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## Lesson 42 - The Testimony of Eight Witnesses

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# Deseret Sunday School Union Leaflets.

## LESSON 42.—THE TESTIMONY OF EIGHT WITNESSES.

PLACE.—*Manchester, Ontario County, New York.* DATE.—*July, 1829.*

Be it known unto all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people unto whom this work shall come, that Joseph Smith, Jun., the translator of this work, has shewn unto us the plates of which hath been spoken, which have the appearance of gold.

And as many of the leaves as the said Smith has translated, we did handle with our hands; and we also saw the engravings thereon, all of which has the appearance of ancient work, and of curious workmanship.

And this we bear record with words of soberness, that the said Smith has shewn unto us, for we have seen and hefted, and know of a surety that the said Smith has got the plates of which we have spoken.

And we give our names unto the world, to witness unto the world, that which we have seen; and we lie not, God bearing witness of it.

CHRISTIAN WHITMER,	HIRAM PAGE,
JACOB WHITMER,	JOSEPH SMITH, SEN.,
PETER WHITMER, JUN.,	HYRUM SMITH,
JOHN WHITMER,	SAMUEL H. SMITH.

### LESSON STATEMENT.

So far as can be learned, a few days after the three witnesses viewed the plates the Prophet Joseph Smith, Oliver Cowdery and some of the Whitmers paid a visit to Joseph's parents at Manchester, Ontario Co., New York. Soon after they came Joseph and the eight witnesses retired to a place where the family were in the habit of offering up secret prayer. Here it was, it is said, that the eight witnesses saw and handled the sacred records. This is supposed to have taken place in July, 1829. The difference between the testimony of the three and of the eight witnesses is that there was no heavenly manifestation when the eight saw the plates. They were visited by no angel, there was no glory shining around, the

voice of the Lord did not bear testimony to the truth of the translation, neither did they see, so far as is known, the Urim and Thummim and other holy things. But they were shown the plates by the Propnet Joseph, and handled them—which the three did not, so far as we can judge from their testimony. The eight state that they "hefted" the plates, by which we understand that they lifted them in their hands to judge of their weight. They also testify that the plates had the appearance of gold, and the engravings thereon all had the appearance of ancient and curious workmanship. They finish their testimony by declaring that they lie not, God bearing witness of it.

### NOTES.

CHRISTIAN WHITMER was the eldest son of Peter Whitmer, and was born Jan. 18, 1798. He was baptized April 11, 1830, in Seneca Lake, by Oliver Cowdery, and died, a faithful member of the Church, in Clay Co., Missouri, Nov. 27, 1835.

JACOB WHITMER was the second son of Peter Whitmer, and was born in Pennsylvania, Jan. 27, 1800. He was baptized at the same time as his brother Christian. He left the Church in Missouri, in 1838. He lived until April 21, 1856.

PETER WHITMER, Jun., fifth son of Peter Whitmer, was born Sept. 27, 1809. He was baptized by Oliver Cowdery about June, 1829. He died faithful to the truth, near Liberty, Clay Co., Missouri, Sept. 22, 1836.

JOHN WHITMER, third son of Peter Whitmer, born Aug. 27, 1802, baptized by Oliver Cowdery, June, 1829. He held a high position in the Church in Missouri, but was excommunicated by the High Council, at Far West, March 10, 1838. He died at Far West, July 11, 1878.

HIRAM PAGE was born in Vermont, in 1800. Married Catherine Whitmer, a daughter of Peter Whitmer. He was baptized at the same time as Christian and Jacob Whitmer. He left the Church in 1838, and died in Ray County, Missouri, August 12, 1852.

JOSEPH SMITH, Sen., father of the Prophet, was born at Topsfield, Essex Co., Mass., July 12, 1771. Married Lucy Mack, Jan. 24, 1796, was baptized April 6, 1830. Ordained Patriarch Dec. 18, 1833. Died at Nauvoo, Sept. 14, 1840.

HYRUM SMITH, brother to the Prophet Joseph, born at Tunbridge, Vermont, Feb. 9, 1800. Baptized by Joseph, June, 1829. Appointed one of the first Presidency, Nov. 7, 1837. Called to succeed his father as Patriarch to the Church, Jan. 19, 1841. Martyred at Carthage, June 27, 1844.

SAMUEL HARRISON SMITH, fourth son of Joseph Smith, Sen., was born at Tunbridge, Vermont, March 13, 1808. Baptized May 15, 1829. Ordained April 6, 1830. Died July 30, 1844.

Notwithstanding the fact that three of the eight witnesses lived for many years and died out of the Church, not one of them ever denied his testimony with regard to the Book of Mormon.

THE PLATES.—Each plate was about seven by eight inches in width and length, and not quite as thick as common sheet tin; they were bound together as a book, by three rings running through the whole. The book was nearly six inches in thickness, a part of it being sealed. The engravings were small and beautiful, and were engraved on both sides of the plates.

WHAT WE MAY LEARN FROM THIS LESSON.

1. That Joseph Smith showed the plates from which the Book of Mormon was translated to eight persons. 2. That they handled and examined the leaves which had been translated. 3.

That the plates had the appearance of gold. 4. That the engravings thereon were of curious workmanship and seemingly very ancient. 5. That having seen, handled, and examined the plates, the witnesses were able to testify that they knew beyond a possibility of doubt or mistake that Joseph Smith had the plates. 6. How highly improbable it is that twelve men, of good repute, would conspire to deceive the world if the plates did not exist.

QUESTIONS ON THE LESSON.

1. What is the subject of our lesson? 2. When and where did the eight witnesses see the plates? 3. To what do they testify? 4. What are the names of the eight witnesses? 5. What do you know of Christian Whitmer? 6. What of Jacob Whitmer? (And so through the eight.) 7. How many of these witnesses died out of the Church? 8. Repeat their names. 9. What do you know of the constancy of their testimony? 10. Of what did the plates have the appearance? 11. What is said about the engravings on the plates? 12. Who showed the plates to the eight witnesses? 13. Describe the size of the plates. 14. How thick was the record?