



The Atonement of Jesus Christ

INSIGHTS FROM THE JOSEPH SMITH TRANSLATION

Joseph Smith's translation of the Bible enhances our understanding of the Savior's suffering, death, and Resurrection.

Soon after The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was organized, the Prophet Joseph Smith was divinely commissioned to make a translation, or revision, of the King James Version of the Bible (KJV). He labored off and on for the rest of his life to fulfill this assignment. The Bible Dictionary explains, “Although the major portion of the work was completed by July 1833, [the Prophet] continued to make modifications while preparing a manuscript for the press until his death in 1844, and it is possible that some additional modifications would have been made had he lived to publish the entire work.”¹ Today, parts of the Joseph Smith Translation (JST) can be found in the LDS editions of the scriptures.²

The Joseph Smith Translation is an invaluable aid to biblical understanding and interpretation. It is a witness for the divine calling and ministry of the Prophet Joseph Smith.

This article will help you increase your understanding of the Savior's suffering, death, and Resurrection by highlighting some of the changes made by the Prophet in his Bible translation. (Please note that in the scripture quotations that follow, the Prophet's changes are represented by **boldface** type.)



Christ in Gethsemane,
by William Henry Margetson
(see JST, Luke 22:44)

A GARDEN OF SORROW

JST, Mark 14:36–38

(compare KJV, Mark 14:32–34)

And they came to a place which was named Gethsemane, **which was a garden; and the disciples began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy, and to complain in their hearts, wondering if this be the Messiah.**

And Jesus knowing their hearts, he said to his disciples, Sit **you** here, while I shall pray.

And he taketh with him Peter and James and John, and **rebuked them**, and saith unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, **even** unto death: tarry ye here, and watch.

JST, Luke 22:45–46

(compare KJV, Luke 22:45–46)

And when he rose up from prayer, and was come to his disciples, he found them sleeping, **for they were filled with sorrow,**

And said unto them, Why sleep ye? rise and pray, lest **you** enter into temptation.

JST Mark 14:43, 46–47

(compare KJV, Mark 14:38, 41–42)

And they said unto him, The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak. . . .

And he cometh **to them** the third time, and **he** saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take rest: it is enough, the hour is come; behold, the Son of man is betrayed into the **hand** of sinners.

And after they had finished their sleep, he said, Rise up, let us go; lo, he **who** betrayeth me is at hand.

Could Ye Not Watch with Me One Hour?
by James Tissot
(see JST, Luke 22:45; Mark 14:46–47)

SOME INSIGHTS FROM THE JOSEPH SMITH TRANSLATION

- A gloomy, heavy feeling engulfed the hearts of Jesus's disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane.
- Jesus's disciples began to be "sore amazed" by what they were experiencing in the garden with Jesus.
- The disciples, including Peter, James, and John, began to wonder whether Jesus was truly the Messiah.
- Jesus rebuked Peter, James, and John.
- Succumbing to the feeling of sorrow and heaviness in the garden, Peter, James, and John fell asleep. They, not Jesus, said, "The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak."
- Filled with compassion, Jesus watched and waited while His disciples slept, not wanting to wake them.





The Denial of Peter,
by Ary Scheffer (see JST,
Mark 14:80–82)

SIMON PETER AND JUDAS ISCARIOT: NIGHTTIME WITNESSES

JST, Mark 14:80–82 (compare KJV, Mark 14:72)

And the second time the cock crew.

And Peter called to mind the **words which** Jesus said unto him, Before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice.

And he went out, and fell upon his face, and wept bitterly.

JST, Mark 15:1–2 (compare KJV, Mark 15:1)

And straightway in the morning the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes;

And the whole council **condemned him** [Jesus], and bound **him**, and carried him away, and delivered him to Pilate.

JST, Matthew 27:3–6, 10 (compare KJV, Matthew 27:3–5, 10)

Then Judas, **who** had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders,

Saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood.

And they said **unto him**, What is that to us? See thou to **it; thy sins be upon thee.**

And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself **on a tree. And straitway he fell down, and his bowels gushed out, and he died. . . .**

And therefore they took the pieces of silver, and gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed by the mouth of Jeremy.

SOME INSIGHTS FROM THE JOSEPH SMITH TRANSLATION

- Distraught with grief, Peter “fell upon his face” as he wept inconsolably.
- When Judas Iscariot tried to give back the bribe he had received, the leaders of the Jews rebuffed him, saying, “Thy sins be upon thee.”
- The Joseph Smith Translation reconciles the two seemingly different versions of how Judas Iscariot died (see Matthew 27:3–10 and Acts 1:15–20).



The Remorse of Judas, by Edward A.
Armitage (see JST, Matthew 27:3–5)



Jesus before Pilate for the First Time, by James Tissot (see *JST*, Mark 15:3–4)

SOME INSIGHTS FROM THE JOSEPH SMITH TRANSLATION

- When Pilate asked if He was the King of the Jews, Jesus boldly and directly replied, “I am.”
- The Joseph Smith Translation harmonizes the Matthew and Mark accounts with John’s account of Pilate’s involvement in preparing the cross (see John 19:19–22).

PILATE AND THE KING OF THE JEWS

JST, Mark 15:3–4 (compare *KJV*, Mark 15:2)

And Pilate asked him, Art thou the King of the Jews?

And **Jesus** answering said unto him, **I am, even as thou sayest.**

JST, Matthew 27:26–27 (compare *KJV*, Matthew 27:24–25)

When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see **that ye do nothing unto him.**

Then answered all the people, and said, His blood **come upon** us, and our children.

JST, Mark 15:29 (compare *KJV*, Mark 15:26)

And **Pilate wrote his accusation and put it upon the cross, THE KING OF THE JEWS.**

JST, Matthew 27:39–42 (compare *KJV*, Matthew 27:37)

And **Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross, and the writing was,**

Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews, in letters of Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew.

And the chief priests said unto Pilate, **It should be written** and set up over his head his accusation, This is **he that said he was** Jesus the King of the Jews.

But Pilate answered and said, What I have written, I have written; let it alone.



The Trial of Christ, English School, 18th century (see *JST*, Matthew 27:26–27)

UPON THE CROSSES AT CALVARY

JST, Mark 15:25–26 (compare KJV, Mark 15:22–23)

And they bring him unto the place **called** Golgotha, which is, (being interpreted) the place of a **burial**.

And they gave him to drink **vinegar** mingled with **gall**: **and when he had tasted the vinegar, he would not drink.**

JST, Luke 23:35 (compare KJV, Luke 23:34)

Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do (**meaning the soldiers who crucified him**).

JST, Matthew 27:47–48 (compare KJV, Matthew 27:44)

But the other rebuked him, saying, Dost thou not fear God, seeing thou art under the same condemnation; and this man is just and hath not sinned; and he cried unto the Lord, that he would save him.

And the Lord said unto him, This day thou shalt be with me in Paradise.

JST, Matthew 27:54 (compare KJV, Matthew 27:50)

Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, **saying, Father, it is finished, thy will is done,** yielded up the ghost.

*It Is Finished,
by Liz Lemon
Swindle (see
JST, Matthew
27:54)*



SOME INSIGHTS FROM THE JOSEPH SMITH TRANSLATION

- The place of Jesus's Crucifixion was near a tomb or place of burial.
- As He hung on the cross, Jesus forgave the Roman soldiers, who were merely doing their duty.
- One of the men crucified with Jesus cried out to Him, asking that He would save him.
- Jesus's last words from the cross included the phrase "thy will is done," confirming that He died according to the will of His Father.

*Jerusalem,
by Jean Leon
Gerome
(see JST,
Mark 15:25;
Matthew
27:47–48)*



Angels
Declaring That
Jesus Is Risen
from the Dead,
by William
Brassey Hole
(see JST,
Mark 16:4)



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EASTER DAY

JST, Matthew 28:1–3 (compare KJV, Matthew 28:1–4)

Early in the morning, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre.

And, behold, there **had been** a great earthquake: for **two angels** of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it.

And their countenance was like lightning, and **their** raiment white as snow: and for fear of **them** the keepers did shake, and became as **though they were** dead.

JST, Mark 16:3–6 (compare KJV, Mark 16:4–7)

But when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away (for it was very great); and

two angels sitting **thereon**, clothed in long white garments; and they were affrighted.

But the angels said unto them, Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, **who** was crucified: he is risen; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him.

And go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall **you** see him, as he said unto you.

And they, entering into the sepulchre, saw the place where they laid Jesus.

JST, John 20:16–17 (compare KJV, John 20:16–17)

Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master.

Jesus saith unto her, **Hold** me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father.

*JST, Matthew 27:56–57
(compare KJV, Matthew 27:52–53)*

And the graves were opened; and **the** bodies of the saints which slept arose, **who were many**,

And came out of the graves **and** after his resurrection, went into the holy city, and appeared unto many. ■

SOME INSIGHTS FROM THE JOSEPH SMITH TRANSLATION

- Early Easter morning, *two angels* from the presence of God opened the tomb and cleared the way for the arrival of the women at the tomb.
- The Savior instructed Mary Magdalene, “Hold me not” rather than “Touch me not.”

NOTES

1. Bible Dictionary, “Joseph Smith Translation.”
2. See Robert J. Matthews, “I Have a Question,” *Ensign*, June 1992, 29. For the complete JST text, see *Joseph Smith’s New Translation of the Bible: Original Manuscripts*, ed. Scott H. Faulring, Kent P. Jackson, and Robert J. Matthews (2004), also available on the DVD *Joseph Smith’s Translation of the Bible: Electronic Library* (2011).

Jesus Said to
Her, “Mary,”
by William F.
Whitaker Jr.
(see JST,
John 20:16–17)

