

RESTORATION SCRIPTURES ANNOUNCEMENT

March 18, 2017

Although what is to be announced may be viewed by most people as a modest achievement, I think history will eventually reflect this as one of the greatest steps forward after the deaths of Joseph and Hyrum.

What I'm about to announce will generate a considerable number of questions. To reasonably manage them, we've set up an email address where you can send your questions & suggestions. That address is: RESTORATIONSCRIPTURES2017@GMAIL.COM. Your questions will be reviewed this evening, and then tomorrow, a number of the major questions will be answered in front of this body. Any that aren't answered immediately will be replied to after the conference ends.

One of the first ways a dispensation becomes corrupted is by compromising the scriptures used by believers in that dispensation. Therefore when a new dispensation begins, one of the first orders of business for believers is to adopt a new set of scriptures which restore, insofar as it is possible, a correct version of the material they regard as scripture.

Just like the saints of the New Testament adopted a new body of teachings, the Book of Mormon people preserved and added to sacred writings. And while Joseph Smith lived, there were both corrections to old scripture and new scripture was added. Likewise for us, there is a need to remove errors, correct texts, and add to the body of scripture to guide us. This assembly - that is, this worldwide body of believers - must also decide what we accept as scripture. It is our right and sacred responsibility to address this need.

To that end, a new edition of the scriptures is proposed. They are divided into three volumes that have been produced through a unified effort by two independent bodies of volunteers, separately driven to approach the scriptures anew.

Initially the members of these two groups felt individually inspired to revisit the scriptures in an effort to prune away some of the uninspired alterations of man so that they might have a more correct version of scripture for their study. Over time, these individuals were led to one another, combining and harmonizing their efforts. What began as two wholly separate groups, each forming at the same time, both unknown to one another, resulted in separate projects that were completed *at the same time*, and what was learned from their independent efforts identified issues that needed to be addressed.

On the last day of 2016, less than 2 weeks after discovering each other, these two groups held a meeting, facilitated by Denver Snuffer, and determined to unify their efforts, each bringing to the table differing components for a greater outcome than either project possessed alone. On the first day of the new year, the two became one as work began, preparing what would become this *Restoration Edition* of the scriptures.

Moving forward, the united team has worked closely with each other, with the Lord, and with His servant, to produce a more accurate record that is true to the Lord's intent and to the Restoration. We are on His errand, not our own.

In September 1832, the Saints were condemned by the Lord and commanded to "repent and remember the new covenant, even the Book of Mormon and the former commandments which I have given them, not only to say, but to do according to that which I have written."

We often see this as the Lord rebuking the Saints for failing to *do* according to that which He had written, yet assume that the Saints had been correctly *saying* what He had written. But the Saints did not *say*, and have failed to accurately preserve, what the revelations God provided to them said, because their texts became corrupted. This means that the first step towards emerging from condemnation is to try and do exactly what is being accomplished through this scriptural work now underway. While the full purpose of this project was initially unknown, it has begun a best effort to "repent and remember the new covenant." If done right, we will at least accomplish the first step: recovering what the Lord provided so we can "say" what He has revealed. Then the challenges increase as we are called upon "to do according to that" which God has revealed.

A future conference must then be held with the intent of approving the final content of the *Restoration Edition* and sustaining that edition as canon for this assembly.

The following is a summary of what is contained in this *Restoration Edition* of the scriptures:

ALL THE SCRIPTURAL WORKS SHARE THE FOLLOWING CHANGES:

- Verse numbers have been eliminated and the text has been formatted into paragraphs. This provides greater context for individual passages and removes the isolation of a statement that is caused by restricting it to a verse. The only exception to individual numbering is in Proverbs where each proverb has been numbered.
- The chapters have been regrouped based on contextual themes rather than staying as they have existed historically. Our team recognized that since chapters were originally organized by man and not by God, we were free to reorganize them. Some paragraphs in some of the books have been combined or divided as well, based on their context. However, in the Book of Mormon, chapters were designated by Joseph Smith himself and those have been preserved.
- Very minor standardization and spelling correction has taken place. Care was taken to respect the text.
- Punctuation can clarify, but it can also restrict. Therefore punctuation has been significantly reduced in all of the volumes in order to free up the text for greater possible interpretation.

INDIVIDUALLY

VOLUME 1 IS THE OLD TESTAMENT

- Joseph Smith's *New Translation of the Bible* (the JST) is the base text.
- *The Song of Solomon* had been removed since Joseph indicated that it is not an inspired text.

- Proverbs now includes *Proverbs of Joseph Smith, Jr.* and *Proverbs of Denver Snuffer, Jr.*

VOLUME 2 CONSISTS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT AND THE BOOK OF MORMON

- In a letter to the “brethren in Zion” on 21 April, 1833, Joseph Smith stated, “...it is not the will of the Lord to print any of the new translation in the *Star*, but when it is published it will all go to the world together in a volume by itself, and the New Testament and *The Book of Mormon* will be printed together.”
- Joseph Smith’s *New Translation of the Bible* is the base text for the New Testament.
- The 1840 edition of *The Book of Mormon* is used as the base text and was already formatted into paragraphs. This version was chosen because it contains corrections given by Joseph Smith to what was originally published in 1830 and 1837.

VOLUME 3 CONSISTS OF THE DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS & PEARLS OF GREAT PRICE

- The new D&C returns the *Lectures on Faith* to its original place, along with those sections and revelations identified as coming through Joseph Smith. These have been painstakingly compared to the manuscripts found in the Joseph Smith Papers Project:
 - The order of the sections has been restored to thematic groupings rather than simply being presented chronologically. These groupings are: Restoration, Organization and Worship, and Revelations to Individuals.
 - Several LDS sections have been removed for the following reasons:
 - Sections 2 & 13 are extracts from *JS-History* and are therefore redundant.
 - Section 20 was written by Oliver Cowdery and constitutes church articles and covenants used to begin to structure the early church organization. They no longer apply.
 - Section 101 on Marriage, from the original 1835 Kirtland Edition, is not being reintroduced because it is not a product of either Joseph or Hyrum. However, pertinent points are included in another area.
 - Section 110 is completely unverifiable as a true revelation/vision. The three individuals with some information about the section, Joseph Smith, Oliver Cowdery and Warren Cowdery, left no statement or explanation about Section 110. Further, in listing those who visited with them in their respective testimonies, neither Joseph Smith nor Oliver Cowdery mention Elijah as having come. Finally throughout the Nauvoo time frame, including a month before his death, Joseph Smith spoke of Elijah’s return as a future and not a past event.
 - Section 129 was a struggle. Initially it was revised by taking the shorthand notes from Joseph Smith’s journal and fleshing them out with bridge words and phrases to make them into comprehensible sentences. However, once attempted, that effort was abandoned and the section was completely removed for the following reasons:
 1. The shorthand is just sketchy enough that some of the bridge wording is clearly debatable.
 2. The instruction we have through the Book of Mormon is sufficient on its own to allow us to discern evil spirits.
 3. This section, if relied upon alone, is apparently not sufficient to defend against lying spirits.
 - Section 134 is a declaration on laws & government written by either Oliver Cowdery or Sidney Rigdon, not Joseph Smith.
 - Section 135 is simply the announcement of the martyrdom of Joseph and Hyrum.

- Section 136 is from Brigham Young.
 - Section 138, Joseph F. Smith's vision of the dead, is restricted by copyright and cannot be used.
 - Official Declarations 1 & 2 are declarations made by a different church.
- Several LDS sections have been revised for the following reasons:
 - Section 107 was an amalgamation of content, with only one portion traceable to a revelation before the 1835 publication of the D&C. That portion has been preserved. The 1835 published version bears hallmarks of revisions by the hand of man. Therefore only a portion has been extracted, and then added to by revelation, to explain the establishment of dispensations and reflect the direction of this current dispensation. It is placed as the last section in the new D&C.
 - Sections 121, 122 and 123 came from a letter written from Liberty Jail and are presented within the context of the entire letter written by Joseph Smith.
 - Section 132 on celestial marriage is now represented as it is posted by Denver Snuffer on his blog, containing the redactions suggested there to make the document internally consistent and reflect the earliest descriptions of the original.
 - More than 40 new sections have been added for the following reasons:
 - Nearly all of these new sections are verified revelations given through Joseph Smith that simply were never sustained as scripture.
 - Restoration Edition Section 97 is President Hyrum Smith's epistle to the church.
 - The new D&C also includes an insert in the Appendix called A PROPHET'S PREROGATIVE, an example of an extremely valuable method of comparative study that can significantly help your understanding. The example used is Isaiah 29, and includes an introductory explanation.
 - *The Pearl of Great Price* - has had its name changed to *Pearls of Great Price*, both reflecting and implying further expansion, and the following portions have been removed, revised or added for the following reasons:
 - (A Proposed Set of) *Governing Principles* is a rewritten statement of principles and practices - similar to LDS Section 20 - that reflects this assembly's efforts to preserve the Restoration. This statement is not yet completed. It requires additional inspired input from you.
 - *The Articles of Faith* have been replaced by *The Wentworth Letter* that they were copied from, in order to provide context to those articles.
 - *Joseph Smith - History* has been slightly expanded to the same extent as it was originally published in the *Times and Seasons*.
 - *The Book of Moses* and *Joseph Smith - Matthew* have been removed because they already exist in the New Translation of the Bible and are redundant.
 - *The Book of Abraham* remains as is.
 - *The Revelation of the Testimony of St. John* - as given through Denver Snuffer, Jr. - has been added. It will not replace the existing *Testimony of St. John* found in the New Testament, but will stand as its own book.

- *Continuing Revelation* - is a section which consists of visions and revelations given through Denver Snuffer, Jr. to be made public. This portion of the *Pearls of Great Price* is expected to be the place where new revelation will be added as it is received, which, you will see, has already happened.
- A *Glossary of Fundamental Terms* is at the end of the final volume. Currently it's blank, except for a single sample definition. We encourage all of you to consider emailing us terms for the glossary using the following criteria:
 1. The definition must be scriptural, not your opinion.
 2. The terms need to be those that are critical to seeing things correctly. LDS and Christian culture have so skewed many religious terms as to render them not just wrong, but spiritually dangerous in that they point people in the wrong direction. This will not become a "bible dictionary," but is an attempt to explain words as the Lord has intended, not "Gospel speak" or Mormonese.

Given that this body must declare to the Lord what records they intend to hold sacred, electronic Preview copies of these volumes of the *Restoration Edition* are available as of right now for download, in PDF, ebook and other requested formats, from www.scriptures.info, an online library that has been established for materials pertinent to the Scriptures. There are a number of interesting tools and features that are being developed for this site, but now is not the time to go into them. However, I will say that *scriptures.info* is specifically being built with tools to aid in comparative study. That's why the Isaiah 29 example is at the back of the D&C - to kickstart you. So take a tour of that important site on your own. Those of you who may have content pertinent to the scriptures that you wish to contribute, those of you who are looking for research material or tools, and those of you who are just curious, be sure to visit the ABOUT page on that site for direction.

A hard copy of each volume is already available for purchase on Amazon.com and Amazon Europe. Search *Restoration Scriptures Preview* or the title of each work and you should find Vol. 1, 2 and 3. This copy is NOT formatted completely - it still has minor flaws in it. In fact, if you are happy to use the electronic copies that are available, you may want to wait until the scriptures have been sustained and scrubbed before buying a copy, as they may change. A final version will be produced that incorporates any changes sustained by this assembly and has been scrubbed of formatting errors.

Additionally, since Amazon won't allow us to sell the copies at cost, the minimal royalties from the copies sold will be donated to the temple fund.

A quick side note: The reason the Creative Commons copyright for these scriptures is in my name is only because I am acting as the public face of this project. There are dozens of people that have contributed to it besides me.

A Research version of these scriptures is partially completed and available for download on www.scriptures.info as well. Unlike the printed scriptures, this Research version will remain in electronic form - at least for now - and will differ in the following ways from the print copies:

- Though retaining the new chapter groupings, all of the books have LDS chapter and verse numbers inserted to allow for easier research and for comparison with other versions of scripture.
- The JST and D&C include both strikethroughs and additions visible in their original manuscripts.

- *The Book of Mormon* footnotes all significant changes from the editions that were published during Joseph Smith's lifetime. Any editions after his death were not approved by him and therefore have been ignored.
- Items removed from the printed copy can be preserved in this copy for research purposes, including, for example, section 129.
- Items of historical or educational significance deemed helpful may be added to this version. Recognize that the Research version is intended to expand details of the sustained scriptures, not supplant them.

We do have plans for a fancier set of scriptures being produced with bible stock paper, leather or faux leather covers, and so forth. That process is already underway, but anyone familiar with the process is invited to email us and lend a hand. I'm not sure of a time frame other than we'd like to have those available by the end of the year. But we won't print any until after the sustaining conference.

For those who honestly can't afford around \$45 to purchase a set of these scriptures and can't use electronic copies for now, if you have a local fellowship you meet with, ask them if they can provide you with a set. If they can't meet your need, please use the email address given to request a set. We have several free sets available for the truly needy that are here at the conference. If there are those in need who could not attend, but would like a copy, please place a request at that same email address and a copy can be sent to you or your local fellowship.

THE NEXT CONFERENCE, which has been mentioned during this announcement, will be held in Boise, ID, Labor Day weekend, September 2-3, with the intent of approving the final content for the Restoration Edition of the scriptures and sustaining that edition as canon for this assembly. Today is the "open to public view" step of the process. Our team simply got the ball rolling. You will now have approximately 5 months to digest, critique and react to what the Lord has offered.

Please carefully consider what is being offered to us. Zion is the Lord's work. So getting it will not depend on the goodness or desires of men and women, but on their submission to the Lord, who intends to accomplish it. WE can't force it, cause it, bring it, or hope it into existence. What we can do is submit to the Lord in a way that encourages Him to continue to use us for His purposes. There is no need for an immediate, knee-jerk reaction to this announcement. You will have time to consider all of it before making a decision.

No sustaining or debate of the scriptures will take place during this conference. But your input is necessary and required. An email address has been provided specifically for that purpose. Please use RESTORATIONSCRIPTURES2017@GMAIL.COM to send in questions you have about what has been announced and provided. There likely won't be enough time tomorrow to answer all the questions that get sent in, but any that aren't addressed during tomorrow's Q&A session will be replied to. But there's no rush. If you have an immediate, burning question, please send it in quickly so that we have time this evening to prepare responses for tomorrow. Also, this same email address will be used over the next 6 months for additional questions and ongoing feedback in preparation for a sustaining conference. So if you don't have a question or suggestion until June, you can still

submit it and it will be addressed. But please refrain from pointing out formatting issues unless it is alarming. We will be combing through the books again to find them all.

If there's a particular issue in these scriptures that is critical, in your opinion, email your concern and your reasoning to support your argument. It will be posted for others to view and consider. If you think that there is something else that belongs in this edition, feel free to email that suggestion as well. For example you might feel inspired about a principle that needs to be added to the Governing Principles statement. However, realize that what this edition now contains has been under the Lord's direction for the past year and a half and He has provided, at times, direct input. And there is a rigorous set of questions in the GUIDELINES on *scriptures.info* to assist you in determining whether you should submit new material.

The PRELIMINARY SUBMISSION & CRITIQUE PROCESS works like this:

1. Questions, suggestions, criticism and requests get submitted to restorationscriptures2017@gmail.com.
2. From the end of the St. George conference until the 4th of July, a SUBMISSIONS LIST will be maintained on www.scriptures.info.
 - a. The items on the list will come from emails submitted.
 - b. That document will list the specific items that have been pointed out as concerns to be removed, modified or added to the *Restoration Edition*. The points made by the submitter will also be given. Please be aware that your reasoning will be significantly refined if you submit a long explanation, so keep things brief. And make sure that what you submit is scriptural, not simply personal opinion.
 - c. If you have very strong feelings about any of the items on the list, email us and let us know. If you're fine with what has been proposed today or if you don't care one way or the other about the items on the list, don't email us. Only those who are strongly opposed to an existing item or strongly in favor of adding or amending an item should email us during those first few months.
 - d. The SUBMISSIONS LIST will be updated as needed.
3. As of the 4th of July, a final SUBMISSIONS LIST will be posted which also includes the total number of emails for/against an item. We will then wipe the slate clean.
 - a. From then on, no new items will be added to the list.
 - b. People who are strongly advocating or opposing can again email their vote about the item(s).
4. That new voting period runs from the 4th of July to the end of August.
 - a. A final tally will then be taken.
 - b. If there is no significant number of emails in opposition of an existing item or advocating a missing item or amendment, that item will be dropped.
 - c. And if you email us 6 times, it still only counts as one vote for any item.

Benefits of this process are:

1. We are using simple, easy to reach technology. Anyone can go online to do this - even if they have to go to a library or a friend to do so. And this can be done from anywhere in the world.
2. By providing the reason why an item is listed, opposing voices get the chance to be heard and perhaps to persuade.

3. Doing 2 rounds of voting gives everyone the chance to be persuaded over time and therefore find confidence of their final decision.
4. Everyone gets an opportunity to be involved if they feel so inclined.

2 CRITICAL POINTS:

1. Remember that what is important is the message, not the messenger, so focus on the content of this gift, not how it's delivered.
2. The most important lesson for our group was expressed in the course of our emailing back and forth when someone said this: *I would rather submit to the decision of the group than insist that my view be followed. For me harmony between brethren is more important than getting what I think best to be followed. I believe harmony can lead to much greater things than can merely enforce[ing] even a correct view. I know how difficult it is to have a correct view, because of how often I have been corrected by the Lord. Sometimes I am humiliated by my foolishness when the Lord reproves me. Humiliation can lead to humility, but my experience is that the humiliation is accompanied by shame, whereas humility can proceed with a clear conscience. My experience with others leads me to conclude that if we can have one heart first, eventually we can likewise come to have one mind. But if we insist on having one mind at the outset, we may never obtain one heart together.*

So I make a request to all of you - from all of us: Kaai sent the team an email 3 weeks ago, just after we had submitted the final volume to our formatter. We had begun to consider this next step. So he wrote: *One of the ways to hopefully mitigate the sheer volume of emails will be to encourage fellowships to meet together and come up with a consolidated list of questions/suggestions/concerns/etc... If there are individuals not associated with a fellowship, then they'll follow the standard process [on their own]. If they make it a matter of prayer and forethought, first as individuals, then families, then fellowships, and submit in that manner, we may be able to keep the volume manageable. It will allow fellowships to meet together for a directed purpose and importune the Lord for revelation. It will draw them closer together in the bonds of love as indicated in the General Principles preamble and make them accountable to each other for the questions raised. I think it also reinforces the manner in which the Lord would want us to approach any challenge or issue presented.*

Please consider these points as you determine what you choose to advocate in the scriptures.

Given the experiences many have had with organized religion, it's only natural for some people to have an aversion to "official" scriptures. But these volumes are not set in stone; rather, they are presented to you in the appropriate manner, and with sufficient time for the group's collective review, critique, support, and, possible sustaining. The Lord deals with His people by covenant; accepting these scriptures as comprising the history, teachings, doctrine, and covenants of our faith represents another step in our collective journey towards having our hearts bound together. And this should remain a labor of love and devotion to God. Those involved in this work do not present these volumes with any other expectation than that we are to be called to answer to every principle

advanced, and we hope and pray that this continued effort to preserve and honor the word of the Lord will be accepted by Him, and by you.

In closing, I'd like to read a journal entry from one of our team members from Feb 18th:

I checked the scripture email and saw that volume 2 had been formatted and is now ready to print. Upon opening the file and viewing the document I was filled with joy and with the Spirit and was given a prophecy by the spirit saying,

“These scriptures will go to all the world and teach every nation, kindred, tongue, and people, to bring in the children of Israel from the four corners of the earth.”