

Discrepancies Answered

By Bob Moore

Larry Mannering, life long member of the Reorganized Church, recently denounced the Book of Mormon, writing a letter, along with his wife Joan, addressed to many saints that listed what he believes are discrepancies in the Book of Mormon. I am surprised that a person so closely attached to the Restoration gospel repeats such groundless and errant complaints. The following answers Larry's accusations. Each answer is preceded by the number of the claimed discrepancy. The first set answers what he calls Scriptural Discrepancies

1. The high priest's office described in the Book of Mormon and which Alma held is a different office than the high priest's office held by Aaron and his successors. The Bible teaches that there are two priesthoods (Heb 7:11). This fact is confirmed in the Old Testament. The Bible identifies both Melchisedec (Heb 7:1) and Jethro (Ex 18:1) as priests, yet both held their priestly office before Aaron was ordained. If Aaron held the same priesthood as these older priests, then that priesthood would not be named after Aaron, but the first priest. The fact that Moses called and ordained Aaron and afterwards established the Levitical priesthood shows that Moses must have held a priestly office similar to that held by Melchisedec and Jethro. It also shows that this older priesthood is greater than the priesthood given Aaron. He who ordains must have the same or greater authority than the person he ordained. The high priests mentioned in the Book of Mormon were not of the Aaronic order and did not need to be Levites.

2. If Melchisedec had no father or genealogy, how did he come into being? According to the Bible, Adam was the only person independently created. Even Eve was made from Adam. If Melchisedec had no genealogy, he must have been an independent creation. This conclusion is inconsistent with scripture. The lack of genealogy does not apply to the man Melchisedec, but to the priesthood which he held. While the Aaronic priesthood must descend from father to son, the Melchisedec priesthood does not. This is the meaning of the cited verse in Hebrews.

3. Both the Bible and the Book Mormon agree that before Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit. God commanded them to "be fruitful and multiply." If Adam and Eve had not fallen, they could not have produced a mortal offspring. In order for our first parents to produce mortals, Adam must have fallen first. This conclusion confirms the truthfulness of the cited Book of Mormon text.

4. The Book of Mormon text states that the darkness coming on those in ancient America was "upon the face of the land." While critics like to assume that the Book of Mormon is describing a darkness surrounding the earth, the record does not state that. The darkness in ancient America was limited to America and perhaps the country in which the Book of Mormon people resided. The described darkness felt like a vapor (3 Ne 4:18). It prohibited the kindling of any fire. The record also describes "the great destruction," that included earthquakes and volcanoes. Such seismic activity could easily

have unearthed gases that could be felt and that could also prohibit the kindling of fire as the Book of Mormon describes. Although the darkness described in the New Testament may have also occurred in ancient America, it was not detected because the darkness caused by the seismic activity prevented it from being observed. There is no contradiction between the two accounts.

5. No biblical text states that the Bible is complete. The cited verse only specifies that all scripture, whether contained in the Bible or not, is given by God's inspiration. Early Christians quoted scriptural texts that are not in our present Bible. Some are from the Apocrypha and some are from lost texts. When Paul wrote Timothy, the New Testament was not yet compiled. The scriptures to which the apostle referred was the Old Testament. No Christian would conclude that the Old Testament is complete and thoroughly equips people to do God's work. The conclusion that the Bible is now complete and thoroughly equips people today to do God's work is equally errant.

6. If the word of God only came by the Jews, how should Christians view the New Testament? It came through the Gentiles. Some will accurately point out that most New Testament writers were Jews. This is true, but what about Mark and Luke? They were both Gentiles. Is the cited verse in Romans stating that the Gospels of Mark and Luke as well as the book of Acts, which was written by Luke, not scriptural? Certainly not! Paul is telling the Romans that the Old Testament came through the Jews. After all, that was the only scripture available at the time the apostle wrote his epistle. Just as Mark and Luke could write the word of God, so others who were not Jews may write God's word.

7. While the Holy Ghost fell upon the apostles on Pentecost, according to the Savior's promise that he made just before his ascension, the Bible never states that the Holy Spirit never existed prior to that event. In the days of Noah, God said that his spirit would not always strive with man (Gen 6:3), implying that the Holy Spirit worked with people at the time of the flood. The Bible also states that the spirit of God was in Joseph (Gen 41:38). God said that he filled Hur's grandson, Bezaleel, with his spirit (Ex 31:3, Ex 35:30). Joshua, Moses' successor, was a man in whom rested the spirit (Num 27:18). The Spirit of the Lord came on Othniel (Judg 3:9), Jephthah (Judg 11:29), Samson (Judg 14:6), Saul (1 Sam 10:6), and David (1 Sam 16:13). David begged the Lord to not take the Holy Spirit from him (Ps 51:11). Isaiah stated that the Lord's children "vexed his Holy Spirit" and clearly says that he "put his Holy Spirit within" Moses (Is 63:10-11). These Old Testament references show that the Holy Spirit came on people before Christ's first advent. If the Holy Ghost came on Israelites who lived before Jesus and whose history is recorded in the Bible, the Holy Ghost can certainly come on Israelites who lived before Jesus and whose history is recorded in the Book of Mormon.

8. The "mystery of God" entails more than the conversion of the Gentiles and their inclusion with the Israelites in the promise given to Abraham and his seed. Paul states that the mystery of godliness is: "God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, raised up into glory" (1 Tim 3:16). Elsewhere, he shows that it includes the "redemption through his [Jesus'] blood, [and] the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace" (Eph 1:7). The

relationship between Christ and his church is also a mystery (Eph 5:32), as is the resurrection. (1 Cor 15:51). Even the preaching of Jesus is “the revelation of the mystery” (Rom 16:25). All these mysteries surrounding his first advent were given to ancient Israelites. The Old Testament is filled with prophecies fulfilled in the life and ministry of Jesus.. Despite those revelations, Jewish leaders failed to recognize the Savior. While they possessed the scriptures, they did not understand them. One reason is that many prophecies were enigmatic. They were couched in symbols and their meaning was obscure. This is why Jesus himself had to expound to his disciples the meanings of all the scriptures that prophesied about him (Lu 24:28). Paul’s use of the word *mystery* is not that the prophecies were unknown but that they were not understood. Understanding a prophecy requires divine explanation. The testimony from the Book of Mormon is that Nephi, as well as other ancient American prophets, received God’s revelation and by divine enlightenment understood the prophecy. This statement is not contradicted by the Bible.

9. The cited Book of Mormon text (actually 2 Ne 5:29) does not say that no Jews will return to Palestine before their conversion to Christ. While many Jews now live in Israel, many more do not. Their gathering is not complete. The promise of the Book of Mormon, like the promise of the Bible, is that one day all Jews will be converted to Jesus. When that happens, all Jews will be gathered to the lands of their inheritance. The fact that all Jews have not yet gathered to the lands of their inheritance only shows that the prophecies promising their conversion have not yet been fully fulfilled.

10. The Book of Mormon was translated into English about 1830. At that time *Jesus* was an English word. The appearance of the word *Jesus* in an English translation of a book published in 1830 does not mean that the Book of Mormon plates contained a Greek word. If the writers of the Book of Mormon had used the Hebrew word and God had instructed Joseph to give a literal translation, the word would have appeared in the 1830 addition as *Joshua*. Then, readers might have found it more difficult to understand that the Book of Mormon writers were referring to Jesus and more easily have missed the message of the book. After all, God did not bring forth the American record for scholars, but for ordinary men and women, some of whom lived on the American frontier and some remain scattered among indigenous American peoples all across the continent. God chose the English word *Jesus* so that readers would not be confused.

11. While *Christ* is not a word found in the Old Testament, its Hebrew counterpart, Messiah which means *anointed*, appears frequently. Moses anointed Aaron (Lev 8:12) until oil flowed onto his robes (Ps 133:2). He also anointed Aaron’s sons. Samuel anointed both Saul (1 Sam 10:1) and David (1 Sam 16:13), while Zadok anointed Solomon (1 K 1:39). The frequent use of the word *anointed* in the Old Testament made clear to the early Christians that those scriptures contained the word *Christ*. Eusebius, who lived from 260 to 341, wrote, “Both Jesus and Christ were names honoued even by God’s beloved prophets of old,” adding, “For in describing God’s high priest, the most powerful of man, he [Moses] called him Christ, and on this high-priestly office, which in his eyes surpassed all preeminence among man, he bestows as a mark of honour and glory the name of Christ. It is clear then that he understood the divine import of the word

Christ” (The History of the Church, Bk 1, Ch 3). Elsewhere, he said, “Hence, you will find that those men, God’s beloved, were even honored with the appellation of Christ, according to the word which says of them: Touch not my Christ (Ps 105:15)” (Bk 1, Ch 4). The Old Testament references even taught the early Christians to recognize that the word *Christian* occurred in the sacred text. Eusebius wrote, “All these, whose righteousness won in them commendation, going back from Abraham himself to the first man, might be described as Christians” (Bk 1, Ch 4). Just as the Old Testament writers use the names Jesus and Christ before the Savior’s advent, Book of Mormon writers also used the names Jesus and Christ before the Savior’s incarnation. In the case of the Book of Mormon, God caused its translation into the English language in such a way that the common person could easily understand the meaning.

12. Jesus performed many miracles in Palestine. The cited Book of Mormon reference refers to events that Jesus did not show in Judea. Just before the Savior’s cited statement, Jesus gave his disciples the Holy Ghost in front of the multitude. That did not happen in Jerusalem. There, the Savior breathed the Holy Ghost on his disciples behind closed doors. After his public bestowal of the Holy Ghost on the twelve American disciples, Jesus prayed words that were so great and marvelous “that they cannot be written, neither can they be uttered by a man” (3 N 9:34). The Bible never records a time when Jesus prayed such marvelous words in Palestine. The Savior’s statement about the miracles that he could not perform in Judea because of a prevailing lack of faith among the Jews are the miracles surrounding the cited Book of Mormon statement. That statement is true. Jesus did not personally give the Holy Ghost to his disciples at Jerusalem in front of a multitude, nor did he pray unspeakable words in their hearing.

13. Larry implies that those born before Jesus were not saved, yet the Bible teaches that Abraham, who had the gospel preached a him, exercised faith and became righteous (Gal 3:6-9). James calls Abraham the friend of God (Jam 2:23). He, along with other Old Testament Christians, must have been saved. The Bible records that after Jesus died, “The graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many” (Mat 27:52-53). Presumably, some, if not most, of these resurrected saints lived and died before the Savior’s first advent. If these saints were resurrected, surely they are saved.

Larry also states that no one was baptized until Jesus died on the cross. To the contrary, the Bible implies that the Jews practiced baptism. Jesus asked Nicodemus, when the Pharisee inquired about how one was born again, “Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?” (Jn 3:10). The Savior’s inquiry implies that a master in Jewish law and custom should have known about baptism. Cyprian, who wrote about 255, confirmed that the Jews practiced baptism: “They [the heretics] differ in no respect from the baptism of the Jews, which they use in such a manner that in it, as if in the common vulgar laver, only external filth is washed away. But if it is spiritual, how can baptism be spiritual among those whom there is no Holy Spirit” (Epistle 74, paragraph 13). The Latin father is trying to show in this epistle that heretical baptisms, like the baptisms among the Jews, lacked the power contained in Christian baptism. Both lacked the presence of the Holy Spirit. Elsewhere, Cyprian specified, “Wherefore it is necessary that they should grant the Holy Spirit to be there, where they say that baptism is; or else

there is no baptism where the Holy Spirit is not, because there cannot be baptism without the Spirit” (Epistle 73, paragraph 5).

When Paul discovered that some believers claimed baptism without knowledge of the Holy Ghost, he re-baptized them, afterwards laying his hands on them for the gift of the Holy Ghost (Acts 19: 1-7). Likewise, the Book of Mormon records that when Jesus appeared, all were baptized even though some had previously received baptism. The reason is that baptisms prior to Jesus did not include an ordinance to receive the Holy Ghost. Nephi, who lived approximately 600 years before Jesus, specifically stated that in his time the Holy Ghost came without ordinance to those who were baptized (2 Nephi 13: 14-17). The Bible and the Book of Mormon agree. Baptism, the coming of the Holy Ghost, and salvation occurred among the elect prior to Jesus’ birth. Those who advocate differently, maintaining that salvation, baptism, and the gift of the Holy Ghost were neither taught nor practiced prior to the Savior’s incarnation, speak falsely. All these doctrines appear in the Old Testament, but, like most prophecies concerning Jesus, were written esoterically. They also appear in the Book of Mormon, but were translated plainly. The reason they are plainly stated in the Book Mormon is because Joseph Smith translated the ancient American scriptures after the Savior’s appearance in the flesh. The translation of the Book of Mormon is more than merely rendering American words into modern English. God caused the Palmyra Seer to write the revelation in terms applicable to the culture into which it was being translated. Since English and its corresponding culture of 1830 contained many plain explanations of Christ’s gospel, the translation of the Book of Mormon accounts prior to Jesus, which may have been written on the plates in more enigmatic language, were translated into plain English terminology.

Larry lists a second set of complaints that he calls Other Discrepancies. They are answered according to the number associated with each criticism as written in Larry’s letter.

1. The referenced Book of Mormon text in Helaman reads, “They that have done good, shall have everlasting life; and they that have done evil, shall have everlasting damnation” (Hel 4:73). The cited verse in John’s Gospel says, “They that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation” (John 5:29). While the two references carry the same meaning, they are not identical quotations. Another quotation comes from a later portion of the Book of Mormon: “If they be good, to the resurrection of everlasting life; and if they be evil, to the resurrection of damnation” (3 Ne 11:33). The context of this latter Book of Mormon verse suggests that it was said by Jesus. However it was not a direct quote, but the rendition of the Savior’s words by the book’s compiler, Mormon. The Book of Mormon states (3 N 12:1) that it contains only about one hundredths of the Savior’s words. The full record of his words are engraved on a larger account to which Mormon had access. It is possible, even probable, that the Savior’s words as written in the larger record are the words recorded in Helaman. This is because Mormon, who lived long after Jesus, also compiled Helaman and from the context is the person actually providing the quotation. If Mormon is quoting Jesus, he is merely repeating the words as they were written on records to which he had access. The presence of the cited quotation in Helaman is not an anachronism. Mormon, not Helaman, was quoting Jesus

2. The Book of Mormon contains a portion of Malachi's prophecy. Jesus quotes it and afterwards explains, "These scriptures which ye had not with you, the Father commanded that I should give unto you, for was wisdom in him that they should be given unto future generations" (3 Ne 11:29). The Savior's appearance among ancient Americans occurred after his crucifixion. More to the point, it occurred after Malachi. Just as Jesus quoted the Old Testament in Palestine, he quoted the Old Testament in ancient America. The presence of Malachi's prophecy in the Savior's teachings is not an inconsistency. Apparently, Larry confused 3 Nephi with 1 and 2 Nephi, and concluded that since the Nephi that wrote 1 and 2 Nephi lived about 560 years before Christ, the quotation in 3 Nephi, which was written after Christ's appearance in America, was written about 560 years before Christ. His confusion should not confuse others.

3. The Book of Mormon states that the Nephites observed the law of Moses as best they could. The trespass offerings, meat offerings, drink offerings, wave offerings, and peace offerings specified in the law of Moses were required to be performed by Levitical priests. No Levitical priests accompanied the Nephites. Because the Aaronic priesthood was unavailable, the Nephites could not make these offerings. The absence of Aaronic high priests and priests is one reason that the Nephites could not observe every aspect of the law of Moses.

4. The Mosaic law required that Passover, like the other Hebrew festivals, be observed in Jerusalem. Those Hebrews who could not journey to Jerusalem for every festival were expected to make a yearly pilgrimage to the holy city at Passover. This provision is the reason Jeroboam erected two golden calves, one at Bethel and one at Dan. He wanted his subjects to make their offerings within his kingdom instead of returning to Jerusalem. The Bible explains, "If this people go up to sacrifice in the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, then shall the heart of this people turn again unto their lord, even unto Rehoboam king of Judah, and they shall kill me" (1 K 12:27). Once the Nephites came to America, they could not go to Jerusalem each year to observe Passover. Neither could they celebrate any of the other Hebrew festivals there. Their inability to return to Jerusalem made it impossible for them to observe these festivals and provides another example of why the Nephites could not fully observe the law of Moses.

5. The conclusion that because the Book of Mormon records the use of precious metals by the first Nephites in America does not mean that the temple that they built could have contained all the "precious things" that Solomon's Temple included. Nephi's description does not detail the difference between the temple that they built and the Temple that they left in Jerusalem, nor does he explain how closely they followed the pattern. Did they have a Holy of Holies or a brazen altar? Did they make golden utensils, a crystal sea, or cherubim? The "precious things" missing from the temple built by the Nephites may have excluded precious features or ornaments included in Solomon's Temple. The Nephites were probably less skilled craftsmen than the artisans who constructed and installed the finer features in Jerusalem's Temple. Perhaps Nephi was also acknowledging that his people lacked the ability to turn the precious metals abundant in their environment into the precious features installed in Solomon's Temple.

Larry is jumping to the conclusion that since the first Nephites found precious metals in America and learned to use them (however limited their craftsmanship may have been), they must have been able to build a Temple as elaborate and opulent as what Solomon built.

Larry also concludes that the Nephites did not receive a divine command to build their temple. The Book of Mormon is not a full account. The fact that it does not record a command to build a temple does not mean that it was never received. At the same time, if God never commanded the Nephites to build a temple, their desire to build a less opulent rendition of Solomon's Temple as a source of inspiration and as a reminder of their religion is not necessarily wrong.

6. The date suggested for the invention of glass varies according to the source. Some date its discovery around 3000 BC. Egyptian glass beads from 2500 BC have been unearthed (<http://inventors.about.com/library/inventors/bleyeglass.htm>). The Jaredite history began at the destruction of the Tower of Babel. That event happened about 2200 BC, approximately 300 years after the Egyptian glass beads were made. Larry's complaint is unfounded.

7. Larry assumes that the "curse" that darkened the Lamanites' skin was a pigment change to their skin that is genetically passed to children. Another possibility, and one that is better supported from the ancient customs of some indigenous people of ancient America, is that the curse is the practice of tattooing the skin, sometimes the entire body. This practice is often the sign of a more barbaric people and is not a genetically-transmitted condition, but a socially-transmitted practice. If the "curse" referred to in the Book of Mormon is the practice of dyeing the body, then repentance, which would bring a change of action, would result in refraining from such markings. Then, the repentant would avoid the "curse" and their skin, or at least the skin of their children, would return to its previous fair condition.

8. The Book of Mormon does not specify the number of animals that the Jaredites brought with them, nor can we tell from the account the size of the barges. If a tree to which the writer refers was 50 feet in length and the barges were round, then the square feet of interior space would be about 1950 square feet. That would be more than enough room for 5 people per barge, along with supplies and sufficient animals for produce. The Pilgrims who first came to Plymouth packed 102 people between the decks of the Mayflower. At best, the square footage for all those people was only 2500. The ceiling was so low that they could not stand erect. They were not allowed on deck. They record that the stench was terrible, but they survived to land in America, losing only one of their number, who died from scurvy. In comparison, the Jaredite barges provided more living space per passenger and contained holes for ventilation and waste disposal. One hole was in the top and was probably opened for fresh air whenever the seas and weather allowed. The other was in the bottom and provided easy exit for all waste products. This information suggests that the Jaredites enjoyed a far more sanitary and refreshing ocean-crossing voyage than the Pilgrims.

9. The Book of Mormon was translated into English in 1830. By that date, *adieu* was an English word. The fact that the translator, whether he was Joseph Smith or the Holy Spirit, chose *adieu* to communicate the meaning of what was written in the ancient tongue has nothing to do with the reality of the plates or the legitimacy of their translation.

10. The gospel of Jesus Christ is most plainly stated in the Book of Mormon. Jesus defined his doctrine: “And whoso believeth in me, and is baptized, the same shall be saved; and they are they who shall inherit the kingdom of God. And whoso believeth not in me, and is not baptized, shall be damned. Verily, verily I say unto you, that this is my doctrine” (3 N 5:34-36). Later, he stated his gospel: “Behold I have given unto you my gospel, and this is the gospel which I have given unto you, that I came into the world to do the will of my Father, because my Father sent me; and my Father sent me that I might be lifted up upon the cross; and after that I had been lifted up upon the cross, I might draw all men unto me: that as I have been lifted up by men, even so should men be lifted up by the Father, to stand before me, to be judged of their works, whether they be good or whether they be evil; and for this cause have I been lifted up; therefore, according to the power of the Father, I will draw all men unto me, that they may be judged according to their works. And it shall come to pass, that whoso repenteth and is baptized in my name, shall be filled; and if he endureth to the end, behold, him will I hold guiltless before my Father, at that day when I shall stand to judge the world” (3 N 12:25-29). No other book, neither Bible nor Doctrine and Covenants, states the Savior’s gospel in such plain and concise language. For that reason, the Book of Mormon contains the fullest expression of the gospel. Descriptions of three glories in the resurrection are revealed in the Bible (Matt 13:43, Mark 4:8, 1 Cor 15:41, and 2 Cor 12:2, all from the King James Version) and in the Doctrine and Covenants (Sec 76, 85:5-6), but, while important to a fuller understanding about the resurrection, they are unnecessary to the gospel of salvation. Pre-existence, as taught in Utah Mormonism, and a chance for salvation after death are not tenets of either the Bible or Doctrine and Covenants.

11. In describing the weapons used by soldiers in the Book of Mormon, the author uses a word that was translated into English as *cimeters*. Critics claim that the word was not a word known in English until 500 AD. The Book of Mormon was not translated before 500 AD, but long afterwards – in 1830. By that date the word *cimeters* was an English word. Whatever the weapon was or the name the ancient Americans called it, the translator chose *cimeter* because it provided the best English description for what the ancient word meant.

12. The Book of Mormon does not state that the American Indians descended from the Jews. What the book says is that Jews came to America, in all probability Central America, and, after only a few generations, united with followers of Mulek, who was a descendant of Zedekiah, the last Jewish king in Judea. In all probability, the followers of Mulek came from Ireland and included Phoenician sailors and perhaps some natives of the Emerald Isle. Apparently, these people intermingled with remnants of the Jaredites, a culture known among archeologists as Olmecs, to form the people who eventually created the Mayan nations. Some Mayans may have migrated north and became part of

the North American Indian culture. Other American Indians probably have different ancestries. With such a dispersion of Jewish ancestry among the indigenous population of North America, it is not surprising that little if any of the Jewish language or genetic codes remain among modern American Indians.

13. The critics often show that prestigious archeological foundations and groups never use the descriptions in the Book of Mormon to find ruins or other ancient relics. This does not mean that no correlation exists between surviving ruins and geographical details recorded in the Book of Mormon. Those who have studied the subject have found a remarkable degree of similarity. Some prestigious archeological societies have stated that they have found no evidence of Christianity in ancient America, but that is not the view that the first Spaniards held. John Baldwin, in his book, *Ancient America, in notes on American archeology*, page 109, wrote, "This led the Catholic missionaries to assume that knowledge of Christianity had been brought to that part of America long before their arrival." Lord Kingsborough, an early investigator, reported in his book *Antiquities of Mexico*, volume 6, p 409, "It is so singular of fact that the Indians of Mexico and Peru should have believed with Christians in many doctrines which are held to be peculiarly and exclusively Christian and to constitute a line of demarcation between Christianity and all other religions that it appears a convincing proof that Christianity must, in early ages, have been established in America." While many present-day archeologists dismiss these conclusions, some dismiss the history of the Bible, claiming that no evidence exists for the reign of King David over Israel or the historicity of Jesus. They doubt the existence of Sodom and Gomorrah, as well as their cataclysmic, divine destruction. Their doubts do not undermine the accuracy of the Bible nor the archeological evidence unearthed to date. Likewise, the doubts held by some American archeologist concerning the accuracy or truthfulness of the Book of Mormon do not dismiss its authenticity or accuracy.

Attached to item 13 is a complaint about how the Book of Mormon explains what Jesus meant when he promised that John would tarry. A standard evangel view of the inerrancy of the Bible is presented. I address these two complains as items A and B.

A. Larry disbelieves that John, the Lord's beloved disciple, tarried as the Book of Mormon teaches. He justifies his doubt by stating that Jesus did not promise the apostle that he would not die, but that he would tarry until the Lord's return. Jesus has not returned as the angels promised when the Savior ascended after the resurrection. If Jesus was true to his word, then John should still be tarrying. That is exactly what the Book of Mormon states. To conclude that John has died is to imply that either Jesus has returned or that he made an errant statement.

B. Larry makes a concerted and lengthy defense of the Bible as the only scripture for Christians to accept. He points out that the Book of Mormon teaches 1) that "many plain and precious truths" were removed from it by the 'great and abominable church'; 2) that the Book of Mormon contains "the fulness of the gospel"; and that people "are a fool to believe that the Bible" is all people need, concluding that none of these assertions can be remotely true.

The preserved historical record clearly shows that passages of the Bible were removed during early Christian times. The Jews made about 18 alterations to the Old Testament in an attempt to hide the prophecies pointing to Jesus as the Messiah. Justin, Origin, and Hippolytus are three of the more vocal witnesses to these changes. Of those 18 modifications, 17 remain uncorrected in present-day copies of the Bible. In addition, early Christian writers complain of changes made by heretics. Some of those changes were copied into the accepted Christian text. Irenaeus states that an entire verse in 1 John was altered by Gnostics. Those who claim that the present-day text accurately present the word of God as first given are simply ignorant of what the scriptures used to contain.

As already shown, the Book of Mormon states a plain and precise definition of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The Bible does not. That is why the Book of Mormon contains the fulness of the gospel.

People are not foolish for believing that the Bible is the word of God. It is! People are foolish when they reject the word of God, whether it is the Bible or any other divine revelation. Jewish leaders claimed to believe the Old Testament and often quoted it, but they rejected the Savior along with his words. When they did, they acted foolishly. Their belief in the Old Testament did not make their dismissal of Jesus or their rejection of his words any less foolish. If the Book of Mormon is revelation from God, then its rejection is foolish.

Not one of Larry's claimed discrepancies carries a substantiative objection. After all the critics muster every imaginable accusation during almost two centuries of widespread disbelief, the Book of Mormon remains untarnished. Meanwhile, archeological and internal evidence accumulates, testifying that it is what it claims: sacred scripture detailing God's efforts with ancient Americans and divinely revealed in latter times through Joseph Smith, Jr.