

PALMYRA AND JERUSALEM

JOSEPH SMITH'S SCRIPTURAL TEXTS AND THE WRITINGS OF FLAVIUS JOSEPHUS

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What has Athens to do with Jerusalem?

Or, the academy with the Church?

Tertullian, *Praescr.* 7

THE publication of the Book of Mormon in the spring of 1830 and Joseph Smith's claims to divine revelation brought forth new and unique teachings foreign to traditional interpretations of the Bible or established Christianity. There have been numerous attempts to uncover the sources behind such material. Since many have thought from the outset that less supernatural explanations must surely account for this material, a diverse range of sources have been marshaled to account for one peculiarity or another in Joseph's works and thought.¹ In fact, a kind of general source criticism has almost emerged in the field that has sought to bring to

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light—or, in the hostile treatments, expose—the putative sources Joseph drew upon.² More recently, several writers have suggested that one source that may have influenced Joseph, especially with respect to his extrabiblical writings like the Joseph Smith Translation, Book of Moses, Book of Abraham, and even the Book of Mormon, is the first-century Jewish historian and apologist Flavius Josephus.³ While this suggestion has been made on a number of different occasions, it has never been rigorously pursued or investigated. To this end, the present paper seeks to thoroughly consider the potential influence the writings of Josephus could have had on Joseph and whether or not they may have left any discernible influence on the scriptural texts he produced. To conduct this investigation, this paper will proceed in the following order: first, it will begin by defining the scope of the comparison and by offering some clarifying remarks about Josephus and Joseph Smith; second, this paper will elucidate the reception of Josephus in early America (eighteenth and nineteenth centuries) and in early Mormonism; third, this paper will closely compare Josephus's and Joseph's treatment of certain biblical stories and figures to determine whether there is cause to think that Josephus directly influenced Joseph and that the latter directly conscripted material from the former.

Scope of Analysis

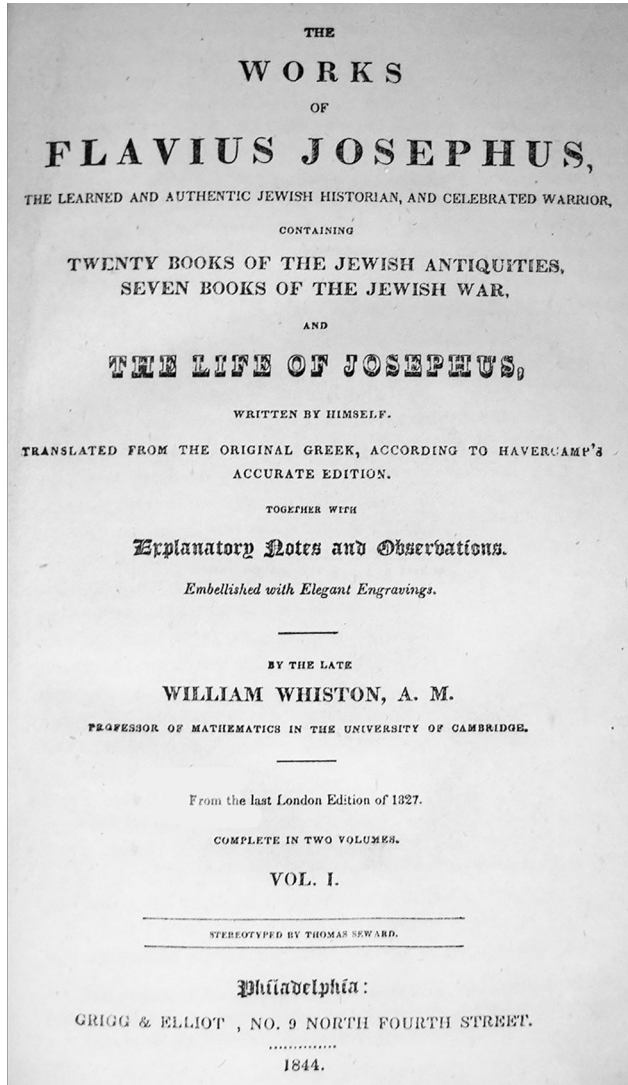
As a necessary preamble, a few words need to be said about Josephus and the scope and nature of the present analysis. Josephus, known by his *tria nomina* as Titus Flavius Josephus, was born in AD 37 in Jerusalem and died sometime circa AD 100 in Rome. A Jewish priest descended from the Hasmonean Dynasty, Josephus is best remembered for his four surviving works that have proved enormously popular among Christians for the past nineteen hundred years: *Jewish War*; *Jewish Antiquities*; *Life*; and *Against Apion*. His first two works (*Jewish War* and *Jewish Antiquities*) have proved

to be the most influential since in them he recounts Jewish history of his own time, as well as of previous ages, and includes a number of stories and sources previously unknown. In particular in his *Jewish Antiquities*, which contains twenty books, he determines to recount the history of the Jewish people from the beginning up to his own time (i.e., end of the first century). In the first eleven books of this work, he basically retells the biblical narrative contained in the Old Testament from Genesis through Nehemiah. However, while Josephus promises at the outset that in his retelling he would not depart from the narrative in the slightest, and that he would with fidelity and accuracy retell the story, no sooner does Josephus begin the work than he begins to depart from the biblical narrative.⁴ At times he adds numerous details not found in the Bible and at other times changes the biblical stories so drastically that they are hardly recognizable. Furthermore, he adds entire stories that have no biblical precedent at all, or at other times excises passages as though they never belonged to the biblical account. This initial description of Josephus's handling of the biblical text in his *Jewish Antiquities* ought to call to mind some of Joseph Smith's biblical revisions where he either added, omitted, or otherwise altered select passages.

Josephus in America and Early Mormonism

Though the name Josephus may seem foreign to many people today, even to persons "well-churched," between the sixteenth and early twentieth centuries in England, Europe, and America, the works of Josephus were second in popularity only to the Bible itself.⁵ If Puritans arriving in New England brought with them any book besides the Bible, it was Josephus,⁶ and in fact among the Puritans it was the only book aside from the Bible that was permitted to be read on the Lord's Day (Sunday).⁷ It was the second book of Jewish authorship (after the Bible) to be published in colonial America in 1722 and was among the initial forty volumes contributed by the clergymen who founded the

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The Works of Flavius Josephus. *Courtesy of the International Museum of Religion.*
Collegiate School of Connecticut in 1701, now Yale University.⁸ In addition, the popularity of Josephus's works can be seen in the fact that they were often cited by both sides of the debate in the growing

slavery controversy.⁹ Owing to the popularity of Josephus during this time, he is sometimes referred to as a kind of “fifth evangelist,”¹⁰ and his works were often found in libraries or church bookshops during the period.¹¹

Most persons of the time engaged with Josephus not via the original Greek text or a Latin translation, but were entirely dependent on the English translation of the day.¹² The first English translation of Josephus to appear was made in 1602 by Thomas Lodge (1558–1625).¹³ Enormously popular in the seventeenth century, this translation underwent multiple re-editions, with a new edition being printed about every decade.¹⁴ In 1692 another English translation was produced by Sir Roger L’Estrange (1616–1704), and by the end of the following century, between 1773 and 1775, it had begun to circulate in America as it was published in New York and Philadelphia.¹⁵ However, the most popular and enduring English edition of Josephus was printed in 1737 and was translated by William Whiston (1667–1752).¹⁶ Whiston, a professor of mathematics at Cambridge and the successor of Newton, was also a gifted linguist who had a keen interest in theology and church history. In December of 1734, at the age of sixty-seven, Whiston began translating Josephus and, remarkably, by January of 1736 had completed the entire project. Published under the title *The Genuine Works of Flavius Josephus the Jewish Historian*, Whiston’s translation immediately won widespread acceptance as the “received text” of Josephus since the translation boasted on the title page that it had been translated from the original Greek, instead of the Latin or French, and Whiston guaranteed in the preface that Josephus’s testimony of Jesus was authentic. As a result, Whiston’s translation was thought by many to be tantamount to sacred scripture and a natural companion to the King James Version of the Bible. As there have been no less than 217 reprintings of Whiston’s translation of Josephus since 1737, a rate of about one every 1.25 years, one can readily see the enduring popularity of this translation.¹⁷

Given the popularity of Whiston's edition, it is no surprise that by the latter part of the eighteenth century this was the most common English translation of Josephus in circulation in America. Thomas Jefferson, among other prominent Americans, possessed a copy of Whiston's 1737 edition of Josephus in his personal library.¹⁸ Likewise, the personal copy of Josephus owned by Hyrum Smith was the 1830 imprint of Whiston.¹⁹ As one begins to zero in directly on Joseph Smith and possible points of contact with Josephus, it becomes evident that Joseph Smith could have had direct access to the writings of Josephus very early on. It may be noted here that the Manchester Rental Library, formally established sometime between 1815 and 1817 and located within five miles of the Smith family farm in Palmyra, possessed a copy of Whiston's six-volume 1806 edition of Josephus's works.²⁰ Furthermore, from newspaper advertisements from Palmyra during the 1820s and early 1830s, it is evident that copies of Josephus were periodically advertised for sale in the local bookshops.²¹ Years later, after the foundation of the Church's first library in Nauvoo in the early 1840s, a catalog of sorts existed for the books that were donated by different Church members.²² While Joseph Smith's personal donation did not include the works of Josephus, a number of members did donate personal copies of Josephus,²³ and depending on how the titles in the catalog are interpreted, the works of Josephus may have been the most popular book in the library.²⁴ In the later Seventies Library in Nauvoo, additional donations of Josephus's works were made by Isaac Allred and William Clayton.²⁵

In early Mormon literature, the works of Josephus are first invoked primarily in the Church's newspapers and in the earliest references are typically employed to help buttress certain claims about the validity of Mormonism. In the earliest reference, in the *Evening and Morning Star* from December 1832, Josephus is cited along with other sources to establish that the ancient Hebrews kept important

records on plates of gold or other mediums like brass, copper, or wood.²⁶ In a December 1835 issue of the *Messenger and Advocate*, Josephus is cited again in an open letter by Oliver Cowdery, explaining some of the vignettes preserved on the Joseph Smith papyri and how they allegedly related to certain extrabiblical stories preserved in Josephus.²⁷ Specifically, Cowdery relates how one vignette included a picture of “Enoch’s Pillar,” which contained the prophecies of Adam concerning the destruction of the world by water and then by fire. This pillar was also mentioned in Josephus.²⁸ In a July 1837 issue of the *Messenger and Advocate*, Josephus is mentioned in passing as part of a larger argument for ancient apostasy.²⁹ Later that year he is cited in the *Elders’ Journal of the Church* because he preserves a description of the Urim and Thummim.³⁰ In 1840 he was cited in the June edition of the *Times and Season* as a witness to the Book of Jasher,³¹ and the following year in the July *Times and Seasons* article “The Location of Zion, or the New Jerusalem,” he is quoted extensively in connection with a description of the fall of Masada.³²

From these early references to Josephus in LDS newspapers, a few interesting observations emerge. The first is that there is a clear tendency to invoke Josephus when he provides testimony to distinctly Mormon claims (e.g., gold plates, Jewish apostasy, extrabiblical records, etc.). The second is that while it appears that at least a few early Mormons were reading Josephus in some depth since they were marshaling him as evidence for certain claims, upon closer examination, it becomes clear that the early references seem to have been taken from secondary studies about Josephus rather than being taken directly from Josephus himself. For example, in the 1832 reference from the *Evening and Morning Star* that alleges that Josephus mentioned records kept on gold plates, the whole quote is taken directly from Richard Watson’s biblical dictionary published in 1832 even though no citation is given.³³ Similarly, the next reference from the July 1837 issue of the *Messenger and Advocate*, where Josephus

is cited as part of an argument for ancient apostasy, is lifted directly from Joseph Milner's 1812 *The History of the Church of Christ*,³⁴ and the reference in the *Times and Seasons* where Josephus is cited as a witness to the Book of Jasher is taken directly from a newspaper article published elsewhere.³⁵ Lastly, the longest discussion of Josephus from the July 1841 issue of the *Times and Seasons* is taken verbatim from Henry Hart Milman's *The History of the Jews*.³⁶ The distinct impression one gets from the newspapers is that most early Mormons were not reading Josephus directly but were relying on secondary literature like commentaries, Bible dictionaries, or popular theological works for information about him.

Turning now to Joseph Smith, there are three direct references showing that he was acquainted with the works of Josephus. The first, which will be treated in more detail later in the paper, comes from the journal of early Church member George Laub in an entry dated April 13, 1843. On this day Laub commented that in a long sermon given by Joseph that touched on different aspects of Genesis, he made a reference to Josephus when discussing the giants that appeared in the days of Noah.³⁷ The next reference comes from later in the year in a letter addressed to James Arlington Bennet dated November 13, 1843, and published in the November 1843 edition of the *Times and Seasons*.³⁸ In this rather pretentious letter, wherein Joseph tries to impress Bennet with his language skills and knowledge of various ancient authors, he makes a passing reference to Josephus among other ancient writers.³⁹ The third and final reference comes from Joseph's time in Carthage Jail in June of 1844. According to an account given by Willard Richards and preserved in the *History of the Church*, on the fateful day of June 27, 1844 Hyrum Smith read extracts of Josephus to Joseph, John Taylor, and Willard Richards.⁴⁰ While the references are few, they do show that at least by the early 1840s Joseph was somewhat acquainted with the works of Josephus.

Josephus and Joseph Smith

The biblical territory most ripe for a comparison between Josephus's and Joseph Smith's alterations comprises the book of Genesis and to a lesser extent Exodus through Deuteronomy. The reason Genesis offers especially fertile ground is that, while Joseph Smith's alterations of the Bible span the entire Old Testament, they are most pronounced in Genesis. These alterations may be found not only in the JST, but in the Book of Moses and the Book of Abraham. After Genesis, the JST alterations are generally less numerous and less pronounced. While the JST of Isaiah and Psalms represents exceptions,⁴¹ Josephus includes very little material from either book in his *Jewish Antiquities* since he is most concerned with retelling biblical narrative, and so no real comparison can be made here.⁴²

In comparing Josephus's approach to the Bible with Joseph Smith's for evidence of influence, it is worthwhile to first look at their handling of the creation accounts preserved in Genesis 1–2. In a number of respects Josephus's rendering of Genesis 1 and 2 is rather unexceptional and generally follows the biblical text with only minor alterations.⁴³ Perhaps the most apparent difference between the two is that Josephus's account lacks a number of details included in the biblical account. Another significant revision is that Josephus in fact informs his audience that he is giving an adumbrated account. He intends in another treatise to address the issues in some length since it would require an extended "philosophical" treatment.⁴⁴ For the present purposes what is most notable about Josephus's terse account is how he renders the first verse of the Bible. Instead of the traditional explanation that God simply "created" or "made" the heavens and the earth, Josephus instead describes creation as an act of "founding" or "building," and his Greek rendering differs from the Septuagint (LXX) rendering.⁴⁵ The significance here is that Josephus is apparently not describing creation as an *ex nihilo* act but more appropriately as an *ex aliquo* act.⁴⁶ That is, Josephus is interpreting

the first verse of the Bible to be understood as an act of “ordering” rather than an act of “creation.”⁴⁷ As for Joseph Smith, it is interesting to note that as his idea of creation evolved, he came to the conclusion that creation was also an act of ordering. This is perhaps most explicit in the Book of Abraham creation account, where the heavens and the earth are “organized” or “ordered” and where creation is depicted as some kind of materialistic refashioning.⁴⁸ In the King Follet discourse, given April 7, 1844, Joseph builds upon this point and goes so far as to argue that the first verses in the Bible, properly understood in the Hebrew, meant that God did not create the world but that he organized the world out of pre-existing matter:

Now, I ask all the learned men who hear me, why the learned doctors who are preaching salvation say that God created the heavens and the earth out of nothing. They account it blasphemy to contradict the idea. If you tell them that God made the world out of something, they call you a fool. The reason is that they are unlearned but I am learned and know more than all the world put together—the Holy Ghost does, anyhow. If the Holy Ghost in me comprehends more than all the world, I will associate myself with it.

You ask them why, and they say, “Doesn’t the Bible say He created the world?” And they infer that it must be out of nothing. The word create came from the word BARA, but it doesn’t mean so. What does BARA mean? It means to organize; the same as a man would organize and use things to build a ship. Hence, we infer that God Himself had material to organize the world out of chaos.⁴⁹

While this may suggest that Joseph Smith is simply indebted to Josephus, since both basically take the same novel approach to the first verse of the Bible, it is not that straightforward. In Whiston’s translation of Josephus, he misses this nuance entirely and simply translates Josephus’s rendering of the first verse of the Bible in accordance with established tradition: “In the beginning God created the

heaven and the earth.” Additionally, every other English translation of Josephus at the time rendered the passage similarly.⁵⁰ It has only been with the advent of modern scholarship on Josephus, beginning in the twentieth century, that this subtlety in Josephus’s interpretation of Genesis 1:1 has been fully recognized.⁵¹

Despite this similarity, when it comes to the creation account as a whole, Josephus’s and Joseph Smith’s respective accounts are marked more by differences than similarities. As noted previously, if there is any tendency in Josephus’s rendering of the first few chapters of the Bible, it is to excise and summarize;⁵² on the other hand, Joseph tends to greatly expand the biblical text with substantial additions. This expansion appears in the very first chapter of Genesis that is framed in the JST/Book of Moses as a revelation given to Moses about God’s purpose for creation before the accounts contained in Genesis 1–2 are ever introduced.⁵³ Likewise, in Joseph Smith’s extrabiblical material in the early chapters, a prominent role is given to Satan, be it to tempt Moses, Adam and Eve, or their posterity, whereas Satan never figures once in the entire narrative of Josephus.⁵⁴

As one examines the differences in more detail, no consistent pattern emerges. At certain times when Josephus departs from the biblical narrative Joseph Smith will stick closely to the biblical account, such as in Genesis 2:19–20, which reports that Adam personally named all of the animals, on which the JST/Book of Moses and the Book of Abraham concur,⁵⁵ but which Josephus will change so that God himself names all of the animals instead of Adam.⁵⁶ Consider also Genesis 3:14–19, in which God curses the serpent and then Adam and then Eve. This account is closely followed in the versions by Joseph Smith but it is significantly altered by Josephus, who not only changes the order but also omits and adds certain punishments and curses.⁵⁷ At other times in these chapters when Josephus adheres to the biblical account, it is Joseph Smith who departs from it. In Genesis 5:21–24, wherein the enigmatic figure Enoch is

introduced, Josephus essentially reproduces the laconic biblical account that Enoch lived and then was taken by God.⁵⁸ Joseph Smith, however, will radically depart from the biblical text here. In the JST/Book of Moses he greatly expands the account of Enoch by reporting that Enoch was a great prophet who not only foresaw everything that would transpire among the human race from beginning to end, but that he founded a city, and on account of the city's righteousness it was taken up to heaven.⁵⁹

At other times when both Josephus and Joseph Smith diverge from the biblical account in the first few chapters, they do it in markedly different ways. This is the case with how both treat Genesis 4:1–16, which details the murder of Abel by his brother Cain and the consequent curses pronounced upon Cain by the Lord. For Josephus the story is recast to make more sense of the biblical account, which begs a number of questions, and to highlight the virtue of Abel in contrast to the innate depravity and wickedness of Cain.⁶⁰ While it could certainly be argued that Joseph Smith's expansion of the story also seeks to make more sense of the biblical account and that in this respect shares an exegetical similarity to Josephus's treatment, overall his alterations are quite different. The JST/Book of Moses account highlights Satan's deleterious role in the course of humanity since it is he who tells Cain to make an offering to the Lord and he who first puts the idea of murder into Cain's head. Furthermore, when the Lord chastises Cain for the murder of his brother, he blames Satan.⁶¹ Whereas Josephus is seemingly at a loss to fully explain why God rejected Cain's offering and only adds that God did not like the offerings of a "covetous" man,⁶² the JST/Book of Moses implies that the sacrifice was rejected because it was not offered in similitude of the future sacrifice of Jesus that required a firstling of the flock.⁶³ At the close of the story, when Cain is expelled, Josephus claims that Cain repented and was pardoned for the murder but still had to depart.⁶⁴ Nowhere

in Joseph Smith's account is there any hint that Cain repented or was pardoned by God. Instead it implies that Cain and his posterity increased in wickedness.⁶⁵

Notwithstanding the many differences between Josephus's and Joseph Smith's accounts of the first few chapters of the Bible, there are some general similarities that need to be pointed out. Besides their interpretation of Genesis 1:1, Josephus and Joseph Smith sometimes agree on the ages of the biblical patriarchs mentioned in Genesis 5, although they never agree against the biblical text.⁶⁶ A more substantial parallel may be found in their reading of Genesis 4. Returning to the account of Cain and Abel, the biblical narrative gives the impression that Cain and Abel were the first children of Adam and Eve (Genesis 4:1–2) and never mentions that Adam and Eve had any daughters until after Seth was born sometime later (Genesis 5:4). The problem here is that already in Genesis 4:17 Cain is married, and the question that naturally arises is, how is Cain married if there is no other woman, besides his mother, to marry? In Josephus this problem is circumvented because he explicitly states that after Cain and Abel were born, and before Cain's murder of Abel, Adam and Eve also begot daughters.⁶⁷ The JST/Moses 4:2–3 also explicitly states, before Cain and Abel are even introduced, that Adam and Eve had sons and daughters, thus answering the question in the very same way Josephus had done.

Another interesting parallel in these early chapters not found in the Bible concerns the subject of record keeping and the transmission of knowledge. Josephus claims that the descendants of Seth erected two pillars, one of brick and the other of stone, that contained the learning of their ancestors and the prophecies of Adam so that such information could benefit future generations.⁶⁸ In the Book of Moses it is recorded that during the lifetime of Seth a "book of remembrance" was kept wherein genealogies, the prophecies of Adam, or other relevant information was recorded for the benefit

of future posterity.⁶⁹ Despite some of the differences in the specifics, there is a general parallel here in the accounts of Josephus and Joseph Smith.

In accounts of the latter antediluvians and the Flood in Genesis 6–9, however, the alterations of Josephus and Joseph Smith are marked more by differences than by similarities. Genesis 6:1–8 details how the “sons of God” and the “daughters of men” consorted with one another with the result that their offspring were large in stature (i.e., “giants”) and wholly given to corruption, which ultimately led to the cataclysm.⁷⁰ Josephus takes the reference to the “sons of God” to be “angels of God” and relates how the offspring of heavenly fathers and mortal mothers were utterly insolent, depraved, and committed all kinds of sordid acts.⁷¹ On the other hand, the JST and the Book of Moses interpret the passage differently. Since the term “sons of God” is taken to refer to righteous mortals who kept the covenants of God,⁷² the passage is reconfigured so that it was the daughters of the righteous “sons of God” who forsook the covenant and married nonbelieving men.⁷³ George Laub, in the journal entry mentioned above, laconically alleges that in a sermon given April 13, 1843, Joseph Smith made the following report about Genesis 6: “Now the history of Joseph[u]s in speaking of angels came down and took themselves wives of the daughters of men, see Genesis 6 chapter 1–2 verses. These were resurrected bodies, [they] violated the celestial laws.”⁷⁴ It is difficult to know what to make of Laub’s entry, especially the last sentence, since if it is correct, and there are reasons to question its accuracy, then Joseph apparently changed his mind about the interpretation of Genesis 6; in the JST/Book of Moses the “sons of God” are clearly taken as mortals, whereas according to Laub, Joseph alleged that they were resurrected beings (i.e., angels).⁷⁵

Concerning Josephus’s and Joseph Smith’s respective treatments of Noah, there is little overlap outside of the biblical tradition. On the whole, Josephus does not supplement the biblical depiction of Noah

in any substantial way, and while he reorders or cuts certain aspects of the Noaic narrative they are fairly minor.⁷⁶ While Joseph Smith's treatment of Noah does not diverge markedly from the biblical account either, the few alterations are quite different from Josephus's. The enhancements in the JST/Book of Moses regarding the life of Noah tend to deal with Noah's prophetic message. It reports that he not only exhorted the people to repentance but as part of this message he also urged them to be baptized and have faith on Jesus Christ.⁷⁷ On the other hand, Josephus's biblical enhancements to the Noaic narrative do not deal with the subject of Noah's preaching but rather with explaining why God wiped out the better part of humanity by sending a deluge.⁷⁸ If there is any agreement in their respective expansions of the biblical text, it is that both authors add that Noah's life was in danger because of his preaching; in Josephus's account, Noah and his family have to move because he fears for his life, and in the JST/Book of Moses there were at least two direct attempts made on his life.⁷⁹ While the biblical account implies that Noah was not liked by the people, it never relates that there were attempts made on his life or that he even feared for his life.

As for Noah's direct posterity, Josephus's and Joseph Smith's extrabiblical alterations are once again marked more by differences than by similarities. This is particularly the case with Ham, the third son of Noah, about whom Josephus has very little to say which is not in the biblical text, but about whom Joseph Smith adds some significant details.⁸⁰ In particular, Ham is a fairly important figure for Joseph Smith, since according to Abraham 1:23–27, it was through Ham and his wife, Egyptus, that a curse, presumably of Cain,⁸¹ was perpetuated upon the land.⁸² Josephus says nothing about the wife of Ham or connects Ham in any way to the curse of Cain, but only mentions the cursing of Ham, or more specifically his son Canaan, in connection with the biblical account of Ham discovering the nakedness of his father (Genesis 9:20–25).⁸³

After Noah, the next significant biblical character is Abram/Abraham, and while Josephus and Joseph Smith both enhance the presentation of this character with extrabiblical additions, they tend to differ more than they agree. Following the terse biblical account, Josephus introduces the figure of Abram in the context of relating Shem's posterity, and as soon as he is introduced he is leaving with certain family members for the land of Canaan.⁸⁴ On the other hand, when the Book of Abraham introduces Abraham it does so with a lengthy extrabiblical account, for which there is no parallel in Josephus, of how Abraham was miraculously saved by the Lord from being sacrificed to idols.⁸⁵ Whereas the Bible gives no reason why Abram left Ur (compare Genesis 11:31), Josephus adds that he left because he was driven out by his kinsfolk,⁸⁶ while in the Book of Abraham Abram left Ur because God directly commanded him to do so.⁸⁷

When Abram leaves Canaan for Egypt, Josephus follows the biblical narrative and relates that Abram instructed his wife to tell the Egyptians that she was his sister, and not his wife, lest they seek to kill him because of her beauty (Genesis 12:10–13).⁸⁸ In the Book of Abraham, however, it is the Lord who warns Abram about the Egyptians and instructs him to tell his wife that she is the sister of Abram lest he be killed.⁸⁹ The episode that has garnered the most attention with respect to parallels between Joseph Smith and Josephus has to do with Abram instructing Pharaoh regarding the principles of astronomy during Abram's sojourn in Egypt. In the biblical account there is no mention that Abram ever instructed Pharaoh in astronomy, but Josephus relates that during his sojourn in Egypt, Abram impressed the Egyptians with his knowledge of mathematics and astronomy:

Therefore, having been admired by them in these relations as an extremely intelligent man and gifted not only in understanding but also in persuading by his words with regard to whatever he would undertake

to teach, he communicated to them arithmetic, and delivered to them the science of astronomy; for, before Abram came into Egypt, they were unacquainted with those parts of learning; for that science came from the Chaldeans into Egypt, and from there to the Greeks also.⁹⁰

The Book of Abraham implies that Abram reasoned with the Egyptians about astronomy,⁹¹ and while there is certainly a very distinct parallel here between Josephus and Joseph Smith, there are also some key differences in the way they present Abram teaching astronomy.⁹² First off, the Book of Abraham relates that the principles of astronomy were given to Abram in a nighttime revelation before he entered Egypt.⁹³ However, Josephus reports that Abram had already acquired such knowledge while still in Chaldea. Josephus also states that he derived such knowledge through celestial observation, as opposed to revelation, since by nature Abram was naturally very intelligent and somewhat of a prodigy.⁹⁴ Second, Josephus frames Abram's presentation of astronomical insights within the context of mathematics whereas the Book of Abraham never reports that Abram taught mathematics but instead that he taught the Egyptians astronomy to teach the realities of deity. Finally, in Josephus's account, Pharaoh is never mentioned, and the context presupposes that Abraham taught generally the Egyptians arithmetic and astronomy,⁹⁵ whereas the Book of Abraham implies that Abraham taught Pharaoh specifically astronomy.⁹⁶ In this respect, the Book of Abraham account is actually closer to an account given by Artapanus, an ancient Jewish author who lived in Egypt sometime before the first century BCE, since he specifically reported that Abram taught Pharaoh astronomy.⁹⁷ These observations are not to minimize the fact that there is significant extrabiblical parallel between Josephus and Joseph Smith, but to suggest some caution before automatically assuming that Josephus has to be the direct source for this parallel since there are also some important differences. Also, it must be remembered that in Jewish sources of the Second Temple period and Rabbinic

period, Abram was widely regarded as an astronomer of sorts, so it is not inconceivable that such information could have been obtained via a source other than Josephus.⁹⁸

Despite this significant parallel, comparing other extrabiblical alterations to the Abram narrative by Josephus and Joseph Smith reveals that there are more differences between the two accounts. This is particularly the case with the enigmatic figure of Melchizedek, whom Abram encounters in Genesis 14:17–20 after returning from Egypt. Josephus says little about Melchizedek beyond what is contained in the biblical account, and his minor additions merely serve to clarify ambiguities in the biblical account.⁹⁹ In the JST, the meeting between Abram and Melchizedek is greatly expanded; Joseph adds several verses describing Melchizedek, his priestly lineage, his power, and the specific blessings he bestowed upon Abram.¹⁰⁰ The only extrabiblical similarity between Josephus and Joseph Smith's depiction of Melchizedek and Abram is that both make it clear that it was Abram who paid tithes to Melchizedek and not the other way around, whereas the biblical narrative is unclear on this point.¹⁰¹ In Genesis 17:1–14, where God changes Abram's name to Abraham and commands him to circumcise his household as a sign of the covenant, Josephus uses the account to explain the reason for circumcision and expound on its merits. The JST expands the account so that God discourses to Abraham about proper ordinances and that children are not accountable until they are eight years old; thus circumcision is made to prefigure baptism in some way in the JST.¹⁰²

It is worthwhile to look at Genesis 48–50 when comparing the two accounts, since these concluding chapters of the JST, as well as the Book of Mormon, add a significant amount of material.¹⁰³ In particular, these chapters are greatly expanded by Joseph Smith in places where patriarchal prophecies are made about the posterity of Jacob and then his son Joseph. In Genesis 48, Joseph Smith adds several verses after Genesis 48:6 to detail promises made by Jacob to his son

Joseph about his posterity.¹⁰⁴ Though Joseph adds little to Genesis 49, Genesis 50 is massively expanded. In the JST (Genesis 50:24) and 2 Nephi 3, a number of extrabiblical prophecies are inserted that pertained to Joseph's posterity and the work they were to accomplish.¹⁰⁵ On the other hand, Josephus pays little attention to these chapters as a whole and merely summarizes them in a few short passages.¹⁰⁶ The only minor extrabiblical parallel between Josephus and Joseph Smith here is that both make it explicit that when Joseph died his body would be carried in due course to be buried with that of his father in Hebron even though this is not made clear until Exodus 13:19;¹⁰⁷ however, while Joseph Smith mentions Joseph's body alone, Josephus includes not just Joseph's body but also those of his brothers.

The final biblical figure worth examining in Josephus and Joseph Smith is Moses, because both include a significant amount of extrabiblical material about him. Since Moses was probably the most well-known biblical figure in the Greco-Roman world, he was also often the subject of scathing critique and lampoons in Greco-Roman literature. Josephus devotes an enormous amount of attention to elevating the stature of Moses so that he might be more respectable to a Greco-Roman audience. Thus Josephus depicts Moses as an ideal hero figure from birth who excels all others in wisdom, courage, temperance, and virtue. Josephus's many departures from the biblical account of Moses can often be explained through his motive to enhance one of these characteristics.¹⁰⁸ To this end Josephus includes a number of extrabiblical stories about Moses' birth and childhood that served to elevate his status and display his wisdom beyond years.¹⁰⁹ Similarly, Josephus continues to enhance the person of Moses as a young man with extrabiblical insertions, like a story that he was given charge of the armies of Pharaoh to drive out the Ethiopians, in order to illustrate that Moses epitomized the ideal general.¹¹⁰ On the other hand, Josephus also omits any potentially embarrassing stories from the biblical

account such as Moses' murder of the Egyptian (Exodus 2:15), his speech impediment (Exodus 4:10; 6:12), or his failure to circumcise his son and God's subsequent threat to kill him (Exodus 4:24–26).¹¹¹ It therefore becomes readily apparent that Josephus's presentation of Moses is especially apologetic.

Due to Josephus's exceptionally apologetic treatment of Moses, his many departures from the biblical account are far too numerous to detail here in any comprehensive way. However, a comparison of Josephus's depiction of Moses with Joseph Smith's reveals that on the whole they are markedly different. Never once does the JST omit any of the potentially embarrassing biblical episodes pertaining to Moses, and none of Josephus's embellishments that enhance the character and accomplishments of Moses are included, let alone hinted at, in either the JST or the Book of Moses. On the contrary, the extrabiblical additions in the JST and the Book of Moses are such that they reinforce Moses' prophetic role without taking away any of his human foibles, and cast him in line with earlier prophetic figures like Enoch, who was privy to the mysteries of God. To illustrate this point, it is worth examining the different ways Josephus's and Joseph Smith's biblical alterations figure in the life of Moses in relation to the golden calf episode and the consequences of Israel's return to idolatry (Exodus 32–34). Since this incident was very embarrassing for Israel, as well as for Moses because he was their leader, Josephus omits the story from his retelling and proceeds as though there was never a golden calf, and as if Moses never broke the tablets that contained the commandments of God.¹¹² However, in the JST, rather than expunging the episode, the rebellion of Israel is actually heightened as God's anger towards Israel is made more explicit—how could they rebel after all that God had done for them?¹¹³ Additionally, the incident paves the way for a significant JST alteration. When Moses returns to the Lord after learning of the rebellion and breaking the stone tablets, he does not go about making a second copy, as is

implied in the biblical account (Exodus 34:1–4), but the JST relates that the Lord tells Moses he is going to write something different on the second set of tablets.¹¹⁴ In the lengthy addition, the Lord tells Moses that he is taking the gospel covenant from the Israelites and is instead going to give them a lower law (the law of Moses) since they have shown that they could not abide his higher law.¹¹⁵ While many more differences between Josephus's and Joseph Smith's biblical alterations with respect to Moses could be marshaled, this present example is the most significant.

Notwithstanding the differences, there are two similarities worth pointing out from the Moses narratives.¹¹⁶ The first is of a fairly general nature and relates not to Moses specifically, but to the larger narrative and the biblical text's repeated assertion that it was the Lord himself who repeatedly hardened Pharaoh's heart so he would not set the Israelites free.¹¹⁷ For many interpreters these passages have been difficult to reconcile to the larger narrative since on the one hand the Lord hardens Pharaoh's heart so he will not allow the Israelites to depart from Egypt, yet on the other hand the Lord continues to plague and punish the Egyptians because they refuse to let the Israelites go. To avoid the inherent problem this poses to the concept of divine theodicy, Josephus shifts the blame entirely to Pharaoh and changes the narrative so that as a result of his anger, stubbornness, pride, or downright foolishness, he repeatedly rebuffs Moses' pleas to set the Israelites free even after the plagues have begun.¹¹⁸ In a similar fashion Joseph Smith will alter the biblical narrative so that it is Pharaoh, and not the Lord, who is ultimately responsible for the continuation of the plagues. Each time the biblical account states that it was "the Lord" who hardened Pharaoh's heart, the JST changes the verse so it is simply Pharaoh who hardened his own heart.¹¹⁹ While Josephus's approach is more subtle and indirect compared to Joseph Smith's direct altering of the biblical text, both methods produce the same result.

The other parallel worthy of note between Josephus's and Joseph Smith's handling of Moses has to do with his passing. Whereas the biblical text makes it clear that Moses died,¹²⁰ Josephus explicitly states that Moses never experienced death but was taken up to heaven. The writings of Joseph Smith strongly imply the same conclusion. In Josephus, when Moses is ready to pass on he takes Eleazar and Joshua to Mount Abarim, opposite Jericho, and while talking to them is gradually overshadowed by a cloud and disappears.¹²¹ To make it explicit that Moses never died and to deal with the seeming contradiction between what was written in the biblical account Josephus points out that the biblical account did not contain this story because Moses feared that it was too much for the people.¹²² While the writings of Joseph Smith about the death of Moses, on the other hand, are somewhat enigmatic, it is evident that like Josephus Joseph Smith believed that Moses was taken up to God and never actually died. In the JST, Deuteronomy 34:6 is altered from "And he [the Lord] buried him [Moses]," to "The Lord took him [Moses] unto his Fathers," at least suggesting some doubt about the death of Moses. The Book of Mormon contains a more definitive statement that Moses did not die but was taken up to God. Alma 45:19, describing how Alma the Younger did not taste death and was taken up to God, invokes the example of Moses, who similarly, it is implied, did not die but was also taken by God.¹²³

Beyond the biblical narrative, however, it is worthwhile to look at the Book of Mormon specifically to see whether there are any significant parallels with Josephus. Though some in the spirit of exposé have claimed that various incidents contained in the Book of Mormon are so close to incidents contained in Josephus that the latter is the source for the former, upon closer examination such alleged parallels are grossly exaggerated.¹²⁴ Nevertheless, there are a couple of distinct parallels that warrant comment. The first is a general one that can be found in Josephus's *Jewish War* and the Book of Mormon

when it comes to the subject of banditry. In both works gangs of marauding “robbers” are directly linked to the downfall of the respective societies.¹²⁵ According to Josephus, more than any other factor, be it Roman mismanagement of the province of Judea, class warfare, or Jewish religious susceptibilities, the upsurge of banditry to seemingly epidemic proportions on the eve of and during the first Jewish revolt of AD 66–73 directly led to the destruction of Judea.¹²⁶ In particular, Josephus blames various groups like the “Sicarri,” “Zealots,” and “Fourth Philosophy,” who are all designated by Josephus as “robbers,” for the collapse of Judean society. According to Josephus, the ultimate purpose of these groups was to acquire power in society and they did so through plunder, indiscriminate murders, or assassinations of officials who opposed them or who were not sympathetic to their particular agenda. While Josephus reports that these groups could at times work together when they shared a common interest, for the most part there was intense factionalism and fighting among them with the result that the more these robbers became entrenched in society the closer society moved to the brink of collapse.

“Robbers” also figure prominently in the downfall and ultimate destruction of Nephite society in the Book of Mormon.¹²⁷ Beginning in the book of Helaman, the “Gadianton robbers” emerge as a clandestine group who seek to acquire wealth and power and largely do so through plunder, assassination, and the indiscriminate murder of whoever stands in their way.¹²⁸ In fact, the situation becomes so dire as a result of this group’s activities that Mormon laments that they “did prove the overthrow, yea, almost the entire destruction of the people of Nephi.”¹²⁹ Though this particular group of robbers is temporarily defeated,¹³⁰ they re-emerge as the Book of Mormon narrative progresses and have a significant role to play in the final collapse and destruction of Nephite civilization.¹³¹

While the respective purposes of robbers in Josephus and the Book of Mormon are quite similar and their *modus operandi* share

a number of parallels, this does not automatically suggest Joseph Smith's direct reliance on Josephus. Looking at the larger phenomenon of brigandage in the ancient Mediterranean world reveals that it is not just Josephus who cites banditry as a contributing factor to societal decline.¹³² In fact, in a number of ancient Greek and Roman sources, banditry is often seen as both a contributing factor to and as a natural symptom of societal decline.¹³³ Therefore, as Josephus is not unique in his assessment that groups of robbers were to be largely blamed for societal turmoil, the parallels lose some of their force. While there are certainly overlaps, one cannot automatically account for the other.

On the subject of societal decline, there is one other parallel between Josephus and the Book of Mormon worth pointing out. In Josephus, the depth to which Jewish society had fallen is epitomized in a horrific story about a widow named Miriam, set during the final weeks of the Roman siege of Jerusalem. The city is surrounded by four legions; all hope is lost of either victory or escape; and severe famine and rampant infighting is happening within the walls of the city.¹³⁴ Miriam, greatly fearing what will happen to her infant son when the Roman legions finally breach the city's wall, determines to kill her child. But that is not all; being on the verge of starvation, she cooks her son and eats half of his dead body. When people in the city catch the scent of cooking meat, they converge on her house and demand that she share her food. When she shows them the half-eaten body of her infant son, they leave in utter horror. As the story spreads and news even reaches the Roman legions outside the city's walls, people are aghast.¹³⁵ Due to the shock value of the episode, it was the single most quoted story from Josephus, aside from his reference to Jesus, by Christians up through the middle ages.¹³⁶

In the Book of Mormon, there is one story that typifies the depravity of the Nephites, and the depths to which they too have fallen once God has forsaken them, and it too involves a case of cannibalism.

In Moroni 9, a letter sent from Mormon to his son Moroni, Mormon details the depravities of the Nephites and how, despite much work on his own part, the people had utterly forsaken the Lord. To graphically illustrate the people's debaucheries, he tells his son how certain Nephite warriors, upon capturing some Lamanite women, not only tortured and sexually assaulted them but, after killing them, ate their flesh as "a token of bravery."¹³⁷ Granted that the specific circumstances under which cannibalism occurs in the Book of Mormon are very different from those related by Josephus, it is interesting that both accounts highlight the depravities of civilizations on the brink of destruction. While this thematic similarity is noteworthy, it is important to remember that in the Old Testament cannibalism was seen as divine retribution for severe wickedness and was one of the signs that Israel had been forsaken by God.¹³⁸

Conclusion

This paper represents only a sondage, albeit a fairly wide-reaching one, of the possible points of contact between Josephus and Joseph Smith, as it has focused only on those parts of their respective writings that lend themselves most readily to comparison. To fully assess and compare all the writings of Josephus and Joseph Smith would require considerably more space and would unduly extend the scope of the present analysis. While this paper has not examined every potential point of contact, enough comparison has been made to render some tentative conclusions about Josephus's potential impact upon Joseph Smith as well as his use in the early Church. The foregoing analysis suggests that while Joseph Smith knew of Josephus and even occasionally began to cite him in the later part of his career, thus showing some familiarity with Josephus's writings, he did not possess a detailed working knowledge of Josephus or that he even spent much time studying or reading his works. The most explicit reference to Joseph's study of Josephus comes from Carthage Jail, where

it is reported that hours before Joseph was killed his brother Hyrum spent part of the day reading extracts of Josephus to the group.

Given that the writings of Josephus were widely popular in Christian circles in the early part of the nineteenth century, it seems most likely that like many others, Joseph had heard about Josephus and may have been generally familiar with his importance as a source for the history of the Bible, but knew little about the details or the intricacies of his actual works. When one looks at the use of Josephus in early LDS newspapers it becomes evident that the information about Josephus in the articles is largely derived from secondary literature, either popular books or Bible dictionaries, and not from an in-depth study of Josephus's works. If this is indicative at all of Joseph's encounter with Josephus then perhaps it too was primarily via secondary sources.¹³⁹

The actual comparison of Josephus's biblical alterations with Joseph Smith's reveals that they are marked considerably more by differences, and at times very significant ones, than they are by any general or specific similarities. There are no verbatim parallels to be found and in fact the overarching differences between Josephus's and Joseph Smith's respective handling of different episodes in Genesis particularly is such that the former can hardly be considered to have exerted any significant influence on the latter.¹⁴⁰

One final point worth considering here is how Joseph Smith and other early LDS writers were not using Josephus. Besides completely ignoring his *Life* and *Against Apion*, which shows that they were more interested in what he had to say about the Bible and about the background to the New Testament than they were in his actual life or his non-biblical Jewish apologetics, it is interesting that the most oft-cited passages in Josephus never occur in early LDS writings. Easily the most famous passage, as well as the most controversial passage in Josephus, is what is known as the *Testimonium Flavianum* and concerns the earliest reference to Jesus outside of the writings of the New

Testament.¹⁴¹ From the beginning this passage had held a very special place in the hearts of most Christians since it was taken as an authenticating proof of the historical Jesus by an outside source, and with the rise of higher criticism in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries this passage was a favorite proof text of Christians.¹⁴² Interestingly, however, this important passage is never cited by any early LDS writer to defend the authenticity of Jesus and the first allusion to it is not until 1856 by Brigham Young.¹⁴³ Similarly, other famous passages in Josephus, like the references to John the Baptist or to James the brother of Jesus, are altogether absent from early LDS literature although they were rather popular in contemporary Christianity.¹⁴⁴

In sum, even though Josephus's and Joseph Smith's handling of the Bible is marked much more by difference than agreement and there is no sustaining pattern between the two, what both have in common is the idea that the biblical text is malleable and can be expanded, contracted, or even reshaped. Though their motives for doing so were undoubtedly quite different, the mere fact that both felt the biblical text was seemingly inadequate and that they possessed authority—even the audacity—to alter the text represents an important parallel. Perhaps then the most significant impact of Josephus upon Joseph Smith was that he set a precedent where *sola scriptura* was not enough and provided a respected context where it was acceptable to build upon and enhance the biblical narrative.

Notes

1. Less than a year after the Book of Mormon was published, Alexander Campbell wrote a scathing critique in the *Painesville Telegraph* (March 15, 1831) where he devoted some attention to explaining away the Book of Mormon by alleging certain modern sources.
2. Recent studies marked by this rigorous source criticism include David Persuitte, *Joseph Smith and the Origins of the Book of Mormon*, 2nd ed. (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, 2000); D. Michael Quinn, *Early*

- Mormonism and the Magic World View*, revised and enlarged ed. (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1998); John L. Brooke, *The Refiner's Fire: The Making of Mormon Cosmology, 1644–1844* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); cf. Fawn Brodie, *No Man Knows My History: The Life of Joseph Smith*, 2nd ed. (1945; repr., New York: Vintage Books, 1995).
3. Richard Lyman Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005), 292; Grant H. Palmer, *An Insider's View of Mormon Origins* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2002), 16–19; Persuitle, *Origins of the Book of Mormon*, 170, 201, 203, 206, 282; Vernal Holley, “A Study of the Similarities Between the Works of Flavius Josephus and the Book of Mormon” (1981); Quinn, *Early Mormonism*, 180, 207; cf. Jared W. Ludlow, “Abraham’s Vision of the Heavens,” in *Astronomy, Papyrus, and Covenant*, ed. John Gee and Brian M. Hauglid (Provo, UT: Institute for the Study and Preservation of Ancient Religious Texts, 2005), 65n30; Erich Robert Paul, *Science, Religion, and Mormon Cosmology* (Urbana; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 85. Interestingly, Brodie, in *No Man Knows My History*, although he frequently discusses an eclectic compilation of putative sources that influenced Joseph’s writings and thought, never mentions Josephus.
 4. Josephus, *Ant.* 1.17: “As I proceed, therefore, I shall accurately describe what is contained in our records, in the order of time that belongs to them; for I have already promised so to do throughout this undertaking, and this without adding anything to what is therein contained, or taking away anything therefrom.”
 5. Abraham J. Karp, *From the Ends of the Earth: Judaic Treasures of the Library of Congress* (New York: Rizzoli, 1991), 5; cf. Moses Hadas, *A History of Greek Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1950), 237, who specifically notes that in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries Josephus was the most widely read of all the ancient historians. For his reception in earlier periods, see Peter Burke, “A Survey of the Popularity of Ancient Historians, 1450–1700,” *History and Theory* 5 (1966): 135–52, who points out (p. 136) that Josephus’s *Antiquities of the Jews* was the most popular Greek history during this period in terms of the number of editions produced. See also Heinz

- Schrekenberg, *Rezeptionsgeschichtliche und textkritische Untersuchungen zu Flavius Josephus* (Leiden: Brill, 1977), 5–69; Heinz Schrekenberg, *Die Flavius-Josephus-Tradition in Antike und Mittelalter* (Leiden: Brill, 1972). See also Louis H. Feldman and Gohei Hata, eds., *Josephus, Judaism, and Christianity* (Detroit: Wayne State University, 1987), 315–426.
6. Bruce M. Metzger and Michael D. Coogan, eds., *The Oxford Companion to the Bible* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 253.
 7. Mireille Hadas-Lebel, *Flavius Josephus: Eyewitness to Rome's First-Century Conquest of Judea*, trans. Richard Miller (New York: Macmillan, 1993), 229; cf. Louis H. Feldman, *Josephus and Modern Scholarship, 1937–1980* (Berlin; New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1984), 862.
 8. Louis H. Feldman, *Josephus and Modern Scholarship*, 973; Feldman and Hata, *Josephus, Judaism, and Christianity*, 62, who notes that *Josippon*, a free paraphrase of Josephus's *War of the Jews*, was the second Jewish book published in the American colonies.
 9. Elizabeth Fox-Genovese and Eugene D. Genovese, *The Mind of the Master Class: History and Faith in the Southern Slaveholders' Worldview* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 757–58, where a detailed bibliography is provided about Southerners' use of Josephus in the debate over slavery.
 10. Hadas-Lebel, *Flavius Josephus*, 228–29.
 11. Joseph F. Kett and Patricia A. McClung, *Book Culture in Post-Revolutionary Virginia* (Worcester, MA: American Antiquarian Society, 1984), 147.
 12. For a concise overview of the manuscripts of Josephus, see R. J. H. Shutt, *Studies in Josephus* (London: SPCK, 1961), 110–16. For more detailed treatment, see Schrekenberg, *Die Flavius-Josephus-Tradition*.
 13. Gohei Hata, “Robert Traill: The First Irish Critic of William Whiston's Translation of Josephus,” in *Making History: Josephus and Historical Method*, ed. Zuleika Rogers (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2007), 418. However, Hata notes that an obscure English translation of *Josippon* was available prior to Lodge's edition (418n2).
 14. Heinz Schrekenberg, *Bibliographie zu Flavius Josephus, Arbeiten zur Literatur und Gesichte des hellenistischen Judentums 1* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1968), 861–63.

15. Schreckenberg, *Bibliographie zu Flavius Josephus*, 29. In 1732 another edition of Josephus appeared in London, by an H. Jackson, but it was simply a copy of L'Estrange's text with some different notes.
16. On Whiston's translation of Josephus, see Hata, "The First Irish Critic of William Whiston's Translation of Josephus," 424–28. To highlight the enduring nature of Whiston's translation, the most recent edition of it was published in 1981: *Josephus: Complete Works*, ed. William Sanford LaSor, trans. William Whiston (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 1981).
17. Louis H. Feldman, "A Selective Critical Bibliography of Josephus," in *Josephus, the Bible, and History*, ed. Louis H. Feldman and Gohei Hata (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1989), 333.
18. Karp, *Judaic Treasures of the Library of Congress*, 2–5, where Jefferson's personal copy, now in the Library of Congress, is described.
19. Palmer, *An Insider's View of Mormon Origins*, 18, provides an image of the title page of the work with Hyrum Smith's signature at the bottom.
20. Robert Paul, "Joseph Smith and the Manchester (New York) Library," *BYU Studies* 22, no. 3 (1982): 14, where the volumes of Joseph are listed as follows: "181–186 The works of Flavius Josephus. Translated by Wm. Whiston. London, 1806" (Number 181–186 refers to the accession number originally assigned the books by the Manchester Library. By 1830, 275 books had been acquired). However, Paul notes (pp. 5–6) that there is no evidence that Joseph Smith ever had a membership at the Manchester Library and believes that it was unlikely that he would have exploited its resources.
21. In the *Wayne Sentinel* (Palmyra, NY), December 1, 1826, and again on December 19, 1828, the "Palmyra Book Store" advertised copies of "Josephus' works" among other books. Later the *Western Spectator & Public Advertiser* (Palmyra, NY), on April 5, 1831, advertised a two-volume set of Josephus along with four other books under the heading "Miscellaneous Books." While the *Palmyra Register*, which ran from November 1817 to February 1820, had frequent advertisements for book sales by a T. C. Strong bookstore, some by a Strong & Bradish bookstore, and a few advertisements from a Geneva bookshop, the works of Josephus are never once explicitly mentioned.

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22. Christopher C. Jones, "The Complete Record of the Nauvoo Library and Literary Institute," *Mormon Historical Studies* 10, no. 1 (2009): 180–204.
23. Under the donation of Ebenezer Robinson the works of "Flavius Josephus" are specifically mentioned, although no indication is given concerning what edition of Josephus Robinson donated. See Jones, "Nauvoo Library and Literary Institute," 192.
24. Elsewhere in the catalog it is recorded that Sidney Rigdon donated a three-volume "History of the Jews" that could perhaps be taken to refer to Josephus's *Jewish Antiquities* since it was frequently referred to by this name; however, it is also possible that it could refer to Henry Hart Milman, *The History of the Jews* (London: John Murray, 1829) which was published in three volumes. Similarly, Josiah Ells's donation of "Bible Antiquities" could be taken to refer to the same work by Josephus. Finally, a donation made by Nathaniel G. Norris of a "History of the Destruction of Jerusalem" should be taken to refer to Josephus's *The War of the Jews* since it frequently went by the double title *The War of the Jews: History of the Destruction of Jerusalem*.
25. The catalog for the Seventies Library is still unpublished. The dates for the donations by Isaac Allred and William Clayton is January 25. Allred's donation is described as comprising two volumes and Clayton's edition is identified as "Clark's Josephus" but should be "Clarke's Josephus."
26. *Evening and Morning Star*, January 1833, 58–59: "It may be well to state, that the people of God, in ancient days, according to the accounts of men, kept their sacred records on plates of gold, and those of less consequence on plates of brass, copper, wood, &c. see John's biblical archeology, Josephus, and others." Notwithstanding this claim, there is no such reference to be found in Josephus. While Josephus does refer on multiple occasions to "plates of gold" (*Ant.* 3.117, 149; 8.68, 78; *J.W.* 5.222) he never refers to a writing medium but rather to decorative plates that covered the tabernacle and later the temple. Of course, there is much evidence from antiquity for preserving important records on metal plates, but it is not to be found in Josephus. In a reference in the *Journal of Discourses*, 7.24, dated January 2, 1859, Orson Pratt reiterated that Josephus reports that important Jewish records were kept on gold plates

and credits “Bishop Watson” with this reference without providing any explicit citations. *Journal of Discourses* (London: Latter-day Saints’ Book Depot, 1854–86). The reference is to Richard Watson, *A Biblical and Theological Dictionary* (London: John Mason, 1832), 1036: “The Hebrews went so far as to write their sacred books in gold, as we may learn from Josephus compared with Pliny.” There is a Bishop Richard Watson (bishop of Llandaff 1782–1816), but this is not the same Richard Watson (1781–1833) who authored this biblical dictionary, who was never a bishop. Pratt has apparently confused the two in his reference. The *Evening and Morning Star* reference to Josephus indicates that it was simply taken from Watson’s dictionary published earlier in the year and was not an in-depth study of Josephus.

27. *Messenger and Advocate*, December 1835, 236.

28. *Messenger and Advocate*, December 1835, 236: “Enoch’s Pillar, as mentioned by Josephus, is upon the same roll.—True, our present version of the bible does not mention this fact, though it speaks of the righteousness of Abel and the holiness of Enoch,—one slain because his offering was accepted of the Lord, and the other taken to the regions of everlasting day without being confined to the narrow limits of the tomb, or tasting death; but Josephus says that the descendants of Seth were virtuous, and possessed a great knowledge of the heavenly bodies, and, that, in consequence of the prophecy of Adam, that the world should be destroyed once by water and again by fire, Enoch wrote a history or an account of the same, and put into two pillars one of brick and the other of stone; and that the same were in being at his (Josephus’) day.”

While Cowdery alleges that the account comes from Josephus and is correct on this point, he is mistaken in that Josephus only ever talks about the pillars of Adam and never any pillars of Enoch. Josephus, *Ant.* 1.70–71 (Whiston): “And that their inventions might not be lost before they were sufficiently known, upon Adam’s prediction that the world was to be destroyed at one time by the force of fire, and at another time by the violence and quantity of water, they made two pillars, the one of brick, the other of stone: they inscribed their discoveries on them both, that in case the pillar

of brick should be destroyed by the flood, the pillar of stone might remain, and exhibit those discoveries to mankind; and also inform them that there was another pillar of brick erected by them. Now this remains in the land of Siriad to this day.”

29. *Messenger and Advocate*, July 1837, 532: “We ought not then to be surprised, that Christians are so little noticed by Tacitus and Josephus: These historians are only intent on sublunary and general politics.” However, this passage is part of a longer section that is merely quoting from Rev. Joseph Milner, *The History of the Church of Christ. Volume the First: Containing the First Three Centuries* (London: Luke Hansard & Sons, 1812), 142.
30. *Elders’ Journal*, November 1837, 26–27: “Josephus says, ‘The one in the shape of a button on the high priest right shoulder shined out when God was present at their sacrifices so as to be seen by those most remote which splendor, was not before natural to the stone.’ The breastplate likewise shone when Israel was to be victorious in battle. ‘This has appeared a wonderful thing to such as have not so far indulged themselves in philosophy as to despise divine revelation’”; cf. Josephus, *Ant.* 3.215–16.
31. *Times and Seasons*, June 1840, 127: “Josephus refers to this Book [i.e., Book of Jasher].”
32. “The Location of Zion, or the New Jerusalem,” *Times and Seasons*, July 18, 1841, 474–78.
33. Richard Watson, *Biblical and Theological Dictionary*, 1036.
34. Milner, *History of the Church of Christ*, 142.
35. The entire section this quote appears in is taken from a newspaper article in the *Evening Star*, which is mistakenly referred to as the *New York Star* in the *Times and Seasons*; cf. Duncan MacDougal, *A Treatise on the Chronology, and the Prophetical Numbers, of the Bible* (London: Hatchard & Son, 1840), 146–48, where the very same passage from the *Evening Star* is cited. However, Josephus never actually refers to the Book of Jasher.
36. Milman, *History of the Jews*, 3.75–81.
37. Eugene England, “George Laub’s Nauvoo Journal,” *BYU Studies* 18, no. 2 (1978): 174.

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38. *Times and Seasons*, November 1843, 372–75. The letter was written in response to an earlier letter written by Bennett dated October 24, 1843. *Times and Seasons*, November 1843, 371–72.
39. *Times and Seasons*, November 1843, 374: “The world at large, is ever ready to credit the writings of Homer, Hesiod, Plutarch, Socrates, Pythagoras, Virgil, Josephus, Mahomet, and an hundred others, but where, tell me where, have they left a line, a simple method of solving the truth of the plan of eternal life?” The excessively pretentious tone of the letter can probably be explained as the result of two factors. First, in the previous letter Bennet had praised Joseph Smith for his philosophical acumen and even declared that he was a better legislator than Moses and so Joseph Smith probably felt compelled to send a letter worthy of such high praises. Second, there is strong evidence that because Joseph wanted to impress Bennet he conscripted the aid of W. W. Phelps, who was well-known for his rhetorical flourishes, to help him compose the letter. See Samuel Brown, “The Translator and the Ghostwriter: Joseph Smith and W. W. Phelps,” *Journal of Mormon History* 34, no. 1 (2008): 43–47.
40. Smith, *History of the Church*, 6.614–15: “3:15 P.M.—The guard began to be more severe in their operations, threatening among themselves, and telling what they would do when the excitement was over. Elder Taylor sang the following—[*A Poor Wayfaring Man of Grief*]. When he got through, Joseph requested him to sing it again, which he did. Hyrum read extracts from Josephus.”
41. JST, Isaiah 29:10–11; 42:19; JST, Psalms 10–16; 17:1; 24:8–9; 30:5, 9; 36:1–6; 46:1–11; 49:9, 13; 90:13; 121:3–4; 138:8; 141:5. See *ad loc.*, in Thomas A. Wayment, *The Complete Joseph Smith Translation of the Old Testament: A Side by Side Comparison with the King James Version* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2009).
42. Josephus, *Ant.* 9.276; 10.12–35; 11:5–6; 13:64–71; *J.W.* 7:432.
43. Josephus, *Ant.* 1.27–34.
44. Josephus, *Ant.* 1.25: “For those wishing, however, to examine also the reasons for each thing the inquiry would be very deep and philosophical. I now bypass this but if God should afford us time I will set about writing it after the present

- work.” Cf. *Ant.* 1.29, 192, 214; 3.94, 143, 205, 230, 257, 259, 264; 4.198; 20.268. This other treatise is not extant and was either never finished or lost.
45. Josephus, *Ant.* 1.27: ἐν ἀρχῇ ἔκτισεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν. On the other hand, Genesis 1:1 in the LXX reads: ἐν ἀρχῇ ἐποίησεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν; (“In the beginning God made the heaven and the earth.”) Cf. Josephus, *Ant.* 1.55, where Josephus calls God the “craftsman of the universe” (δημιουργὸν τῶν ὅλων).
46. Ursula Früchtel, *Die kosmologischen Vorstellungen bei Philo von Alexandrien: ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Genesisexegese* (Leiden: Brill, 1968), 98–100; Louis H. Feldman, trans. and ed., *Flavius Josephus: Judean Antiquities 1–4* (Boston; Leiden: Brill, 2004), 10n36.
47. Louis H. Feldman, *Judean Antiquities 1–4*, 10n36, who notes that Josephus felt that the Hebrew word אָרַב was best rendered with κτίζω (“founded,” “built,” “brought into being”). On Josephus’s rendering of Hebrew words, see Gregory E. Sterling, *Historiography and Self-Definition: Josephus, Luke-Acts and Apologetic History* (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 256n133, who cites examples.
48. Abraham 4:1, 7, 9, 12, 14–16, 25, 27, 31.
49. Stan Larson, “The King Follet Discourse: A Newly Amalgamated Text,” *BYU Studies* 18, no. 2 (1978): 10–11. See also Ronald V. Huggins, “Joseph Smith and the First Verse of the Bible,” *JETS* 46, no. 1 (2003): 29–52; Kevin L. Barney, “Joseph Smith’s Emendation of Hebrew Genesis 1:1,” *Dialogue* 30, no. 4 (1997): 103–35.
50. John Lodge, trans., *The Famous and Memorable Works of Josephus* (London: 1670), 3, “In the beginning God created heaven and earth”; John Court, trans., *The Works of Flavius Josephus* (London: 1733), 7, “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.”
51. Louis H. Feldman, *Judean Antiquities 1–4*, 10; cf. J. Thackeray, trans., *Josephus: Jewish Antiquities Books I–III*, The Loeb Classical Library 242 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1930), 14–15, who translates the passage “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth,” but in the critical apparatus at the bottom of the page notes that “created” could also be rendered as “founded” and points out how Josephus employed ἔκτισεν instead of ἐποίησεν.

52. For example, Josephus omits the blessing that God gives to the animals in Genesis 1:22 (*Ant.* 1.32); omits the repeat account of creation given in Genesis 2:4–6 (*Ant.* 1.34); omits the reference to the serpent after Adam and Eve discover that they are naked in Genesis 3:1; omits God’s question to Adam about where he was hiding in the garden in Genesis 3:9, which excision was doubtless done for apologetic reasons to preserve God’s omniscience (*Ant.* 1.45); omits part of Adam’s response in Genesis 3:12 for why he partook of the fruit (*Ant.* 1.48); omits that God made a coat of skins to cover Adam and Eve’s nakedness in Genesis 3:21 (*Ant.* 1.51); and omits that God placed cherubim to guard the entrance of the garden in Genesis 3:24 (*Ant.* 1.51). Elsewhere, Josephus will inform his readers that he has simply summarized portions of the biblical account since it would take too long to provide a full account (*Ant.* 1.68): “As for the rest, it would take too long to name them; I will only endeavor to give an account of those who proceeded from Seth.”
53. Moses 1, where Moses is shown all the works of God and their respective purposes as a prelude to the creation account.
54. JST, Genesis 3:1; Moses 1:12–24; 4:1–6; 5:13, 18–30, 38, 49, 52; 6:15, 49; 7:24–26; 37. Josephus, unlike Joseph Smith, never connects the serpent with Satan (Genesis 3:1–14).
55. JST, Genesis 2:19–20; Abraham 5:21; Moses 3:19–20.
56. Josephus, *Ant.* 1.35.
57. Josephus, *Ant.* 1.49–50, where the order is Adam, Eve, and then the serpent. In *Ant.* 1.50 Josephus adds that the serpent was punished with loss of speech, even though this is never mentioned in the biblical text, but omits the reference that the serpent would be punished by slithering upon its belly.
58. Josephus, *Ant.* 1.85. The only addition Josephus makes here is that he adds the phrase “wherefore they have not recorded his [Enoch’s] death.” Cf. *Ant.* 9.28 where Josephus will compare Enoch’s return to God with Elijah’s. It is curious that Josephus does not say more about Enoch given that in the Second Temple Period (c. 200 BCE–100 CE) Enoch was the subject of considerable speculation: 1 Enoch; *Jub.* 4:18, 23; *Ps.-Eup.* 1.7–8; *T. Ab.* B 11:3–9; *Philo, Abr.* 17–19; *Mut.* 34–36; *GQ* 1.82–85; *Hebrews* 11:5; *Jude* 1:14–15.

59. JST, Genesis 5:19–24; Moses 6:21–8:1. Cf. D&C 107:48–57.
60. Josephus begins the story by pointing out that Abel was a shepherd who sought “virtue” whereas Cain was a husbandman who by nature was depraved and only looked to acquire gain (*Ant.* 1.52). As a preamble, Josephus provides the etymology of the name Cain, which means “acquisition,” and tries to show how Cain lived up to his name (*Ant.* 1.51; cf. Philo, *Sacr.* 1.2 who gives the same etymology). Whereas Josephus has Abel present to the Lord an offering of milk (not mentioned in biblical account) and the firstborn of his flock, Cain only presented the Lord with fruits of the ground (*Ant.* 1.54).
61. Moses 5:38.
62. Josephus, *Ant.* 1.54.
63. Moses 5:5–8.
64. Josephus, *Ant.* 1.58–59. Josephus states that when Cain is exiled, his primary worry was that he was going to be devoured by wild beast. Josephus also relates here that Cain’s punishment was suspended until the seventh generation (*Ant.* 1.58), whereas in the biblical account whosoever killed Cain would be punished seven times over (Genesis 4:15).
65. Moses 5:41–56; cf. 1 Enoch 22:5–7. Though Josephus never explains what exactly the mark was that was placed upon Cain in the Moses 7:22, the implication is that was blackness (cf. JST, Genesis 9:26).
66. Adam, Genesis 5:5, 930 years (Josephus, *Ant.* 1.83, 930 years; JST, Genesis 5:5, 930 years but in an earlier draft of the JST [OT1] the number is 1,000 years [cf. Moses 6:12, 930 years]); Seth, Genesis 5:8, 912 years (Josephus, *Ant.* 1.83, 912 years; JST, Genesis 5:8, 912 years but in OT1 981 years [cf. 912 years in Moses 6:10]); Enos, Genesis 5:11, 905 years (Josephus, *Ant.* 1.83, 905 years; JST, Genesis 5:11, 905 but in OT1 940 years [cf. Moses 6:18, 905 years]); Cainan, Genesis 5:14, 910 years (Josephus, *Ant.* 1.83; JST, Genesis 5:14, 910 but in OT1 957 years [cf. Moses 6:19, 910 years]); Mahalaleel, Genesis 5:17, 895 years (Josephus, *Ant.* 1.84, 895 years; JST, Genesis 5:17, 895 years but in OT1 845 years [cf. Moses 6:20, 895 years]); Jared, Genesis 5:20, 962 (Josephus, *Ant.* 1.85, 962 years; JST, Genesis 5:20, 962 years [cf. Moses 6:24, 962 years]); Enoch, Genesis 5:23, 365 years (Josephus, *Ant.* 1.85, 365 years; JST, Genesis

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- 5:23, 365 years but in OT1 430 years [cf. *Moses* 7:68, 365 years]); Methuselah, Genesis 5:27 969 years (Josephus, *Ant.* 1.86, 969 years; JST, Gen 5:27, 969 years but in OT1 1,000 years [cf. *Moses* 8:7, 969 years]); Lamech, Genesis 5:31, 777 years (Josephus, *Ant.* 1.87, 777 years; JST, Genesis 5:31, 777 years [cf. *Moses* 8:11, 777 years]). On OT1 see Thomas A. Wayment, ed., *The Complete Joseph Smith Translation of the Old Testament: A Side-by-Side Companion with the King James Version* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2009), x–xi; Kent P. Jackson, *The Book of Moses and the Joseph Smith Translation Manuscripts* (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, 2005), 2–6. For a useful discussion of the ages of the patriarchs in the JST in Genesis 5, see Kent P. Jackson and Charles Swift, “The Ages of the Patriarchs in the Joseph Smith Translation,” in *A Witness for the Restoration: Essays in Honor of Robert J. Matthews*, ed. Kent P. Jackson and Andrew C. Skinner (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, 2007), 1–11.
67. Josephus, *Ant.* 1.52
 68. Josephus, *Ant.* 1.69–71.
 69. *Moses* 6:3–8.
 70. Genesis 6:4 describes them as “giants.”
 71. Josephus, *Ant.* 1.73. Josephus is typical of many ancient commentators of Gen 6 who took the “sons of God” to be angels: *Jub.* 4:15, 22, 5:1–2; 2 Enoch 18; Philo, *Gig.* 2.6; Ps.-Clem., *Hom.* 8:11–15.
 72. D&C 11:30; 34:3; 35:2.
 73. Mos. 8:13–15; cf. Charles R. Harrel, “*This Is My Doctrine*”: *The Development of Mormon Theology* (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2011), 218–19.
 74. England, “George Laub’s Nauvoo Journal,” 174; English text has been partially corrected.
 75. I am personally convinced that Laub is mistaken here and that he missed some nuance in Joseph’s sermon; it is difficult to imagine how Joseph would make such a radical shift in theology later in his career especially when he had already addressed the matter decisively in *Moses* 8:13–15 and D&C 11:30; 34:3; 35:2 (cf. Harrel, *The Development of Mormon Theology*, 219, who concedes that Joseph may have changed his position on the passage). Furthermore, Laub implies that Joseph taught that the “sons of God” in Genesis 6 were resurrected

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beings, yet everywhere else in Joseph's writings it is clear that he espoused that the resurrection would not occur to anyone until after the resurrection of Jesus (Alma 40:2–10,16–21). In fact, in a sermon given three days later on April 16, 1843, and recorded by Willard Richards (*The Words of Joseph Smith*, ed. Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, 1980), 195–96) Joseph Smith reiterated that the resurrection happens after the resurrection of Christ. Certainly Joseph did not change his mind about the resurrection yet again only three days later! Commenting on the April 13, 1843, entry of Laub's journal Eugene English notes that it contains a number of "unusual, even unique, comments on the resurrection" and that "the only other known account of a speech by Joseph Smith on 13 April 1843 is the one from Willard Richard's diary" (published in Joseph Smith, *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 2nd ed. rev. [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1978], 5:354–57). That speech, given to the Saints newly arrived from England is entirely different in subject matter from the one reported by Laub." See England, "George Laub's Nauvoo Journal," 173n24.

76. Josephus stated that the Ark was four stories in height (*Ant.* 1.77; cf. Philo, Moses 2.60) while the Bible has it at three stories (Genesis 6:16). Instead of explicitly stating, as the Bible does, that Noah took every animal two by two male and female (Genesis 6:19–21) and then clean animals by sevens (Genesis 7:2–3) Josephus collapses the accounts and simply states that with some animals Noah took as many as seven (*Ant.* 1.77). Josephus also clarifies the exact date of the Flood by reference to Macedonian and Hebrew months (*Ant.* 1.80) though this is not done in the bible (cf. Genesis 7:11). Also, Josephus infers that others, besides the immediate family of Noah, may have survived the flood (*Ant.* 1.109).
77. Moses 8:21–27.
78. *Ant.* 1.96–102. Josephus's expansion here serves essentially as an apology (esp. *Ant.* 1.99) for the Flood as God relates to Noah that it was humanity that brought up themselves the destruction because of their wickedness.
79. Josephus, *Ant.* 1.74; JST, Genesis 8:6, 15; Moses 8:15, 26.

80. Josephus, *Ant.* 1.109, 113, 130–34.
81. While Abraham 1:23–27 does not explicitly connect the “curse” with Cain (Mos. 5:36), it seems likely that this is implied as Canaan (the son of Ham [Genesis 9:18] and Egyptus) seemingly bears the same mark as Cain (cf. Moses 7:22 and JST, Genesis 9:26).
82. In Abraham 1:23–27 Ham and his wife are also important because one of their daughters, also called Egyptus (Abraham 1:25), will settle the land of Egypt and her son will become the first Pharaoh (Abraham 1:25–26). Thus the Book of Abraham directly connects the establishment of Egypt with the descendants of Ham. While Josephus will also explicitly make this connection (*Ant.* 1.132–36) the Bible also makes the connection with the second son of Ham, Mizraim (Genesis 10:6), to Egypt (cf. Psalms 105:23, 27; 106:22). In fact, the very name Mizraim in Hebrew means “Egypt.”
83. Josephus, *Ant.* 1.141–42. Josephus adds that Noah was angry with Ham not merely because he saw his nakedness (cf. Gen 9:22) but because he “showed him mockingly to his brothers,” who then covered him. In JST, Genesis 9:26, the curse is expanded so that Canaan will be covered by “a veil of darkness” (cf. Moses 7:22).
84. Josephus, *Ant.* 1.148–54; cf. Genesis 11:24–32.
85. Abraham 1:1–31.
86. Josephus, *Ant.* 1.281. Elsewhere Josephus reports that Terah left Ur because he was exceedingly grieved over the death of his son Haran (*Ant.* 1.52). Neither the Bible nor Josephus explain the causes behind Haran’s death in Ur but in the Book of Abraham 2:1 Haran’s death is connected to a severe famine.
87. Abraham 2:1–5, the command is given in the context of a severe famine in the land. Cf. Abraham 2:3, where the Lord specifically charges Abram to leave Ur, with Genesis 12:1, where the Lord tells Abram to leave Haran. Abraham 1:1 reports that Abram sought to leave Ur because of the rampant idolatry.
88. Josephus, *Ant.* 1.162, although Josephus adds (*Ant.* 1.161) that Abram was also going to Egypt to Egypt to either teach the Egyptian priests or to be taught by them if they proved superior.

89. Abraham 2:22–25. Perhaps the closest ancient parallel to this account may be found in the Genesis Apocryphon (1QapGen) col. 19.14–21, where Abram is given a vision that warns him of impending danger in Egypt and attempts to justify to some degree why he deceived the Egyptians by telling them that Sarai was his sister.
90. Josephus, *Ant.* 167–68.
91. While the evidence for this is drawn from Abraham Facsimile 3 and the interpretations given, namely, that the vignette depicted the following scene, “Abraham is reasoning upon the principles of Astronomy, in the king’s court,” there is some debate about who wrote the interpretations of the facsimile and how exactly it is connected to the Book of Abraham proper. Regardless, it seems from Abraham 1:12 and 14 that the vignettes were to be included as part of the Book of Abraham as they are explicitly referred to in the text.
92. On this topic see also the discussion given in Jared W. Ludlow, “Abraham’s Vision of the Heavens,” in *Astronomy, Papyrus, and Covenant*, ed. John Gee and Brian M. Hauglid (Provo: FARMS, 2005), 57–74.
93. Abraham 3:1–18.
94. Josephus, *Ant.* 1.155–57.
95. Josephus, *Ant.* 1.167–68: “He communicated to them arithmetic, and delivered to them the science of astronomy; for, before Abram came into Egypt, they were unacquainted with those parts of learning; for that science came from the Chaldeans into Egypt, and from there to the Greeks also.”
96. Abraham Facsimile 3; cf. 3:15.
97. Artapanus *apud* Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 9.18.1: “He [Artapanus] say that the latter [Abram] come to Egypt with all his household to the Egyptian king Pharethothes, and taught him astrology.” Though Artapanus mentions “astrology” instead of “astronomy” the two were virtually synonymous in antiquity and the terms basically interchangeable. I am unaware of an English translation of Eusebius’ *Praeparatio evangelica* before the translation made by E. H. Gifford, trans., *Preparation for the Gospel* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1903).

Josephus's account of Abraham teaching the Egyptians astronomy (*Ant.* 1.167–68) is actually closer to what Eupolemus, a Jewish historian of the second century BCE, states (*apud* Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 9.17.8): “Abraham lived in Heliopolis with the Egyptian priests and taught them much: He explained astrology and other sciences to them.” Whereas Josephus definitely knew of Eupolemus (*J.W.* 12.415, 419), and presumably his works, there is no indication that Josephus specifically knew of Artapanus even if he was aware of a similar tradition about Moses and the Ethiopians (*Ant.* 2.238–53; cf. Eupolemus, *apud* Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 9.27.1–37).

Another point worth making here is that Philo of Alexandria also discusses Abraham and astronomy in a number of different places in his works (Philo, *Abr.* 68–71, 77–78; *Cher.* 4, where he mentions Abraham's learning in both Mathematics and Astronomy [cf. Josephus, *Ant.* 1.167]; *Mut.* 66–67; cf. *QG* 3.1). While Philo never mentions that Abram taught the Egyptians Astronomy he does make an interesting statement about the study of astronomy in the context of his treatment of Abram and about how interplanetary light was thought to be transmitted and the how planets moved that shares some general parallels to Abraham 3:5–8; 12–13 and Joseph Smith's explanation of Facsimile No. 2. Compare Philo, *Somn.* 1.53, where Philo talks about how Terah and Abraham left the land of the Chaldeans and then immediately discusses Chaldean astronomy: “The Chaldaeans are great astronomers, and the inhabitants of Charran occupy themselves with the topics relating to the external senses. Therefore the sacred account says to the investigator of the things of nature, why are you inquiring about the sun, and asking whether he is a foot broad, whether he is greater than the whole earth put together, or whether he is even many times as large? And why are you investigating the causes of the light of the moon, and whether it has a borrowed light, or one which proceeds solely from itself? Why, again, do you seek to understand the nature of the rest of the stars, of their motion, of their sympathy with one another, and even with earthly things?” Adapted from C. D. Yonge, trans., *The Works of Philo: Complete and Unabridged* (repr. 1993; Peabody,

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- MA: Hendrickson, 1854), 369–70. The works of Philo were not translated into English until Yonge’s translation in 1854.
98. Ben Zion Wachholder, “Pseudo-Eupolemus’ Two Greek Fragments of the Life of Abraham,” *HUCA* 34 (1963): 103.
 99. Josephus, *Ant.* 1.180–82; *J.W.* 6.438. Josephus wants to make it clear that “Salem” (Genesis 14:18) is to be identified with Jerusalem so he makes the explicit connection (*Ant.* 1.180; cf. *J.W.* 6.438). Josephus also makes it clear, although the biblical account is nebulous, that it was Abram who paid tithes to Melchizedek and not the other way around (*Ant.* 1.181; cf. Gen 14:20).
 100. JST, Genesis 14:23; cf. Alma 13:14–19.
 101. Josephus, *Ant.* 1.181; JST, Genesis 14:23. Cf. Hebrews 7:2 where the account is interpreted similarly.
 102. Josephus, *Ant.* 1.192, where Josephus cites that circumcision was given so that the posterity of Abraham might remain unmixed with foreign groups. In this passage Josephus also promises to address the issue of circumcision at greater length in a later treatise (JST, Genesis 17:3, 7).
 103. After the Abraham narrative and between the concluding chapters of Genesis the JST adds little beyond minor expansions or clarifications of select verses. In this intervening material the largest JST expansion occurs at Genesis 19:1–11, where the JST alters how Lot handled the lewd advances of certain Sodomites to dishonor the three angels who he was hosting. In the JST the account is reconfigured so that Lot never offers his daughters as substitutes but it is the Sodomites, in a lengthy addition to the biblical text, who threaten Lot that they will also defile his daughters if he does hand over the messengers willingly. On the other hand, Josephus basically sticks to the biblical account and Lot offers his virtuous daughters to be defiled in lieu of the divine messengers. Later, after the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, when Lot and his daughters had fled to Zoar and where his two daughters hatched a plan to have offspring with their father (Genesis 19:30–38), the JST condemns the acts as a “wicked” one (JST, Genesis 19:31–33), whereas Josephus gives no such judgment (*Ant.* 1.204–06). In this respect the JST has something in common

- with *Jub.* 16:9, where the sexual act of Lot and his daughters is harshly censured as an act of lewd wickedness.
104. Though this section in the JST has no parallel in Josephus it is interesting that Josephus does make a passing reference that much more was stated than what he is writing as Jacob “enlarged upon the praises of Joseph” (*Ant.* 2.195).
 105. Though some of these prophecies are recorded in the JST and 2 Nephi 3, 2 Nephi 4:1–2 gives the impression that a fuller account was preserved on the plates of brass. Likewise, Joseph Smith claimed that some of the prophecies of Joseph of Egypt could be found on some of the papyri that came into his possession. *History of the Church*, 2:236 (July 5, 1835): “Soon after this, some of the Saints at Kirtland purchased the mummies and papyrus, a description of which will appear hereafter, and with W. W. Phelps and Oliver Cowdery as scribes, I commenced the translation of some of the characters or hieroglyphics, and much to our joy found that one of the rolls contained the writings of Abraham, another the writings of Joseph of Egypt.”
 106. Josephus, *Ant.* 1.194–95.
 107. Josephus, *Ant.* 199; JST Genesis 50:26. Cf. Acts 7:15.
 108. For a lucid analysis of Josephus’s presentation of Moses, see Louis H. Feldman, “Josephus’ Portrait of Moses,” *JQR* 82, 3–4 (1992): 285–328; Louis H. Feldman, “Josephus’ Portrait of Moses (Part II),” *JQR* 83, 1–2 (1992): 7–50; Louis H. Feldman, “Josephus’ Portrait of Moses (Part III),” *JQR* 83, 3–4 (1993): 301–30.
 109. Josephus, *Ant.*
 110. Josephus, *Ant.* 2.239–50.
 111. Cf. Josephus, *Ant.* 2.255, 272, 279.
 112. Cf. Josephus, *Ant.* 3.98–99; though Philo will not omit the episode of the golden calf from his retelling of the biblical narrative he will refashion the narrative so that blame was upon the Israelites who were “men of unstable nature” and not upon Aaron the high priest (*On the Life of Moses* 2.269).
 113. JST, Genesis 32:14; 33:20. The JST’s heightening, so to speak, of certain embarrassing episodes in the life of Moses can also be seen in JST, Exodus 4:26 where Moses neglects to circumcise his son. The JST adds that Moses himself

- admitted to the Lord that he had “sinned,” which is not in the bible. This incident is omitted by Josephus (*Ant.* 2.279).
114. JST, Exodus 34:1; cf. D&C 84:18–26.
115. The closest parallel to JST, Exodus 34:1 I could locate in early Christian literature comes from the *Epistle of Barnabas* 4:6–8 where the author of this letter discuss how God’s covenant with the Israelites was broken when Moses smashed the tablets and was not renewed until the coming of Jesus. The implication from the passage in Barnabas seems to be that Moses was initially entrusted with a real covenant from the lord but then lost it due to the rebellion of the Israelites. The parallel is not exact but at a certain thematic level shares a distinct similarity with JST, Exodus 34:1.
116. A minor semantic similarity worth pointing out concerns Moses’ parting of the Red Sea. In Josephus’s account he reports that Moses “smote the sea with his rod” (*Ant.* 2.338) whereupon it parted, although the biblical account in Exodus 14:16 relates that Moses lifted his rod and stretched out his hand to part the sea. In Helaman 8:11 Nephi reports that Moses did “smite upon the waters of the Red Sea” to divide them. See David Calabro, “Stretch Forth Thy Hand and Prophecy’: Hand Gestures in the Book of Mormon,” *JBMORS* 21, no. 1 (2012): 53.
117. Exodus 7:13; 9:12; 10:1, 20, 27; 11:10; 14:8.
118. Josephus, *Ant.* 2.288, 291, 295–96, 299, 302, 305–10.
119. JST, Exodus 7:3, 13; 9:12; 10:1, 20, 27; 11:10; 14:4, 8, 17.
120. Deuteronomy 32:49–50; 34:5–8; Joshua 1:1–2.
121. Josephus, *Ant.* 4.325–26. In some ways the account is reminiscent of Jesus’ ascension on the Mount of Olives where he was overshadowed by a cloud and taken up to heaven while speaking to his disciples (Acts 1:9).
122. Josephus, *Ant.* 4.326: “But he [Moses] has written himself in the sacred books that he died because he was afraid that they might dare to say that because of the abundance of the virtue surrounding him he had gone up to the Divinity.” For Josephus, Moses’ ostensible fear had to do with fact that if people really knew that he had been taken up to God they might erroneously suppose that he was divine and be guilty of idolatry. As an aside, Josephus was certainly

- not the only ancient author to suppose that Moses never experienced death as there was much speculation in a number of ancient Jewish texts about what actually happened to Moses. Cf. Philo, *On the Life of Moses* 2.288. For an exhaustive listing, see Ginzberg 1928 6.161n951.
123. Alma 45:19: “Behold, this we know, that he was a righteous man [Alma the Younger]; and the saying went abroad in the church that he was taken up by the Spirit, or buried by the hand of the Lord, even as Moses. But behold, the scriptures saith the Lord took Moses unto himself; and we suppose that he has also received Alma in the spirit, unto himself; therefore, for this cause we know nothing concerning his death and burial.”
124. Holley, “A Study of the Similarities Between the Works of Flavius Josephus and the Book of Mormon”, the arguments put forth by Holley in this unpublished paper are both ill conceived and absurd; Holley knows neither the *Book of Mormon* nor the writings of Flavius Josephus.
125. In Josephus a more accurate description of these “robbers” would be with brigands or bandits. Whiston always translates ληστής as “robber.”
126. *J.W.* 2.253–54, 264, 271, 275, 278, 425, 431, 434, 441, 511, 541, 593, 653; 3.169, 177; 4.84, 97, 135, 138, 147, 199–204, 244, 406, 504, 510, 555; 5.30, 53, 424–25; 448–49; 524; 6.123, 129, 195–96, 277, 324, 363; *Life* 28, 78, 105–6, 175, 206.
127. For studies on the “robbers” in the Book of Mormon and their relation to “robbers” in Josephus, see Keith H. Meservy, “‘Gaddiantonism’ and the Destruction of Jerusalem,” in *The Pearl of Great Price: Revelations from God*, ed. H. Donl Peterson and Charles D. Tate Jr. (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, 1989), 171–95; Benjamin George, “The Sicarii and Book of Mormon Secret Combinations,” in *Selections from the Religious Education Student Symposium* (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, 2003), 69–80.
128. Helaman 6:18–35; 7:4; 11:2, 26–32; 3 Nephi 1:27–29; 2:11–18; 3:11–20; 4:1–7, 15–26.
129. Helaman 2:13. In the following verse Mormon will clarify that he is not just referring to the people of Nephi at the time of the book of Helaman but of the entire Nephite civilization that spans the whole Book of Mormon.
130. 3 Nephi 4:27–33; 5:4; 6:3.

131. 4 Nephi 1:46; Mormon 1:18; 2:8, 10, 27–28; 8:9. For earlier parallels, see Ether 10:33; 13:26.
132. Lincoln H. Blumell, “Social Banditry? Galilean Banditry from Herod until the Outbreak of the First Jewish Revolt,” *SCI* 27 (2008): 37–40; Lincoln H. Blumell, “Beware of Bandits! Banditry and Land Travel in the Roman Empire,” *Journeys* 8, no. 1 (2007): 4–7; cf. Brent D. Shaw, “Bandits in the Roman Empire,” *Past & Present* 105 (1984): 198–270.
133. Dio Cassius 36.20.2: “Ever since war had been carried on continuously in many different places at once, and many cities had been overthrown, while sentences hung over the heads of all the fugitives, and there was no freedom from fear for anyone anywhere, large numbers had turned to banditry.” Cf. Dio Cassius 77.10.5; SHA, *Sev.* 18.6, where a notable bandit named Bulla Felix who plundered throughout Italy at the start of the third century CE was both a cause and a product of societal decline. Cf. Martin Goodman, *The Ruling Class of Judea: The Origins of the Jewish Revolt Against Rome, A.D. 66–70* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 60–6; Seth Schwartz, “Josephus in Galilee: Rural Patronage and Social Breakdown,” in *Josephus and the History of the Greco-Roman Period: Essays in Memory of Morton Smith*, ed. Fausto Parente and Joseph Sievers (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1994), 297–300; John Kloppenborg, *Excavating Q: The History and Setting of the Sayings Gospel* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 247, who notes, “It is a priori likely that an increase in banditry is symptomatic of worsening social and economic conditions.”
134. *J.W.* 6.201–13.
135. *J.W.* 5.412. Cf. Honora H. Chapman, “Josephus and the Cannibalism of Mary (BJ 6.199–219),” in *A Companion to Greek and Roman Historiography*, ed. John Marincola (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2007), 419–26, who notes that Josephus was also seeking to engender compassion for the Jewish survivors of the siege.
136. Schreckenberg, *Die Flavius-Josephus-Tradition*, 186–203, where a list of known references is provided. Cf. Steve Mason, *Josephus and the New Testament* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2003), 11, who notes that the episode was even more popular among Christians than Josephus’s reference to John

- the Baptist or James the brother of Jesus. The story was so well known that in illuminated manuscripts of Josephus from the middle ages it was visually depicted. See Guy N. Deutsch, *Iconographie de l'Illustration de Flavius Josèphe Au Temps de Jean Fouquet* (Leiden: Brill, 1986), Ill. nos. 1, 144–46; cf. Guy N. Deutsch, “The Illustration of Josephus’ Manuscripts,” in *Josephus, Judaism, and Christianity*, ed. Louis H. Feldman and Gohei Hata (Detroit: Wayne State University, 1987), 398–410.
137. Moroni 9:9–10: “And notwithstanding this great abomination of the Lamanites, it doth not exceed that of our people in Moriantum. For behold, many of the daughters of the Lamanites have they taken prisoners; and after depriving them of that which was most dear and precious above all things, which is chastity and virtue—and after they had done this thing, they did murder them in a most cruel manner, torturing their bodies even unto death; and after they have done this, they devour their flesh like unto wild beasts, because of the hardness of their hearts; and they do it for a token of bravery.”
138. See 2 Kings 6:24–32, where during the siege of Samaria by King Ben-hadad of Aram cannibalism is resorted to because of a great famine. During the siege of Jerusalem by Babylon, people resorted to cannibalism (see Lamentations 2:20; 4:10; cf. Ezekiel 5:10). In fact, in Jeremiah 19:8–9 Jeremiah specifically threatens the people of Jerusalem that since they have forsaken the Lord he will make them eat the flesh of their sons, daughters, and neighbors. In Leviticus 26:29 and Deuteronomy 28:53–57, cannibalism is used as a sign that Israel has forsaken the covenant and God has rejected them.
139. One of the more popular descriptions of Josephus and his works in the early part of the nineteenth century was given in Rev. Charles Buck’s *Theological Dictionary*, first printed in 1802 and reprinted five times before 1851, that contained a half-page entry on Josephus. This entry was subsequently reprinted verbatim in other Bible dictionaries and encyclopedias of the time like Fessendern & Co.’s, *Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge: Or, Dictionary of the Bible, Theology, Religious Biography, All Religions, Ecclesiastical History, and Missions* (1835), 702. In the *Lectures on Faith* (1835), Joseph began the first lecture by quoting the opening paragraph of Buck’s entry on “Theology”

- and elsewhere in the lecture Buck's *Theological Dictionary* is cited. See Joseph Smith, *Lectures on Faith*, published as part 1 of *The Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints* (Kirtland, OH, 1835), 1; cf. Matthew Bowman and Samuel Brown, "Reverend Buck's Theological Dictionary and the Struggle to Define American Evangelicalism, 1802–1851," *Journal of the Early Republic* 29, no. 3 (2009): 469.
140. A work thought to have been written by Josephus entitled "Concerning Hades" but now recognized as written by a different author employs the phrase "from corruption to incorruption." See Whiston, trans., *Concerning Hades*. In the Book of Mormon on six occasions the terms "corruption" and "incorruption" are juxtaposed using a similar construction: 2 Nephi 2:11; 9:7; Mosiah 16:10; Alma 5:15; 40:2; 41:4. While this potentially could be considered some sort of verbatim parallel, it is important to note that this very same language is also used by Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:42, 50–54, in the context of the resurrection. It seems more likely that the Book of Mormon is echoing Paul than Josephus here since it is always used in the context of the resurrection.
141. Josephus, *Ant.* 18.63–64 (Whiston translation): "Now there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man; for he was a doer of wonderful works—a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews and many of the Gentiles. He was [the] Christ. And when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men among us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first did not forsake him, for he appeared to them alive again the third day, because the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him; and the sect of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct at this day."
142. On the reception of this passage by Christians, see Alice Whealey, *Josephus on Jesus: The Testimonium Flavianum Controversy from Late Antiquity to Modern Times* (New York: Peter Lang, 2003); Heinz Schreckenberg, "The Works of Josephus and the Early Christian Church," in *Josephus, Judaism, and Christianity*, ed. Louis H. Feldman and Gohei Hata (Detroit: Wayne State University, 1987), 315–24. See also Philip L. Barlow, *Mormons and the*

Bible: The Place of the Latter-day Saints in American Religion (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 38–9, who notes that Joseph Smith show little awareness of higher criticism of the bible.

143. Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses* (London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1854–96), 3.366, where Young briefly discusses Josephus's depiction of select early Christians: "What is his history? Read for yourselves the account given by his friends. It is said that Josephus has given a pretty just account of Joseph and Mary, of the Apostles, &c., but he has only given just about as good an account of Jesus and his parents as some person in London lately has about the 'Mormons' and Joseph Smith their Prophet, though he gives a pretty fair account. Take a man in Paris or in London and let him write a history of Joseph Smith and the Latter Day Saints thirty years after Joseph figured on the earth, for the history of Christ by Josephus was written several years, after he was crucified, and he would come as nigh to the truth, perhaps, as Josephus did in the history he has given of Jesus and his Apostles. Josephus was a pretty fair man, but he knew but little about them." It should be noted here that Josephus says nothing about Joseph and Mary and technically says nothing about any of the early Christian Apostles.

The next allusion to the *Testimonium Flavianum* is from Orson Pratt, in *Journal of Discourses*, 16.219, where in a discourse given September 28, 1873, he points out how the witnesses to the *Book of Mormon* are more valid than Josephus's testimony (to the *Testimonium Flavianum*?) since his testimony was not direct and was based on hearsay: "When we contrast the evidence which we have concerning the divinity of the Book of Mormon, with the evidence which this generation have of the Bible, we discern that the Book of Mormon contains a vast amount of evidence, thousands and thousands of witnesses of its divinity to where the Christian world have one of the divinity of the Bible. 'How so?' you may inquire. These very Elders and missionaries who have gone to the nations have kept their journals, and have recorded the miracles which God has wrought by their hands. These are living witnesses. Those who saw these miracles are still alive. Now, how many witnesses have you that miracles were wrought in the days of our Savior or in the days

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of his apostles who succeeded him? You have no person outside the Church only those who, like Josephus, bore their testimony from hearsay. Within the Church you have six witnesses. There are eight writers in the New Testament, but only six of these eight have borne any testimony concerning the performing of miracles, but you believe it on their testimony. The Book of Mormon, I presume, has more than six thousand, if not sixty thousand witnesses to its divinity and to the miracles that have been wrought in these latter-days. Which is the greatest?"

144. Josephus, *Ant.* 18.116–17; 20.200.