

# *J. Smith - The Restoration Mix*

## **Joseph Smith's Revelation Mixtape**

Understanding the 19th-Century Origins of Mormon Doctrine

The unique theology of Mormonism is often presented as a singular, monolithic revelation from God. This presentation explores a different framework: Joseph Smith as an ambitious curator—a **"mixtape artist"**—who sampled the most compelling religious, cultural, and philosophical "tracks" of his 19th-century world to create something new.

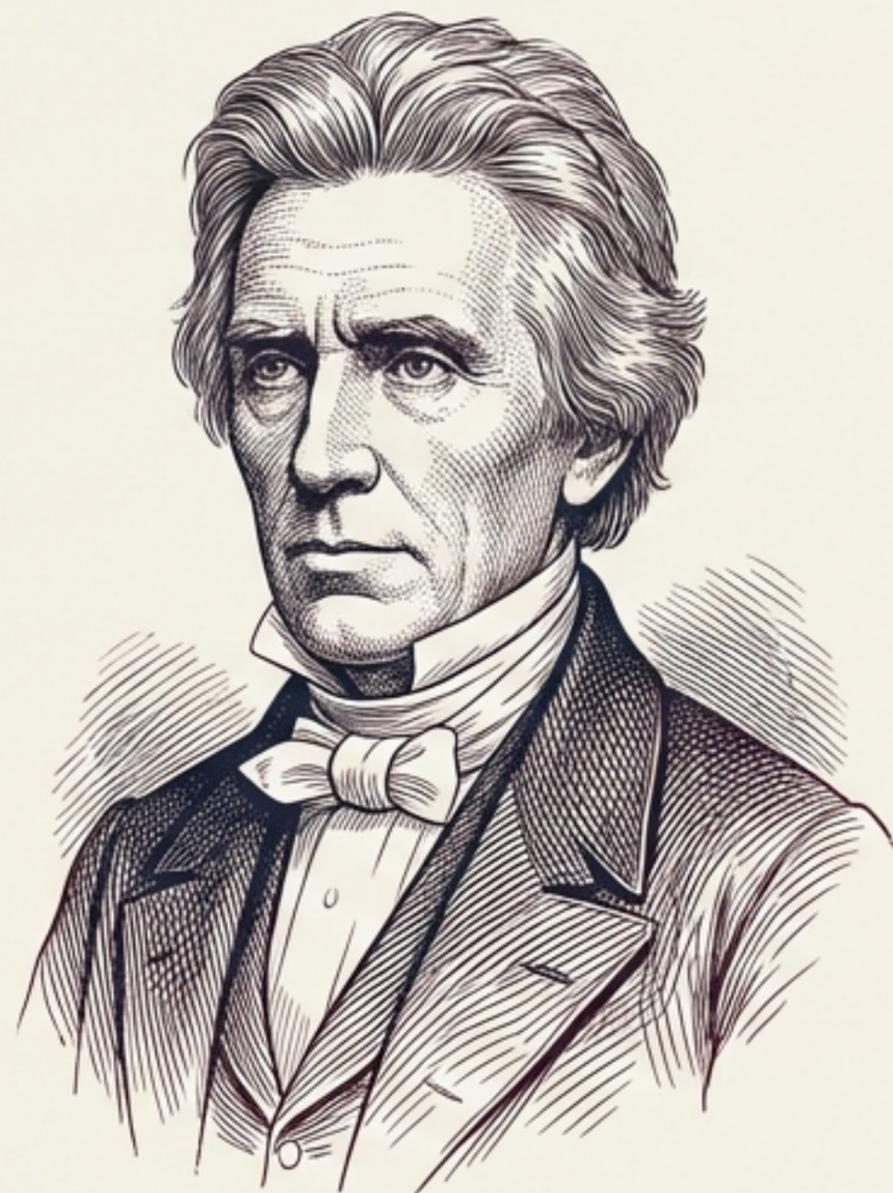
Each "track" we explore will examine a core Mormon doctrine, its contemporary source, and the direct evidence connecting them.

# “Every error and almost every truth discussed in New York for the last 10 years.”

This was the 1831 assessment of the Book of Mormon by Alexander Campbell, an influential preacher and contemporary of Joseph Smith. He immediately recognized the book not as an ancient text, but as a product of its time, addressing all the hot-button religious debates of the day.

“This Prophet Smith... wrote on the plates of Nephi in his book of Mormon every error and almost every truth discussed in New York for the last 10 years. He decided all the great controversies—infant baptism, ordination, the Trinity, regeneration, repentance, justification, the fall of Man, the atonement... even the questions of Freemasonry, Republican government, and the rights of man.”

Alexander Campbell, 1831.



# Track 1: The Book of Mormon

## The Doctrine

A divine, ancient record detailing the history of two groups of Hebrews in the Americas, the righteous, light-skinned Nephites and the wicked, dark-skinned Lamanites.

## The 19th-Century Source

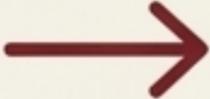
The “Mound Builder Myth.” This was a widespread belief that a sophisticated, ancient white race had built the large earthen mounds found in North America but was subsequently wiped out by a savage, dark-skinned race—the ancestors of modern Native Americans.

## The Direct Connection

The Book of Mormon's core narrative directly reflects the Mound Builder Myth. Other contemporary influences are also present, including themes from *View of the Hebrews* (1823) and Joseph Smith Sr.'s personal dream, which becomes Lehi's dream in the text.



# Track 1 (Remix): The Sermons of Ancient Prophets

| The Doctrine   | The 19th-Century Source   | The Direct Connection  |   |
|--|---|--|---|
| The Book of Mormon contains profound sermons from ancient American prophets. | The impassioned preaching styles and theological language of Protestant revival ministers in Joseph Smith's "Burned-over District." |  | Methodist technique of "laying down heads"—outlining a sermon with bullet points.  "...if there were preaching which was sacred... I, Jacob, should engraven the <b>heads of them</b> upon these plates..." (Jacob 2:4) |

Historian Grant Palmer documented near-identical phrases and structures between these sermons and those in the Book of Mormon. Furthermore, scholar William Davis identified this explicit mention of the 19th-century practice within the supposedly ancient text.

# Track 2: The First Vision

## The Doctrine

A singular, unprecedented event in 1820 where God the Father and Jesus Christ appeared to Joseph Smith.

## The 19th-Century Source

Visionary experiences were a common feature of the Second Great Awakening. LDS historian Richard Bushman himself located 32 pamphlets published between 1783 and 1815 detailing similar visions.

## The Direct Connection

The bottom half of the slide is a side-by-side comparison of two quotes, presented as excerpts from historical documents.

### Norris Stearns (1815)

"I saw two Spirits... One was God my maker almost in bodily shape like a man... Below him stood Jesus Christ... in perfect shape like a man."



### Asa Wild (published in Joseph's hometown paper, 1823)

"He... told me that every denomination of professing Christians had become extremely corrupt."

# Track 3: The Priesthood Restoration

## The Doctrine

The Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthoods, lost during a great apostasy, were restored to Joseph Smith via angelic ordination in 1829.

## The Direct Connection

**1827**  
Campbellites teach a Melchizedek Priesthood.

**Nov 1830**  
Sidney Rigdon is baptized.



**June 1831**  
The "High Priesthood" is first introduced in the church.

## The 19th-Century Source

The idea of a higher, Melchizedek Priesthood was a teaching of the Campbellites, the influential restorationist movement that Sidney Rigdon belonged to before joining Mormonism.

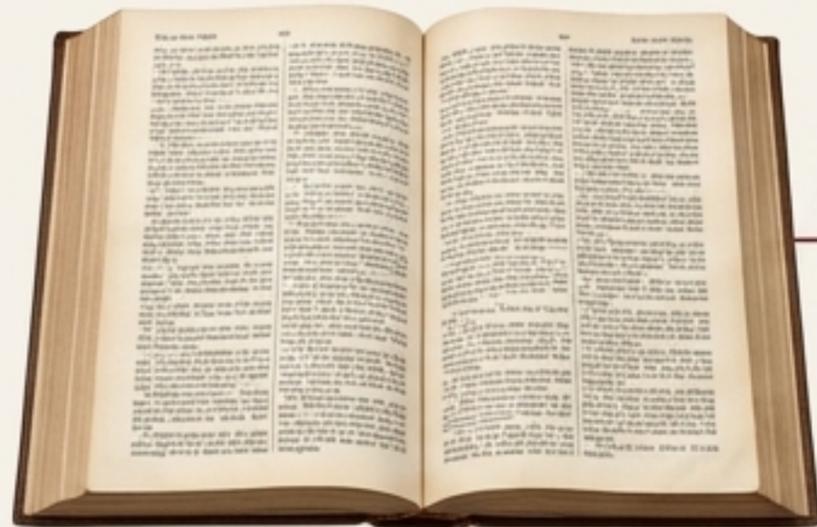
"This matter of the two orders of priesthood... all originated in the mind of Sydney Rigden... This is the way the high priests and the 'priesthood' as you have it was introduced into the Church of Christ almost two years after its beginning."

– David Whitmer, one of the Three Witnesses

# Track 4: The Joseph Smith Translation

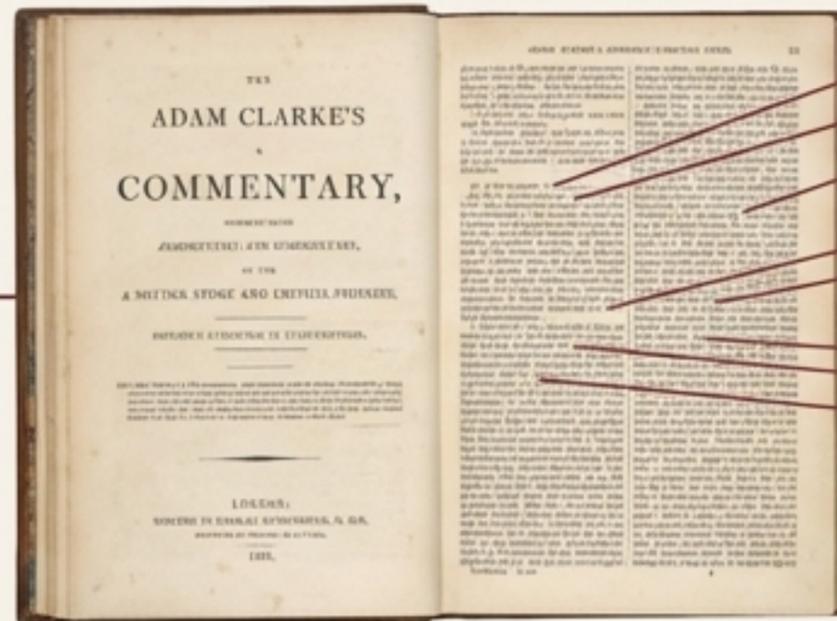
## The Doctrine

A revelatory project to restore “plain and precious” truths to the King James Bible through divine inspiration.

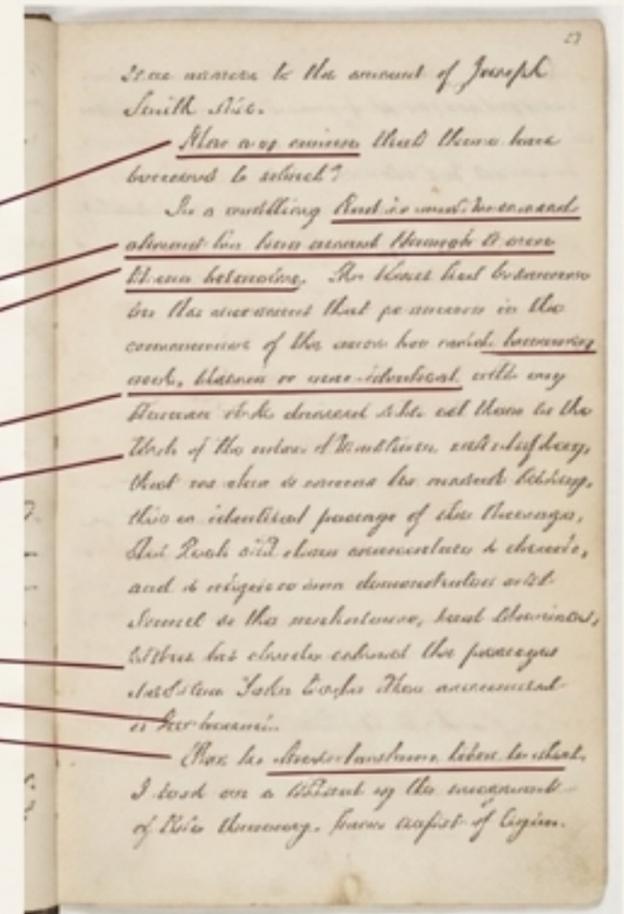


## The 19th-Century Source

Adam Clarke's *A Commentary and Critical Notes*, a popular and readily available Bible commentary of the era.



## The Direct Connection



A 2017 BYU Studies paper by Haley Wilson May uncovered “extensive parallels” between the Joseph Smith Translation (JST) and Clarke's commentary. Her research demonstrated that Joseph Smith and his scribes directly used Clarke's work, borrowing not just ideas but specific phrases and lengthy passages for the “inspired” revision of the Bible.

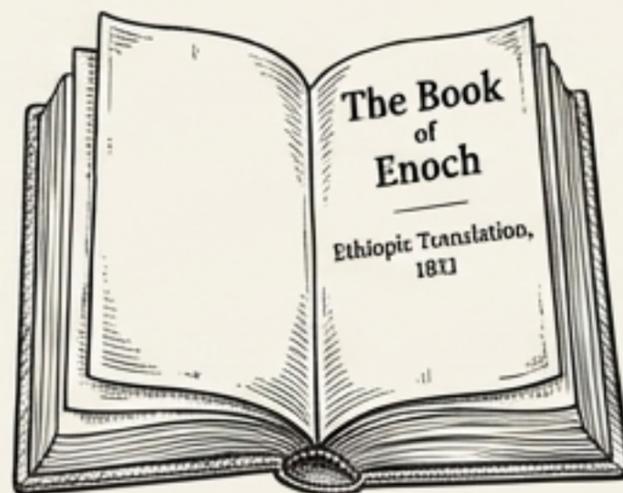
# Track 5: The Book of Enoch

## The Doctrine (and Apologetic Claim)

Joseph Smith restored a lost, ancient prophecy of Enoch in his Bible translation. Apologists like Hugh Nibley argued he could not have known of the Book of Enoch, which was supposedly unavailable at the time, proving his prophetic ability.

## The 19th-Century Source

The actual Book of Enoch. After being translated from Ethiopic, its 1821 publication created significant interest in both Europe and the United States. It was a well-known and heavily discussed text.



## The Direct Connection



Scholar Colby Townsend's research has identified **over 80 different publications and references to the Book of Enoch** that Joseph Smith could have accessed before 1830. The idea that this ancient text was unknown to him is historically inaccurate.

# Track 6: The Word of Wisdom

## The Doctrine

A divine law of health revealed in February 1833, prohibiting wine, strong drinks, tobacco, and “hot drinks.”

## The 19th-Century Source

The American Temperance Movement. This popular health crusade advocated for abstaining from alcohol, smoking, tea, and coffee, while promoting diets of grains and local fruits. Sylvester Graham was a prominent advocate.

## The Direct Connection

Kirtland Temperance Society formed in 1830.



Revelation (D&C 89) given on **Feb. 27, 1833**—the day after a widely publicized “national day of temperance.”

**David Whitmer claimed** it began as a **joke** after Emma Smith complained about having to clean tobacco spit from the floor.

# Track 7: Three Degrees of Glory

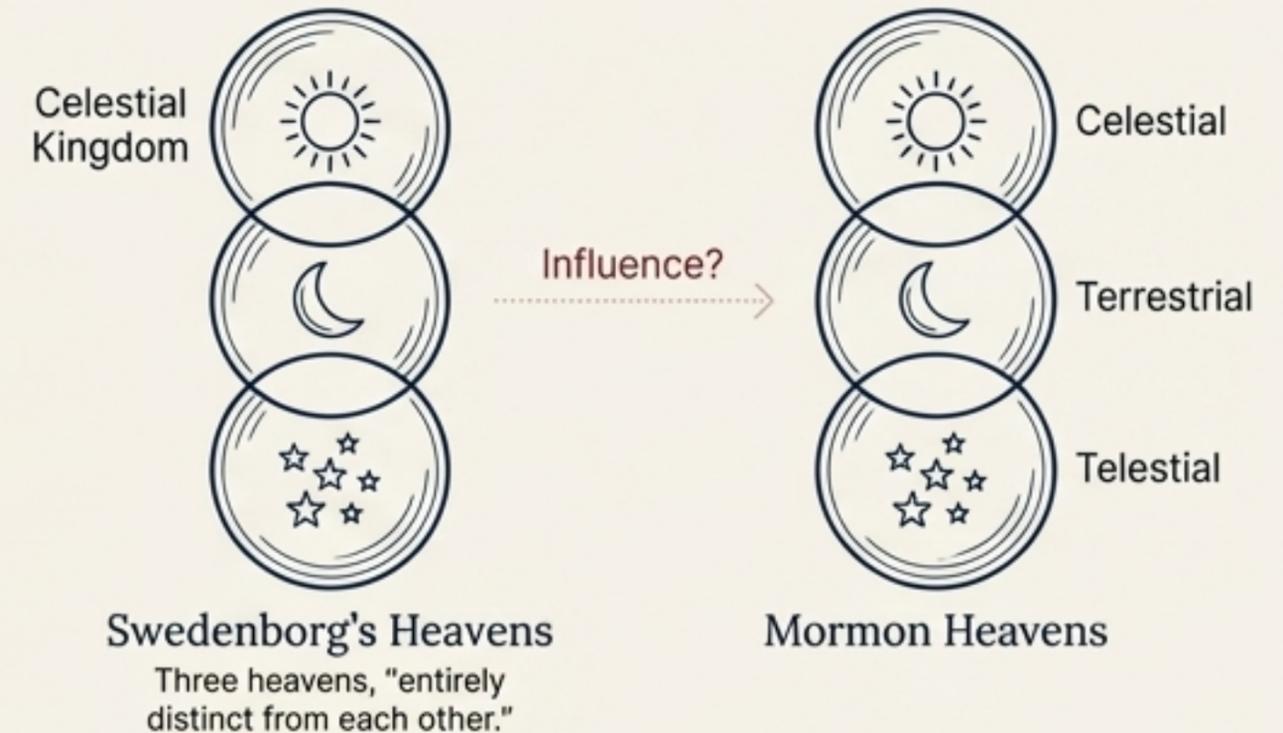
## The Doctrine

A unique plan of salvation with three distinct heavens or “kingdoms of glory”: the **Celestial**, **Terrestrial**, and **Telestial**.

## The 19th-Century Source

The theological writings of **Emanuel Swedenborg**, an 18th-century scientist and mystic whose work was popularized in America starting in the 1780s.

## The Direct Connection



Joseph Smith's familiarity with Swedenborg is confirmed in an account from Edward Hunter, who reported asking Joseph about him. Joseph's reply: "Emanuel Swedenborg had a view of the world to come but for daily food he perished."

# Track 8: The Temple Endowment Ceremony

## The Doctrine

A sacred, ancient ceremony containing signs, tokens, and covenants, restored by Joseph Smith and claimed to originate in the Temple of Solomon.

## The 19th-Century Source

The rituals of 19th-century Freemasonry.

## The Direct Connection



# From “True Masonry” to Myth

## The Historical Claim

Joseph Smith taught his followers that the endowment was the original, pure ceremony from which Masonry had apostatized.

“We have the **true masonry**... Brother Joseph says masonry was taken from priesthood but has become degenerated.”

– **Heber C. Kimball**

Joseph Smith told **Benjamin F. Johnson** that “Freemasonry... was the **apostate endowments**.”

## The Modern Admission

Historical evidence shows Freemasonry did not originate in ancient times. The Church itself now acknowledges this.

“The rituals of Freemasonry appear to have **originated in early modern Europe**... **By Joseph Smith's day** the boundaries between masonry's early European history and its founding **myths and traditions** had long since been blurred.”

# The Full Album: A Cumulative Case

One or two instances of overlap could be dismissed as coincidence or parallel revelation. But when viewed together, the tracks form a cohesive album. The pattern of sampling from contemporary sources is the dominant theme, suggesting a clear methodology behind Joseph Smith's revelations.

## The Mixtape & Its Samples

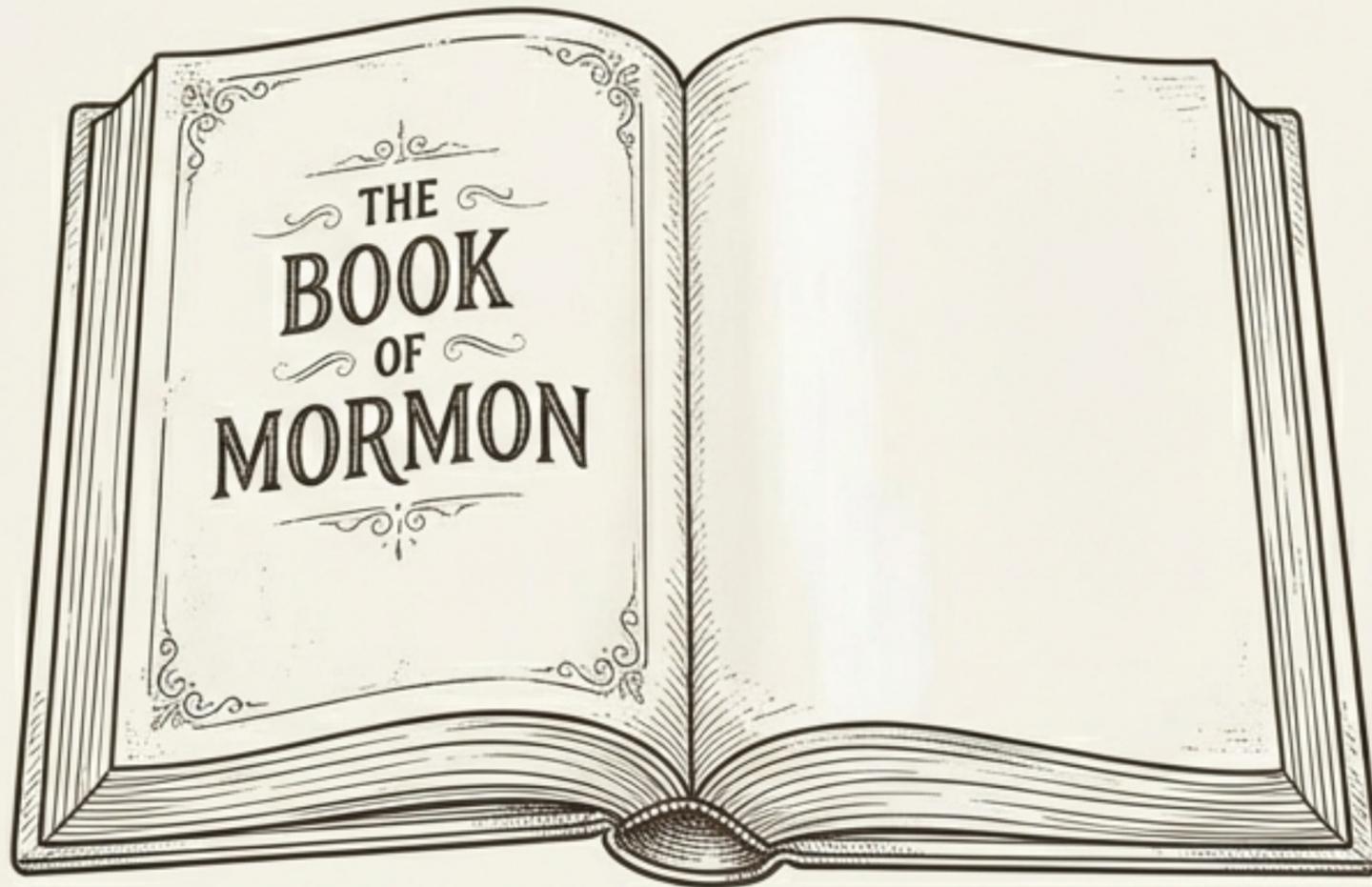
### The Tracks

### The Samples

|                  |   |                          |
|------------------|---|--------------------------|
| Book of Mormon   | → | Mound Builder Myth       |
| First Vision     | → | Revivalist Visions       |
| Priesthood       | → | Campbellite Theology     |
| JST Bible        | → | Adam Clarke's Commentary |
| Word of Wisdom   | → | Temperance Movement      |
| Three Heavens    | → | Swedenborg's Writings    |
| Temple Endowment | → | Freemasonry              |

# The Missing Tracks

The Book of Mormon is claimed to contain the “fullness of the everlasting gospel.” Yet, it is silent on nearly all of the doctrines that define modern Mormonism.



There is no mention in the Book of Mormon of:

- Three Degrees of Glory
- Temple marriage for exaltation
- Baptism for the Dead
- Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthoods as distinct offices
- The Word of Wisdom
- The nature of God as an exalted man
- Plural Marriage

**Why is the “fullness of the gospel” missing its most essential and unique teachings? Because Joseph Smith had not yet encountered or developed these ideas from his 19th-century environment.**

# Joseph Smith, The 19th-Century Curator

The evidence suggests Joseph Smith was not a prophet receiving ancient truths in a vacuum, but a brilliant and ambitious religious synthesizer. He was a product of his time, immersed in the dynamic intellectual and spiritual “waters” of 19th-century America. He listened to the most powerful ideas around him, curated them, and curated them, and compiled them into a new theological soundtrack—a “mixtape” that became Mormonism.

The story of its origins is not one of ancient gold plates, but of a 19th-century world rich with inspiration.

