



The Keystone Under Scrutiny

An Evidence-Based Examination of the Book of Mormon

The Right to an Informed Choice

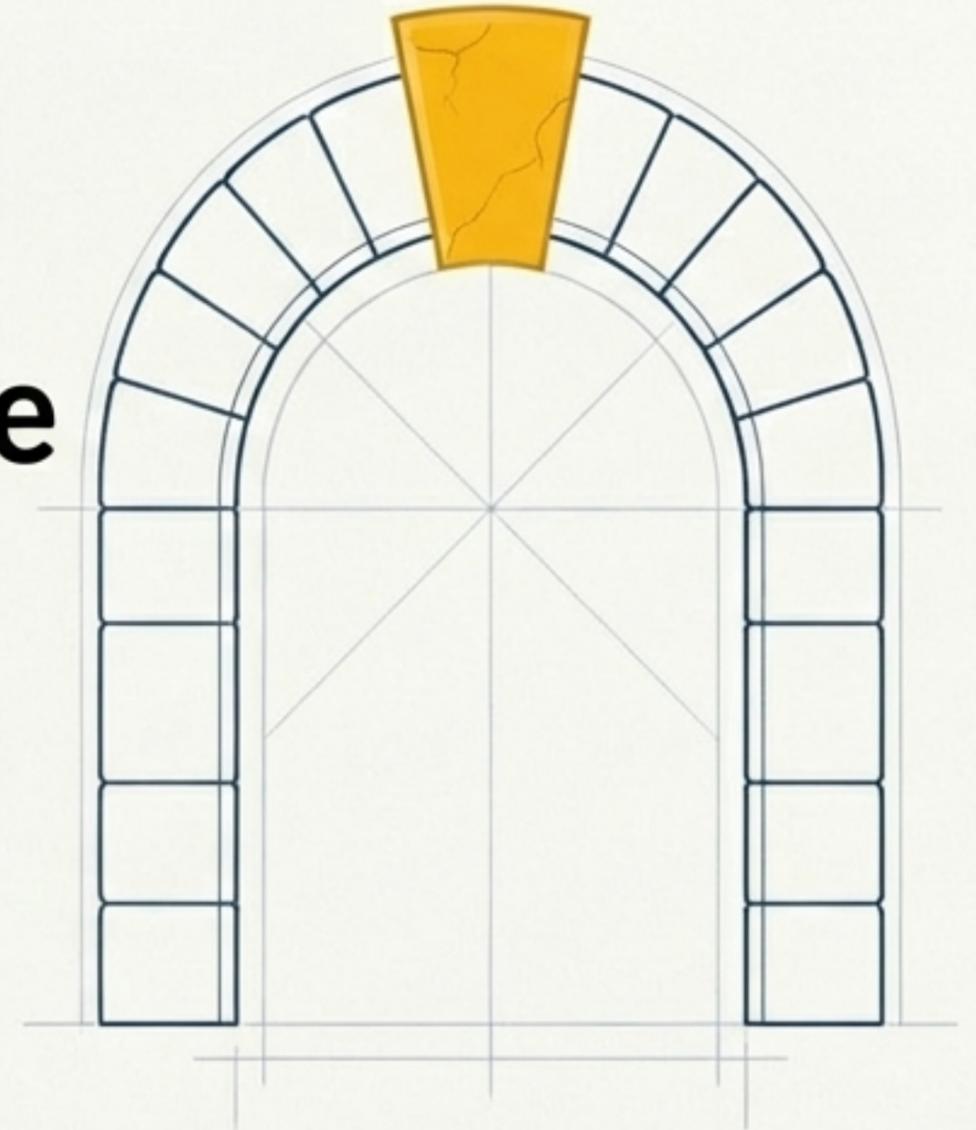
“I believe that members and investigators deserve to have all the **facts** and **information** on the table to be able to make a fully **informed** and **balanced decision** as to whether or not they want to to commit their hearts, minds, time, talents, income, and lives to Mormonism. Anything less is obstruction to the **free agency** of the individual.”

— Jeremy Runnells, *CES Letter*

‘The Keystone of Our Religion’

“He testified that the Book of Mormon was the most correct of any book on earth and the keystone of our religion. A keystone is the central stone in an arch. It holds all the other stones in place, and if removed, the arch crumbles.”

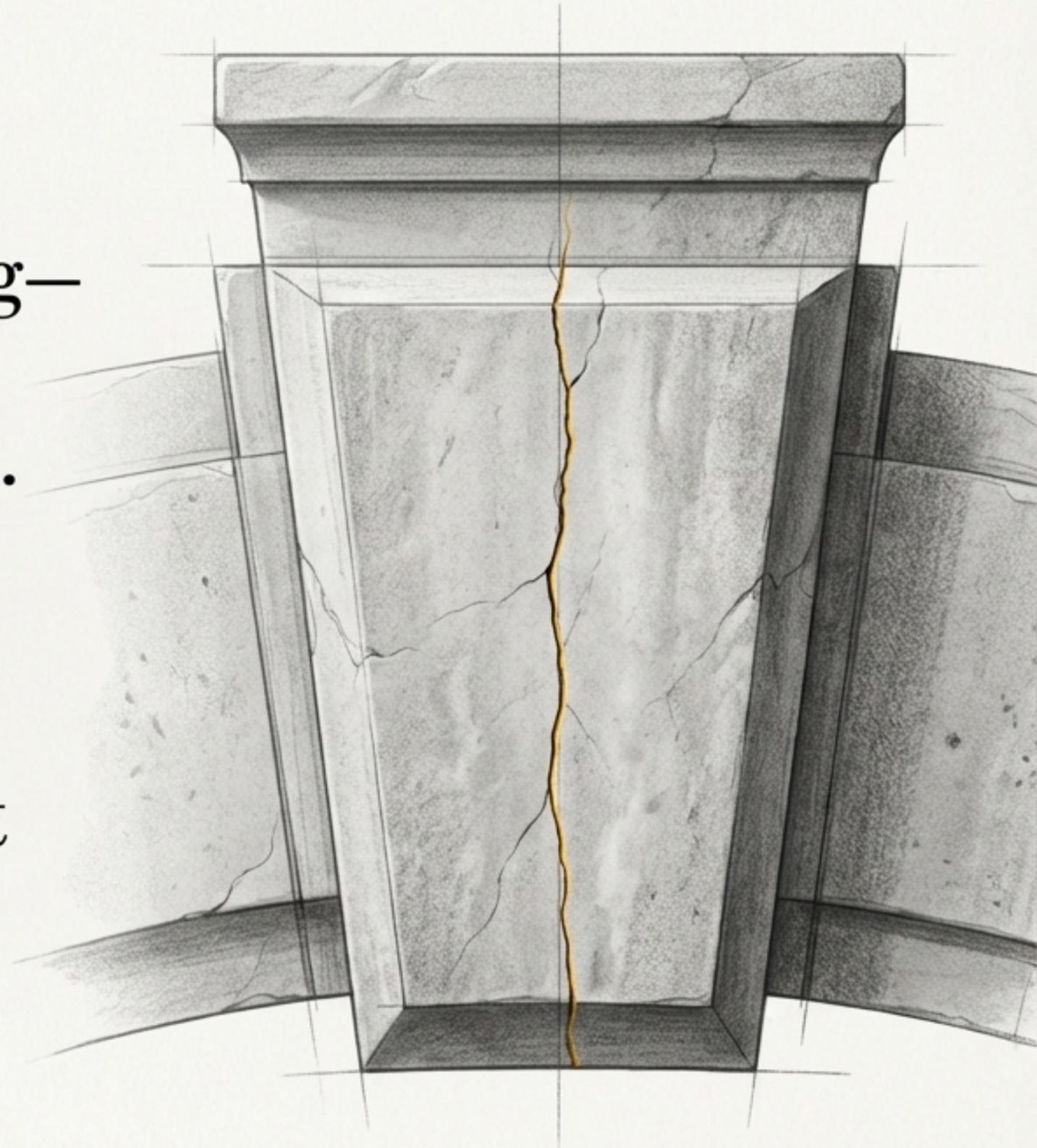
— President Ezra Taft Benson



A ‘Sudden Death Proposition’

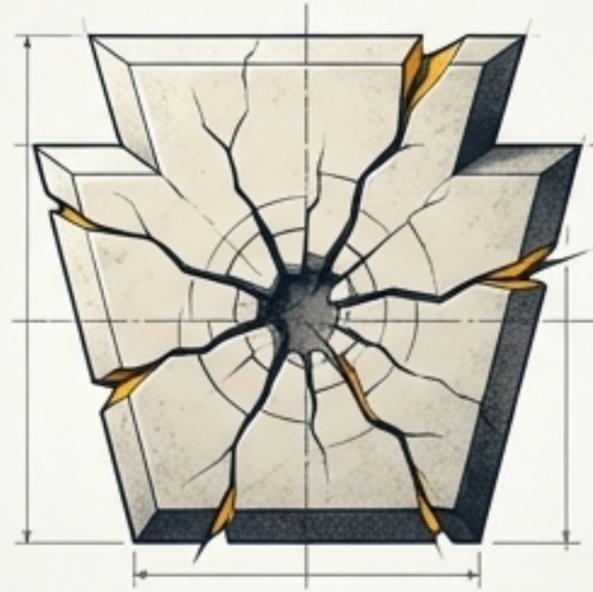
“Everything in the church—everything—everything—rises or falls on the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon... Either the Book of Mormon is what the prophet Joseph said it is, or this church and its founder are false, fraudulent, a deception from the first instance onward.”

— Elder Jeffrey R. Holland



The Scrutiny Begins: Examining the Foundational Claims

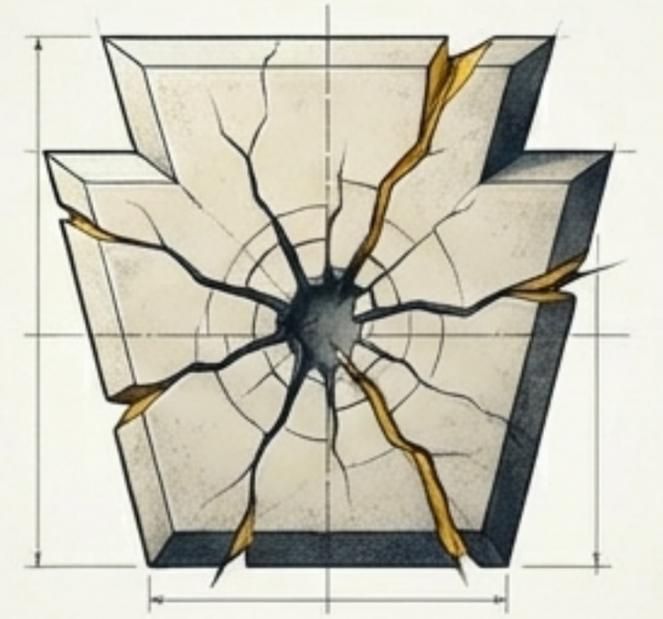
The CES Letter poses a series of critical, evidence-based questions about the Book of Mormon's origins and authenticity. We will examine five of these foundational questions.



1. **King James Bible Errors**
2. **17th Century KJV Italics**
3. **Contradictions** with the Joseph Smith Translation (JST)
4. DNA Evidence and Native American Origins
5. Anachronisms: An Ancient Text or a 19th Century World?

What are 1769 King James Version errors doing in the Book of Mormon?

The Book of Mormon contains textual errors that are not from ancient manuscripts, but are specific to the **1769 edition of the King James Bible (KJV)**—the version available to Joseph Smith.



Evidence

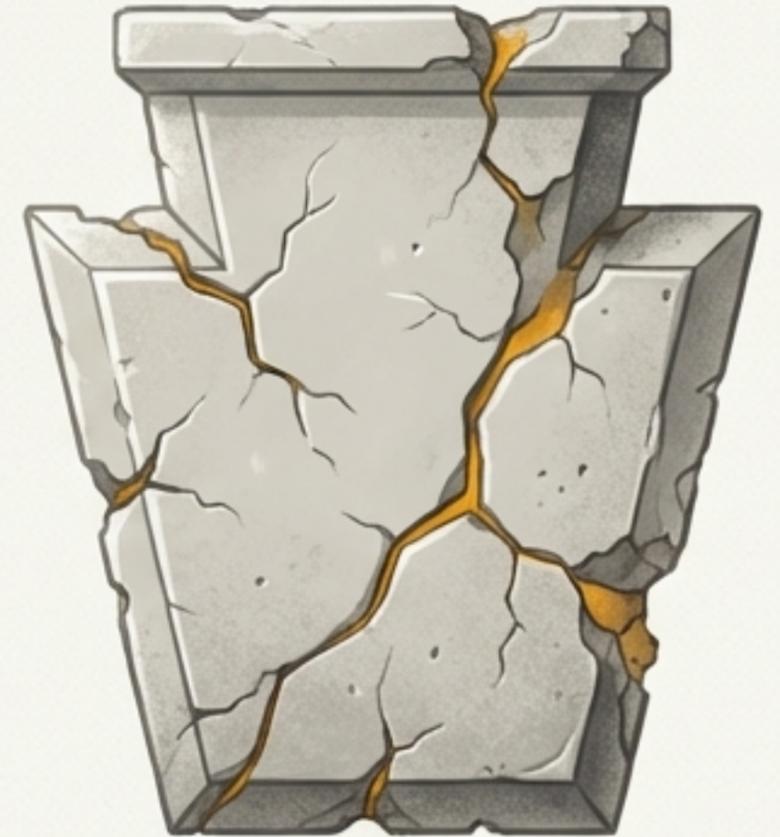
KJV (Matthew 5:27) ...by them of old time...	Book of Mormon (3 Nephi 12:27) ...by them of old time...
KJV (Matthew 5:30) ...should be cast into hell.	Book of Mormon (3 Nephi 12:30) ...should be cast into hell.

If the Book of Mormon were an ancient translation, it should be free of errors introduced into the Bible centuries later. Their presence suggests direct copying from the KJV, not translation from ancient plates.

The Apologetic Response: Acknowledging the Problem, Sidestepping the Cause

FairMormon's Position: Apologists argue the errors exist in multiple KJV editions, not just the 1769 version.

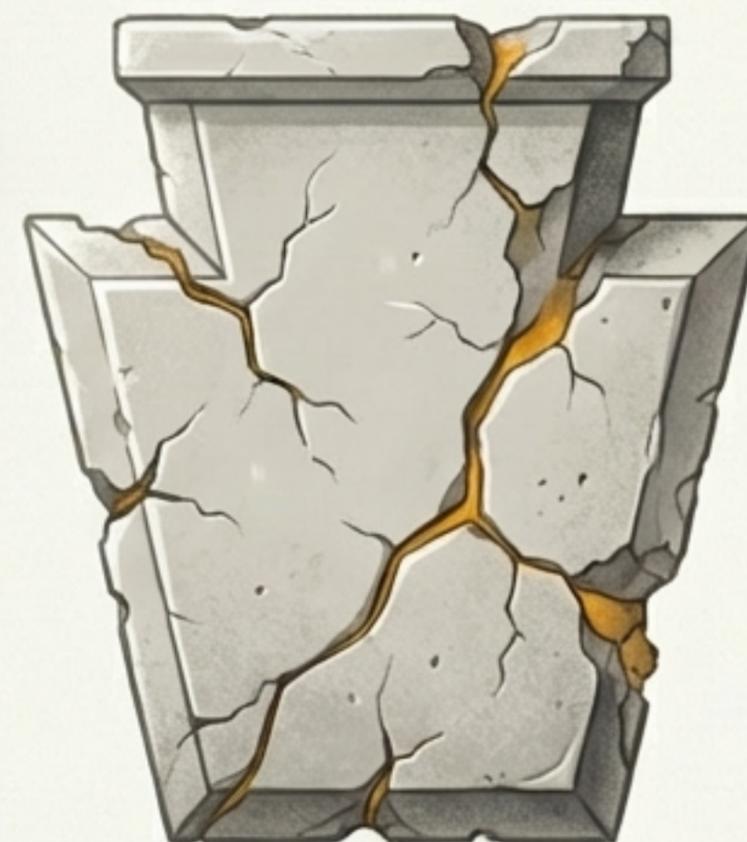
"it's likely... that the other major editions published between 1611 and 1769 contain the exact same errors, which in turn makes it more difficult for us to claim with certainty **which edition of the King James Version, if any, Joseph Smith plagiarized from.**"



Verdict: This defense fails to address the core issue. Instead of explaining why 17th-century errors are in an ancient text, it focuses on which modern text might have been the source, effectively admitting the strong possibility of plagiarism.

What are 17th-century KJV italics doing in the Book of Mormon?

When KJV translators added words to the English text for clarity (words not present in the original Hebrew or Greek manuscripts), they italicized them. These are the specific linguistic choices of 17th-century English scholars.



KJV (Malachi 3:10) - <i>Translator additions italicized</i>	Book of Mormon (3 Nephi 24:10)
...and pour you out a blessing, that <i>there shall not be room enough to receive it.</i>	...and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.

Why would a divine translation from ancient plates contain the exact, identical seven clarifying words invented by English scholars in the 1600s? The odds of this coincidence are astronomically low.

Why does the Book of Mormon copy KJV text that Joseph Smith himself later “corrected”?

Joseph Smith created his own “inspired” translation of the Bible (the JST), changing passages he deemed incorrect in the KJV. However, the Book of Mormon quotes the “incorrect” KJV version, not the “corrected” JST version that was supposedly restored by the same prophet.

Book of Mormon (3 Nephi 13:25-27)	King James Version (Matthew 6:25-27)	Joseph Smith Translation (Matthew 6:25-27)
Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat... take no thought for your life... life...	Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat...	Now I say unto you, and what I say unto you I say unto the church , take no thought for your life...



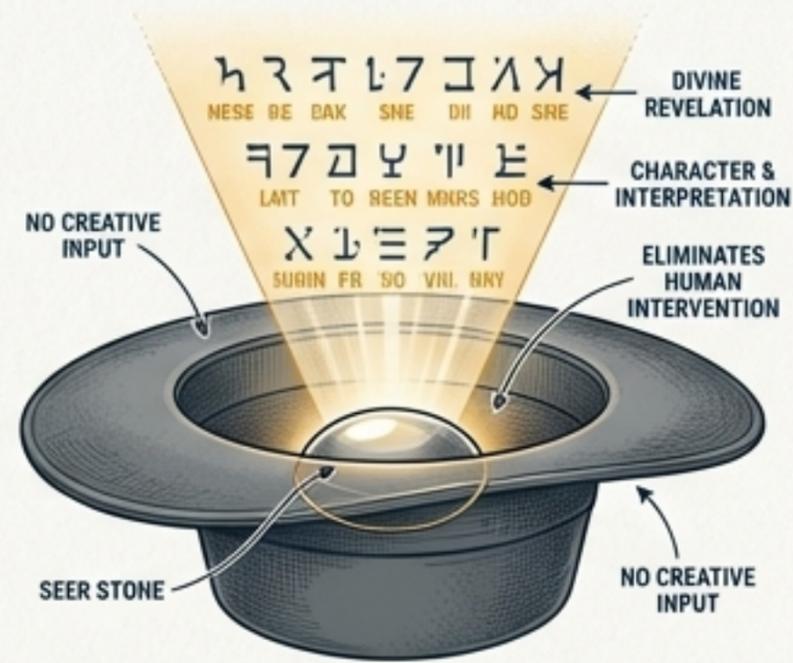
“The Inescapable Question”: “Why would God reveal an “incorrect” text for the Book of Mormon, only to inspire a “correction” a few years later?”

The 'Different Purposes' Defense vs. The Prophetic Teaching

The Apologetic Claim

FairMormon argues, "Joseph had different purposes in mind in his different **translations**." This suggests Joseph Smith actively shaped the text.

The Prophetic Teaching on Translation



President Russell M. Nelson, quoting witness David Whitmer, described a process that eliminates human intervention: "Joseph Smith would put the seer stone into a hat... a piece of something resembling parchment would appear, and on that appeared the writing. One character at a time would appear, and under it was the interpretation in English. Brother Joseph would read off the English... and when it was written down... then it would disappear and another character with the interpretation would appear."

The taught method of a divine, word-for-word revelation on a stone directly contradicts the idea that Joseph Smith was altering the text for different "purposes."



EVIDENCE DOSSIER: An Ancient Record or a Biblical Remix?

Historian Grant Palmer identified 20 narrative parallels between the journey of Nephi and the story of Moses from the biblical book of Exodus, occurring in the same chronological order.

Key Parallels

- Lives in luxury, then life is threatened.
- Justifiably kills a man before becoming a prophet.
- Receives a vision to escape into the wilderness.
- Promised to lead people to a promised land.
- People murmur at the Red Sea (or waters).
- Divine instrument provides guidance (Pillar of Cloud / Liahona).
- People complain of hunger; divine means provide food.
- Leader is accused of seeking to be a ruler.
- Leader ascends a mount to speak with God.
- People rebel with dancing and singing.
- They eventually repent and reach the promised land.



“These 20 shared motifs suggest dependency on the Bible Exodus story.” — **Grant Palmer**

Why does Native American DNA show Asian, not Middle Eastern, ancestry?

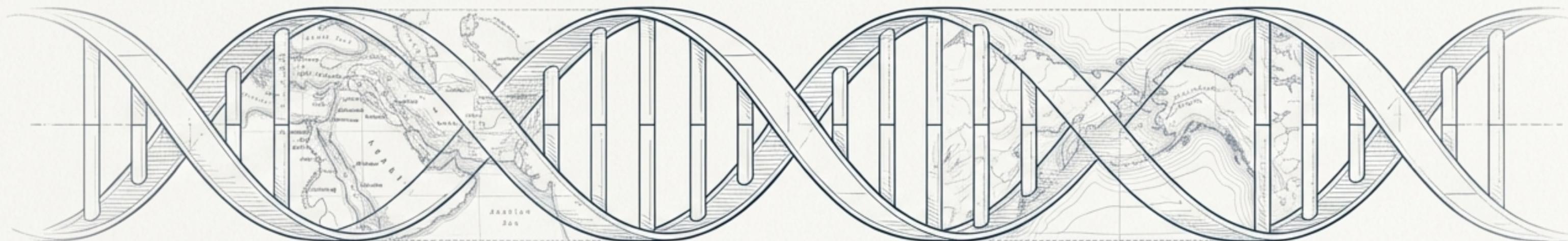
The Original Claim

For nearly 200 years, the Church taught that Native Americans were descended from Israelite Lamanites.



The Evidence

Genetic science has conclusively shown Native American origins trace back to migrations from Asia across the Bering Strait.



The Church's Response (a "before and after" comparison)

BEFORE: Original Text

"...the Lamanites... and they are the **principal ancestors** of the American Indians."

AFTER: 2006 Change

"...the Lamanites... and they are **among the ancestors** of the American Indians."

Official Admission

The Church's own 'Book of Mormon and DNA Studies' Gospel Topics Essay states:

"The evidence assembled to date suggests that the majority of Native Americans carry largely Asian DNA."



Why is the Book of Mormon filled with things that didn't exist in the ancient Americas?



An **anachronism** is a chronological inconsistency—something in a story that **doesn't belong** in its time period. The Book of Mormon is replete with them.

Things in the Book of Mormon but **NOT** in Pre-Columbian America:

- Animals: Horses, Cattle, Oxen, Sheep, Swine, Elephants
- Technology: Chariots, Steel (swords, bows), Iron
- Crops: Wheat, Silk

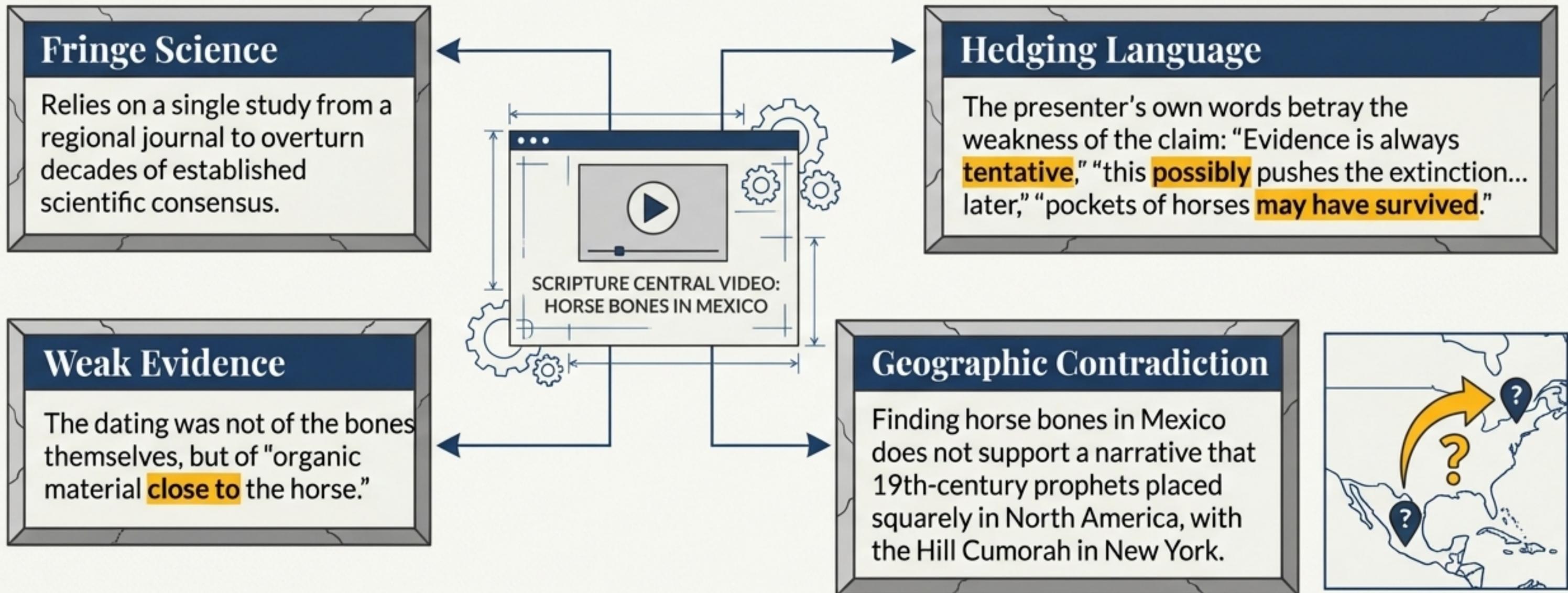


The Reverse Problem: The book is also missing things that were central to life in ancient America, such as corn, beans, squash, tomatoes, jaguars, and llamas.

Handling Anachronisms: How Apologetics Works



Case Study: A recent video from Scripture Central claimed newly found horse bones in Mexico “date to Book of Mormon times.”



The Weight on the Keystone

We have examined five foundational challenges to the Book of Mormon:

1. **Borrowed Text:** Contains unique errors and translator additions from the 17th-century King James Bible.
2. **Internal Contradiction:** Fails to align with Joseph Smith's own "corrected" JST Bible.
3. **Failed Science:** The core claim of Israelite ancestry for Native Americans is refuted by DNA evidence.
4. **Impossible History:** Filled with anachronistic animals, crops, and technologies from a 19th-century worldview.
5. **Biblical Blueprint:** Its core narrative arc mirrors the biblical story of Moses and the Exodus.



Can a keystone with such deep, structural flaws bear the weight of a religion?