

## PREFACE

This edition of the Old Testament is drawn from Joseph Smith's *New Translation of the Holy Bible*, commonly known as the *Inspired Version*. During talks that Joseph Smith gave in the Nauvoo era, there were several times when he said, "The Bible reads this way, but it ought to read that way," or "This is what it says, but a plainer meaning or plainer translation would be this." In 1867, the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (RLDS) first published Joseph's *New Translation* under the title *The Holy Scriptures, Translated and Corrected by the Spirit of Revelation*. When the Joseph Smith Translation (JST) was first published by the RLDS Church, the publishing committee made a number of editorial changes. Additionally, Joseph Smith made changes that did not get incorporated into their version. This Restoration Edition of the Old Testament encompasses every change Joseph Smith made, whether they were in the version published by the RLDS Church or not; also, all of the editorial changes that were inserted by their committee have been eliminated. Great effort has been taken to gather and correctly reflect exactly what Joseph Smith intended. However, Joseph's labor to recover and restore the text of the Bible was never completed, hindering this current effort to fully reflect his intentions.

All available sources of the Joseph Smith *Inspired Version* of the Bible have been used to align the text with Joseph's efforts to improve the text. In addition to the written edits made by Joseph, a number of other textual adjustments have been made; these adjustments were things that Joseph stated in public discourses that never became part of his written New Translation.

The following is a simple list of the updates and changes made to the Old Testament for this Restoration Edition of the scriptures:

- For the first time, the entire Book of Moses will be contained within the Book of Genesis, where it rightfully belongs, as Genesis 1:1–Genesis 5:12. Joseph's work of translation and revision of the Bible commenced with this particular book, and he received it by revelation, starting in June of 1830. Chapters of the Book of Moses were originally published in *The Evening and Morning Star* and the *Times and Seasons*. Later, portions of the book

were published in the 1851 edition of the LDS Pearl of Great Price, with a more complete edition printed in 1878. The RLDS Church included the Book of Moses in its 1864 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants and placed portions in its 1867 edition of the JST. The Book of Moses contains accounts of Adam, Noah, and Moses, as well as the Book of Enoch.

- The Song of Solomon has been removed, as Joseph declared that it was not an inspired writing.
- Archaic language updates to the Bible were approved by the Lord and have been restricted to updating words, phrases, and grammar that are no longer used in modern speech (*see Teachings & Commandments 157:15*).
- Some phrases and sentences have been modified in consequence of these word updates or when current wording made the meaning unclear. This was only permitted when the intent of the meaning was retained, as directed by the Lord (*ibid.*). Whenever meaning was questionable, the text was left alone. This meant that odd-sounding or incorrect text was not necessarily good justification for change. For example: *For in their anger they slew a man, and in their self-will they digged down a wall* (Genesis 12:21); *digged* has been updated to *dug*, but a more correct translation of *digged down a wall* would be an understanding that Simeon and Levi amused themselves by ham-stringing or laming cattle. That correction was not made.
- Particular attention has been paid to how words are used and their structure. For example, *first born* refers to birth order, whereas *firstborn* is titular and refers to the birthright; *every one* refers to all of the parts of a subset, whereas *everyone* refers to all people.
- The distinction of LORD/Lord and GOD/God have been let go and standardized to Lord and God.
- Name spellings have been standardized.
- Some old grammatical structures have been updated to make reading significantly easier, such as Verb>Noun>Object was changed to Noun>Verb>Object; for example: *Then answered they him* became *Then they answered him* (John 5:2). Some exceptions were made when the text needed to be respected more than it

needed to be updated, for example...*created I him; ...created I them* (Genesis 3:14).

- Chapters have been set by context rather than tradition, and verses have been expanded to paragraphs to allow the context to influence the reading of the text. This diminishes the divorcing of statements from their greater context, which often occurs when a scriptural text is poorly divided into smaller chapters and verses.
- Punctuation has been reduced, whenever possible, to allow multiple interpretations where the text suggests that possibility. Otherwise, modern grammatical rules have been applied.
- Some literary tools have been used to invite new or particular perspectives to be considered. For example, when referring to God, pronouns have all been rendered in lowercase to help reduce the historically-perceived distance between God and man. Words that can convey multiple meanings are largely rendered in lowercase, even when one of the meanings would demand capitalization, such as *earth*. Also, a significant number of titles have been rendered in lowercase to avoid elevating some men and positions above others.

Great effort has been put into honoring the work of Joseph Smith in this collection. Because numerous changes indicated in the Bible that Joseph used for his translation have never been included in any prior version of the JST, this should be considered the *most complete* JST currently available.