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The Book of Jasher and the Latter-day Saints

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15

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Edward J. Brandt

The question of so-called extrascriptural writings, while either ignored or unknown to most in the Church, presents an interesting challenge to all those who are acquainted with such materials. Some seek corroboration of truths already revealed or known, and for them these writings sometimes provide strength and witness. For others, however, most often those who naively receive such things, the extrascriptural works become detractors or detours from truth and its fountains. Some wrongly assume that if a work is “scripture-like” or “scripture sounding,” it must therefore be true or at least legitimate. Even if it be only gospel-related, some adopt it as genuine; and for some it becomes their new “scripture”—holding an unauthorized or uncanonical place beyond the official scripture. An individual’s motive for such an action is difficult to discern. For some it may be a new

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kind of “authority,” for others a sort of “one-upmanship” of “I know something you don’t” about the ancients. For the weak or misdirected, any zealous espousal and promotion of these surrogate scriptures often result in embarrassment, not only to themselves, but also to the Church and to the serious, prepared student of the scriptures. Through the years I have labored with a number of such individuals, particularly in connection with questions, concerns, and abuses of a work entitled the Book of Jasher.¹

The biblical record mentions such a book in the report of two separate events. The first is a historical report of Joshua’s miraculous defeat of the Amorite coalition that had brought the city of Gibeon, an alliance-servant city to Israel, under siege (Joshua 9:1–27; 10:1–11). After describing the early success in the battle, the record then reports:

Then spake Joshua to the Lord in the day when the Lord delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel, Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon.

And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. Is not this written in the book of Jasher? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day.

And there was no day like that before it or after it, that the Lord hearkened unto the voice of a man: for the Lord fought for Israel. (Joshua 10:12–14.)

The second mention of such a book is recorded in the report of the reaction of David to the defeat and death of King Saul and his sons. The advanced military skill and preparation of the Philistine forces contributed to this tragic setback for Israel. The scriptural writer reports that additional preparation was made and that the use of weaponry was introduced to the military forces of David: “Also he bade them teach the children of Judah the use of the bow: behold, it is written in the book of Jasher” (2 Samuel 1:18).

These scriptural citations suggest an additional record providing a more complete and comprehensive report of these events. Scholars have long theorized as to what might be the

meaning of the biblical expression transcribed as “book of Jasher.” Some Jewish writers have interpreted the Hebrew phrase from which the name was translated to be another name for “the book of law,” since it is literally translated “the book of the upright” (i.e., righteous men, Israelites).² Some have supposed it is another name for the book of Judges or even the twelve books of the prophets.³ Other studies have suggested that the book referred to was an ancient record of events of the people of Israel. It has been conjectured that these writings contained “national songs” about the “upright or just one” in a full spectrum from military, political, or moral adulations to funeral eulogies.⁴ With the development of textual criticism the Hebrew word *yashar* was imagined to be *shir* because of the reading of the Septuagint (LXX). This popularized the interpretation that it was a book of songs.⁵ More recently, however, the textual meaning of the “upright” or “just one” has been quite commonly accepted as a proper translation for the word *yashar*.⁶

Other attempts to explain these biblical expressions have been extraordinarily creative. A reconstruction of the Book of Jasher was once attempted through the assignment of certain Old Testament passages dealing with themes of uprightness, military victories, prophecy, and promise.⁷ This proposal was rejected by most scholars.⁸ One single trend is found in almost every attempt to explain these scriptural passages, and that is that they reflect sources older than the extant biblical text.⁹ The limited academic turmoil concerning this Book of Jasher was summarized by one scholar who wrote, “The data are too scanty and obscure to determine either the character of the book or the meaning of its title.”¹⁰ However, the intrigue resulting from the Old Testament references to such a book has given rise to a seemingly continual search for the work. As a result, numerous volumes on this subject have appeared through the years, in many languages, some claiming to be the missing scriptural Book of Jasher.

The interest of the Latter-day Saints in missing works of scripture dates from the early years of the Restoration. By June 1830 the Prophet Joseph Smith had begun his work on the “new translation” of the Bible.¹¹ A few months later, in December 1830, he wrote the following:

Much conjecture and conversation frequently occurred among the Saints, concerning the books mentioned, and referred to, in various places in the Old and New Testaments, which were now nowhere to be found. The common remark was, "They are *lost books*"; but it seems the Apostolic Church had some of these writings, as Jude mentions or quotes the Prophecy of Enoch, the seventh from Adam.¹²

As the Prophet's work on the Bible continued, even more evidence came to light, not only regarding the loss of the specifically mentioned items, but also regarding missing or incomplete portions of the Bible itself. In the spring of 1832 Joseph Smith observed, "From sundry revelations which have been received, it was apparent that many important points touching the salvation of man, had been taken from the Bible, or lost before it was compiled."¹³ In a letter sent to some of the Church leaders in June of 1833, he indicated that the interest in missing scripture had not been lost, for he wrote:

We have not found the Book of Jasher, nor any other of the lost books mentioned in the Bible as yet; nor will we obtain them at present. Respecting the Apocrypha, the Lord said to us that there were many things in it which were not true, and to those who desire it, should be given by the Spirit to know the true from the false.¹⁴

These references to the Book of Jasher and to the Apocrypha of the Bible manifest the continuing interest and search for these "lost" scriptures and for greater understanding of scriptural truth. The last statement also suggests prophetic insight that the time of their coming forth was not yet at hand.

In June of 1840, a notice from the *New York Sun* was published in Nauvoo, Illinois. The following is an extract from that notice:

THE BOOK OF JASHER

We shall shortly have a literary, or rather a Biblical curiosity, to present to the American reader, which we feel confident in predicting, will excite great interest among those who take pleasure in reading and studying the Scriptures. It is the Book of Jasher referred to in the Bible, in Joshua, and in the second book of Samuel, and which has been in the progress of translation from the Hebrew for several years in England, and is now completed, and will be published in a few days in this city. . . . It is full of interest,

and written with a warmth of piety and sacred devotion, worthy of taking an equal rank with any of the missing books, not strictly canonical. It does not differ with the Bible in a single instance, but amplifies the events recorded in Scripture, with the single difference in chronology of some 50 years, by making Noah and Abraham contemporary—commencing with the creation of Adam, and ending with the death of Joshua. . . . The discovery of missing books referred to in the Scripture, and the many yet to be discovered, joined to the singular signs of the times in relation to the chosen people, give great interest to this and similar works.—This Book, which makes nearly three hundred pages, clears up some points somewhat obscure in the Bible, and is very full in detailing the events of the reign of Nimrod; the building of the Tower of Babel, and confusion of tongues; the causes preceding the destruction of the doomed cities; the sacrifice of Isaac and the life of Joseph; and has some curious facts about the deluge.¹⁵

What was this Book of Jasher being published in New York in 1840? It was the first printing of the English translation of an old Hebrew work entitled *Sefer Hayasher*. The work was first published in Hebrew in Venice, Italy, in 1625.¹⁶ No known early or complete manuscripts for the book are extant, but one is mentioned in early Hebrew bibliographies as having been used by the first-edition printers.¹⁷ It has been asserted that this work was first published in 1552 or 1613 in Naples,¹⁸ but no known extant copy of such an edition has been found.

This *Sefer Hayashar* has appeared in at least thirty-two Hebrew editions or printings. I have non-critically examined a number of these various Hebrew printings and have found them to be apparently of the same text.¹⁹ The first known translation from the Hebrew appeared in the Yiddish or Judaeo-German language by Jacob B. Jermiah Mattithialevi and was first published in Frankfurt am Main, Germany, in 1674.²⁰ A number of editions of this translation have also appeared through the years. In 1732 Johann Georg Abicht published the *Book of Jasher* in Latin in Leipzig.²¹ His studies on this writing had been published earlier.²² A French translation appeared in 1858, the work of Paul L. B. Drach.²³ The first English translation of *Sefer Hayashar* was published in 1840 in New York by Mordecai Manuel Noah.²⁴ He was not the translator, as some have asserted, but rather co-publisher with a Jewish printer of the day, Alexander S. Gould.²⁵ Mr.

Noah was a prominent Jewish journalist, politician, writer, and publisher of his day. He has been characterized as “probably the most influential Jew in post-Revolutionary America.”²⁶ It appears that Mr. Noah purchased the translation from England. The translator chose to remain anonymous because of the unfavorable climate created in his country by the publication of a *Book of Jasher* in Bristol in 1829, which also claimed to be the missing book mentioned in the scriptures.²⁷ This other Jasher had been first published in London in 1751, and its reappearance in 1829 caused a stir and considerable debate. Scholarly evaluation of this other Jasher exposed it as a fraudulent fictitious work which is most often referred to today as *Pseudo-Jasher*.²⁸ It was widely circulated and accepted in England, creating difficulties not unlike the problems we are reviewing here, and it was even confused with the Hebrew (Jewish) *Book of Jasher* which we are considering.²⁹ This controversy and debate continued there until the latter part of the nineteenth century.³⁰ It should be noted that this other Jasher is the one accepted and published by the Rosicrucian Order since 1934.³¹

What is the likelihood that Noah’s printing of the translation of *Sefer Hayashar—The Book of Jasher*—was had by the Prophet Joseph Smith and the early brethren? And if they did have it, what was their evaluation of it? Two years after the notice of the 1840 publication of *The Book of Jasher*, an editorial appeared in the *Times and Seasons* concerning the “Persecution of the Prophets” in ancient times.³² The article cites among others the example of Abraham’s trials, and then seeks to corroborate the story of the attempt to sacrifice Abraham (Abraham 1:15)³³ through a reference to *The Book of Jasher*³⁴ as follows:

Abraham, the prophet of the Lord, was laid upon the lion bedstead for a slaughter; and the book of Jasher, which has not been disproved as a bad author, says he was cast into the fire of the Chaldees.³⁵

It has been suggested that this implied the Prophet’s approval and acceptance of the book. But is it not possible that he was using *The Book of Jasher* only to corroborate the account of the attempt to sacrifice Abraham which had been revealed earlier to

him? The story of Abraham (as translated from the papyrus) had been published six months earlier in the *Times and Seasons* (March 1, 1842).³⁶ The citation here of *The Book of Jasher* was as a historical support to the newly revealed and published text concerning Abraham, not a declaration of doctrinal acceptance of a claimed missing book of scripture.

Only weeks after the appearance of the above-mentioned article, John Taylor was appointed the editor of the *Times and Seasons*.³⁷ During his lengthy tenure as editor, he too once cited *The Book of Jasher* in an editorial he entitled “Ancient Ruins.” His purpose was to demonstrate that the existence of ruins of the past were witness, in part, of men’s evil ways and their eventual fall and destruction. In reference to the flood he cited *The Book of Jasher* for support of this argument. He introduced the quote with an important qualifying statement: “Let us introduce a few paragraphs from the Book of Jasher, *not allowing it to be revelation, but history* sustained by other history.”³⁸ He then quoted a number of lines reporting the wickedness which existed during Noah’s day, and concluded in summary by writing, “This is simply a corroboration of the Bible: The wickedness of man became so great that God had to destroy the whole world, wherein was life, by the flood to *subdue* it, agreeably to a part of the command given to Adam.”³⁹

It is interesting that Elder Taylor held this view throughout his life. In 1872 he paraphrased a story from *The Book of Jasher* in an address about Abraham and his direction from God. Again he referred to the cited text as only a *history*, not scripture.⁴⁰ No other General Authorities of the Church are known to have used this *Book of Jasher* since these early events.

What are the nature and content of this *Book of Jasher*? From the use made by these early brethren, it obviously contains stories that are parallel with the scriptures. Jewish scholars characterize the work as *midrashic agadah or haggada*—which is an exegetical (explanatory or interpretative) type of legendary or historical narrative—and it is generally thought to have been written about the thirteenth century A.D. in Spain.⁴¹ It is written in a scriptural paraphrase style which is very typical of Jewish litur-

gical writing of the late Middle Ages. It was arranged according to the rabbinical pattern of *parashah* (the fifty-four sections of the Torah read weekly in the synagogue service).⁴² This organizational pattern is not found in the English translation, because the translator dropped the sections and added a system of chapters and verses instead. The Hebrew format parallels the twelve rabbinical sections for Genesis, but only four from Exodus, and then a very brief consideration of items from Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, and Judges. The work contains many elaborations, enrichments, and amplifications of scripture stories; but also many contradictions and deletions, especially stories which seemed troublesome, in that they raised a question or concern or posed an interpretive challenge.⁴³ Its content, however, is similar to many other Jewish writings. It is not highly regarded by Jewish authorities, especially since its authorship is unknown.

It should also be noted that I have found in the Hebrew nine other works which also bear the title *Sefer Hayashar* (*The Book of Jasher*). One is a fifteenth-century commentary on the Pentateuch,⁴⁴ and another is an ethical treatise dealing with man's relationship with God.⁴⁵ Another such titled work was a eulogy and tribute for a friend.⁴⁶ A treatise on the emancipation of the Jews was also called in a translation *Sefer Hayashar*.⁴⁷ A Karaite tract on incest in the Torah was likewise given the same title,⁴⁸ along with three additional works containing collections of scripturally related stories.⁴⁹ The most famous, however, was a *Tosafot*, a rabbinic critical commentary on a portion of the Babylonian Talmud, which has been confused by others with the *Sefer Hayashar* of our study.⁵⁰

After the 1840 publication of *The Book of Jasher* by Mordecai Noah, a second translation of *Sefer Hayashar* in English was made by Edward B. M. Browne⁵¹ and published in 1876.⁵² This edition never achieved the popularity or use that the Noah translation did. A series of reprints of the 1840 edition have been the source of Latter-day Saint interest in this unique Jewish writing. The first of these printings was published by J. H. Parry & Company in Salt Lake City, Utah, in 1887, and is found listed in many libraries throughout the world.⁵³ This edition is a complete resetting of the 1840 edition, although all prefaces from that edition are omitted except that of the translators. It is this 1887

edition, which was privately photo-reprinted beginning in 1964 and has continued in print until the present, that has precipitated much of the interest among the Latter-day Saints today. A photo reprint of the original 1840 edition was also published in 1972 in New York under the title *The Book of Jasher* and with a new introduction.⁵⁴

The published use of Jasher in Church-related materials has included several periodical articles,⁵⁵ an early Sunday School manual,⁵⁶ an Institute of Religion instructor's guide,⁵⁷ and a number of books.⁵⁸ Its most frequent use and abuse are by those who use it as an equivalent or even a substitute for the scriptures themselves.

Perhaps the most conspicuous weakness of this *Book of Jasher* is that, although it contains a parallel account of Joshua 10:13, the promised additional information—as well as the account mentioned in 2 Samuel 1:18—does not even appear in its pages. Furthermore, it contains numerous contradictions to the standard works of the Church.⁵⁹ It is my belief that the Jewish *Sefer Hayashar*, translated and published in English as *The Book of Jasher* (1840/1877), is not the lost scriptural book mentioned in the Old Testament.

Does this *Book of Jasher* contain any ancient elements of truth beyond those found in the scriptures? Scholars have realized from their comparative studies that the roots of many “traditions” are “in deep antiquity.”⁶⁰ In studies of portions of *Sefer Hayashar* that have been based on historical criteria, which admittedly provides only a limited measurement, one scholar concluded: “How unwise and unscholarly it is to neglect, in the study of early Jewish exegesis, the testimony of a midrashic collection merely on the ground of its late appearance.”⁶¹ In an analysis of this problem it has been suggested that much of the material in “even late Midrashim may contain ancient elements.”⁶² Statements ascribed to an authority, or even anonymous statements, may have originated “much earlier.”⁶³ Why might a similar story be found in many diverse sources? Bernard Bamberger concluded his study by observing:

With few exceptions, the parallels between rabbinic literature and Hellenistic, apocryphal, or Christian writings of an earlier date, are to be explained as due to the use of common oral sources. A critical

study of the various aggadoth, utilizing all the forms in which they appear in Talmudic literature as well as extra-rabbinic parallels, may help us to trace the development of various traditions, and occasionally to determine the approximate date at which they arose. But it is clear that a very considerable part of the material preserved in the Talmudic-Midrashic sources is much older than it appears at first sight to be.⁶⁴

Analyses of compilation and comparative studies have shown the existence of similar elements and possibly similar roots in the scriptural stories and related legends. It has been suggested that the "greater part of the older Agada" is preserved in books classified as apocryphal or apocalyptic.⁶⁵ The term *apocrypha* has been used to generally describe a number of writings both inside and outside the canon of some Christian churches and also additional writings accepted by some Jews. Early Jewish use of them provided their introduction to the Christians.⁶⁶ However, with the rise of legalism they came to be rabbinically banned as "outside books."⁶⁷ This milieu has been suggested as one of the possible origins of the term.⁶⁸ The acceptance of some of these writings by Rome and not the Protestant churches seemed to follow the earlier division between the Palestinian and Alexandrian Jews.⁶⁹ The designation *apocrypha* at first applied only to those books taken into the Greek and Latin Bible.⁷⁰ Other writings were accepted and used by the Oriental church communities which have been known under the name *pseudepigrapha*, an appellation now considered inadequate.⁷¹ All of these writings that have come under the general designation of apocrypha have also been categorized into various literary genres, including "historical, romantic, didactic, devotional, and apocalyptic."⁷² Resistance within the Christian churches was the major factor in the acceptance of these books by some and rejection of them by others.⁷³ The Dead Sea discoveries of recent years have further demonstrated the older roots of many of the books.⁷⁴ Otto Eissfeldt characterized some of these discoveries as "Haggadic Narrative Works" because of their affinity with writings of that nature.⁷⁵ As a result of the rediscovery of this large corpus of literature, the scholars have, at least tentatively, designated the entire body as apocalyptic, based on the elements contained in them.⁷⁶

It should also be noted that the primary emphasis of this confusion has dealt with *Christian* sources or related documents. Most of the Jewish sources dealt with are usually evaluated in terms of their relationship to Christian texts or the New Testament context in general. Untouched by most scholars who study apocryphal literature is the vast reservoir of Jewish talmudic and midrashic works which also contain ancient roots. The limited accessibility of these works is due in part to their being ignored by most biblical scholars. They are found, with rare exceptions, only in the original Hebrew, Aramaic, Arabic, and Yiddish editions.⁷⁷ *The Book of Jasher* stands out for Latter-day Saints because it is an English translation of these Jewish sources. The ancient roots of all such writings have forced scholars to attempt seriously to understand them.⁷⁸ However, for the most part the problem has not been with these writings themselves, but rather with the theological orientation of the analysts and users. The early rejection and resulting censorship of apocryphal works by both Christians and Jews was a “theological decision.”⁷⁹ It is now recognized that the theological realm of faith, prophecy, and revelation is the historical stumbling block in the acceptance or understanding of these writings.⁸⁰ The preoccupation with the elements of form and tradition is “a mere way of escape” and has limited scholars in finding a resolute understanding of apocalyptic literature.⁸¹ The appeal is for “different and better explanations,”⁸² but the theological blocks of the present seem to remain for most scholars only refined and sophisticated versions of the theological obstacles of the past.

In the vast reservoir of material, the question stands out, What is the truth? Among the many legends, stories, and narratives, how can one know if they are true, or at least contain verities? The Latter-day Saints have received revelation as a guide to the use of the Old Testament Apocrypha. This direction was given to the Prophet Joseph Smith, who at the time was working on the “inspired translation” of the Bible.⁸³ On March 9, 1833, the Prophet noted, “Having come to that portion of the ancient writing called the Apocrypha, I received the following [from the Lord]. . . .”⁸⁴ This established for the Latter-day Saints a theological verity by which to evaluate the Apocrypha. The revelation (Doctrine and Covenants 91:1–6) states:

Verily, thus saith the Lord unto you concerning the Apocrypha—There are many things contained therein that are true, and it is mostly translated correctly;

There are many things contained therein that are not true, which are interpolations by the hands of men.

Verily, I say unto you, that it is not needful that the Apocrypha should be translated.

Therefore, whoso readeth it, let him understand, for the Spirit manifesteth truth;

And whoso is enlightened by the Spirit shall obtain benefit therefrom;

And whoso receiveth not by the Spirit, cannot be benefited. Therefore it is not needful that it should be translated. Amen.⁸⁵

Joseph Fielding Smith, who was the tenth President and prophet of the Church (1970–1972), commented on this scripture of the Latter-day Saints as follows:

He [Joseph Smith] received the answer that . . . its value was not of sufficient import for time to be taken to revise it. The statement is made that those who have the spirit of discernment and are led by the Spirit of Truth will be able to *cull* from these writings the truth for their edification.⁸⁶

Elder Bruce R. McConkie has applied this principle to other apocryphal (i.e., pseudepigraphic and apocalyptic) writings with the direction that such study would presume an “extended background” of theological knowledge and “a comprehensive understanding” of all the scriptures.⁸⁷

The question, then, is not whether *The Book of Jasher* or any other similar source contains ancient truth, but how one determines what those “old roots” might be. This requires a measuring rod or standard, as it were. For the Latter-day Saints the primary standard consists of the standard works of scripture—the Bible, the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price. The theological perspective and the historical-scriptural view are dependent on these standard works, most of which came as a result of the revelatory experiences and labors of the Prophet Joseph Smith. The uncovering or discovery of any legitimate ancient roots presupposes an extended background of theological or gospel knowledge and also a comprehensive understanding of the standard scriptural works. While a

work like *The Book of Jasher* might contain some ancient roots and truths beyond the obvious scriptural paraphrases, to accept it as a scripture-like authority in totality is either naive or dishonest, or both. The fact that *The Book of Jasher* presents itself superficially as a separate scripture-like, authoritative volume—in contrast to the usual extracting of items from other apocryphal sources—has seemingly increased its acceptance by those who are vulnerable to that kind of deception.

Almost all concerns that arise over apocryphal items among Church members have little to do with one's personal salvation, and particularly the vital realm of personal gospel living. The nature of such items is almost entirely historical in nature. The interpretive challenge in working with or even searching for these "ancient" tidbits is that there is too much zeal in putting the proverbial "cart before the horse." Without a knowledge of the gospel and a comprehensive understanding of the scriptures, there is a narrowness which leaves the investigator without the capacity to recognize the golden threads of verity woven into the records of time. Even the uncovering of a part of truth can be distorted by one's personal theological view—that is, whatever one's articles of faith may be. Warning against such a twisted perspective, either for or against the Latter-day Saint view, Elder Neal A. Maxwell has advised: "One must not mistake the fragments of original faith for evidence against that faith. One must recognize doctrinal debris for what it is—remnants for revealed religion, pieces of powerful principles that are as traceable as pieces of ancient pottery."⁸⁸

For Latter-day Saints, that is an individual, personal challenge which is dependent on our own preparation and experience in gospel understanding and gospel living. Let us drink from the source, the fountain—the scriptures—and expect only flickers of confirmation from all these assorted "Books of Jasher."

Notes

1. This article is based on a more complete study of the question by the author. See Edward J. Brandt, "The History, Content, and

Latter-day Saint Use of the Book of Jasher” (Ph.D. diss., Brigham Young University, 1976). See also Edward J. Brandt, “I Have a Question,” *Ensign*, June 1981, pp. 36–37.

2. C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament*, vol. 4 (Joshua, Judges, Ruth), trans. James Martin (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, n.d.), p. 107.

3. William Addis Wright, “Jasher, Book of,” in William Smith, ed., *Dictionary of the Bible*, rev. ed. by H. B. Haskett, vol. 2 (New York: Hurd & Houghton, 1868), p. 1215.

4. *Ibid.*, pp. 1215–16.

5. Stanley A. Cook, “Jasher,” *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, ed. T. K. Cheyne and J. Sutherland Black, vol. 2 (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1901), pp. 2333–34. See also C. F. Kraft, “Jasher, Book of,” *The Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible*, vol. 2 (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), p. 803.

6. Otto Eissfeldt, *The Old Testament*, trans. Peter R. Ackroyd (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), pp. 132–33.

7. See Joannes Guilelmus Donaldson, *Jasher—Fragmenta Archaetypa Carminum Hebraicorum* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1854), 2d corrected ed. (London: Williams and Norgate, 1860).

8. See J. S. Perowne, *Remarks on Dr. Donaldson’s Book Entitled “Jasher”* (London: Bell and Daley, 1885).

9. Eissfeldt, *The Old Testament*, p. 134; see also Hermann Franke, *Über Bedeutung, Inhalt and Alter des ‘Sepher Haggaschar’* (Halle: Ehrhardt Karras, 1887).

10. W. H. Bennett, “Jashar, Book of,” *A Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. James Hastings, vol. 2 (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1906), p. 551.

11. Robert J. Matthews, “*A Plainer Translation*”: *Joseph Smith’s Translation of the Bible, A History and Commentary* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1975), pp. 26–27. For a more complete background see *ibid.*, pp. 21–39, 96; also Reed C. Durham, Jr., “A History of Joseph Smith’s Revision of the Bible” (Ph.D. diss., Brigham Young University, 1965), pp. 20–39.

12. Joseph Smith, *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1907), 1:132. Some of the lost books mentioned in the Bible are: “the book of the covenant” (Exodus 24:7), “the book of the wars of the Lord” (Numbers 21:14), a book by Samuel (1 Samuel 10:25), “the book of Nathan the prophet” and “the book of Gad the seer” (1 Chronicles 29:29), “the book of Shemaiah the

prophet" (2 Chronicles 12:15), "the story of the prophet Iddo" (2 Chronicles 13:22), an epistle to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 5:9), an epistle from Laodicea (Colossians 4:16), Enoch's writings (Jude 1:14–15), and the book of Jasher (Joshua 10:13; 2 Samuel 1:18).

13. Smith, *History of the Church*, 1:245.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 363; see also *Times and Seasons* (Nauvoo, Ill.), 15 February 1845, p. 800.

15. *Times and Seasons* 1 (June 1840): 127.

16. *Sefer Hayashar* (Venice: P., A., and L. Bragad, 1625), p. i. This edition is regarded as the first by all the bibliographers consulted for this study.

17. Johann Christoph Wolf, *Bibliotheca hebraea*, vol. 3 (Hamburg and Lipsiae: B. Theod. Christoph. Felgineri Viduann, 1727), pp. 1192–93; see also *Catalogus Librorum Hebraeorum in Bibliotheca Bodleiana*, comp. Moritz Steinschneider (Berlin: Ad. Friedländer, 1852–60; Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1964), p. 554.

18. This claim was first made by Leopold Zung in the *Berliner Nachrichten*, 29 November 1828, as cited by Schulim Ochser, "Yashar, Sefer Ha-," *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, vol. 12 (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Co., 1906), p. 588.

19. These Hebrew editions were published in Venice [Italy], 1625; Cracow [Poland], 1628; Prague [Czechoslovakia], (1660, 1661–68) 1840; Frankfurt AM [West Germany], 1706; Amsterdam [Netherlands], 1707; Constantinople [Istanbul, Turkey], 1728; Furth [West Germany], 1769; Koretz [Poland], 1785; Frankfurt AO [East Germany], 1789, 1792; Grodno [Lithuania], 1795; Zolkiew [Poland; Nesterov, USSR], 1798, 1855; Lemberg [Lvov, USSR], 1816, 1840, 1850, 1877, 1929; Wilna [Lithuania], 1817, 1848, 1852, 1870, 1883; Warsaw [Poland], 1846, 1858, 1872, 1878; Bagdad [Iraq], 1869; Leghorn [Livorno, Italy], 1870; Berlin [West Germany], 1923; Jerusalem, 1968 (reprint of 1625 edition). See Giulio Bartolucci, *Bibliotheca magna rabbinica de scriptoribus et scriptis hebraicis*, 5 vols. (Rome: Typographia Sacrae Congregationis de Propaganda Fide, 1675–94), 3:935; Johann Christoph Wolf, *Bibliotheca hebraea*, 4 vols. (Hamburgi: Christiani Liebegeit, Theodor. Christoph. Felginer, 1715–33), 2:1310–11; 3:1191–93; 4:1022; Julius Furst, *Bibliotheca judaica*, 3 vols. (Leipzig: 1849–63; Hildesheim: Georg Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1960), 1:81, 277; 2:103–11, 121; *Catalogus librorum hebraeorum in Bibliotheca Bodleiana*, comp. M. Steinschneider (Berlin, 1852–60; Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1964), pp. 554–55; *Catalogue of Hebrew Books in the British Museum Acquired During the Years 1868–1892*, comp. S. van Straalen (London: British

Museum, 1894), p. 116; *Catalogue of the Hebrew Books in the Library of the British Museum*, comp. Joseph Zedner (London: British Museum, 1867), p. 310; *Harvard University Library Catalogue of Hebrew Books*, 6 vols. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1968), 4:172; *New York Public Library Reference Department—Jewish Collection* (Boston, Mass.: G. K. Hall & Co., 1960), p. 4581; *Dictionary Catalog of the Klau Library*, Hebrew Union College—Jewish Institute of Religion (Boston, Mass.: G. K. Hall & Co., 1964), 30:30–31; *The Jewish Encyclopedia* (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Company, 1901–6), 12:589; *Library of Congress Card Catalog*.

20. Wolf, *Bibliotheca hebraea* 2:1311; 3:1193; see also Furst, *Bibliotheca judaica* 20:20, 111; A. E. Cowley, *A Concise Catalogue of the Hebrew Printed Books in the Bodleian Library* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1929), p. 298.

21. Steinschneider, *Catalogus Librorum Hebraeorum*, p. 662; see also H. G. Enelow, “Abicht, Johann Georg,” *The Jewish Encyclopedia* 1:57.

22. Wolf, *Bibliotheca hebraea* 2:1311; 3:1191–93.

23. “Yaschar,” *Dictionnaire des Apocryphes*, ed. [Jacques Paul] Migne, vol. 2 (Paris: Barriere D’Enfer, 1858), pp. 1070–1310.

24. *The Book of Jasher* (New York: M. M. Noah & A. S. Gould, 1840).

25. Max Raisin, “Noah, Mordecai Manuel,” *The Jewish Encyclopedia* 9:324; and Schulim Oschser, “Yasher, Sefer Ha-,” *The Jewish Encyclopedia* 12:598; Simon Wolf, *Mordecai Manuel Noah—A Biographical Sketch* (Philadelphia: The Levytype Company, 1897), p. 19; Isaac Goldberg, *Major Noah: American-Jewish Pioneer* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1936), p. 245.

26. Pricilla Fiskman, ed., *The Jews of the United States* (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House, 1974), p. 16. For an overview of the life and accomplishment M. M. Noah see Edward J. Brandt, “The History, Content, and Latter-day Saint Use of the Book of Jasher,” pp. 8, 12–15.

27. *The Book of Jasher* (Bristol: Jacob Ilive, 1829).

28. A booklet critically examining the work was published in 1833. (See Thomas Hartwell Horne, *Bibliographical Notes on the Book of Jasher* [London: A. Spottiswoode, 1833].) It was placed *in toto* in the later editions (the 9th and the 10th) of Horne’s famous *An Introduction to the Critical Study and Knowledge of the Holy Scriptures* (i.e., Thomas Hartwell Horne, *An Introduction to the Critical Study and Knowledge of the Holy Scriptures*, 8th ed., corrected and enlarged [London: T. Cadell Strand, 1839], pp. 142–48).

29. William Wright, "Jasher, Book of," *A Cyclopaedia of Biblical Literature*, ed. John Kitto, vol. 2 (New York: Mark H. Newman, 1845), p. 71.

30. Emanuel O. M. Deutsch, *Literary Remains of the Late Emanuel Deutsch* (London: John Abelmark, 1874), pp. 440–48.

31. *The Book of Jasher* (Bristol, 1829; San Jose, Calif.: The Rosicrucian Order A.M.O.R.C., 1934, 1938, 1947, 1948, 1953).

32. Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, comp. Joseph Fielding Smith (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1956), p. 260. Others have suggested that the editorial was not written by the Prophet Joseph Smith, but someone else. In any event, he was the editor of the periodical at that time, which suggests his approval and/or involvement with those items published as editorials. (*Times and Seasons* 3 [1 September 1842]: 910.)

33. This story first appeared in the *Times and Seasons* 3 (1 March 1842): 704. It is now a part of the *Pearl of Great Price* as cited above.

34. *The Book of Jasher* (New York: M. M. Noah & A. S. Gould, 1840), p. 33 [12:23–24]. (The brackets contain the chapter-and-verse citation from the 1840 [1887] edition.)

35. *Times and Seasons* 3 (1 September 1842): 902.

36. *Ibid.*, 3 (1 March 1842): 704. It did not become a part of the canon of Latter-day Saint scripture until 1880.

37. *Ibid.*, 4 (15 November 1842): 8.

38. *Ibid.*, 5 (15 December 1844): 745; emphasis added.

39. *Ibid.*, pp. 745–46. The quotation from the Book of Jasher is found in the 1840 edition, p. 10 [4:16–21].

40. John Taylor in *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1855–86), 14:356–57.

41. Leopold Zunz, *Die gottesdienstlichen Vorträge der Juden, historisch entwickelt* (Berlin: A. Asher, 1832), pp. 145–56 (2nd ed., corrected and with notes by N. Brull [Frankfort AM: J. Kauffmann, 1832], pp. 162–65). See also S. Schechter, *Studies in Judaism*, vol. 3 (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1924), pp. 94, 123; Abraham Berger, "The Literature of Jewish Folklore," *Journal of Jewish Bibliography* 1 (1938–39): 17.

42. These fifty-four sections (portions) were to be used during one year's time. Later rabbinical groups modified the schedule to extend over a three-year period, but this was never fully adopted and the old arrangement has prevailed. These sections are usually referred to today by Jews as *sidrah* (meaning "order").

43. A study comparing *The Book of Jasher* with the scriptural record demonstrated 1387 direct parallels. Thirty-one errors and contradictions to the scriptural record were also noted, along with the deletions (e.g., Genesis 30:14–17; Exodus 4:1–17; Numbers 21:4–9; Joshua 2:2–22). See Edward J. Brandt, “The History, Content, and Latter-day Saint Use of the Book of Jasher,” pp. 58–111, 118–21.

44. Furst, *Bibliotheca Judaica* 1:251–52; 2:64; Cowley, *Concise Catalogue*, p. 14; Wilhelm Bacher, “Ibn Ezra, Abraham ben Meir,” *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, 6:522; M. Friedlaender, *Essays on the Writings of Abraham, Ibn Ezra* (London: Torulner and Co., 1964), pp. 142–43, 152–58, 201–15.

45. Steinschneider, *Catalogus Librorum Hebraeorum*, pp. 1258, 2586–88; see also Cowley, *Concise Catalogue*, pp. 306, 724; Furst, *Bibliotheca Judaica* 2:66; 3:313; Isaac Broyde, “Zerahiah Ha Yewani,” *The Jewish Encyclopedia* 12:661. Some doubt the assignment of authorship by some manuscripts to Zerahiah Hayewani. Additional conjecture suggests R. Jonah Gerondi, but his known writings are contradictory to the views found in this *Sefer Hayashar* (Joseph Dan, “Sefer Hayashar,” *Encyclopaedia Judaica* 14:1099). (See also A. T. Shrock, “The Authorship of the Ethical Treatise Entitled *Sefer Ha-Yashar*,” *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 61 [N.S.: 1971]: 175–87; *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 65 [N.S.: 1974]: 18–31.)

46. Cowley, *Concise Catalogue*, p. 145; see also S. Van Straalen, comp., *Catalogue of Hebrew Books in the British Museum Acquired During the Years 1868–1892*, p. 8; Cecil Roth, “Abulafia (Bolaffi) Ezekiel (Hezekiah) David ben Mordecai,” *Encyclopaedia Judaica* 2:186–89.

47. Van Straalen, *Catalogue of Hebrew Books . . . 1868–1892*, p. 157. *Dictionary Catalog of the Klau Library* 30:30.

48. Wolf, *Bibliotheca hebraea* 1:461–62, 699–700; 4:888; Isaac Beoyde, “Joshua ben Judah,” *The Jewish Encyclopedia* 7:157–58; Leon Nemoy, “Joshua ben Juday,” *Encyclopaedia Judaica* 10:3–4. The Karaites are a sect that reject the talmudic and traditional interpretations of the Torah, but rely upon individual interpretation. They exist as a small group today primarily settled in Israel.

49. *Dictionary Catalog of the Klau Library* 30:31; *Library of Congress Card Catalog* under *Sefer Hayashar*; *Harvard University Library Catalogue of Hebrew Books* 4:172.

50. Furst, *Bibliotheca Judaica* 3:406; see also Steinschneider, *Catalogus Librorum Hebraeorum*, p. 1258; Cowley, *Concise Catalogue*, p. 306. Julius Furst erroneously attributed the authorship of the Venice 1625 edition of *Sefer Hayashar* to Joseph ben Gorin (Josippon of Pseudo-Josephus) on the basis of Tosafotic citations

imputed to Rashi (Furst, *Bibliotheca Judaica* 2:111). This difficulty may be due in part to the fact that Joseph ben Gorin is thought by some to be the author of a history of the Jews from the fall of Babylon to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, entitled *Sefer Josippon* (Josephus). This volume also had early and broad publication among the Jews (Max Schlossinger, "Joseph Ben Gorin," *The Jewish Encyclopedia* 7:259–60).

51. Edward Benjamin Morris Browne seems to have been a man of academic skill, but he experienced much difficulty at the rabbinical pulpit. He was dismissed as rabbi of Temple Emanu-El in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, as "incapable . . . to the satisfaction of any part of the congregation . . . [and] does not possess the necessary qualifications. . . ." (Louis J. Swichkow and Lloyd P. Gartner, *The History of Jews of Milwaukee* [Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1936], pp. 178–79, 411, 452.) He served as rabbi in Montgomery, Alabama; also at the Reform Temple "Gates of Hope" in New York; and in Toledo, Ohio. In addition he taught medical law and "psychology" at the Evansville Medical College of Indiana. (See Morris U. Schappes, *A Documentary History of the Jews in the United States, 1654–1875*, 3d ed. [New York: Schocken Books, 1971], p. 733, n. 9.)

52. *The Book of Jasher*, trans. Edward B. M. Browne (New York: United States Publishing Company, 1876).

53. J. H. Parry & Company was owned and operated by Joseph Hyrum Parry, who specialized in Mormon publications. See "Price List of Mormon Publications" (Salt Lake City: Joseph Hyrum Parry & Co., n.d.), a leaflet on file in the Archives of the Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah; Andrew Jenson, *Biographical Encyclopaedia—Supplement to the "Historical Record"* (Salt Lake City: n.p., 1888), p. 71. The company was purchased by David R. Lyon and John R. Park, who was a silent partner, in 1897. Shortly thereafter the name was changed to Magazine Printing Company. They continued the printing of the *Book of Jasher* until the late 1920s. (Interview with T. Edgar Lyon, son of David R. Lyon and historian, Salt Lake City, Utah, January 16, 1974.) Joseph Lyon and Associates is the firm today (1983).

54. *The Book of Yasher* (New York: Hermon Press, 1972).

55. See *Liahona: The Elder's Journal* 6:710, 712; Hugh Nibley, "The World of the Jaredites—Part II, The Tower," *Improvement Era* 54 (October 1951): 704, 753–55; Charles E. Haggerty, "Melchizedek . . . King of Salem," *Improvement Era* 55 (July 1952): 512; Hugh Nibley, "Since Cumorah: New Voices From the Dust—Part 1," *Improvement Era* 68 (November 1964): 977; Hugh Nibley, "A New

Look at the Pearl of Great Price—Part 7—The Unknown Abraham,” *Improvement Era* 72 (January 1969): 26, 64, 76, 87, 126; Nibley, “A New Look . . . Part 9—Setting the Stage—The World of Abraham,” *Improvement Era* 73 (March 1970): 84; Nibley, “A New Look . . . Part 11—The Sacrifice of Sarah,” *Improvement Era* 73 (April 1970): 79; Thomas W. Mackay, “Abraham in Egypt: A Collation of Evidences for the Case of the Missing Wife,” *BYU Studies* 10 (Summer 1970): 440; Alma E. Gygi, “I Have a Question,” *Ensign* 3 (November 1973): 15–16 [this was based on an earlier privately published pamphlet entitled *Elias and His Son Melchizedek* by the same author]; Hugh Nibley, “A Strange Thing in the Land: The Return of the Book of Enoch, Part 3,” *Ensign* 6 (February 1976): 66, 68.

56. *Birthright Blessings* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Sunday School Union Board, 1942).

57. *Introduction to the Pearl of Great Price* (Provo, Utah: Department of Seminaries and Institutes of Religion, [1970]).

58. Hugh Nibley, *Lehi in the Desert and The World of the Jaredites* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1952); Hugh Nibley, *Since Cumorah* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1976); John Tvedtnes, *The Church in the Old Testament* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1967) (this author issued a new edition of the book in 1980, but references to *The Book of Jasher* were removed); Hugh Nibley, *Abraham in Egypt* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1981).

59. See Edward J. Brandt, “The History, Content, and Latter-day Saint Use of the Book of Jasher,” pp. 58–111. Thirty-one errors have been categorized.

60. Meyer Waxman and Mordecai Waxman, “Literature, Jewish,” *Encyclopaedia Judaica* 2:322; Kaufmann Kohler, “The Pre-Talmudic Haggada,” *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 5 (1893): 399–419; 7 (1895): 581–606.

61. Giza Vermes, *Scripture and Tradition in Judaism* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1961), p. 95.

62. Bernard J. Bamberger, “The Dating of Aggadic Materials,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 68 (1949): 116.

63. *Ibid.*, pp. 116–17, 120–21.

64. *Ibid.*, p. 121; it has also been argued that the sources may not necessarily be oral, but rather may be written (Berger, “The Literature of Jewish Folklore,” p. 12).

65. Meyer Waxman, *A History of Jewish Literature*, 5 vols. (New York: Block Publishing Co., 1933–41) 1:76.

66. Charles Cutler Torrey, *The Apocryphal Literature* (New Haven, Conn: Yale University Press, 1945), p. 8.

67. *Ibid.*, p. 3; see also Klaus Koch, *The Rediscovery of Apocalyptic*, trans. Margaret Kohl (*Ratlos vor der Apokalyptik* [Gutersloh, Germany: Gutersloher Verlagshaus Gerd Mohn, 1970]) (London: SCM Press, 1972), p. 34.

68. Torrey, *The Apocryphal Literature*, p. 9; see also Bruce M. Metzger, *An Introduction to the Apocrypha* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1957), pp. 203–4; Solomon Zeitlin, “The Apocrypha,” *Jewish Quarterly Review* 37 (N.S.: 1947): 220–21.

69. R. H. Charles, *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913), p. vii.

70. Eissfeldt, *The Old Testament*, p. 573.

71. *Ibid.*; Metzger, *An Introduction to the Apocrypha*, pp. 5–6; Robert H. Pfeiffer, *History of New Testament Times and an Introduction to the Apocrypha* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1949), p. 60. A comprehensive treatment of the use of the term is found in James H. Charlesworth, *The Pseudepigrapha and Modern Research with a Supplement* (Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1981), pp. 17–25.

72. Metzger, *An Introduction to the Apocrypha*, p. 9; Solomon Zeitlin, a Jewish scholar lists in addition: halachah, midrash, and misc. (fragments) (Solomon Zeitlin, “Jewish Apocryphal Literature,” *Jewish Quarterly Review* 40 [N.S.: 1950]: 248–50).

73. Torrey, *The Apocryphal Literature*, pp. 22–29. Some have resisted the acceptance of the scrolls (see Solomon Zeitlin, “History, Historians and the Dead Sea Scrolls,” *Jewish Quarterly Review* 55 [N.S.: 1964]: 97–116).

74. Frank Moore Cross, Jr., *The Ancient Library of Qumran and Modern Biblical Studies*, rev. ed. (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Books, 1961), pp. 44, 198–203.

75. Eissfeldt, *The Old Testament*, pp. 664–68.

76. D. A. Russell, *The Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1964), pp. 36–37; see also Walter Schmithals, *The Apocalyptic Movement: Introduction and Interpretation*, trans. John E. Steely (New York: Abingdon Press, 1975), pp. 50–51.

77. For an overview and introduction to these sources see Hermann L. Strack, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash* (New York: Harper & Row [Harper Torchbooks], 1965).

78. Schmithals, *The Apocalyptic Movement*, pp. 66–67.

79. *Ibid.*, p. 171.

80. Koch, *The Rediscovery of Apocalyptic*, pp. 36–48; Schmithals, *The Apocalyptic Movement*, pp. 66, 150. The Latter-day Saint theo-

logical view of prophecy has been characterized as “history in reverse” (Parley P. Pratt, *A Voice of Warning* [n.p.: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, n.d.], p. 33).

81. Koch, *The Rediscovery of Apocalyptic*, p. 124.

82. Ibid., p. 56; see also Schmithals, *The Apocalyptic Movement*, p. 212.

83. Matthews, *Joseph Smith’s Translation*, pp. 11–13.

84. Smith, *History of the Church*, 1:331; see also Matthews, *Joseph Smith’s Translation*, pp. 28–37.

85. The revelation has reference only to the books of the Apocrypha in the Authorized Version of the Bible. It is only by application that the principle is applied to other works.

86. Joseph Fielding Smith, *Church History and Modern Revelation*, vol. 1 (Salt Lake City: The Council of the Twelve Apostles of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1953), p. 391; emphasis added.

87. Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2d ed. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966), p. 42.

88. Neal A. Maxwell, *Deposition of a Disciple* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1976), p. 78.