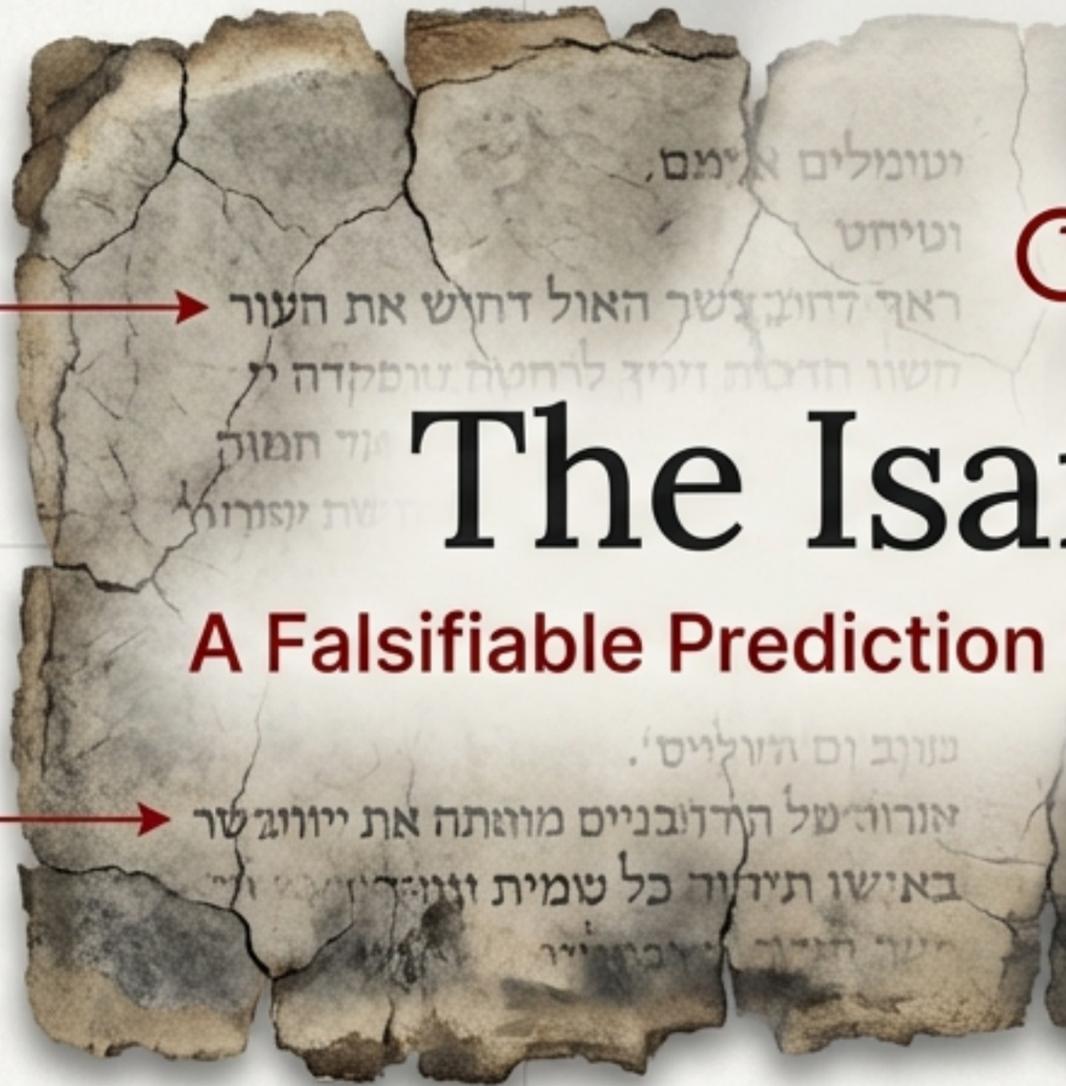


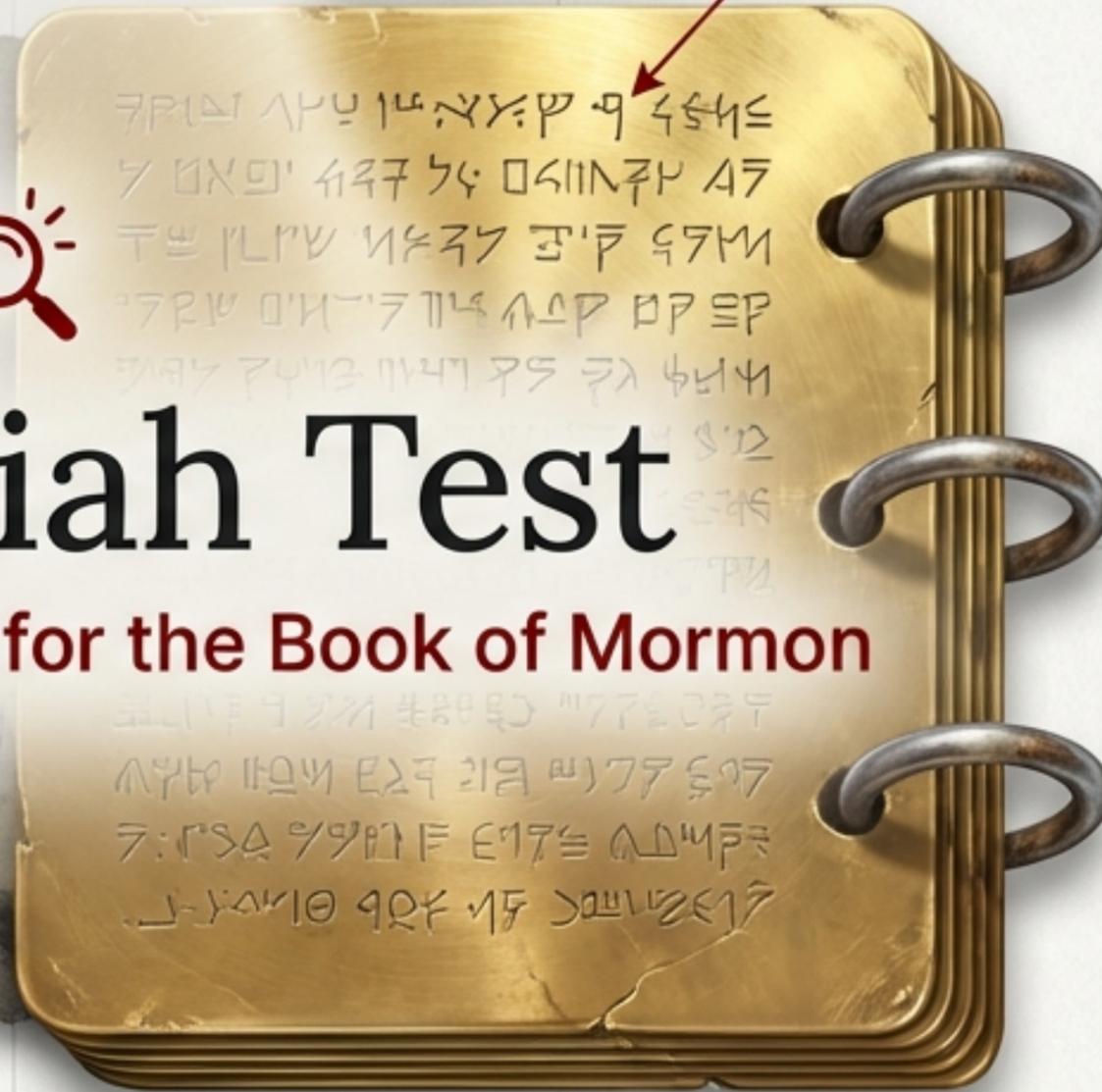
Isaiah Scroll
Fragment (4QIsa^a)



The Isaiah Test

A Falsifiable Prediction for the Book of Mormon

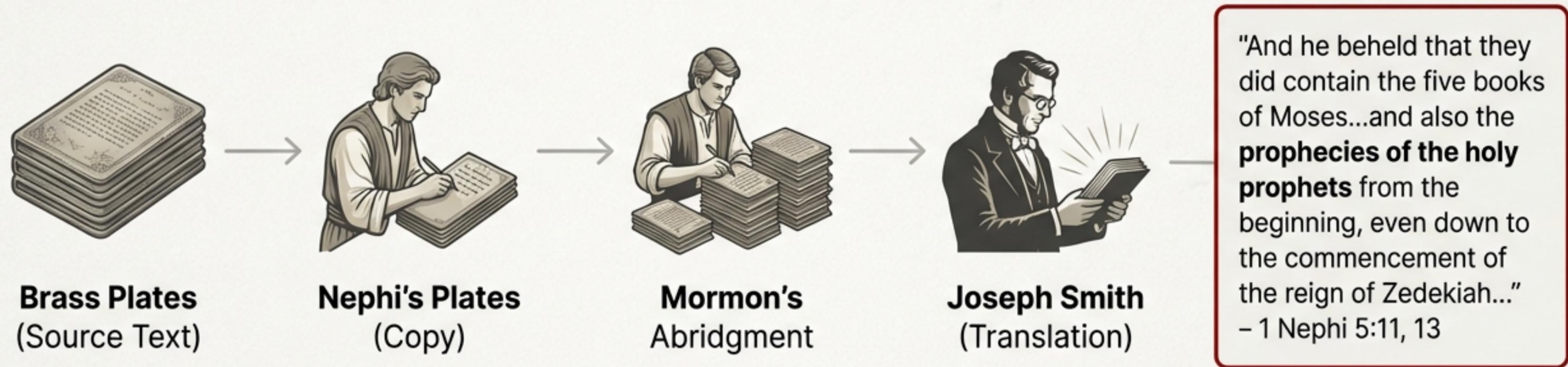
Engraved Character: Compare
with Ancient Semitic Scripts



An evidence-based analysis of the Book of Mormon's claims to ancient origins.

The Foundational Claim: An Ancient Record from 600 BC

The Book of Mormon presents itself as a sacred record of peoples in ancient America, translated from golden plates. A key source for this record was the “Plates of Brass,” which the prophet Lehi’s family supposedly brought from Jerusalem around 600 BC.



The text explicitly states these plates contained the words of Isaiah “**as he existed in 600 BC,**” setting the stage for a direct textual comparison.

A Problem Before We Begin: The Anachronism of a “Codex”

The Book of Mormon describes the brass and gold plates as a “codex”—a book with pages joined on one side. However, this technology was not used by Hebrews until centuries after Lehi’s supposed departure from Jerusalem. Ancient texts were kept on scrolls.

“

“The general conclusion among scholars is that the **Hebrews did not use codices until the second or third century AD.** Thus **Old Testament** documents are **scrolls...**”

- LDS Bible Dictionary, “Codex”

”



800+ Year Anachronism



Invention of the Codex

600 BC

Brass Plates Claim

~200-300 AD

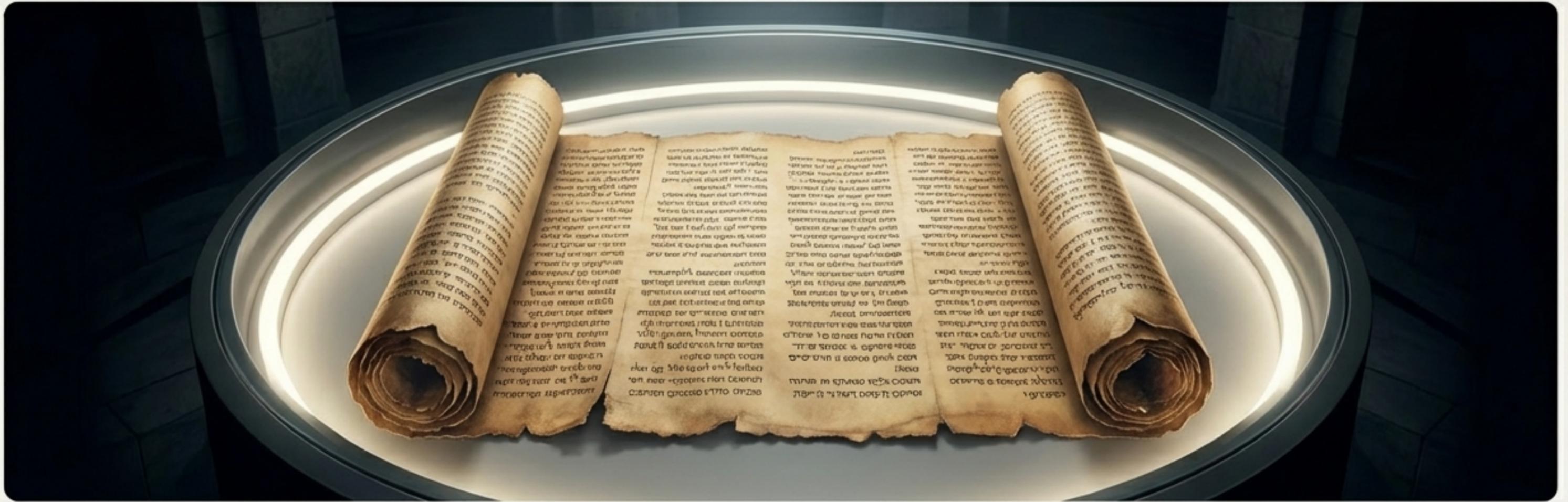
Invention of the Codex

“

“The idea that there would have been **brass plates** that existed as a type of book... It just **doesn't work.** The idea of a **compilation of all these books...** on plates in book form... that idea in and of itself is just **totally anachronistic.**”

- Dr. David Bokovoy, Biblical Scholar

”



A Textual Time Capsule: The Great Isaiah Scroll

Discovered in 1947—long after the Book of Mormon was published—the Great Isaiah Scroll is the oldest complete manuscript of the book of Isaiah by nearly 1,000 years. Dating to ~125 BC, it is our closest textual witness to the version of Isaiah that would have existed in 600 BC.

- **Source:** Dead Sea Scrolls (Qumran, Cave 1)
- **Date:** ~125 BC

Key Facts

- **Significance:** Pushed back our knowledge of the Isaiah text by a millennium.
- **Key Finding:** Contains over 2,600 textual variants when compared to the later Masoretic text that formed the basis for the King James Bible. These variants are crucial "fingerprints."

The Falsifiable Test: Two Mutually Exclusive Predictions

The "Ancient Origin" Hypothesis

IF the Book of Mormon is a translation of an ancient 600 BC record...
THEN its Isaiah passages should more closely match the ancient **Great Isaiah Scroll**, especially in its unique readings.



The "19th-Century Origin" Hypothesis

IF the Book of Mormon is a 19th-century creation...
THEN its Isaiah passages will more closely match the 17th-century King James Bible available to Joseph Smith, including its errors and anachronisms.

Exhibit A: The Case of the Missing Verse

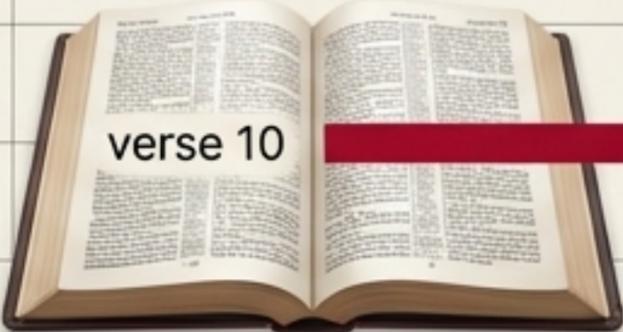
The Great Isaiah Scroll (GIS) is missing the second half of Isaiah 2:9 and all of Isaiah 2:10. Scholars conclude these were later scribal additions to the text.

 Great Isaiah Scroll (~125 BC)	 King James Bible (1611 AD)	 Book of Mormon (1830 AD)
But humanity will be humbled, and a mortal brought low. <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	...and the mean man boweth down, and the great man humbleth himself, therefore forgive them not. Enter into the rock, and hide thee in the dust, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty.	...and the mean man boweth not down, and the great man humbleth himself not, therefore, forgive him not. O ye wicked ones, enter into the rock, and hide thee in the dust, for the fear of the Lord and the glory of his majesty shall smite thee.

Verdict: The Book of Mormon includes text that was added to Isaiah centuries after Lehi supposedly left Jerusalem.

Exhibit B: Compounding the Error

Years after publishing the Book of Mormon, Joseph Smith created his “Joseph Smith Translation” (JST) of the Bible to “restore plain and precious truths.” When he came to **Isaiah 2**, he had a chance to correct the text back to its original state.

The Test	The JST	
 <p>Great Isaiah Scroll</p> <p>verse 10</p>	 <p>King James Bible</p> <p>verse 10</p>	 <p>Joseph Smith Translation (JST)</p> <p>verse 10</p> <p>+</p> <p>“...the glory of his majesty shall smite thee”</p>
Ancient Source: No Verse 10	JST “Correction”: Adds to the Error	

The JST Change

Instead of removing the non-original verse 10, he *added* to it: “...the glory of his majesty **shall smite thee**.” This change mirrors a suggestion in the popular Adam Clarke Bible Commentary.

“On the authority of the Septuagint... I have added here to the text a line which in the 19th and 21st verses is repeated... and has, I think, evidently been omitted by mistake...”

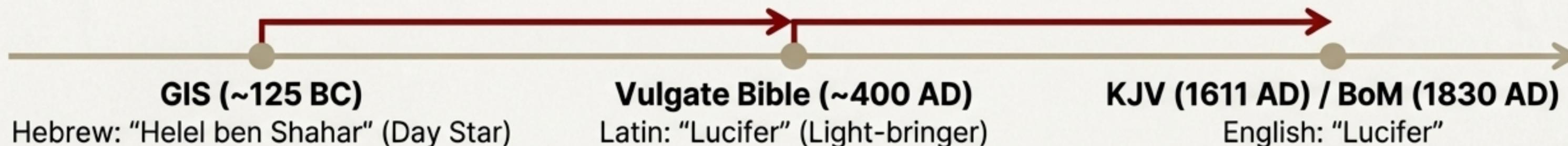
– Adam Clarke's Commentary on Isaiah 2:10

Verdict: Rather than restoring the text to its more ancient state (by removing verse 10), the JST builds upon the KJV's later addition, revealing a 19th-century, not ancient, source

Exhibit C: The Latin Intruder, “Lucifer”

In Isaiah 14:12, the original Hebrew refers to the Babylonian king as “Day Star, son of the morning.” The word “Lucifer” is a Latin translation from the 4th-century Vulgate Bible, meaning “light-bringer.” It would have been entirely unknown to Hebrews in 600 BC.

 Great Isaiah Scroll (~125 BC)	 King James Bible (1611 AD)	 Book of Mormon (1830 AD)
How are you fallen from heaven, O Day Star , son of the morning!	How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer , son of the morning!	How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer , son of the morning!



Verdict: The Book of Mormon uses a Latin-derived word that entered the biblical tradition a thousand years after the Brass Plates were supposedly created.

Exhibit D: The Renaissance Bird, “Bittern”

In Isaiah 14:23, the GIS refers to a “hedgehog.” Early English translators of the KJV, unfamiliar with the animal, substituted “bittern,” a European marsh bird. The word itself entered English from Old French around 1300 AD.

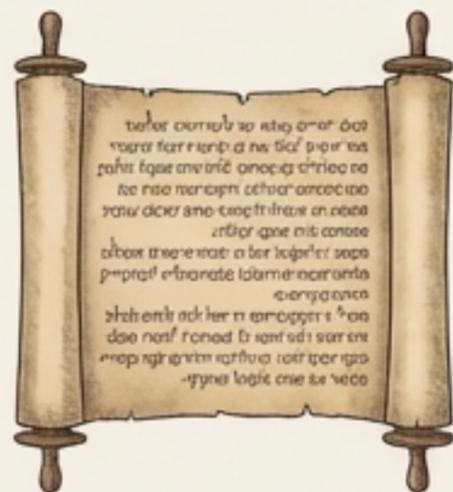
Great Isaiah Scroll	King James Bible	Book of Mormon (2 Nephi 24:23)	Nephi’s Stated Purpose
<p>I will also make it a possession for the hedgehog...</p> 	<p>I will also make it a possession for the bittern...</p> 	<p>I will also make it a possession for the bittern...</p> 	<p>“...to liken his words unto my people.” Ancient Americans would have no context for a European bittern.</p>

Verdict: The Book of Mormon contains a zoological and linguistic anachronism originating from a 14th-century English translation guess, not an ancient Hebrew record.

Exhibit E: A Missed Opportunity to Restore Truth

A key tenet of Mormonism is the restoration of “plain and precious” truths lost from the Bible. Isaiah 53:11 in the Great Isaiah Scroll contains the phrase “he will see light,” which is missing from the later Masoretic text and the KJV. This was a perfect opportunity for the Book of Mormon to restore a lost, Christ-centric phrase. It did not.

Great Isaiah Scroll

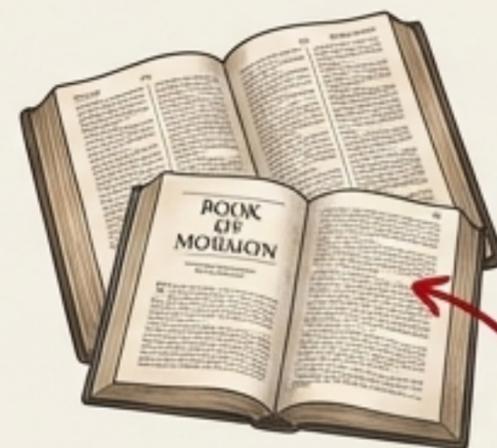


Out of the suffering of his soul **he will see light** and find satisfaction...



[Christ-centric phrase present]

King James Bible / Book of Mormon (Mosiah 14:11)



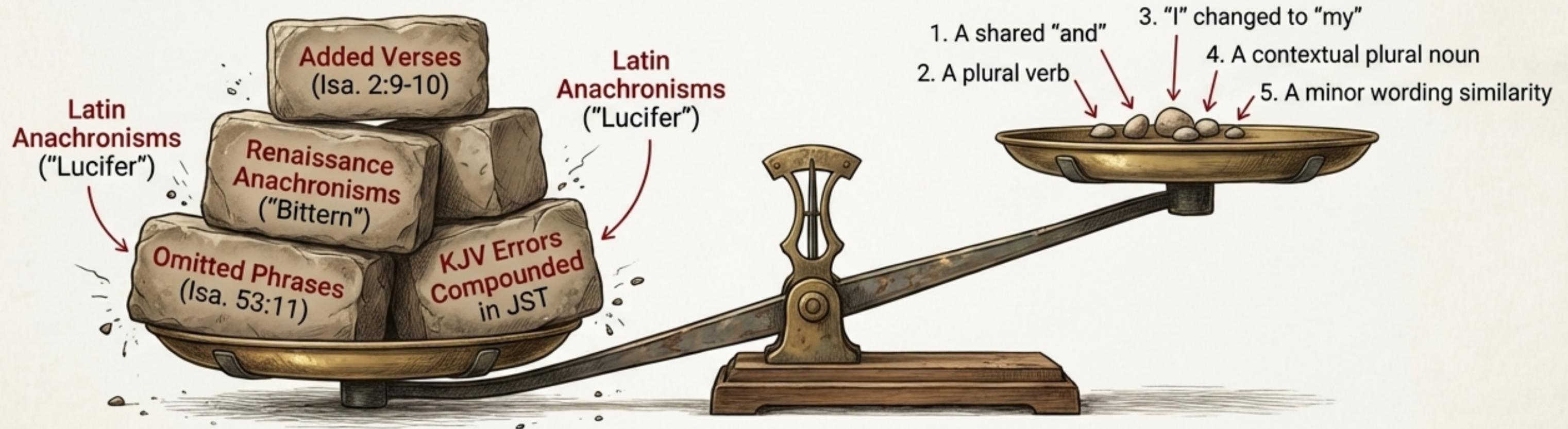
He shall see  [The phrase is absent] of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied...

[Missing Christ-centric phrase]

Verdict: The Book of Mormon fails the restoration test. It follows the KJV in omitting a phrase that is present in the more ancient text, directly contradicting its own narrative purpose.

Examining the Counter-Evidence

Apologists point to a handful of minor instances where the Book of Mormon's Isaiah text aligns with the Great Isaiah Scroll against the KJV. When examined, these alignments are trivial and do not outweigh the major structural contradictions.



These minor grammatical quirks stand in stark contrast to the evidence of entire missing/added verses, theological changes, and significant anachronisms. It is a methodology of finding needles while ignoring haystacks.

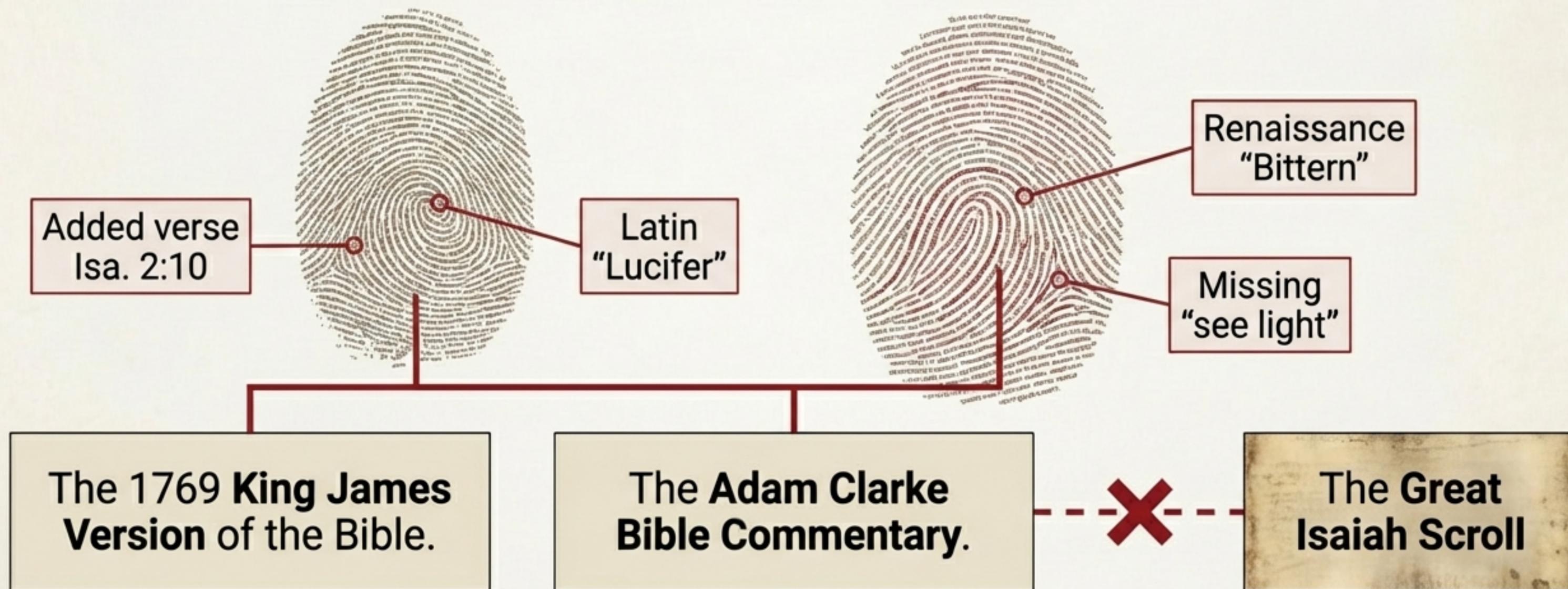
Summary of Findings: The Test Results

Test Case	Matches Ancient GIS?	Matches 17th Century KJV?
Isaiah 2:9-10 (Missing Verse)	✗	✓
JST of Isaiah 2:10	✗	✓ (Builds on KJV error)
Isaiah 14:12 ('Lucifer')	✗	✓
Isaiah 14:23 ('Bittern')	✗	✓
Isaiah 53:11 ('see light')	✗	✓ (Follows KJV omission)
Overall Pattern	No substantive agreement	Near-perfect alignment

Across every significant textual variant, the Isaiah passages in the Book of Mormon align with the 17th-century King James Version and its medieval source text, not with the more ancient Great Isaiah Scroll.

The Verdict: Textual Fingerprints Reveal the Source

The evidence is conclusive. The "Isaiah" in the Book of Mormon is not a translation from an ancient Hebrew record on brass plates. Its textual DNA is a near-perfect match to two 19th-century sources available to Joseph Smith:



Conclusion: The Evidence Contradicts the Claim

The Isaiah Test was designed to evaluate the Book of Mormon's claim of ancient origins. The result is unambiguous. The textual evidence demonstrates that the Isaiah passages in the Book of Mormon **derive directly from a modern English Bible**, not an ancient record.

Implication

This falsifies the book's foundational narrative about the Brass Plates of Laban, calling into question the historical reality of Lehi, Nephi, and the book's claimed origins. While the book may hold spiritual value for believers, its historical claims are not supported by the available textual evidence.

“The Book of Mormon does not contain ancient Isaiah; it contains 17th-century Isaiah, filtered through a 19th-century lens.”

For Further Investigation

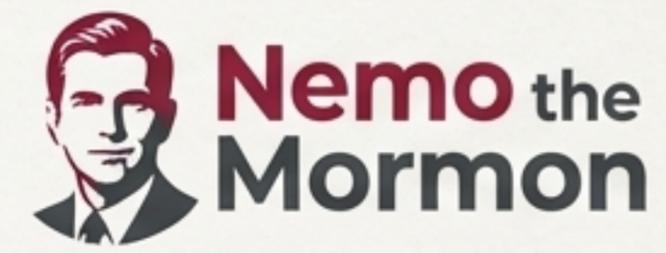
This presentation is a summary of a detailed analysis. For a deeper dive into the evidence, sources, and broader context of Mormon truth claims, we recommend the following resources.



Mormon Stories Podcast
"The Other Isaiah Problem"
(Episode 2095)



LDS Discussions
The complete series analyzing
Mormon truth claims.



Nemo the Mormon
YouTube channel for analysis
of the Church.

