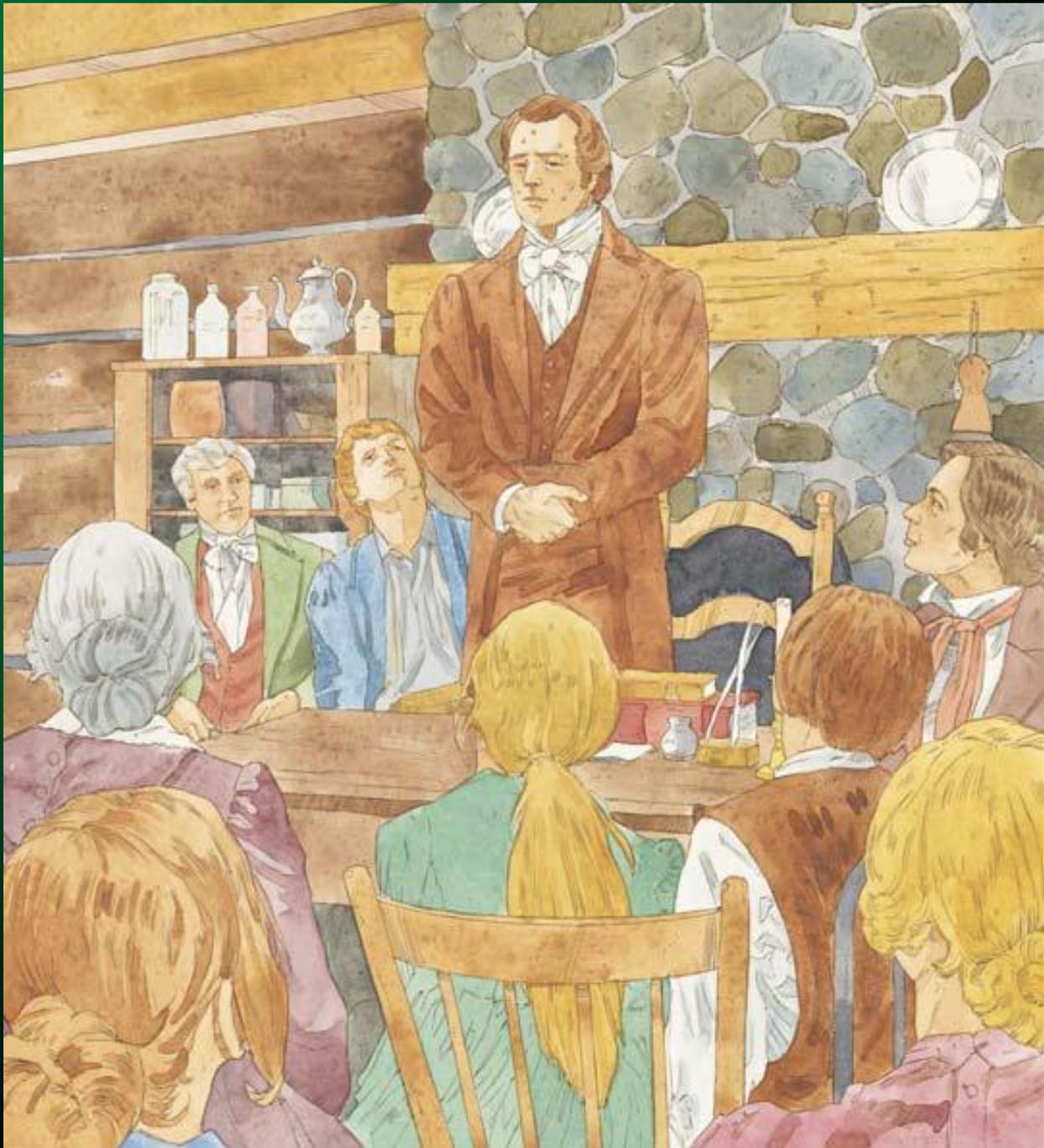
▼ Joseph Smith studied the letters and grammar of the Egyptian language, and then, with the help of the Holy Ghost, he translated the writings on the papyrus rolls.

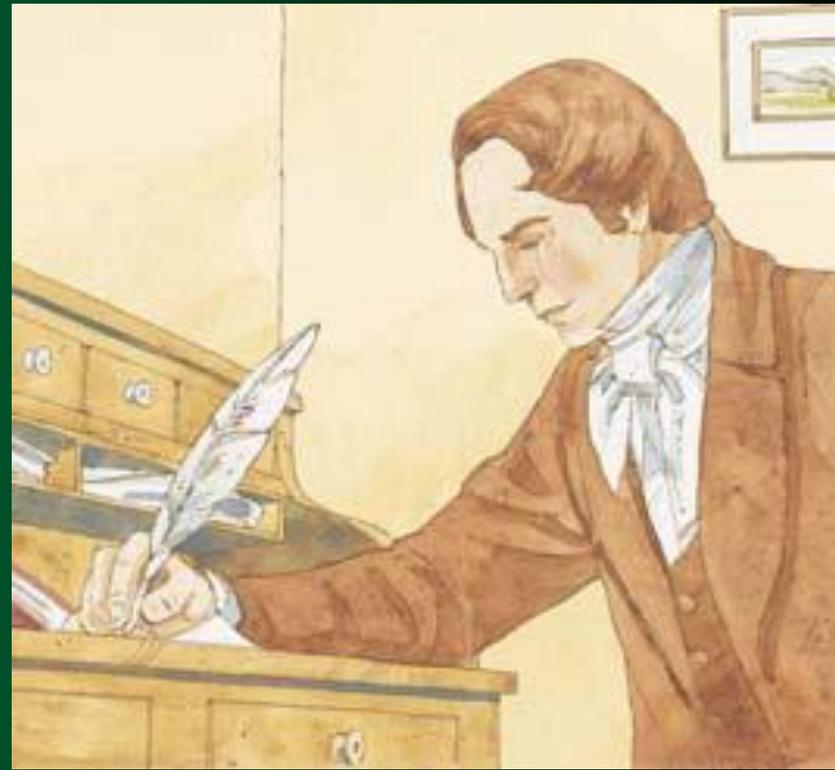
▼ The writings Joseph Smith translated tell about the ancient prophet Abraham and are now published as the book of Abraham in the Pearl of Great Price.





Discussion Time

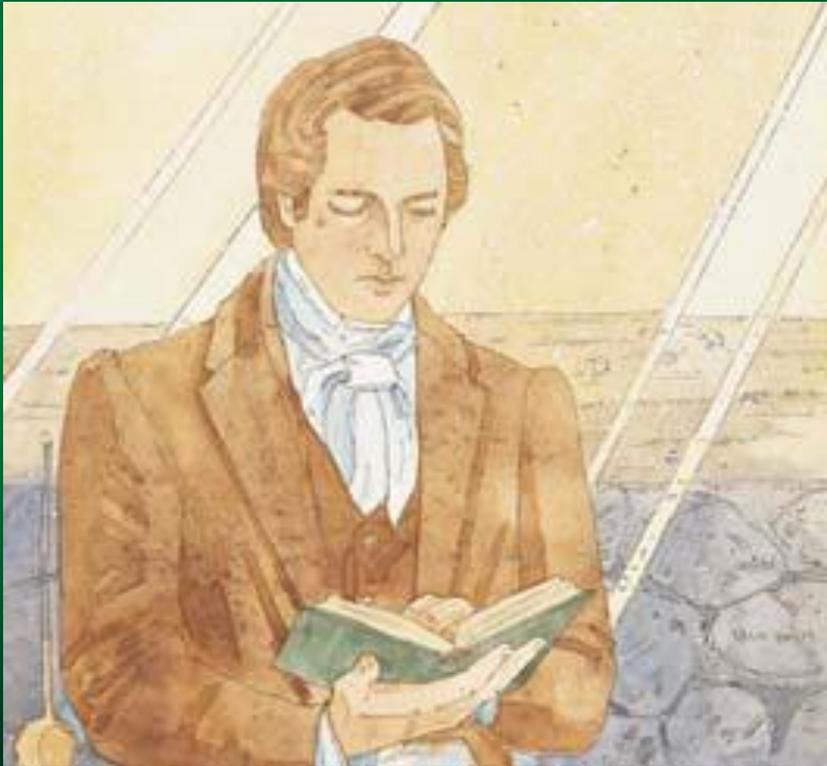




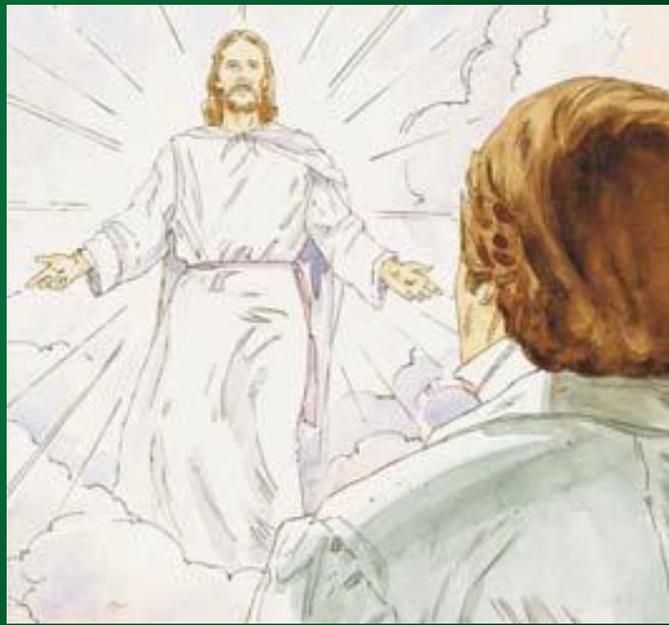
- ✔ How did Joseph Smith know there were mistakes in the Bible?
- ✔ How did these mistakes occur?
- ✔ How did Joseph correct these mistakes?



✔ What was Joseph Smith commanded to do in Doctrine and Covenants 26:1?



- ✔ How did studying the scriptures help prepare Joseph to translate?
- ✔ How was he blessed as he studied the scriptures?



- ✔ Why should we study the scriptures?
- ✔ What happens to our understanding of the gospel as we study the scriptures?
- ✔ Who can help us understand the scriptures?
- ✔ How does studying the scriptures bring us closer to Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ?



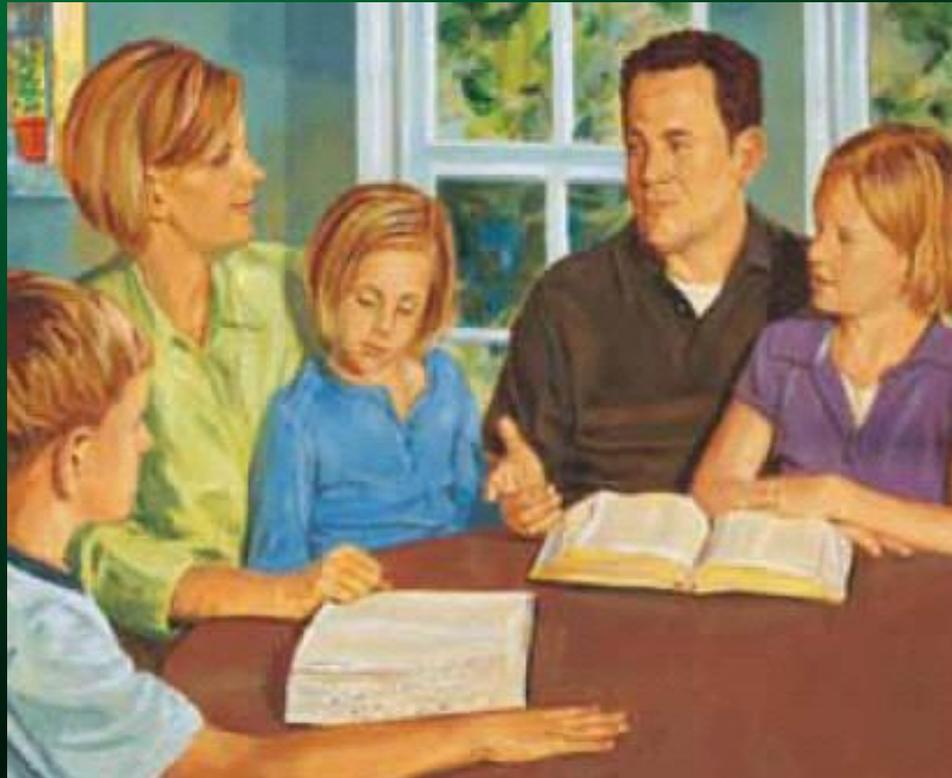
- ✔ What did Joseph Smith do before he began to translate the writings on the papyrus rolls?
- ✔ Why did he study the Egyptian language?
- ✔ Why could Joseph translate the writings on the papyrus while men with more education could not?



- ▼ What scriptures do we have today that the Prophet Joseph Smith helped bring forth or translate?
- ▼ All the standard works: the Bible, the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price.
- ▼ What was Joseph Smith's role in preparing each of these books for our use?



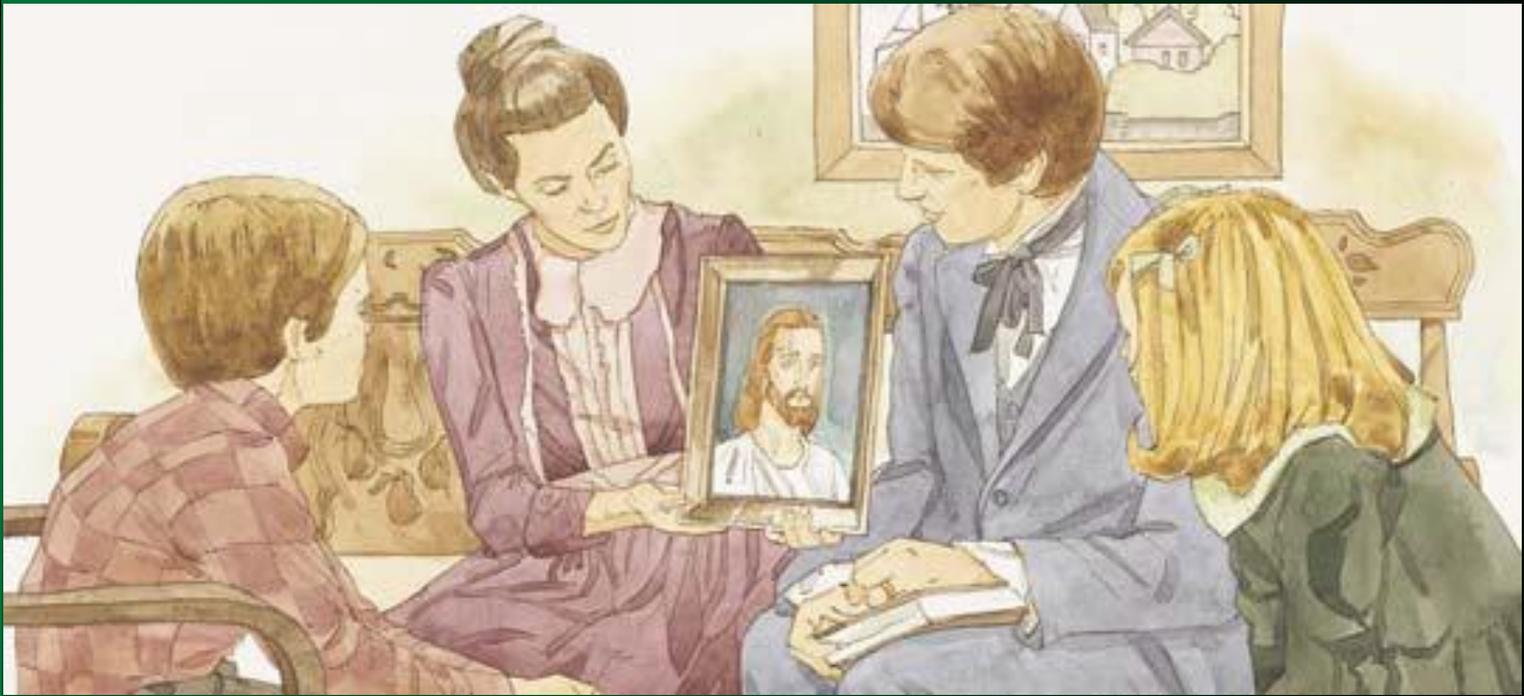
▼ How have the scriptures been a blessing to you and your family?





▼ Can you suggest different ways we can study the scriptures?





Enrichment Activities



We can find counsel about specific subjects as we study the scriptures.

Choose a scripture, locate the scripture reference, and read the scripture to the class.

Match the scripture with its subject from this list.

Courage

Deuteronomy 31:6

Missionary work

Doctrine and Covenants 112:28

Forgiveness

Matthew 6:14–15

Love

John 13:34

Heavenly Father's love

John 3:16

The Sabbath day

Moses 3:3

Obedience

Doctrine and Covenants 130:21

Prayer

3 Nephi 18:21

Baptism

Doctrine and Covenants 20:72–4



Some ways we can study the scriptures.

- ✔ Set a goal to read one or more verses of scripture each day.
- ✔ Read the scriptures aloud with your family.
- ✔ Read scripture stories in the *Friend* magazine.
- ✔ Read from the *Old Testament Stories*, *New Testament Stories*, *Book of Mormon Reader*, *Doctrine and Covenants Stories*, and *Scripture Stories* books.



Some ways we can study the scriptures.

- ✔ After hearing a scripture story in a talk at church, find the story in your scriptures at home and read it.
- ✔ Following each Primary lesson, read the “Suggested Home Reading” to review the lesson.
- ✔ Share something from your scripture reading with your family in family home evening.
- ✔ Would you choose and write down one way you will study the scriptures during the coming week?



Eighth Article of Faith

- ✔ **We believe the Bible to be the word of God as far as it is translated correctly; we also believe the Book of Mormon to be the word of God.**
- ✔ What does it mean, “as far as it is translated correctly”?



- ✦ While we do not use the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible as a separate book of scripture, parts of it are included in other Latter-day Saint scriptures.
- ✦ The places in the scriptures where portions of the Joseph Smith Translation are found: Joseph Smith—Matthew in the Pearl of Great Price, the JST footnotes throughout the Bible, and the section following the Bible Dictionary.



- ✔ Let's compare some verses of the Joseph Smith Translation with the original verses in the Bible.
- ✔ I'll ask one child to read the verse from the Bible and another to read the verse from the Joseph Smith Translation. Then we'll discuss how the Joseph Smith Translation makes the verses clearer and easier to understand.



▼ Examples:

Exodus 32:14

“And the Lord repented of the evil which he thought to do unto the people.”

Joseph Smith Translation

“And the Lord said unto Moses, If they will repent of the evil which they have done, I will spare them and turn away my fierce wrath.”



▼ 1 Samuel 16:14

“But the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him.”

Joseph Smith Translation

“But the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit which was not of the Lord troubled him.”



▼ John 1:18 (JST, John 1:19)

“No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.”

Joseph Smith Translation

“And no man hath seen God at any time, except he hath borne record of the Son; for except it is through him no man can be saved.”



- ✦ Read Joseph Smith—History 1:11–14
- ✦ Discuss the importance of studying the scriptures and praying to ask for blessings and inspiration from Heavenly Father.



- Suggested Home Reading:

- ♥♥ Study the second half of the introductory note to the Pearl of Great Price, which explains the contents of the Pearl of Great Price, at home as a review of this lesson.

- Suggested Family Sharing

- ♥♥ Share with your family a specific part of the lesson, such as a story, question, or activity, or to read with your family the “Suggested Home Reading.” What could you share?



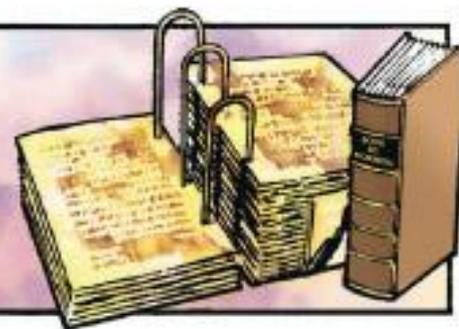
Quick review





FROM THE LIFE OF THE PROPHET JOSEPH SMITH

Restoring Plain and Precious Truths



While translating the Book of Mormon, Joseph read about a book that had "many plain and precious things taken away from" it.¹

What book is it talking about?

The Bible.

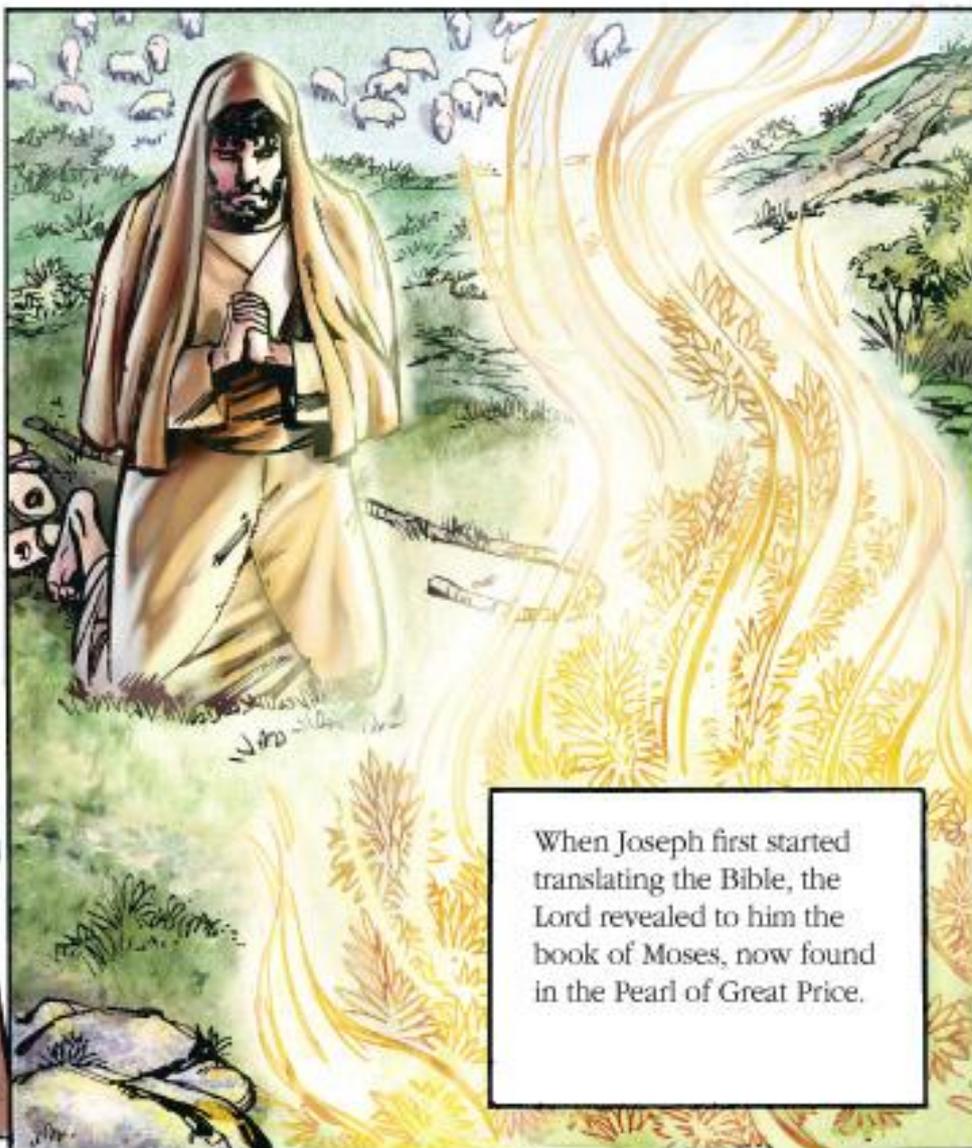
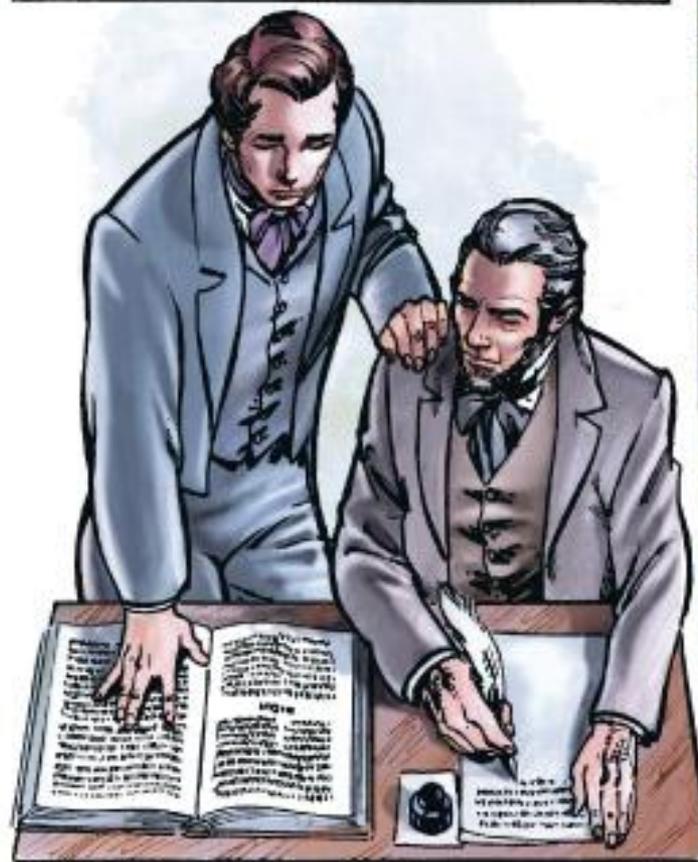
1. 1 Nephi 13:28.

After the Book of Mormon was published, Joseph Smith began translating the Bible to put back the missing truths. Sidney Rigdon was one of his scribes.



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When Joseph first started translating the Bible, the Lord revealed to him the book of Moses, now found in the Pearl of Great Price.

Later, the Prophet read a passage in John that talked about the plan of salvation. He and Sidney did not fully understand the scripture.

"They that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."¹

What happens after we are resurrected, Joseph?

2. John 5:29.

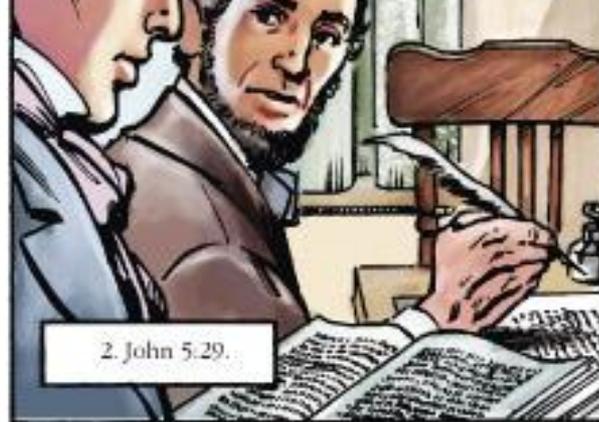
While they pondered this scripture, the heavens were opened and they saw Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ. They also saw the three degrees of glory.



After the vision, Joseph and Sidney wrote down what they saw and heard.



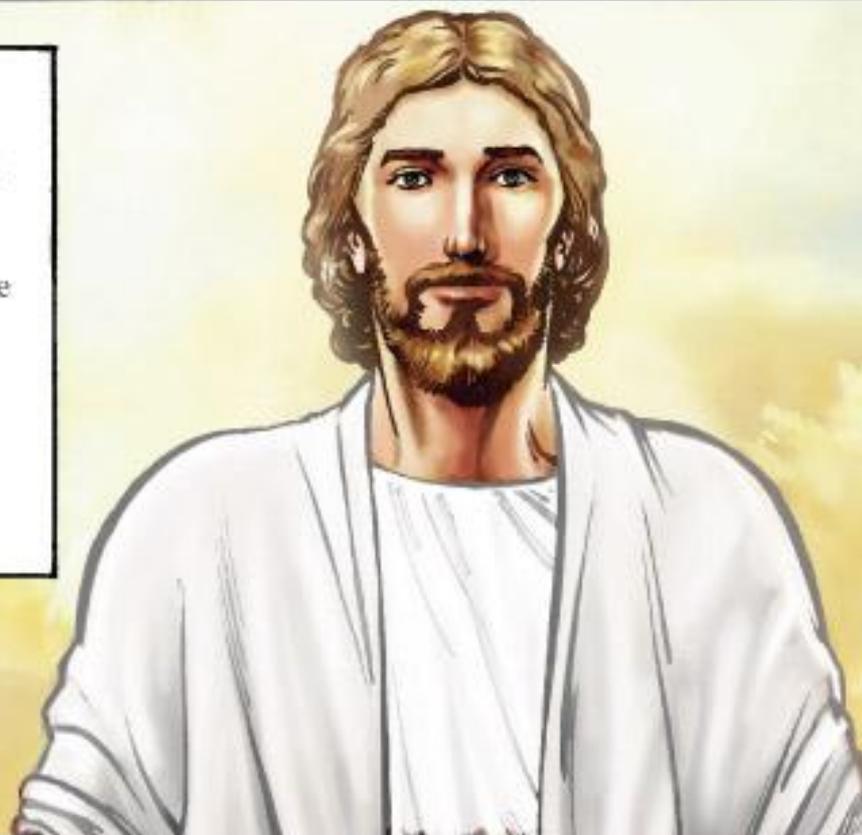
Joseph and Sidney: "After the many tes-



2. John 5:29.



Joseph and Sidney: "After the many testimonies which have been given of him, this is the testimony, last of all, which we give of him: That he lives! For we saw him, even on the right hand of God; and we heard the voice bearing record that he is the Only Begotten of the Father."³



3. D&C 76:22-23.



**OUR CLOSING PRAYER
WILL BE GIVEN BY**



(ENTER NAME HERE)



THE END



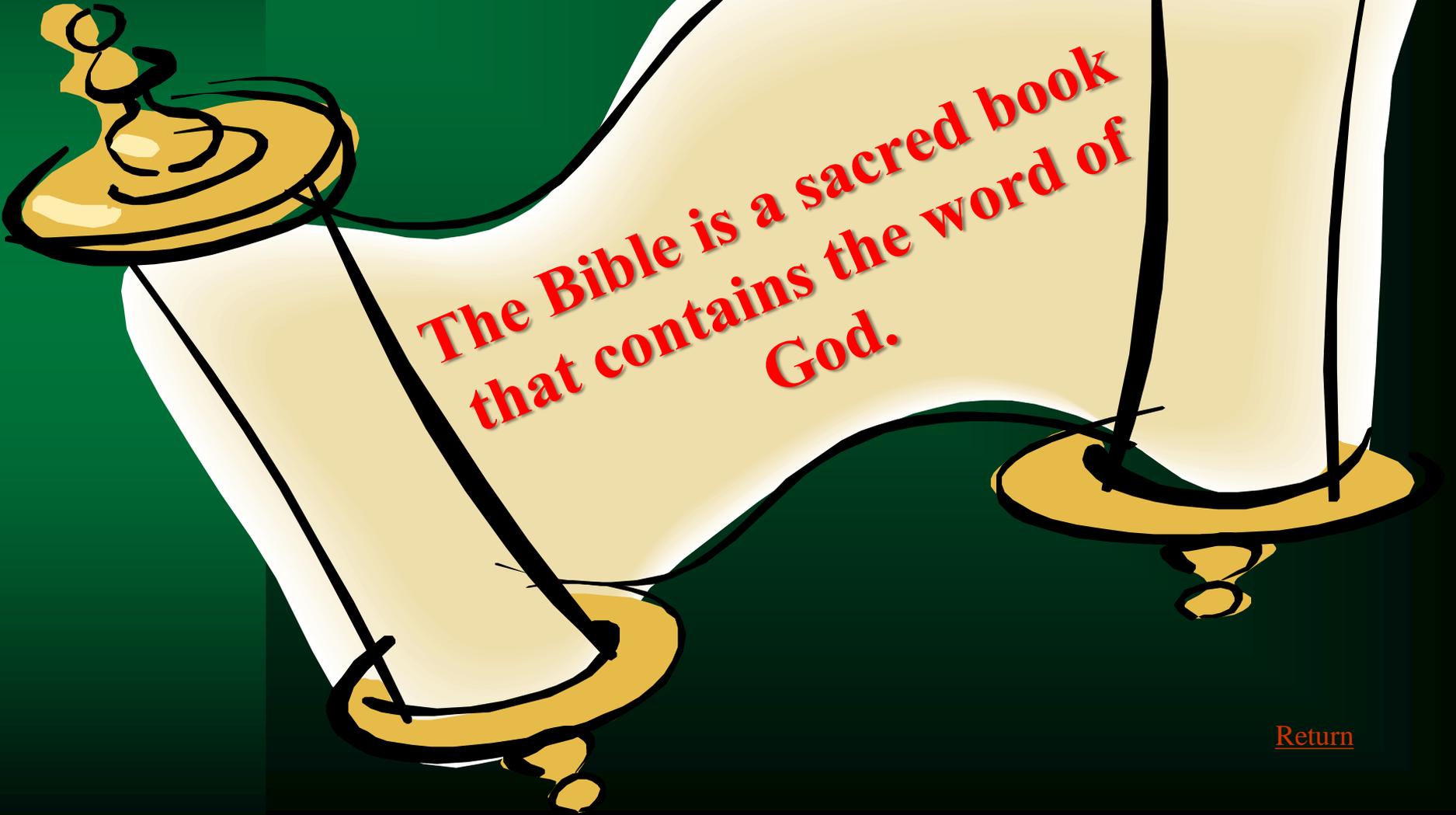
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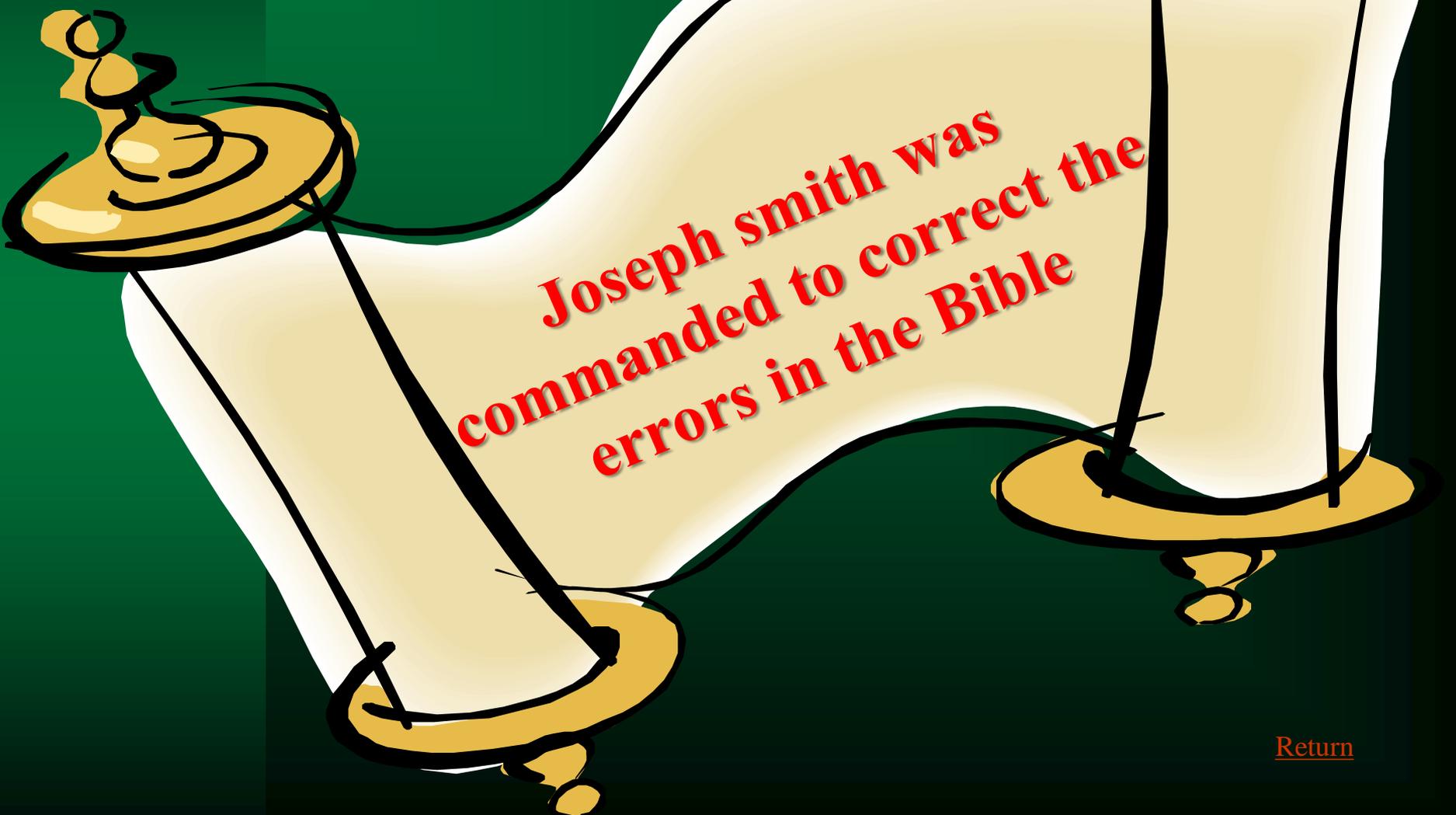
Teachers should refer to the manual, scriptures and other resources when preparing and conducting the lesson.



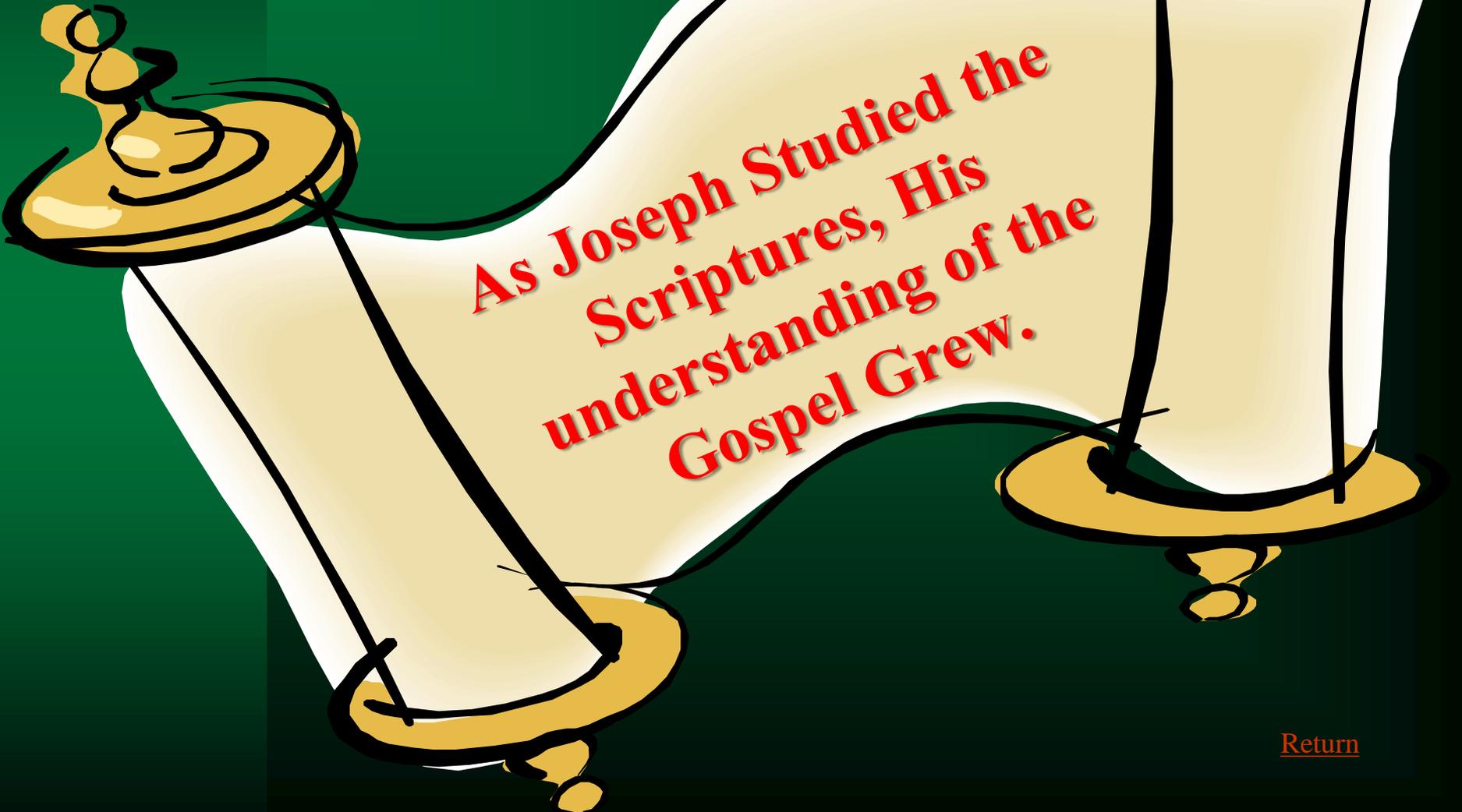
**The Bible is a sacred book
that contains the word of
God.**



**People made mistakes as
they copied and translated
the Bible.**



**Joseph smith was
commanded to correct the
errors in the Bible**



**As Joseph Studied the
Scriptures, His
understanding of the
Gospel Grew.**



Papyrus scrolls were found with some mummies in an Egyptian tomb.



**Joseph Smith Translated
the writings on the Scrolls.**



**As we study the scriptures,
we will learn about
Heavenly Father and Jesus
Christ and the gospel.**



1 Nephi 13:26

- ✓ 26 And after they go forth by the hand of the twelve apostles of the Lamb, from the Jews unto the Gentiles, thou seest the formation of that great and abominable church, which is most abominable above all other churches; for behold, they have taken away from the gospel of the Lamb many parts which are plain and most precious; and also many covenants of the Lord have they taken away.

[Return](#)



D&C 26:1

- 1 Behold, I say unto you that you shall let your time be devoted to the studying of the scriptures, and to preaching, and to confirming the church at Colesville, and to performing your labors on the land, such as is required, until after you shall go to the west to hold the next conference; and then it shall be made known what you shall do.



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