Joseph Steed

Evening Section, Rel C 225

Anthony Sweat

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Faulty Assumptions about the Book of Abraham

I read the article about faulty assumptions from the Book of Abraham by Kerry Muhlestein.

Some things I learned: There were two parties who argued about the Book of Abraham: those for Joseph Smith, and those against. Both came with the erroneous conclusion that the text surrounding the facsimiles in the discovered papyrus were actually the book of Abraham. Also, there were some pretty bad assumptions about how we initially got the manuscript. I was really surprised to learn that Kerry had put in more than 6 years worth of research trying to compile all the eyewitnesses to the Book of Abraham, or the original manuscript thereof. One of the witnesses, describing this noted “...in the arms of the Old King lay the roll of papyrus from which our prophet translated the Book of Abraham.” Based also on the historical evidence, the Book of Abraham was supposed to come primarily from the Egyptian Papyrus, and is almost completely conclusive on that note.

As for how I felt about it, I agree with almost all of it. One of the things that I think is a little hard to reconcile is revelation. Some speculate that Joseph Smith received some serious revelation to assist in the interpretation of the papyrus, and the text could be totally different. I still think this is possible, although I guess that the discovery of increasing evidence that the part of the papyrus that may have contained the book of Abraham could show that that might not have been the case. So, I think I just am curious about if any more papyrus will turn up which show a translation that is similar to that. We have the dead sea scrolls, more could come.