

Digging Deeper Links from the Discussion Guide for

MORMONS: WHO THEY ARE, WHAT THEY BELIEVE

SESSION ONE: THE MORMONS—GENESIS

[The Book of Mormon according to the Latter-day Saints](#) This Latter-day Saints article discusses the origins and purpose of the Book of Mormon. It is included here to give you an acquaintance with this Mormon scripture.

[Introduction to the Book of Mormon](#) The fourth-last paragraph includes Joseph Smith, Jr.'s claim that the Book of Mormon is the world's most perfect book.

[Jesus preaches in the Americas](#) This link takes you to 3 Nephi 8-30 in the Book of Mormon which relates Jesus' supposed visit to the Americas.

[Moroni's Visitation](#) This article lists Joseph Smith's description of the visits of the angel Moroni and unanswered questions critics have raised about it.

[A Seer Stone and a Hat: Translating the Book of Mormon](#) This article sites early testimony for how Joseph Smith, Jr. translated the Book of Mormon from the golden plates. Leaders of the LDS seem to be shrinking back from what Joseph Smith and his first scribes stated.

[Seer Stones- the Occult in Joseph Smith's Day](#) This article points out that seer stones and hats were commonly used in Joseph Smith's time.

[Where Are the Ten Lost Tribes?](#) This PBS article describes the background for the lost tribes of Israelites and traces worldwide claims for their location: including the identification of American Indians with the lost tribes centuries before Joseph Smith, Jr.

[Setting the Record Straight About Native Peoples: Lost Tribes of Israel](#) This article answers linguistic claims that Native American languages match Egyptian and other hieroglyphics.

[Native Americans & Jews: The Lost Tribes Episode](#) This article from a Jewish-American perspective shows the broad appeal of the claim that Native Americans descended from the Lost Tribes of Israel. It helps explain why people responded to Joseph Smith, Jr's Book of Mormon.

[The DNA Challenge to the Book of Mormon](#) This article discusses DNA testing that indicates Native Americans came from Asia and not from the Lost Tribes of Israel.

[**What about Reformed Egyptian?**](#) After “translating” the Book of Mormon, Joseph Smith, Jr. looked to a wealthy farmer named Martin Harris to fund its publication. Martin Harris asked Smith to jot down some of the Reformed Egyptian script, then secretly took it to a Columbia University professor for his opinion. This website includes the entire text of the 1834 book, “Mormonism Unveiled.” This link takes you to Chapter XVIII which includes the letter from that professor—Dr. Charles Anthon, Egyptologist Professor at Columbia University.

SESSION TWO: THE MORMONS—THE EXODUS

[**Review of Sidney Rigdon: A Portrait of Religious Excess**](#) In the early years when Joseph Smith was organizing his new church he fell under the influence of Sidney Rigdon.

[**Sidney Rigdon and the Book of Mormon**](#) This article explores the possible role Sidney Rigdon played in the authorship of the Book of Mormon.

[**Smith and Rigdon are Tared and Feathered**](#) This is Joseph Smith’s account of being tarred and feathered by an angry, drunken mob on March 24, 1832.

[**What was Behind Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon being Tared and Feathered?**](#) This website discusses allegations of adultery raised against Joseph Smith between 1829 and 1835, including one that led to his being tarred and feathered in Hiram, Ohio.

[**Joseph Smith’s Kirtland Bank Failure**](#) This article examines the failure of Smith’s Anti-Banking institution.

[**Missouri State Archives—The Missouri Mormon War**](#) This link takes you to the Missouri State Archives’ article which includes many state documents exploring the clashes between Mormons and non-Mormons in Missouri.

[**The Battle of Crooked River**](#) This is the account of the battle between Missouri and Mormon militias as given by Charles C. Rich, one of the Mormons who led the attack.

[**Missouri Governor Lilburn Boggs’ Extermination Order**](#) This link takes you to the extermination order as it has been saved in the state archives.

[**Did Joseph Smith order Missouri Governor Boggs’ Assassination?**](#) This article includes several newspaper articles and affidavits about O. P. Rockwell, a Mormon who was accused in the attempted assassination.

[**Mormon Quotes By and About The Danites**](#) This page includes the Danite pledges as well as comments from Joseph Smith, primary sources and members of the Danites themselves.

[**The Nauvoo Legion—Civil and Religious Rights**](#) This speech by Mr. George A. Smith, a private in the Nauvoo Legion, speaks of the sacrifices of the Mormons who made the trek to Utah in search of civil and religious freedom.

[**Occultic and Masonic Influences on Early Mormonism**](#) This article summarizes the evidence for Joseph's personal involvement in both Freemasonry and occultism, and their influence on the Mormon religion.

[**Freemasonry in Nauvoo**](#) This article describes the friction the Nauvoo Lodge created with other Illinois' Freemason lodges.

[**Joseph Smith—Prophet of the Restoration**](#) In this speech Tad R. Callister calls Joseph Smith's sins "minor weaknesses."

[**Nauvoo Expositor**](#) This is the text of the original edition of the Nauvoo Expositor.

[**The Order to Destroy the Nauvoo Expositor**](#) This is the text of the order as well as links to the order for the arrest of Joseph Smith for ordering the destruction of the Expositor.

[**Final Moments at Carthage Jail and the Death of Joseph Smith**](#) Bill McKeever discusses the events at the Carthage Jail, including where Smith got his gun, how he broke his own rules against consuming alcohol, and compares the way Smith died with Jesus' death.

[**Six Days in August: Brigham Young and the Succession Crisis of 1844**](#) This article thoroughly describes the succession crisis that occurred after the death of Joseph Smith.

[**Mormon Power Grab?**](#) Within a month of the murders of Joseph and Hiram Smith, Joseph's selected successor—his brother Samuel—died under mysterious circumstances. This article quotes a fourth brother, William Smith, who suspected Brigham Young of having Samuel poisoned.

[**Brigham Young's Rise to Power**](#) Choosing Joseph Smith's successor was not as clear cut or straightforward as many Mormons believe.

[**Abraham Lincoln's Connections to Joseph Smith and Brigham Young**](#) Latter-day Saints views have warmed toward President Abraham Lincoln over the years.

[**Brigham's Destroying Angel**](#) This link takes you to a photomechanical reprint of a manuscript that was claimed to have been written by Bill Hickman, loyal Danite under Brigham Young.

[**Latter-day Saints World Statistics**](#) This chart lists countries that have Mormon temples, missions, stakes, and or districts.

SESSION THREE: ARE MORMONS CHRISTIAN?

Who are Mormon Missionaries? This webpage from the Latter-day Saints explains the two-year period in which young Mormons go out as missionaries.

Why We Need Creeds According to Joseph Smith's divine vision, God called the Christian Creeds an abomination. In this interview, Jaroslav Pelikan explains how the Creeds arose and why they are important to the Church.

Is God an Exalted Man? This website includes quotes from general Mormon authorities, and what the Bible teaches on this subject.

The Heavenly Mother Latter-day Saints rarely talk about God's wife, but their writings speak of their beliefs that God has one or more heavenly wives.

Did Adam become the Heavenly Father? This article explores Brigham Young's sermon of 1852 where he declared that Adam became our heavenly Father.

Our Pre-Mortal Life According to the Latter-day Saints each of us lived as spiritual children with heavenly Father and Mother before our conception and birth.

Do Latter-day Saints think Jesus and Lucifer were spirit brothers? Scroll down to the second question in this "I Have a Question" section of the June 1986 edition of "Ensign."

War in Heaven This page describes the battle between Jesus and Lucifer over God's plan of salvation.

The Choice that Began Mortality Latter-day Saints describe Adam and Eve's Fall as a good thing for humanity.

Jesus Christ, Our Savior This LDS webpage explains Jesus' atonement. It is a good example of an article that almost sounds right. Look for clues to the false theology lying underneath ("the only way we can RETURN to live with our Heavenly Father", "Jesus suffered AND was crucified", "Baptism is a promise or covenant WE MAKE", "It takes effort to EXERCISE ENOUGH FAITH in Christ to repent, be baptized and receive the Holy Ghost, but we have to strive...")

The Unpardonable Sin In his "King Follet Sermon", Joseph Smith explains the one unpardonable sin, when a Latter-day Saint turns from his Mormon faith. (Scroll down to the sections "The Unpardonable Sin" and "The Forgiveness of Sins").

Blood Atonement and Utah's Method of Execution Though many Latter-day Saints leaders deny it today, Blood Atonement is still in the psyche of Mormons in the state of Utah.

What Happens in Temples? This article from the official Latter-day Saints webpage explains the rituals that take place in a Mormon temple and why they are necessary for living with God in the highest heaven.

[The Three Kingdoms of Glory](#) This webpage describes the three Kingdoms of Glory and Perdition as taught by the Latter-day Saints.

SESSION FOUR: THE BURDEN OF BELIEF

[Why do Latter-day Saints Abstain from Alcohol, Coffee, and Tea?](#) This prohibition is found in Section 89 of Doctrine & Covenants. This teaching is called the [Word of Wisdom](#).

[A Temple Recommend: Being Worthy to Enter the Temple](#) This Latter-day Saints page explains what is involved in getting a temple recommend.

[My Temple Recommend Expired](#) A young Mormon woman describes her shame in arriving at the temple only to learn she had let her temple recommend expire.

[The Sealing Ordinance](#) This temple ritual seals Mormon marriages and families.

[Preparing for the Temple Endowment](#) This article discusses the need for the temple endowment to live with God in the highest heaven.

[Aaronic Priesthood](#) This page describes the Aaronic Priesthood.

[Melchizedek Priesthood](#) This priesthood is explained on this site.

SESSION FIVE: TEMPLES OF THE DEAD

[What is a Ward/Stake/Branch?](#) This website describes the local Mormon gathering place. Note that the bishop or branch president is a member who volunteers.

[Baptisms for the Dead](#) Using an obscure passage from 1 Corinthians 15, the Latter-day Saints perform proxy Baptisms for the dead.

[A Closer Look at Proxy Baptism](#) This article by Sandra Tanner looks at the Mormon practice of Proxy Baptism, and the 1 Corinthians 15 passage Mormons use to justify proxy Baptisms.

The Mason/Mormon Connection

[Masonic Parallels](#) This site by an endowed Latter-day Saint explores the Mormon temple ceremonies, describing similarities and differences between the Mormon Endowment and Freemasonry.

[Masonic Symbols and the LDS Temple](#) Sandra Tanner explores Joseph Smith's involvement with Freemasonry.

[The Sacred Temple Garments](#) This LDS essay on the temple garments helps explain their significance to Mormons today.

[Passing Through the Temple Veil](#) This website presents the ceremony for an initiate to pass through the temple veil.

[The Sentinel Angels](#) This article describes the purpose of the sentinel angels in Mormon teaching.

[Passing the Sentinel Angels](#) This article discusses the tokens and signs necessary to pass the Sentinel Angels into the Celestial Heaven.

SESSION SIX: THE JOURNEY OUT—LEAVING THE MORMON FAITH

[A Spiritual and Intellectual Journey From Mormonism to Deism](#) Richard Williamson wrote this blog to describe the first steps of his path out of Mormonism. At that time he believed in God, but only like a watchmaker who created this world, then sat back and lets it run itself by the laws of physics He put in place, but not stepping in or becoming active in His creation. Since becoming Christian he has repeatedly asked deism.com to remove this post since it no longer reflects his viewpoint, but they will not.

Stumbling Blocks to Mormons:

Joseph Smith's First Vision:

[New Light on Mormon Origins From the Palmyra Revival](#) The Latter-day Saints contend that Joseph Smith had his vision in the Sacred Grove in 1820. But early versions from Joseph Smith don't mention the grove, and this article provides evidence that the religious revival didn't occur in Palmyra, New York until 1824.

[Joseph Smith's Changing First Vision Accounts](#) This page gives links to ten accounts of Joseph Smith's first vision that he shared with friends and associates. Note how these accounts change over time before a later account is canonized in Mormon scripture.

Joseph Smith's Multiple Wives

[Joseph Smith's Contradictions](#) This article explores Smith's early public condemnation of polygamy while he practiced it secretly. It goes on to talk about women he took as wives who were already married to living men. It also discusses Mormon teachings that polygamy was essential to becoming gods, and a man who understood this command but refused to marry more than one woman would be damned.

[**Marrying a Child**](#) This article discusses the pain and shame of Joseph Smith's many plural wives. It also describes the threats and schemes Joseph Smith used to convince a devoted father to permit him to take his fourteen-year-old, only daughter as a plural wife.

[**The Mountain Meadows Massacre**](#) In 1857 nearly 120 men, women, and children were murdered by Mormons and Indians in southern Utah.

[**Brigham Young's Teachings on Blood Atonement**](#) This webpage includes excerpts from sermons of Brigham Young and other Mormon leaders explaining that some sins cannot be atoned for by Jesus' blood, but only by the blood of the sinner poured out in death.

[**Latter-day Saints and Biblical Christianity**](#) Though the Latter-day Saints have softened their speech against traditional Christian denominations, they still believe and teach they are the only true Christian Church on earth.

MORMONS: WHO THEY ARE, WHAT THEY BELIEVE - - Discussion Guide

The Book of Mormon according to the Latter-day Saints

<http://beta.mormon.org/lessons/07-book-of-mormon.html>

The Book of Mormon Shows That Christ Lives and Joseph Smith Restored His Church

The Book of Mormon, along with the Bible, testifies that Jesus Christ is our divine Redeemer and that by living according to His gospel we can find peace in this life and eternal happiness in the life to come.

The Book of Mormon is the word of God, like the Bible. It is Holy Scripture, with form and content similar to that of the Bible. Both books contain God's guidance as revealed to prophets as well as religious histories of different civilizations. While the Bible is written by and about the people in the land of Israel and surrounding areas, and takes place from the creation of the world until shortly after the death of Jesus Christ, The Book of Mormon contains the history and God's dealings with the people who lived in the Americas between approximately 600 BC and 400 AD. The prophets in the Book of Mormon recorded God's dealings with His people, which were compiled by a prophet named Mormon onto gold plates.

Missionaries are handing out copies of the Book of Mormon all over the world, even as you read this. So what is this book? If it's given out for free, why do so many members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints count their Book of Mormon as one of their most valuable possessions? What kind of book can cause so many readers to change their lives, their minds and their hearts? What kind of book can answer life's seemingly unanswerable questions?

Before these faithful Christians perished, their record was safely hidden away. Joseph Smith obtained these ancient records in 1827, and with the gift and power of God Joseph was able to translate the ancient writings into what we have today. The Book of Mormon, along with the Bible, testifies that Jesus Christ is our divine Redeemer and that by living according to His gospel we can find peace in this life and eternal happiness in the life to come.

Translated by the Power of God

God can give people special help when they need it for a righteous cause. He gave Joseph Smith the ability to translate an unfamiliar language in order to bring the Book of Mormon to each of us.

When Joseph Smith was 21 years old, an angel named Moroni gave him the ancient records. Joseph had little formal education and was unfamiliar with the ancient language written on the metal sheets of gold, but he was able to translate them because God gave him the gift and power to do so. The translation took less than three months, and in 1830, 5,000 copies of the Book of Mormon were published in Palmyra, New York. God chose Joseph as a prophet, seer, revelator and translator to restore The Church of Jesus Christ in modern time, and The Book of Mormon was essential to this restoration. Joseph Smith was given an extraordinary calling, and because he kept himself worthy of the blessings of heaven, he was able to bring the Book of Mormon to the world.



Joseph Smith translated the Book of Mormon through the gift and power of God.

The Book of Mormon Testifies of Christ

The focus of the Book of Mormon is Jesus Christ, His atoning sacrifice and His gospel.

We believe that having faith in Jesus Christ is the first step in understanding the gospel and receiving the eternal happiness that God our Heavenly Father wants for us. But where does that faith come from? How can we come to believe that Jesus Christ is our Savior if we don't know who He is or what He did? We can develop faith in Jesus Christ by reading about Him in the scriptures and praying to know if what we've read is true.

The title page states that the Book of Mormon's purpose is to convince all of us "that JESUS is the CHRIST, the ETERNAL GOD, manifesting himself unto all nations." It was written to help us develop a true knowledge of Jesus Christ and His mission on earth. The Book of Mormon reaffirms what we learn from the Bible, that Jesus Christ is the

Son of God who came to earth to help us overcome our sins. The people in the Book of Mormon, the Nephites and the Lamanites, recorded their testimonies of Jesus Christ. Many of the prophets who wrote the records that make up the Book of Mormon saw Christ personally, just as happened with the Apostle Paul, which he recorded in the Bible (see Acts 9:3-6). The climax of the book is when Jesus appeared to all the Nephites soon after He was resurrected. He blessed them, taught them his gospel and said,

"Arise and come forth unto me, that ye may thrust your hands into my side, and also that ye may feel the prints of the nails in my hands and in my feet, that ye may know that I am the God of Israel, and the God of the whole earth, and have been slain for the sins of the world" (3 Nephi 11:14)

The Book of Mormon and the Bible Support Each Other

Like two eyewitnesses strengthen an argument in court, the Book of Mormon and the Bible both testify of Christ.

Some people think that because we read the Book of Mormon, we don't read the Bible. That's just not true. It's like saying that we don't eat oranges because we eat apples. Both are good fruit! The Book of Mormon is not a replacement for the Bible. In fact, because the Book of Mormon and the Bible both contain the gospel of Jesus Christ as it was revealed to different civilizations, studying them together can clarify some concepts that are difficult to understand. The Book of Mormon tells us to read the Bible and affirms that its message is true (Mormon 7:8-10). And in the Bible, Jesus told His apostles, "Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd" (John 10:16). Christ visited these "other sheep" in the Americas after He was resurrected, teaching the same message to the Nephites that He taught to the people of Israel. The Book of Mormon makes it clear that Jesus Christ's message and His atonement are not for one group of people at one time. They are for everyone, everywhere, from the beginning of the earth to the end. Having the Book of Mormon as another testament of Jesus Christ reminds us that He is mindful of every one of us.

The Book of Mormon Answers Questions of the Soul

Most of us have some hard questions in the back of our minds — the kind no one else can really answer for us. Some are far-reaching questions about the nature of our existence like the following:

Is there really a God?

Believe in God; believe that he is, and that he created all things, both in heaven and in earth; believe that he has all wisdom, and all power, both in heaven and in earth; believe that man doth not comprehend all the things which the Lord can comprehend (Mosiah 4:9).

Does my life have a purpose?

25. Adam fell that men might be; and men are, that they might have joy.

26. And the Messiah cometh in the fulness of time, that he may redeem the children of men from the fall. And because that they are redeemed from the fall they have become free forever, knowing good from evil; to act for themselves and not to be acted upon, save it be by the punishment of the law at the great and last day, according to the commandments which God hath given.

27. Wherefore, men are free according to the flesh; and all things are given them which are expedient unto man. And they are free to choose liberty and eternal life, through the great Mediator of all men, or to choose captivity and death, according to the captivity and power of the devil; for he seeketh that all men might be miserable like unto himself (2 Nephi 2:25-27).

Did I exist before I was born?

And this is the manner after which they were ordained—being called and prepared from the foundation of the world according to the foreknowledge of God, on account of their exceeding faith and good works; in the first place being left to choose good or evil; therefore they having chosen good, and exercising exceedingly great faith, are called with a holy calling, yea, with that holy calling which was prepared with, and according to, a preparatory redemption for such (Alma 13:3).

What happens after I die?

11. Now, concerning the state of the soul between death and the resurrection—Behold, it has been made known unto me by an angel, that the spirits of all men, as soon as

they are departed from this mortal body, yea, the spirits of all men, whether they be good or evil, are taken home to that God who gave them life.

12. And then shall it come to pass, that the spirits of those who are righteous are received into a state of happiness, which is called paradise, a state of rest, a state of peace, where they shall rest from all their troubles and from all care, and sorrow.

13. And then shall it come to pass, that the spirits of the wicked, yea, who are evil—for behold, they have no part nor portion of the Spirit of the Lord; for behold, they chose evil works rather than good; therefore the spirit of the devil did enter into them, and take possession of their house—and these shall be cast out into outer darkness; there shall be weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth, and this because of their own iniquity, being led captive by the will of the devil.

23. The soul shall be restored to the body, and the body to the soul; yea, and every limb and joint shall be restored to its body; yea, even a hair of the head shall not be lost; but all things shall be restored to their proper and perfect frame (Alma 40:11-13, 23).

As we read the Book of Mormon, we learn about the gospel and God's Plan of Happiness. A knowledge of these things puts our questions in an eternal perspective. From the scripture that says this life is "a time to prepare to meet God," for example, we learn that we will continue to exist after we die, and that by keeping the commandments we can return to heaven (Alma 12:24). We also learn that repentance, forgiveness and the covenant to serve others are essential to our eternal salvation. Any of these questions of the soul can be answered by applying the gospel of Jesus Christ as it's written in the Book of Mormon.

The Book of Mormon Draws People Closer to God

God is our loving Heavenly Father. We can get to know Him better by reading His words in the Book of Mormon.

Some descriptions of God make Him sound abstract and unapproachable, or angry and vengeful, but we learn in the Book of Mormon that "God is mindful of every people" (Alma 26:37) and that like the Book of Mormon prophet Lehi, we can be "encircled about eternally in the arms of his love" (2 Nephi 1:15).

Though we might not get to speak with God face-to-face in this life, He has given us the scriptures to help us draw closer to Him. Of the Book of Mormon, Joseph Smith said, "a man would get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book." We get nearer to God by building faith in Him, and we build faith in Him when we learn about His plan and keep His commandments.

The Book of Mormon teaches us God's plan and shows us how those who live according to His counsel are blessed in this life and the next. When we read prayerfully, the Holy Ghost can teach us, deep in our hearts, that the words in the Book of Mormon are a message to us from our Heavenly Father, sent to help us through this life.

How to Know the Book of Mormon Is the Word of God

Through honest study and humble prayer, we can each know for ourselves that The Book of Mormon really is the word of God.

Of course it's one thing to read the Book of Mormon and another to believe deep in our hearts that what it says is true. We can feel this confirmation when we study the Book of Mormon with diligence and faith, as we are promised in the following scripture:

*"And when ye shall receive these things, I would exhort you that ye would ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true; and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost."
(Moroni 10:4)*

God's method is simple: we read the Book of Mormon; we pray and ask Him to tell us that what we've read is true and He answers us through feelings of peace and assurance given by the Holy Ghost. First of all, we have to study the Book of Mormon diligently, applying its principles to our own lives and doing our best to understand the lessons that God wants us to learn. Second, we have to pray "with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ." We need to hope and believe that God will answer us, and we may have to pray more than once. Last, we need to be willing to accept the answer when it comes, however it may come. Believing that the Book of Mormon really contains the word of God means that we will be willing to live up to the standards of faith and obedience He describes in it. God has promised that He will bless us with much more than it takes to live up to His high standards.

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Introduction to the Book of Mormon

<https://www.lds.org/scriptures/bofm/introduction?lang=eng>

The Book of Mormon is a volume of holy scripture comparable to the Bible. It is a record of God's dealings with ancient inhabitants of the Americas and contains the fulness of the everlasting gospel.

The book was written by many ancient prophets by the spirit of prophecy and revelation. Their words, written on gold plates, were quoted and abridged by a prophet-historian named Mormon. The record gives an account of two great civilizations. One came from Jerusalem in 600 B.C. and afterward separated into two nations, known as the Nephites and the Lamanites. The other came much earlier when the Lord confounded the tongues at the Tower of Babel. This group is known as the Jaredites. After thousands of years, all were destroyed except the Lamanites, and they are among the ancestors of the American Indians.

The crowning event recorded in the Book of Mormon is the personal ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ among the Nephites soon after His resurrection. It puts forth the doctrines of the gospel, outlines the plan of salvation, and tells men what they must do to gain peace in this life and eternal salvation in the life to come.

After Mormon completed his writings, he delivered the account to his son Moroni, who added a few words of his own and hid up the plates in the Hill Cumorah. On September 21, 1823, the same Moroni, then a glorified, resurrected being, appeared to the Prophet Joseph Smith and instructed him relative to the ancient record and its destined translation into the English language.

In due course the plates were delivered to Joseph Smith, who translated them by the gift and power of God. The record is now published in many languages as a new and additional witness that Jesus Christ is the Son of the living God and that all who will come unto Him and obey the laws and ordinances of His gospel may be saved.

Concerning this record the Prophet Joseph Smith said: "I told the brethren that the Book of Mormon was the most correct of any book on earth, and the keystone of our religion, and a man would get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book."

In addition to Joseph Smith, the Lord provided for eleven others to see the gold plates for themselves and to be special witnesses of the truth and divinity of the Book of Mormon. Their written testimonies are included herewith as "The Testimony of Three Witnesses" and "The Testimony of Eight Witnesses."

We invite all men everywhere to read the Book of Mormon, to ponder in their hearts the message it contains, and then to ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ if the book is true. Those who pursue this course and ask in faith will gain a testimony of its truth and divinity by the power of the Holy Ghost. (See Moroni 10:3-5.)

Those who gain this divine witness from the Holy Spirit will also come to know by the same power that Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world, that Joseph Smith is His revelator and prophet in these last days, and that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the Lord's kingdom once again established on the earth, preparatory to the Second Coming of the Messiah.

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Jesus preaches in the Americas

<https://www.lds.org/scriptures/bofm/3-ne/8?lang=eng>.

Third Nephi The Book of Nephi

the Son of Nephi, Who Was the Son of Helaman

Chapter 8

Tempests, earthquakes, fires, whirlwinds, and physical upheavals attest the crucifixion of Christ—Many people are destroyed—Darkness covers the land for three days—Those who remain bemoan their fate. About A.D. 33–34.

1 And now it came to pass that according to our record, and we know our record to be true, for behold, it was a just man who did keep the record—for he truly did many miracles in the name of Jesus; and there was not any man who could do a miracle in the name of Jesus save he were cleansed every whit from his iniquity—

2 And now it came to pass, if there was no mistake made by this man in the reckoning of our time, the thirty and third year had passed away;

3 And the people began to look with great earnestness for the sign which had been given by the prophet Samuel, the Lamanite, yea, for the time that there should be darkness for the space of three days over the face of the land.

4 And there began to be great doubtings and disputations among the people, notwithstanding so many signs had been given.

5 And it came to pass in the thirty and fourth year, in the first month, on the fourth day of the month, there arose a great storm, such an one as never had been known in all the land.

6 And there was also a great and terrible tempest; and there was terrible thunder, insomuch that it did shake the whole earth as if it was about to divide asunder.

7 And there were exceedingly sharp lightnings, such as never had been known in all the land.

8 And the city of Zarahemla did take fire.

9 And the city of Moroni did sink into the depths of the sea, and the inhabitants thereof were drowned.

10 And the earth was carried up upon the city of Moronihah, that in the place of the city there became a great mountain.

11 And there was a great and terrible destruction in the land southward.

12 But behold, there was a more great and terrible destruction in the land northward; for behold, the whole face of the land was changed, because of the tempest and the whirlwinds, and the thunderings and the lightnings, and the exceedingly great quaking of the whole earth;

13 And the highways were broken up, and the level roads were spoiled, and many smooth places became rough.

14 And many great and notable cities were sunk, and many were burned, and many were shaken till the buildings thereof had fallen to the earth, and the inhabitants thereof were slain, and the places were left desolate.

15 And there were some cities which remained; but the damage thereof was exceedingly great, and there were many in them who were slain.

16 And there were some who were carried away in the whirlwind; and whither they went no man knoweth, save they know that they were carried away.

17 And thus the face of the whole earth became deformed, because of the tempests, and the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the quaking of the earth.

18 And behold, the rocks were rent in twain; they were broken up upon the face of the whole earth, insomuch that they were found in broken fragments, and in seams and in cracks, upon all the face of the land.

19 And it came to pass that when the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the storm, and the tempest, and the quakings of the earth did cease—for behold, they did last for about the space of three hours; and it was said by some that the time was greater; nevertheless, all these great and terrible things were done in about the space of three hours—and then behold, there was darkness upon the face of the land.

20 And it came to pass that there was thick darkness upon all the face of the land, insomuch that the inhabitants thereof who had not fallen could feel the vapor of darkness;

21 And there could be no light, because of the darkness, neither candles, neither torches; neither could there be fire kindled with their fine and exceedingly dry wood, so that there could not be any light at all;

22 And there was not any light seen, neither fire, nor glimmer, neither the sun, nor the moon, nor the stars, for so great were the mists of darkness which were upon the face of the land.

23 And it came to pass that it did last for the space of three days that there was no light seen; and there was great mourning and howling and weeping among all the people continually; yea, great were the groanings of the people, because of the darkness and the great destruction which had come upon them.

24 And in one place they were heard to cry, saying: O that we had repented before this great and terrible day, and then would our brethren have been spared, and they would not have been burned in that great city Zarahemla.

25 And in another place they were heard to cry and mourn, saying: O that we had repented before this great and terrible day, and had not killed and stoned the prophets, and cast them out; then would our

mothers and our fair daughters, and our children have been spared, and not have been buried up in that great city Moronihah. And thus were the howlings of the people great and terrible.

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MORMONS: WHO THEY ARE, WHAT THEY BELIEVE - - Discussion Guide

Moroni's Visitation

<http://mormonthink.com/moroniweb.htm>

Moroni's Visitation

In the Pearl of Great Price, Joseph Smith recounts his first meeting with the angel Moroni on the night of September 21, 1823. As Joseph said his prayers and settled in for the night, an angel, "glorious beyond description," appeared at his bedside:

While I was thus in the act of calling upon God, I discovered a light in my room, which continued to increase until the room was lighter than at noonday, when immediately a personage appeared at my bedside, standing in the air, for his feet did not touch the floor.^[1]

Joseph said that Moroni appeared three separate times, each time filling his bedroom with intense light that became as bright as the noonday sun and these three visits took the whole of the night,

Not only was his robe exceedingly white, but his whole person was glorious beyond description, and his countenance truly like lightning. The room was exceedingly light, but not so very bright as immediately around his person.^[2]

Overview of LDS position

Devout Mormons believe that Moroni, an angel from ancient America, physically appeared to Joseph three times on the night of September 21, 1823. During these visitations, Moroni revealed the story of the Book of Mormon and shared with him the beginning of the knowledge Joseph would use to locate and translate the messages on the gold plates. LDS faithful believe that Joseph literally saw Moroni with his physical eyes, heard him with his ears, and processed his revelations with his alert, conscious brain.

Overview of Critics' position

Critics have raised concerns about the circumstances of Moroni's visitation. They pose questions with significant theological implications, which they maintain have not been adequately examined by LDS faithful. On the night of Moroni's three appearances, for

example, Joseph lived with his siblings in his parents' small house. He and his five brothers slept together in a tiny room that is thought to have contained only two beds, meaning that Joseph shared a bed with at least one brother. If the visitation by the brightly shining Moroni was a literal, real event as the church teaches, why were Joseph's brothers not awakened?

References

1. Joseph Smith - History 1:30. Available <http://www.lds.org/scriptures/pgp/js-h/1.30#29>
2. Joseph Smith - History 1:33. Available <http://www.lds.org/scriptures/pgp/js-h/1.32?lang=eng#31>

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What most LDS have been taught in church and believe as truth

In Joseph's own words:

On September 21, 1823 after retiring to bed, While I was thus in the act of calling upon God, I discovered a light appearing in my room, which continued to increase until the room was lighter than at noonday, when immediately a personage appeared at my bedside, standing in the air, for his feet did not touch the floor.

His whole person was glorious beyond description, and his countenance truly like lightning. The room was exceedingly light, but not so very bright as immediately around his person. He called me by name, and said unto me that he was a messenger sent from the presence of God to me, and that his name was Moroni; that God had a work for me to do.

After this communication, I saw the light in the room begin to gather immediately around the person of him who had been speaking to me, and it continued to do so until the room was again left dark, except just around him; when, instantly I saw, as it were, a conduit open right up into heaven, and he ascended till he entirely disappeared, and the room was left as it had been before this heavenly light had made its appearance.

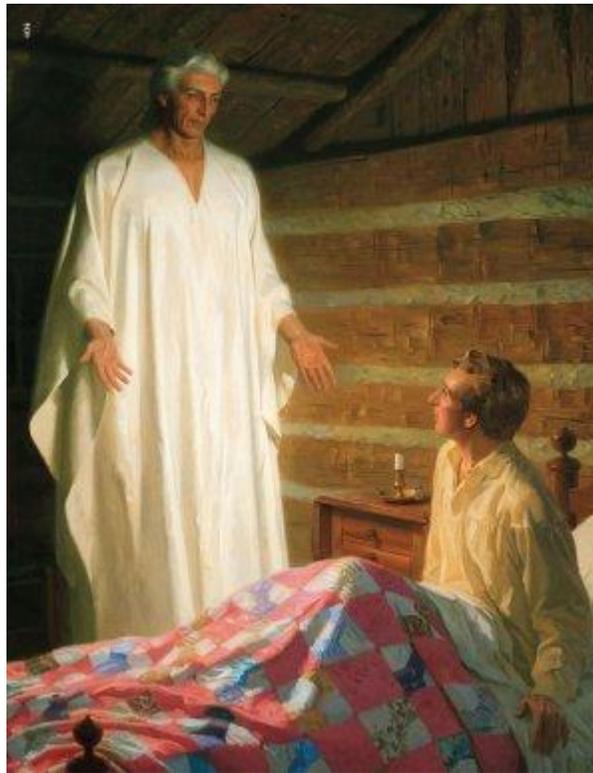
I lay musing on the singularity of the scene, and marveling greatly at what had been told to me by this extraordinary messenger; when, in the midst of my meditation, I suddenly discovered that my room was again beginning to get lighted, and in an instant, as it were, the same heavenly messenger was again by my bedside.

He commenced, and again related the very same things which he had done at his first visit. Having related these things, he again ascended as he had done before.

By this time, so deep were the impressions made on my mind, that sleep had fled from my eyes, and I lay overwhelmed in astonishment at what I had both seen and heard. But what was my surprise when again I beheld the same messenger at my bedside, and heard him rehearse or repeat over again to me the same things as before.

After this third visit, he again ascended into heaven as before, and I was again left to ponder on the strangeness of what I had just experienced; when almost immediately after the heavenly messenger had ascended from me for the third time, the cock crowed, and I found that day was approaching, so that our interviews must have occupied the whole of that night.

This illustration from the Church's official website of the event appears in many Church publications and in paintings adorning Church buildings:



Links recording official church version:

- <http://www.lds.org/hf/art/display/0,16842,4218-1-4-116,00.html>
- <http://www.lds.org/library/display/0,4945,104-1-3-6,00.html>
- http://scriptures.lds.org/js_h/1

Problem summary

The Smith family was rather poor and therefore lived in a small house. Here's a replica of the small, humble Smith home that Joseph lived in when the Moroni visitation took place:



The following is from the Smith home that has been restored by the LDS Church where they provide tours. Here's a photo of Joseph's room where he lived with his five brothers:

One of these two beds was where Joseph Smith first saw the Angel Moroni. The room in the back was where Joseph's two sisters slept, his youngest sister had a room attached to his parent's room on the main floor. Joseph and his five brothers shared these two beds, which were upstairs on the second floor.



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The Problem

When Moroni came and spoke with Joseph on the night of September 21, 1823, why didn't this wake up Joseph's brothers who were sleeping in the same room with him? It seems that the appearance of an angelic being with a "countenance truly like lightning" would have awoken the entire Smith family: his five brothers in the same room, his two sisters in the adjoining room, and possibly even his parents and sister sleeping below.

There were only two beds in the small room that Joseph and his brothers occupied. With six brothers all sharing one room, Joseph would have had two brothers sleeping in the very same bed as he slept in. It is simply inconceivable that his brothers sleeping in the same room, let alone the same bed, would not have been woken up by the magnificent appearance of the Angel Moroni.

Joseph said that Moroni appeared three separate times, each time filling the room with intense light that became as bright as the noonday sun. He estimated that these three meetings took the whole of the night. Although we don't know what his voice was like, even a regular man speaking with a mortal voice in the room above Joseph's bed for the whole of the night, would have awoken everyone upstairs and in the small Smith house, possibly everyone.

It is also perhaps somewhat deceptive of the LDS Church to show the illustrations of Joseph with Moroni all by themselves. See update below. (<http://mormonthink.com/moroniweb.htm#update>) Before 2009, the Church never showed any illustrations with Joseph's five brothers in the room sleeping with him. Showing Joseph in bed by himself gazing at Moroni is not accurate as he would have had two brothers sleeping in the bed with him. In the August, 2009 *Ensign*, the church did show an image of Joseph with his brothers in bed with him. However, two years later, the October, 2011 *Ensign* resorted to the old image with Joseph by himself.

Responses to these issues by the LDS Church

We regret that we could not find this issue mentioned in any church publication or web site. We have, however, discussed this issue with several devout members to get their input.

1) Joseph's family not being woken up by Moroni's visit.

Devout member's response #1

I have always simply presumed that one cannot, under normal circumstances, perceive spiritual matter or things with normal vision. (D&C 131:7-8) Joseph had to be blessed in some way to hear and see a divine messenger. Others were not so blessed, and so would hear and see nothing. If God can send an angel, surely he can keep the audience to that which he wishes?

Apologist's response

Let's start with the basics. Genesis 2:21 tells us, "And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof;" What if we were to state, "Now the big question is that when the Lord God removed one of Adam's ribs, why didn't he wake up?" For anyone who believes that for God nothing is impossible, the question is simple to answer. Why, then, must we insist that Joseph's brother's should have been awakened? Why is it

unreasonable to assume that God simply kept them asleep? (FAIR's website, March 26, 2014))

Critic's response

Most Latter-day Saints have not even thought about this problem and its significance. Unfortunately, Joseph Smith did not leave any explanation of how it was possible that his family was not awakened.

It is a natural presumption to think that spiritual things cannot be perceived by normal vision. Assuming this was the case, if nothing else, Joseph would most likely not have been able to be completely silent and hold stock still throughout the majority of a night. It stands to reason that sometime during the night at least one of his family members would have perceived something going on within Joseph's bedroom.

In direct response to the idea that God used his power to cause the family to sleep through the events, then one must wonder that if God can alter people's conscious state at any time, unknown to them, then how could anyone really trust their senses? Therefore, how would one know when they were under their own control?

In addition, God causing sleep to come upon a person would take away their free will. There are scriptural accounts of God intervening in people's lives without their permission, but this topic is too big for this section to discuss. Further inquiry may be in order.

Many people throughout history, and still today, claimed having divine communications from supreme beings and claim that God prevented others from witnessing them. (Famed psychic Uri Geller would use this same tactic by saying he could see UFOs in the sky when others could not. Uri's psychic abilities were debunked as a fraud (http://www.rationalresponders.com/james_randi_exposes_uri_geller_and_peter_popoff) by James Randi.)

Devout member's response #2

Perhaps the Moroni visit happened in a vision meant for Joseph only and therefore his brothers or anyone else in the house could not see or even hear it.

Personally, I can consider the visitation of Moroni during the night to be more of a vision than a meeting as we might understand it, physically speaking. Thus, the vision can be open to Joseph Smith but not to others in the room. This would be similar to the reception of D&C 76, which Joseph saw along with Sidney Rigdon. Philo Dibble

was present in the room, along with others, and knew a vision was taking place, but apparently only Joseph and Sidney actually saw it. See Dibble's account recorded in *The Juvenile Instructor*, 15 May, 1892.

Critic's response

First off, Philo Dibble may not be the best witness to use. First, the the event referenced occurred 60 years prior to Philo's retelling of it. Second, Dibble recounted the event ten years earlier differently. In 1892 he said he was there "during a part of the time— probably two-thirds of the time...which I think was over an hour, and to the end of the vision." Assuming Dibble was there an hour, and that was two-thirds of the entire vision, the whole thing would have been about 90 minutes long. In his 1882 account he said, "On a subsequent visit to Hiram, I arrived at Father Johnson's just as Joseph and Sidney were coming out of the vision alluded to in the Book of Doctrine and Covenants, in which mention is made of the three glories."

"[J]ust coming out of the vision" and "over an hour" don't seem to match. In fact, that seems to be a pretty big discrepancy. Would the 1882 account (when Dibble was 76) or the 1892 account (when he was 86) be more accurate? The early account makes no mention of the method of the vision.

Additionally, the 1892 account says that besides Dibble, "there were other men in the room, perhaps twelve, among whom I was one." This vision took place at John Johnson's house where Joseph and Sidney "sat doing the work of translation" of the bible. They "came to the twenty ninth verse of in the fifth chapter of John...and while we meditated upon these thing the Lord touched the eyes of our understandings and they were opened and the glory of the lord shone round about..." (josephsmithpapers.org) Why were a dozen men sitting around watching Joseph and Sidney translate the bible? Nowhere is there information that the bible translation process was ever accompanied with a crowd. In fact, if a dozen men had witnessed the translation of the bible, why have they left no record of it? There isn't even second-hand tellings from friends or relatives of those who witnessed the bible translation process.

More to the point, if there were approximately 15 eyewitnesses to one of the most glorious and important revelations given in modern days, why has only one of the 15 left documentary evidence?

If Philo Dibble did in fact witness any part of The Vision, it seems that his 1882 might be the more accurate. If that is the case, the example used by the FAIR apologist above is invalid.

Philo Dibble's 1892 account is found in the Doctrine and Covenants Student Manual, (2002), 158-166 (<https://www.lds.org/manual/doctrine-and-covenants-student-manual/section-69-80/section-76-the-vision-of-the-degrees-of-glory>) and in this scan of the original Juvenile Instructor, 15 May, 1892. (<http://archive.org/stream/juvenileinstruct2710geor#page/302/mode/2up>)

Dibble's 1882 account is found in a scan of the book in which it originally appeared. (<https://archive.org/stream/earlyscenesinchu00lamb#page/81/mode/1up>)

To the devout who say the Angel Moroni's visit was entirely in the spiritual realm, or in Joseph's mind, and that is the reason none of his family could see the angel that night, what kind of a "dream" was it? Was it a regular dream, a hallucination or a "vision" and how can we know? See the section below: "Could there be other possible explanations?" (<http://mormonthink.com/moroniweb.htm#couldtherebe>)

If God requires His word to be established by the mouth of two or three witnesses (D&C 6:28; 2 Cor 13:1), why didn't God provide witnesses for the heavenly visions Joseph Smith had? God provided witnesses for metallic plates, that simply could have been left behind if there was a real need to verify their existence. Yet He chose not to provide witnesses for experiences which Joseph Smith had that must be taken on Joseph's words alone. If it's a matter of testing the faith of members, why was there a need to provide witnesses for the golden plates but not heavenly visitations?

2) LDS Church's art omits the presence of siblings in Joseph's room.

Almost all artwork depicting the visit of Moroni to Joseph Smith in his bedroom shows only Joseph and Moroni. The lone exception was in the August 2009 *Ensign* given below. (<http://mormonthink.com/moroniweb.htm#update>) This has not been repeated as of the updating of this webpage in March 2014.

Apologist's response

The simplest answer may be that artists simply don't always get such matters right. The critics' caricature to the contrary, not every aspect of such things is "correlated." FAIR (March 2014)

Critic's response

The Church is well aware that Joseph's brothers all slept in the same room as he did. The LDS tour guides at the restored Smith home confirm this. The Church for years

omitted this part of the story in its publications, paintings and illustrations. It's more believable to show only Joseph in the room during Moroni's visit rather than multiple family members somehow sleeping during his appearance, even though that isn't what happened. To promote transparency in LDS history, the Church must improve their media choices when portraying that history in official publications. It seemed like they were starting this transparency with the August 2009 *Ensign*, but then they resorted to the old, familiar image in the October 2011 *Ensign*.

Moroni media sources

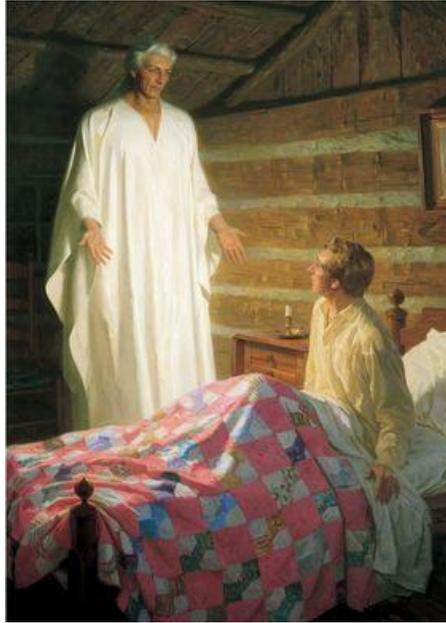
Whether accurate or not, when people get a picture of an event in their mind, that image will stick. Later, when they realize the image in their mind is wrong, it creates a disjunct that can be jarring. The easiest way to get an image in your mind is by seeing an image. The following are typical portrayals of the Angel Moroni's visit to Joseph Smith's bedroom.

Coming Forth of the Book of Mormon

Instructions: Read the captions under each picture, then color the picture. You could use these captions and pictures for a family home evening lesson or a Primary talk.

		
<p>1. One night, 17-year-old Joseph Smith went to his bedroom and prayed (see Joseph Smith—History 1:28–29).</p>	<p>2. The angel Moroni appeared to Joseph three times during the night and told him about a book of gold plates hidden in a hillside (see Joseph Smith—History 1:30–35, 44–47).</p>	<p>3. Joseph went to the Hill Cumorah the next day. Using a stick, he moved a large rock and found a stone box containing the gold plates and the Urim and Thummim—“seer” stones fastened to a breastplate (see Joseph Smith—History 1:50–52).</p>
		
<p>4. Moroni appeared to Joseph and told him not to remove anything but to come back each year for the next few years. Joseph returned every year and was taught by Moroni. Four years later, on September 22, 1827, Moroni told Joseph to take the plates and Urim and Thummim (see Joseph Smith—History 1:53–54, 59).</p>	<p>5. Joseph used the Urim and Thummim to translate some of the plates. At different times he asked Oliver Cowdery, Martin Harris, Emma Smith (his wife), and a few other people to write down what he said as he translated from the gold plates (see Joseph Smith—History 1:62, 67; D&C 3:preface, 25:1, 5–6).</p>	<p>6. In 1830, Joseph Smith took the Book of Mormon to a printer in Palmyra, New York (see <i>History of the Church</i>, 1:71).</p>





Moroni appearing to Joseph video. (<http://josephsmith.net/media/joseph-describes-his-first-visit-from-the-angel-moroni-video?lang=eng#1>)

2009 *Ensign* picture

The August 2009 *Ensign*, page 54 has the following picture:



The painting is entitled "He Called Me By Name" (<http://www.reparteegallery.com/p-10586-he-called-me-by-name.aspx>) by Liz Lemon Swindle.

LDS.org has this painting of a brother in bed with Joseph:



If the church accepts these artists' renderings as accurate, then this seems to support the idea that the Moroni visitation was a real, physical event with Joseph awake and alert, and not a vision contained within Joseph's mind. If that's the case, there still needs to be an explanation as to why Joseph's brothers remained asleep for the entire night while Moroni, with the "countenance of lightning" and with a "room lighter than at noonday," conversed (at what volume we do not know) with Joseph for "the whole of that night."

MormonThink supports the Church in the more accurate depictions of historical events, whether of the Angel Moroni appearing to young Joseph, or Joseph translating

the Book of Mormon by putting his face in a hat.
(<http://mormonthink.com/transbomweb.htm#significant>)

2011 Update

In the October 2011 Ensign, page 8 (<https://www.lds.org/ensign/2011?lang=eng>), the Church **did not use** the more accurate image of Joseph with his brothers in the room when Moroni appeared. Instead the Church reverted to using the older painting of Joseph alone in the bed with Moroni appearing over him.

Editor note: To show that by far the most common image portrayed in LDS publications is of Moroni appearing to Joseph alone, here is a Google search of the LDS.org website for "angel moroni and joseph smith"
(https://www.google.com/search?q=moroni+site:lds.org&client=firefox-a&hs=t9l&rls=org.mozilla:en-US:official&channel=fflb&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ei=FXw3U5zcFIGMyQH0oHADA&ved=0CAgQ_AUoAQ&biw=1440&bih=791#channel=fflb&q=angel+moroni+joseph+smith+site:lds.org&rls=org.mozilla:en-US:official&tbm=isch).

Could there be other possible explanations?

The most straightforward explanation critics have for Joseph's visitation by Moroni is that he made it up. Putting aside that theory, are there other explanations? It was initially reported that he thought it was a dream. Perhaps it was. How many of us have had an intense dream that seemed so real, at first we didn't know if it was a dream or not when we awoke?

There is a phenomenon that many people experience that scientists call sleep paralysis. This phenomenon allows people to see dreams in their rooms with their eyes open, but often remain paralyzed by the chemical that is naturally generated in our bodies when we sleep that prevent us from acting out our dreams and hurting ourselves. The nature of the experience seems to be determined by the environment and media influences in which the people live. In modern times, most people, who scientists believe are experiencing sleep paralysis, claim to see aliens from other planets in their rooms. Back in the Joseph Smith's day, people would claim to see demons, witches and angels.

Often the episodes of sleep paralysis could be very intense involving detailed conversations and experiments to flights aboard space ships. Thousands of people every year claim they are abducted by aliens in the middle of the night. Many of them

are credible and earnestly believe the events took place. Despite the evidence against their experiences being anything but imaginary, most of those people still maintain that their experiences were absolutely real and their lives are forever altered by the events they allege took place in their rooms in the middle of the night.

Perhaps it was just a dream

Joseph Smith and his early followers all started out explaining Moroni as a dream, not a vision. Then after 1830 they started calling it a visitation. We can see how these things can evolve, especially if people take the earlier stories as true and want to believe it's more. Here's references that indicate it was perhaps just a dream (emphasis added):

Martin Harris, one of the three witnesses to the Book of Mormon

Consequently long before the idea of a Golden Bible entered their minds, in their excursions for money-digging, which I believe usually occurred in the night, that they might conceal from others the knowledge of the place, where they struck their treasures, Jo used to be usually their guide, putting into a hat a peculiar stone he had through which he looked to decide where they should begin to dig.

It was after one of these night excursions, **that Jo, while he lay upon his bed, had a remarkable dream.** An angel of God seemed to approach him, clad in celestial splendor.

Reference: *Testimonies of Book of Mormon Witnesses*, John Clark, Gleanings (1842), p.226 "Martin Harris Interview"

Letter of Testimony, 26 Nov. 1830, Parley P. Pratt

This new gospel was found in Ontario Co., N.Y. and was discovered by an **Angel of Light, appearing in a dream** to a man by the name of Smith.

Reference: *Letter from Amherst*, Ohio, 26 Nov. 1830, "BEWARE OF IMPOSTERS," The Telegraph. Reprinted in The Reflector (Palmyra NY), 14 Feb. 1831. Also see *Early Mormonism: Correspondence and a New History* by Dale Morgan (Signature Books, 1986)

Martin Harris Testimony

September 5, 1829, the Rochester Gem reported on the origins of Mormonism and quoted Book of Mormon Special Witness Martin Harris:

...he states that after a third visit from the same **spirit in a dream** he (Smith) proceeded to the spot.

Reference: *A GOLDEN BIBLE*, Gem, (Rochester, NY), 5 Sept. 1829. Source of reference: *A New Witness for Christ in America*, (Zion's printing and Publishing, 1951)

Report from the Palmyra Freeman in August 1829

In the autumn of 1827, a person by the name of Joseph Smith, of Manchester, Ontario Co., reported that he had been **visited in a dream by a spirit** from the Almighty and. After having been thrice visited, as he states, he proceeded to the spot.

Reference: *A New Witness for Christ in America*, (Zion's printing and Publishing, 1951)

Joseph Smith Sr, the father of Joseph Smith

During his 1830 interview with Fayette Lapham, Joseph Smith Sr. referred to the Moroni visit as "**a very singular dream**" about "a valuable treasure, buried many years since."

Reference: *Early Mormon Documents*, Volume 1, Page 458, reprint from Fayette Lapham's original work from 1830, *Interview with the Father of Joseph Smith, the Mormon Prophet*.

Family living with Smith

A cousin of Emma, who stayed with Emma and Joseph Smith during the dictation of the Book of Mormon reported

...the statement that the prophet Joseph Smith made in our hearing, at the commencement of his translating his book, in Harmony (in 1828-1829), as to the manner of his finding the plates, was as follows... **He said that by a dream he was informed by a ghost.**

Reference: Photocopy of letter, Photocopy in fd 8, box 149, H. Michael Marquardt Papers, Manuscripts Division, J. Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah. Also

see *Mormon History, A New Chapter*, by Joseph Lewis and Hiel Lewis and *Early Mormon Documents*, Volume 2.

Ohio Star, reporting on preaching by Oliver Cowdery and Peter Whitmer in December 1830

(They said) In the fall of 1827, a man named Joseph Smith of Manchester, Ontario Co., NY, reported that he had three times been **visited in a dream**, by the spirit of the Almighty...

Reference: *THE GOLDEN BIBLE*, Ohio Star, (Ravenna, OH), 9 Dec. 1830, Madeline R. McQuown Papers, Marriott Library UofU, in fd 4, box 46. Also see History of the Church, Volume 1, page 118-119.

Was Moroni's visit an "out-of-body" experience?

Some researchers believe that Joseph had an 'out-of-body' experience which he interpreted as The First Vision. When we read the following essay on The First Vision, some of us wondered if the same theory could also apply to the Moroni Visitation. For more information on the theory of Joseph's visions as being 'out-of-body' experiences, please read this very interesting 2006 article by Robert Bushman, former supervising linguist in the Translation Department of the LDS Church:

References

<http://www.angelfire.com/co/SleepParalysisLucid/moreInfoPar.html>

<http://www.sciam.com/article.cfm?id=ask-the-brains-sleep-paralysis&print=true>

<http://skepticroblog.org/2011/07/11/sleep-paralysis/>

http://www.i4m.com/think/history/moroni_dream.htm

<https://www.sunstonemagazine.com/audio/DC01007.mp3> (~7mb mp3 file ~1 hour long)

Summary by critics

If Joseph had lived on his own then this particular criticism would not be an issue. But since he lived with 10 other people, this is an opportunity to examine whether or not the possibly verifiable parts of his divine experiences can be confirmed by other people rather than just taking Joseph's word for it. Simply put, if you were one of six brothers all sleeping in the same room and your youngest brother sleeping in your

very own bed, who believed in magic and finding treasure by looking into stones, told you that an angel appeared in your room last night not once, but three times and lit up the entire room as bright as the noonday sun with his countenance as bright as lightning and conversed with him for almost the entire night whilst you and your other five brothers snoozed away for this entire time - would you believe it?

Equally puzzling is that there is no record that Joseph told any of his brothers, or the rest of his family, about his experience upon waking up. You would think that he would immediately wake up his brothers and tell them what happened. Joseph apparently didn't mention it to anyone until later that day and then perhaps only to his father.

This sounds every much like the alien abduction stories where someone swears that they were abducted in the middle of the night by aliens and taken aboard a space ship but their spouse was never woken up by this. The alleged abductee of course says that the all-powerful aliens have the ability to keep people asleep or erase their memories so their spouses can never see the aliens and verify their stories. To the spouses sleeping next to the abductee, there is no doubt that their spouse was sleeping in the bed with them the whole time, but to the abductee they still think their bizarre experiences were real despite the lack of evidence and the complete absurdity of it all.

From Mormon historian D. Michael Quinn

There is at least one instance where this subject has been the source of considerable scholarly investigation. Acclaimed Mormon historian D. Michael Quinn offered a rather illuminating hypothesis regarding the Moroni visitations of 1823 to 1827. In his 1998 revised edition of 'Early Mormonism and the Magic World View' he makes some fascinating and convincing parallels between the timing of the alleged visitations and folk occult practices associated with conjuring deceased spirit guardians for the purpose of locating hidden treasure.

Starting on page 141, Quinn writes: When comparing accounts of the 1820 [first] vision and the 1823 [Moroni] visions, both Mormons and non-Mormons have commented on the contrast in details. None of Smith's known narratives of his First Vision (<http://mormonthink.com/firstvisionweb.htm>) were precise about dates: "the 16th year of my age," "I was about 14 years old," and "my fifteenth year." The most detailed dating in the final version of official history is still less than wholly satisfying: "in the spring of Eighteen hundred and twenty.

By contrast, Smith was very specific about the date and time of his 1823 visions. His earliest autobiography gave the day, month, and year for these experiences. The first published history gave even the hours: "On the evening of the 21st of September,

1823. [Joseph Jr.] supposes it must have been eleven or twelve, and perhaps later," he began praying "to commune with some kind of messenger." A few years after this published account, Smith precisely described the final moments of what happened on 22 September: "When immediately after the heavenly messenger had ascended from me the third time, the cock crew, and I found that day was approaching so that our interviews must have occupied the whole of that night." On 22 September 1823 sunrise occurred at 5:59 a.m. in this part of New York. Smith's prayer-visitation therefore occurred between Sunday night at 11:00 and Monday morning's sunrise at 5:59 a.m.

Palmyra's Joseph Smith was not the only one who valued the date of 22 September to "commune with some kind of messenger." In his *Complete System of Occult Philosophy*, Robert C. Smith quoted from the recent experience of three of his occult protégés in London. "On the night of September 22, 1822, we resolved upon invoking the spirits of the moon, and accordingly, having prepared the circle, and used the necessary ceremonies and incantations. to urge the spirits more powerfully to visible appearance . (our ceremonies began at midnight)." Within traditional magic lore, details of Smith's 1823 visitation were consistent with ritual magic's requirements for successful encounters with otherworldly beings.

[Further on in page 142] In Joseph Smith's generation, those who subordinated magic to religion also regarded such invocation as a spiritual quest. In 1823, Peter Buchan's occult handbook stated: "Now, Magic, subordinately to Religion, teaches the social cultivation of those principles or beings, which are the medium of communication between God and man." Buchan regarded this as "spiritual magic."

By all Mormon accounts, Smith met with this personage who was once a human in possession of gold plates. Moroni buried his treasure long ago to conceal it from those who were about to kill him. This was consistent with [Reginald] Scot's *Discourse* on which one of the Smith family lamens [ceremonial magic parchments] was based (see ch. 4): "Astral spirits of men departed, which (if the party deceased was disturbed and troubled at his decease), do for many years, continue in the source of this world . When Treasure hath been hid, or any secret thing hath been committed by the party; there is a magical cause of something attracting the starry spirit back again, to the manifestation of that thing."

.Furthermore, Smith's experience with this spirit on 21-22 September 1823 fits the internal dating of his family's magic parchment. Designed to enable a pure youth to contact a good spirit, the "Holiness to the Lord" parchment's inscriptions indicate that 12-21 September was one of the periods it was constructed. Also, the inscriptions show that 1823 was one of the only 9 years the lamens could have been inscribed (see ch. 4). Finally, for those who shared a magic world view, the times and seasons of

Smith's September 1823 visitation fulfilled instructions for spirit incantation by Scot, Agrippa, pseudo-Agrippa, Sibly, Erra Pater, Barrett and other occult works in frequent circulation in early America (see chs. 1-4.)

[On to page 143] Smith began praying late Sunday night on 21 September 1843 "to commune with some kind of messenger." Astrological guides specified that Sunday night was the only night of the week ruled by Jupiter. Jupiter, Smith's ruling planet, was the most prominent astrological symbol on his family's golden lamén ("Holiness to the Lord") for summoning a good spirit.

.Cowdery wrote that Smith began praying earnestly. that Sunday night about "eleven or twelve". Reginald Scot's instructions specified that spirit conjurations should begin "about eleven a clock at night." His writings were the basis for the Smith family's "Jehovah, Jehovah, Jehovah" parchment (see ch. 4).

In fact a treasure-quest was the context Martin Harris described for Smith's prayer that September night. Joseph Jr. had served as a treasure-seer earlier that evening, according to a non-Mormon's report of an interview with Harris in the "autumn of 1827". In fact, Smith's prayer "to commune with some kind of messenger" may have been in response to that evening's unsuccessful effort to locate treasure.

[On page 144] It was also significant that Smith's experience occurred at the autumnal equinox. [Ebenezer] Sibly's *New and Complete Illustration of the Occult Sciences* specified that the equinox was the time when the planetary hours of invocation corresponded most closely with the common hours of the clock. In the magic world view, the equinox was a time when the earth could be expected to experience the introduction of "broad cultural movements and religious ideas."

Therefore, published guides specified that the hour and the day of Joseph Smith's 1823 prayer "to commune with some kind of messenger," was ideal for the invocation of spirits. The appearance of treasure-spirits at 11 p.m., the hour of midnight, also continued in popular folklore through the mid-nineteenth century.

According to Joseph Jr., the messenger Moroni departed early the next morning near sunrise (5:59 a.m., according to the almanac). The messenger had communicated with him in three separate appearances since 11 p.m. In magic, the moon ruled Monday morning from midnight to 1 a.m., Saturn from 1 a.m. to 2 a.m., Jupiter from 2 a.m. to 3 a.m., Mars from 3 a.m. to 4 a.m., the Sun from 4 a.m. to 5 a.m., and Venus from 5 a.m. to 6 a.m. In ceremonial magic, the hour of the moon was "especially suited to the conjuration of spirits, works of necromancy," the hour of Saturn was "good for communication with spirits," the hour of Jupiter was especially "favorable both to ordinary and extraordinary experiments," the hour of Mars was "good for

communication with spirits," the hour of the Sun was "favorable both to ordinary and extraordinary experiments not included in those already mentioned." The hour of Venus - the hour of the messenger's final visit to Smith before sunrise - was "good for communication with spirits" There is exact correspondence between instructions for the successful magic invocation of spirits as compared with the hours during which Cowdery and Smith say he communicated with the messenger on Sunday night and early Monday morning.

[On page 145] Requirements of magic invocation even correspond to the time Smith's visitation ended. He said that the messenger ascended just before sunrise. Pseudo-Agrippa's *Fourth Book of Occult Philosophy* specified that spirit conjuration must end "before the rising of the sun."

Nonetheless, Mormon apologists insist that all of the above correlations are irrelevant. Writing for the Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies (FARMS), BYU's professors dismiss as mere coincidence the avalanche of linkages involving Joseph Smith's 1823 experiences, the magic implements of his family, the published works upon which those artifacts were based, and the details of books available in the Smith family's neighborhood. Readers must decide whether it is academically legitimate (or consistent with faith) to inflate standards of evidence to "prove" something "faith-promoting," while throwing out those standards in order to dismiss unwelcome evidence.

See: D. Michael Quinn; Early Mormonism and the Magic Word View (revised and enlarged), 1998, Signature Books (Pg. 141-145)

Scripture Quoted to Joseph Smith by the Angel Moroni

The following essay is reprinted in its entirety:

Scripture Quoted to Joseph Smith by the Angel Moroni

**The more time we spend deceiving others,
the more we deceive ourselves.**

- Jim Whitefield

Whilst Joseph Smith's angel may very well deserve to be called Nephi, we will here use the name of Moroni, to be consistent with the name used by the Mormon Church today.

The only time the Angel Moroni is recorded as having extensively quoted scripture to Joseph Smith, is in his 1838 version of events, published in Times and Seasons in

1842 and subsequently in the Pearl of Great Price in 1851. Thus it was some fifteen years after the event that the first record of this aspect was ever written down. We are expected to accept that Smith remembered every detail and word change when he then recorded it.

Smith says the Angel Moroni quoted all the following (plus a lot more not mentioned).

- Part of Malachi 3. (Quoted some of the 18 verses).
- Malachi 4. (Quoted all 6 verses with several changes).
- Isaiah 11. (Quoted all 16 verses.) Says they are **about** to be fulfilled.
- Acts 3:22-23. (Quoted 2 verses quoted exactly).
- Joel 2:28-32 (5 verses quoted exactly). Says they are **soon** to be fulfilled.

Moroni quoted some of Malachi 3 word for word, as it appears in the Authorised Version (called the "King James Version" in America) of the Bible. I will use "KJV" for reference. According to Joseph Smith, Moroni then quoted and altered, Malachi 4. Smith apparently remembered exactly what was said, fifteen years later, recording it word perfectly.

MALACHI CHAPTER 4

Changes in scripture "quoted" by Moroni: [DELETIONS] ADDITIONS

For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall [be] burn as stubble: [and the day that cometh] for they that come shall burn them [up], saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.

But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall.

And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the LORD of hosts.

Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments.

Behold, I will [send you] reveal unto you the Priesthood, by the hand of Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD:

And he shall [turn the heart of the fathers to] plant in the hearts of the children, the promises made to the fathers and the hearts of the children shall turn to their fathers [, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse]. If it were not so, the whole earth would be utterly wasted at his coming.

The first question to ask is; in 1823, did Smith have the family Bible open in his bed in order to be aware of the exact changes without his brothers ever noticing? As Smith and his five brothers shared a small upper room in the family shack, in addition to which there is no indication that the vision was expected; probably not. If not, how did he remember any of the material changes in all Moroni said?

Smith wrote down this supposed 1823 vision in 1838. However, he must have forgotten that he wrote his "Inspired" version of the Bible in between times and in it, he left Malachi 4 exactly as it appeared in the KJV, presumably believing himself inspired at the time to confirm that it was already correct:

In the 1830-1832 Inspired Revision of the Bible; Malachi 4:5-6 reads the *same* as the KJV:

5. Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord;
6. And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.

It would have been more convincing (but not much) had Smith's inspired version read the same as his Moroni version. Smith claims Moroni quoted it this way in 1823. He wrote the "Inspired" version (without changing these verses) in 1830-32. He wrote down what Moroni had supposedly said, in 1838, only *then* changing it from the original KJV text. If Smith could remember in 1838, what Moroni supposedly said, word for word in 1823; how is it that in 1830-32, half way between those events, when he was "inspired" to correct the KJV, he forgot Moroni's corrected version and left the verses exactly as they appear in the KJV? The answer is all too obvious. If Moroni did quote it that way in 1823, Smith would have altered the KJV to match it in his 1830-32 "inspired" revision but he did not. If Smith made it up in 1838, he forgot that he had kept his inspired revision the same as the KJV and that it wouldn't match. Either that or he was too confident in himself to even care. Either way, Smith is once again evidenced here as a fraud and his work a hoax, through his bad memory and lies. It was not the only time he made this "Malachi" mistake.

Smith used the reference in other places. Malachi 4:5 & 6 as quoted by Smith; as if from Moroni, was added in as Section 2 of the D&C but not until 1876. Suspiciously,

the verses are also quoted (almost exactly as the original from the KJV), in D&C 27:9 in relation to the Priesthood, in the 1835 edition. Section 110, also not included until 1876 but written in 1836, includes in verse 15, the same words as the KJV, in respect to "keys." Additionally, in D&C 128, (added to the 1844 edition, written 6 Sep 1842) after giving us the KJV in verse 17; in verse 18, Smith says he might have "*rendered a plainer translation than this, but it is sufficiently plain to suit my purposes as it stands.*" What he probably meant was that he remembered he might have altered it in 1838 but couldn't remember what he changed it to, so he just used the KJV which he had available, in case he misquoted himself; and then he links the idea of fathers to children and children to fathers; to baptism for the dead. The dates tell it all in terms of what is true.

In his famous King Follett Sermon on 7th April 1844, Smith quoted the *original* KJV text:

I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.

Despite claiming Moroni changed Malachi, Smith did not alter it in his "inspired" revision nor did he use it in a direct quotation in a major sermon to a claimed 20,000 saints, years later. It would have been a glorious occasion for him to have reminded the saints about the corrected words of Moroni. Moroni's altered words changed the meaning entirely so if the original was so wrong, why did he quote it as if it was correct and not use Moroni's words?

Huge chunks of scripture were quoted from the King James Version of the Bible in each of three visits by the angel and Smith seems able to precisely relate some which he says were quoted differently. The new version, given by the angel, says that they that do wickedly will "*burn*" as stubble "*for they that come shall burn them*" rather than use the original, that they shall "*be stubble*" and "*the day that cometh shall burn them up*". This is a pointless and nonsensical change when you consider any number of wonderful things that an angel could reveal if he was going to go to the trouble of actually visiting someone. To simply alter a scripture from saying a day will come which will burn people as stubble to say that those who come will burn them, does nothing to educate or inform in a manner that will help anyone. It serves only to confuse even further, an already confused people.

The King James comparison is inherent within the above text. To get a better perspective concerning the possible reason why an angel might feel the need to alter it, a look at Young's Literal Translation will show us how it sits by comparison.

Malachi 4 (Young's Literal Translation)

1. For, lo, the day hath come, burning as a furnace, And all the proud, and every wicked doer, have been stubble, And burnt them hath the day that came, Said Jehovah of Hosts, That there is not left to them root or branch,
2. And risen to you, ye who fear My name, Hath the sun of righteousness -- and healing in its wings, And ye have gone forth, and have increased as calves of a stall.
3. And ye have trodden down the wicked, For they are ashes under the soles of your feet, In the day that I am appointing, Said Jehovah of Hosts.
4. Remember ye the law of Moses My servant, That I did command him in Horeb, For all Israel -- statutes and judgments.
5. Lo, I am sending to you Elijah the prophet, Before the coming of the day of Jehovah, The great and the fearful.
6. And he hath turned back the heart of fathers to sons, And the heart of sons to their fathers, Before I come and have utterly smitten the land!

There is no correlation which substantiates any reason for such changes to be made.

There are two important questions. The first and most obvious is; how could Joseph Smith have possibly remembered all of that; *overnight*, let alone fifteen years later? The second is; why the changes, which make no sense and don't even sit well with a literal translation. We know the King James Bible to be just one of many translations from earlier works which do not all exactly conform to the originally intended ideas. It is hard to imagine that an angel would quote directly from the King James Bible, (itself the object of several earlier translations) just because that was the version Smith was familiar with; and alter the text. If there was any credence to Smith's story, the entire text would have been given as it was originally intended to have been spoken, using the original information, likely given to Smith in modern English of his own day, in order to relay the message in a currently clear and understandable manner. After all, that was the way angels had spoken in the past.

It is humans that seem to expect angelic messengers to speak in Early Modern English, presumably as that is the language of the King James Bible. However, it was not the language of the ancients or of Christ nor is it ours. It was used in a period of time which bears no relationship to the time of the events written about, let alone to our current day. Earlier generations used their then current language in all finished

translations. Retaining the Early Modern English form of speech in modern times has simply occurred as the Bible was not updated into modern English for such a long time. It thus now sets it apart from us and artificially gives dignity and perhaps awe to the supposed words of the Lord and his servants. In reality, their original manner of speech was nothing like Early Modern English which is archaic enough to us mere mortals so goodness knows what angels would make of it. However, as we don't use it today, it provides an assumed "authentic" religious touch.

It is illogical to think that angels would do anything other than speak to people using their own current language, should they choose to speak with them at all. Early Modern English does not belong to angels or to us but to a time of the translation of a book at an intermediate point, in one language out of many, in just one small part of the world.

Most of the Old Testament was written in Hebrew, except some of Daniel, Ezra and Jeremiah which were written in Aramaic. The New Testament was most probably written in Greek, although some of it possibly in Aramaic before that. Subsequently, prior to the King James Bible being written in Early Modern (Jacobean) English, a lot had happened.

The Jewish Tanakh, (later Septuagint or Old Testament) was translated into Koine Greek in stages from 3rd - 1st century BC in Alexandria and is still used in Eastern Orthodoxy. In the second century, Origen's Hexapla placed six versions of the Old Testament side by side, including two second century Greek; one a literal translation from Hebrew by Aquila of Sinope (a convert Jew) and one by Symmachus the Ebonite, also a Jew. Although previously accepted by the Church, the Christian Bible was formally established by Bishop Cyril of Jerusalem in 350 AD, confirmed by the Council of Laodicia in 363 (no Book of Revelation included) and later in 367 by Athanasius of Alexandria (including Revelation). Revelation, often quoted by the LDS Church, first excluded, finally got included by the skin of its teeth as many theologians of the day considered it a work of someone who was mentally ill rather than scripture. The vote came very close to excluding it completely.

Although there are previous (Vetus Latina) Latin translations, Jerome's Vulgate (AD 382-420) went back to original Greek and Hebrew where possible. Pope Innocent III banned anything other than the official version in 1199. However, previously in 900, Alfred the Great had some passages in circulation. In 1408, Wyclif's Middle English Bible translation of 1380-90 was banned by the Oxford Synod. Shortly after the ban on Martin Luther in 1521, when he then translated the New Testament from Greek into German, William Tyndale translated the Bible into Early Modern English in 1526, based on the Vulgate. He was jailed for doing so in 1535, tried for heresy and treason and burned at the stake.

Many more translations began to appear during the Reformation. The English versions included the first "authorized" version, The Great Bible in 1539; Matthew's Bible 1537 and Taverner's Bible 1539, both based on Tyndale. The Geneva Bible (1560) during Protestant scholarship exile in Queen Mary's time was the first divided into verses, chapters already existing for three centuries. Elizabeth did not like the Geneva Bible or those associated with it, (Knox and Calvin). The Bishop's Bible in 1568 was the result; and although there were nineteen editions, it survived only forty years. The Douai-Rheims Version of the New Testament was published in 1582 and the Old Testament in 1609, (just before the King James Version); both from the Vulgate. This translation was updated (possibly also largely retranslated) by Bishop Challoner in 1750 and with later updates, was the standard Catholic English Language Bible until 1941. The notes were anti-Protestant, the preface including the idea that Protestants had been guilty of "*casting the holy to dogs and pearls to hogs*". King James commissioned his 1611 Bible for the Church of England, using a large team of translators and a wide range of source texts. However, although referring back to earlier translations, much of Tyndale's work got included. There are problems with some of the translations according to modern day scholars. Smith did *not* correct them.

There have been many translations into many languages. Given that each language has its own unique form of expression, why would an angel not speak in the current language applicable to the person with whom he is speaking? Considering all the people who have claimed to have had such communication over the centuries in many different languages, why does Smith have to be different. Did each claim their messenger spoke in the manner of their old scripture if an intermediate language pattern had been used? It is illogical that an angel would do anything other than speak to someone in their own current language if not using his own dialect. He would not use "Bible speak". What Smith claims the angel quoted in the revised Malachi 4 is not remotely like the text in Young's Literal Translation, even if rephrased into modern English. Perhaps this is because Smith let his imagination run away with him. There are example comparisons later in this chapter.

It is humans rather than angels who think Early Modern English is the language of angels.

In the Pearl of Great Price, Joseph Smith - History. 1:40 - 41, Smith continues:

In addition to these, he quoted the eleventh chapter of Isaiah, saying that it was about to be fulfilled. He quoted also the third chapter of Acts, twenty-second and twenty-third verses, precisely as they stand in our New Testament. He said that

that prophet was Christ; but the day had not yet come when "they who would not hear his voice should be cut off from among the people," but soon would come.

He also quoted the second chapter of Joel, from the twenty-eighth verse to the last. He also said that this was not yet fulfilled, but was soon to be. And he further stated that the fulness of the Gentiles was soon to come in. He quoted many other passages of scripture, and offered many explanations which cannot be mentioned here.

Isaiah 11 is fully quoted by the Angel, as it appears in the King James Bible and Smith is told that it is *about* to be fulfilled. Of all the scriptures to quote; why choose this one? Aside from verses concerning a prophet emanating from Jesse, a narrative about animals not being dangerous in the millennium and a gathering of Israel, it includes the Lord utterly destroying the tongue of the Egyptian sea so the seven streams could be walked over "dryshod". Over a hundred and seventy years later, the "*about to be fulfilled*" idea may be legitimately questioned. Apart from the effects of the Aswan High Dam, flood control measures, silting; and the changing relief reducing the delta to two main channels from the original seven that existed in the time of the ancients, it still remains one of the world's largest river deltas. I would not venture to walk across it, with or without shoes! You would most certainly not only get very wet but in all probability you would also drown. Whatever was "*about*" to happen to dry it up, is still awaited. What was the point of Moroni quoting it?

Next, Moroni quotes Acts 3: 22-23 word for word. Smith has Moroni saying that "*that prophet was Christ - the day had not yet come when "they who would not hear his voice should be cut off from among the people," but soon would come.*"

For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you.

And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people.

Considering that Smith thought the second coming would occur well before the end of the nineteenth century (about 1891) this prophecy is also somewhat overdue in its fulfillment.

Next Joel 2:28-32 is quoted verbatim.

And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions:

And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit.

And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke.

The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come.

And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said, and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call.

As an aside, it is interesting to note the changes made in words during translation relevant to what will suit the generation reading the work. For example the KJV reads in verse 31, "the great and terrible day" and yet the New American Standard Bible reads "the great and *awesome* day." In a modern day translation process, it is not a word the British would use. The point is that language is used which will best help a reader understand a description. Thus, surely angels would do the same and use terminology most familiar to the recipient.

This is stated as *soon* to be fulfilled. That includes the sun being turned to darkness and the moon to blood. One questions the meaning of *soon* and also, as this has still to occur even now, *why* the angel even bothered to mention it at all. Surely there were better things to talk about than this? It was; and is still, meaningless; it was of no help to Smith, his followers at that time, or the several generations that have followed.

Smith states that many other passages of scripture were quoted with many explanations that cannot be given. The final question therefore is; when will they be given? They have to date still not been given and the present prophet, Gordon B. Hinckley, has stated that the Lord doesn't give revelations the way He used to. They now just get feelings about things instead and have to figure it all out for themselves. So we are left to conclude that we will never know what these additional unmentioned explanations of scripture actually were. Judging by the above, it would appear there would be little point in knowing anyway.

Just to get an idea of the plausibility of a claimed angelic statement being true, we will look at just a few translations a little more closely. The alterations Smith claims Moroni made to Malachi 4, when compared to other translations, do not agree with the original text in any of them at all.

For reference, Smith had said Moroni altered the following parts in verse 1 thus:

For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall [be] burn as stubble: [and the day that cometh] for they that come shall burn them [up], saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.

(KJV scripture AS "quoted" by Moroni: [DELETIONS] ADDITIONS

Smith has Moroni saying that rather than the day itself, people will actually be burned by those who come. Is there any correlation with other translations, historically speaking?

Wyclif 1380-90

1. For lo! a dai schal come, brennyng as a chymenei; and alle proude men, and alle doyng vnpitee schulen be stobul; and the dai comyng schal enflaume hem, seith the Lord of oostis, which schal not leue to hem rote and buriownyng.

The above leans more to Middle English so is harder to understand but it would now read:

1. For lo, a day shall come, burning as a chimney; and all proud men, and all doing wickedly shall then be stubble; and the day coming shall enflame them, saith the Lord of hosts, which shall not leave to them root and branching."

Miles Coverdale Bible 1535:

1. For marck, the daye commeth that shall burne as an oue: and all the proude, yee and all soch as do wickednesse, shalbe straw: and the daye that is for to come, shall burne the vp (sayeth the LORDE of hoostes) so that it shal leaue them nether rote ner braunch.

Matthew's Bible 1537:

1. For mark, the day cometh that shall burn as an oven: and all the proud, yee and all such as do wickedness, shall be straw: and the day that is for to come, shall burn them up (sayeth the Lord of hosts) so that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.

Geneva Bible 1560:

1. For behold, the day cometh that shall burn as an oven, and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble, and the day that cometh, shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, and shall leave them neither root nor branch.

Bishops Bible 1568:

1. For marke, the day commeth burning like an ouen: and all the proude, and all that worke wickednesse shalbe stubble, and the day that is for to come shall burne them, saith the Lorde of hoastes, and shall leaue them neither roote, nor braunche.

We must conclude that either Malachi did not get his idea down the way the Lord intended, (as the original translations appear reasonably consistent) or that Smith was once again just making things up as he went along. He may have hoped to have looked more like a prophet and seer but he revealed nothing but nonsense in these altered verses. Whatever they do mean, any original translation clearly does not mean that *people or angels* will come and burn the wicked people, the condition of the day will do that. Ultimately, even if Smith's version is accurate, what is the difference that makes it worth an angel wasting time talking about it? It proves and means absolutely nothing worthwhile. If the righteous believe that the wicked will be burned, it will make no difference to the righteous how it happens; and those judged as wicked by the so called righteous, most of whom don't think they *are* actually wicked, don't believe they are going to burn anyway so they don't want to know about it. The whole supposed "corrected" quote is pointless and useless to anyone.

Likewise, the alteration to the latter part of Malachi 4 is even more bizarre. Smith changes it completely to incorporate the Priesthood thus:

Behold, I will [send you] reveal unto you the Priesthood, by the hand of Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD:

And he shall [turn the heart of the fathers to] plant in the hearts of the children, the promises made to the fathers and the hearts of the children shall turn to their

fathers[, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse]. If it were not so, the whole earth would be utterly wasted at his coming.

[DELETIONS] ADDITIONS

Wyclif 1380-90:

5. Lo! Y schal sende to you Elie, the profete, bifore that the greet dai and orible of the Lord come.
6. And he schal conuerte the herte of fadris to sones, and the herte of sones to fadris of hem, lest perauenture Y come, and smyte the erthe with curs.

Again, as this is a little harder to understand, this is how it would read now:

5. Lo! I shall send to you Elias, the prophet, before that the great day and horrible of the Lord come.
6. And he shall convert the heart of fathers to sons, and the heart of sons to fathers of them, lest peradventure I come, and smite the earth with curse.

Miles Coverdale Bible 1535:

5. Beholde, I will sende you Elias ye prophet: before the comynge off the daye of the great and fearfull LORDE.
6. He shall turne the hertes of the fathers to their children and the hertes of the children to their fathers, that I come not, and smyte the earth with cursynge.

Matthew's Bible 1537: (no verses)

Behold, I will send you Elias the prophet: before the coming of the day of the great and fearful Lord. He shall turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, that I come not and smite the earth with cursing.

Geneva bible 1560:

5. Behold, I will send you Elijah the Prophet before the coming of the great and fearful day of the Lord.
6. And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with cursing.

Bishops Bible 1568:

5. Beholde, I wyll send you Elias the prophete, before the comming of the great and fearefull day of the Lorde.
6. He shal turne the heart of the fathers to their children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with cursing.

There is no reference to Priesthood in any translation and the rest of the changes do not alter or clarify anything. Again it is nonsense, simply meant to impress Smith's followers.

One can only conclude that if indeed we were to accept that the Angel Moroni really did quote and somewhat "correct" all the above scripture; and if Smith really did remember it all so precisely fifteen years later; why did he not change it in his supposedly "Inspired Revision", and moreover, why continue to use the KJV in the D&C to reference Priesthood, keys and also baptism for the dead; and in addition, in his key "King Follett" sermon?

More importantly, why did Moroni bother? Why not say something actually useful?

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Influenced by Others' Experiences?

Angel with a flaming sword

In 1799, Timothy P. Walker published an account describing an angelic visitation he claims to have experienced on March 28, 1798. Walker wrote that in the early morning he was visited by an angel from heaven, bearing a flaming sword 30 feet long. At the time, he was staying at the house of Captain J. Bissell, in Chelsea, Vermont.

Walker wrote that a light in his room awakened him—he arose from his bed, but could see nothing. He couldn't go back to sleep. So, "After musing some time on the conversation of the evening and the events which caused it" he was distracted when

a bright light appeared in the room, as though the moon in the height, of its lustre had shone directly upon me, I raised myself in bed but immediately sunk back with terror and surprise, and lay some minutes motionless, at length methought I heard an audible voice which I conceived not human, call to me by name, and said arise and give ear to the messenger of Heaven.

His story continues:

As the clock struck three, I arose from my bed and prepared my team, paid my fare and set out on my journey, without making known to the family the singular occurrence of the preceding night, though my mind was so truly fixed on what had past, that it was with much irregularity that I proceeded on my journey. I had not got on my way more than one mile and a half, before my team, which consisted of four oxen and a horse, in full speed, were instantly stopped as though hushed by a mighty hand; I unthinkingly bid them go on, but without effect; for at the same instant, a bright light appeared to overspread the horizon, and an Angel, or some supernatural Being, as I conceived, descended and stood erect in the air but a little distance before me, dressed in a long unfoiled robe, with a Flaming Sword in his hand.

After receiving information from the messenger, he said

I fell with my face to the ground, where I lay in a profound reverie for some time, at length I thought I heard an audible voice articulate and say, all these are Signs by which you shall know what is to befall the nations now in the latter days.

The full account of "The Flaming Sword, or a sign from heaven; being a remarkable phenomenon, seen in the state of Vermont" by Timothy P. Walker can be read as a PDF file of the 1814 publication.

([http://mormonthink.com/files/flaming%20sword%20a%20sign%20 from%20 heaven.pdf](http://mormonthink.com/files/flaming%20sword%20a%20sign%20from%20heaven.pdf))

For those interested in exploring contemporary influences on Joseph Smith and the *Book of Mormon*, this account raises several intriguing questions. Could Walker's story have been known to Joseph Smith or Joseph Smith's family? And if it was, could it have impacted the development of his own story?

Many researchers have posited connections between potentially influential events, stories, or books from Joseph Smith's day and the writing of the *Book of Mormon*. Some critics tend to get preoccupied with locating the contemporary book that could serve as the unqualified "source" for the *Book of Mormon*. Indeed, several texts published before the *Book of Mormon* have been found to possess striking linguistic and thematic consistencies with Joseph Smith's narrative. This cluster of incredibly similar contemporaneous texts, at the very least, signals that Joseph Smith was a product of his time: that, like any writer, he consciously or unconsciously drew from the symbolic resources available in his environment to clarify his understanding of God.

The purpose of this section is to explore several possibilities: that Joseph Smith was merely a product of his time; that he was familiar with other reports of heavenly visitations prior to his own, which may have influenced him; or that it was an astonishing coincidence that deity intervened in history at the same time others were having similar experiences

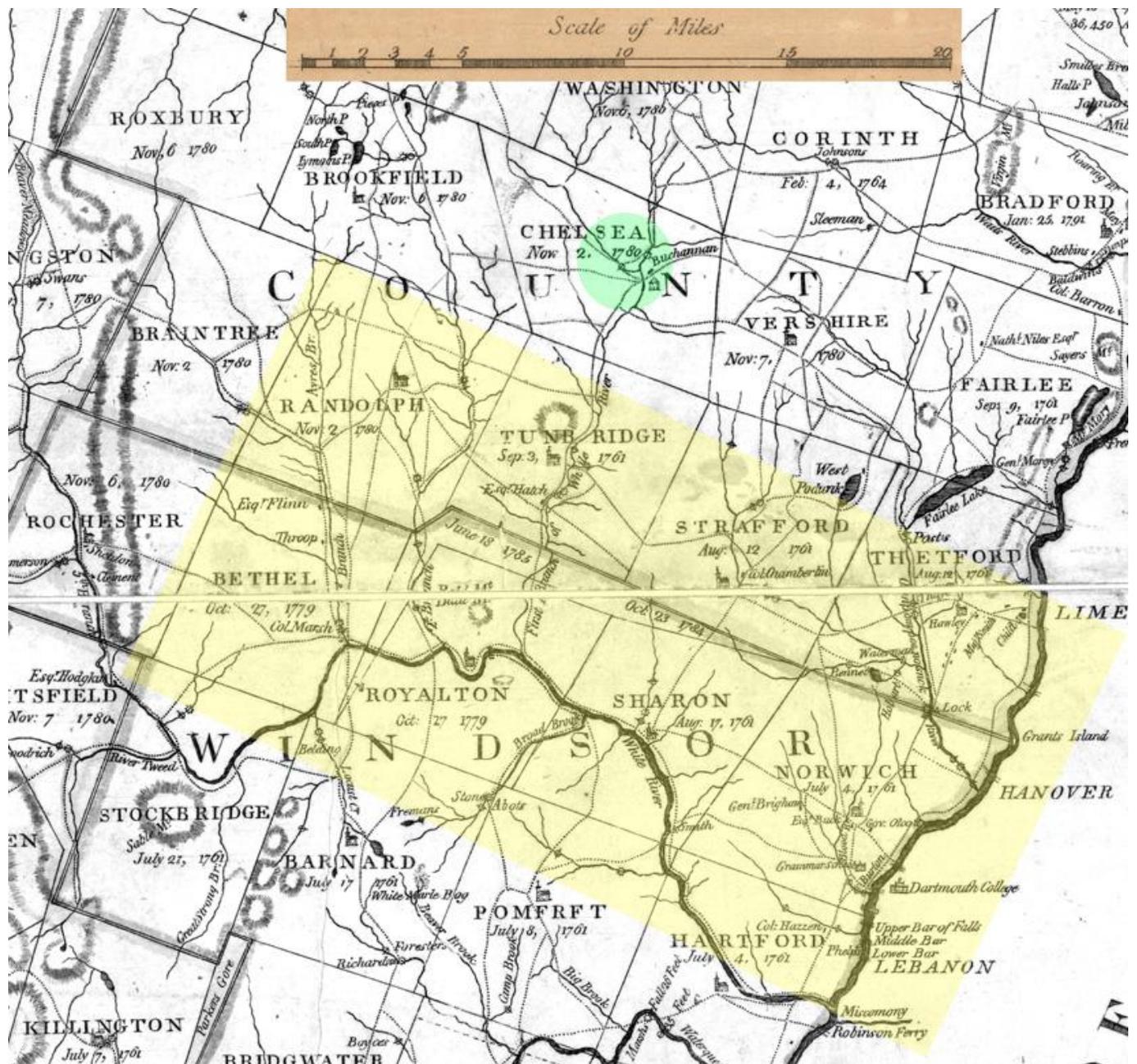
The Smith's early residences

Joseph Smith Sr. and Lucy Mack were married in Tunbridge, Vermont in 1796. For the next 20 years they moved about eight times within a 15 mile radius of Tunbridge. The following lists the year and location of those moves:

- 1796 Tunbridge, Vermont
- 1802 Randolph, Vermont
- 1803 Tunbridge
- 1803 Royalton, Vermont (for a few months)
- 1804 Sharon township, Vermont
- 1807 Tunbridge
- 1808 Royalton
- 1811 West Lebanon, New Hampshire
- 1813 Norwich, Vermont
- 1816 Palmyra, New York

This area is relatively small in size, about 25 miles east to west and 13 miles north to south, straddling the Vermont and New Hampshire borders.

Returning to Timothy P. Walker's account, recall that his angelic visitation occurred in Chelsea, Vermont, only a few miles north of the boundary within which the Smiths lived, as shown in the map below. Note the yellow boundary approximates the area in which the Smiths lived. The green circle marks Chelsea. (Click for a full-size map.)



Given that the supposed event occurred within a few miles of the Smith's residence of 20 years, and that it occurred while the Smiths lived there, it is likely they were aware of it. Such news would surely have been a topic of conversation in a small community. Even if the experience was fabricated by Walker, and even though the first several editions were published some distance from Chelsea, news of such an event would have been shared among the people of Windsor and Orange counties. While primary sources cannot prove this claim now, based on what we know about the diffusion of information in early American communities, it is reasonable to suggest that such communication would have happened.

The following lists the publication years and places for "The Flaming Sword," indicating the story's diffusion:

- 1799 - Norwich, Connecticut
- 1801 - Suffield, Connecticut
- 1812 - Groton, Connecticut
- 1814 - Exeter, New Hampshire

The 1800 Census for Chelsea lists the population at approximately 900 people. <https://archive.org/stream/populationsc18000051unit#page/n301/mode/1up>

The 1800 Census lists the population for Tunbridge at 1324.

- 1800 Census listing Tunbridge's total population <https://archive.org/stream/populationsc18000051unit#page/n354/mode/1up>

The Smiths lived in Tunbridge for about 7 of the 20 years in the area. From Tunbridge to Chelsea is approximately six miles.

The 1790 and 1800 censuses do not show anyone by the name of "Bissell," or any name close to that, living in Chelsea, Vermont. However, the 1790 Census does show a Jeremiah Bissel living in Windsor County, 15 or so miles southeast of Chelsea. A Jeremiah Bissel is listed as a town clerk of Norwich, Windsor County, Vermont, in "The Vermont Register and Almanack, 1819." Norwich is a place in which the Smiths lived from 1813-1816. Whether this individual is Walker's host, "Capt. J Bissell," is not certain.

Regardless of whether Walker's angelic visitation actually took place, the four published accounts verify that the family would have had access to knowledge about it. Even if the Smiths did not have access to a printed copy of Walker's story, talk about the account would have spread throughout the region.

While there is no way to know for sure, it would seem quite possible that Joseph Smith, Sr. and Lucy Mack Smith were aware of the event, either through word of mouth, publication or a combination. Joseph Smith Jr. himself lived in the area for the first ten years of his life. It is not unlikely that Walker's could be passed down to the Smith's children as part of the community's lore or even within the Smith family when discussing places they had lived. In such a way, Joseph Smith, Jr. could have easily been aware of it long before 1820, the year in which he says he had his first heavenly visitation.

An LDS Connection

Would someone be bold enough to plagiarize Timothy P. Walker's fantastical story? Apparently so. And the purported angelic account was reported in the LDS publication *Millennial Star*, Vol. XXX, September 20, 1868. pp 396-98.

Apparently, in 1868, the *Millennial Star* received a copy of a vision had by one Thomas C. Prencis. The *Millennial Star* version matches the Walker version word for word, with the following exceptions: the names of people and places have changed, and so have the dates. Another peculiarity is that all of the pronouns for the angel were changed to feminine. The *Millennial Star* editors had this to say: "The writer, it will be perceived, evidently had an idea that angels are feminine, by the manner in which the one spoken of is referred to."

In an interesting spin, the story of this vision was submitted to the periodical by Emer Harris, Martin Harris's brother. Emer claims to have found the story in Prencis' library. The *Millennial Star* account is entitled, The Flaming Sword; or, a sign from heaven.

(<http://books.google.com/books?id=6y8EAAAAQAAJ&pg=PA396&lpg=PA396&dq=influence+the+vision+of+the+night&source=bl&ots=r0NAAjujIV&sig=IISUXVg2p2dUgOZP6yZNPtccyVM&hl=en&sa=X&ei=vIh-UqmANYqtigKwzYCIBw&ved=0CDkQ6AEwAw#v=onepage&q=influence%20the%20vision%20of%20the%20night&f=false>) (Being a remarkable phenomenon, seen in the state of New Hampshire, in May, 1820.) The end of the piece says that it is "by Thomas C. Prencis."

To make matters more complex, an auction manifest from 1917 lists a text published in New Hampshire in 1816, titled "Flaming Sword, Or a Sign from Heaven! Being a Remarkable Phenomenon seen in the State of New Hampshire in May last. Signed Thomas C. Prentis." This is the version reported in the *Millennial Star*, but dated four years earlier. <https://archive.org/stream/cu31924029555475#page/n47/mode/1up>

Regardless of whether either account is accurate, or which came first, we can infer that an account of an angelic visitor with a flaming sword was circulated in the Smith's vicinity.

Editor's Comments

If a camera was in Joseph's room on the night of September 21, 1823, what would it have recorded? It seems unlikely that Joseph's brothers sleeping in the same room and bed would not have been awoken by the events as described by Joseph. If Joseph wasn't lying about this experience then we think the only real possibility is that it was

not a visitation, but rather a vision that was contained within Joseph's mind. The question is who put it there - God or was it just a product of his own mind?

Some of us watched the movie 'A Beautiful Mind' ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A_Beautiful_Mind_\(film\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A_Beautiful_Mind_(film))) in which a brilliant mathematician would see people and have detailed conversations with them but they were totally imaginary. This went on for years until someone discovered this and tried to convince him that the people that he was having interaction with were not real. It was very difficult for him to accept this. This movie is based on a true story. A friend of mine's father was delusional at times and would see people that were not real. He would actually call the police about them. Is it possible that a similar kind of experience happened to Joseph Smith?

Some people that believe that Joseph was essentially a good man but they do not believe in the divinity of the LDS church because they think that Joseph may have had some similar experiences as did the delusional mathematician in the movie 'A Beautiful Mind'. Perhaps whenever a strange thought entered Joseph's mind, he thought it came from God and acted upon it accordingly. He may have thought he was trying to do the right thing by getting people motivated by a new religion and whenever people needed more convincing he developed things on his own such as a prop covered in a cloth that he said contained gold plates - all to the end goal of following the guidance of the thoughts in his head.

If visions are not meant for others to see then this really adds to the difficulty of proving or disproving anyone's claims of having them. It would be worthwhile to further examine additional accounts of visions recorded by Joseph and others.

Joseph's written account of the Moroni visitation, and the paintings displayed by the Church, make it seem as if it was a tangible event that anyone in the room could see if they were there. This doesn't seem to be the case if it was a vision contained in Joseph's mind. We think this should be recognized when any meaningful discussion of this event is made. If the Church teaches that this is a tangible event, then we need to recognize the problems associated with it. Otherwise it makes it seem like we have something to hide. We believe that as honest Latter-day Saints, the truth should be told to avoid accusations of withholding information or deceiving anyone.

Related issues of further interest

Did Joseph always refer to the angel as Moroni?

Another problem with the Moroni visit is that in several LDS publications Joseph refers to the angel as Nephi not Moroni. The following link explores several instances where Joseph and other early members of the Church referred to Moroni as Nephi.

Nephi or Moroni? (<http://mormonthink.com/nephiweb.htm>)

Dan Vogel video

Noted LDS historian Dan Vogel produced a video that touches on Moroni's visitation.

Occult context of Joseph Smith's 1823 Discovery of Gold Plates
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7z0iHyvz5xY>)

Links

Additional References

We almost never see this issue brought up in any other books, websites or publications so we have few other references, pro or con, to provide. We did find it briefly mentioned in the following Dialogue Magazine article (Dialogue is a fairly neutral publication). If any reader has any other references, please email them to the administrator of MormonThink.com.

Dialogue, A Journal of Mormon Thought, vol 36, Number 4, Winter 2003, Clay L Chandler
(<http://content.lib.utah.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/dialogue/id/28355/show/28160>)

Supporting the Church

The pro-LDS apologetic organization FAIR has an article called "Church art and historical accuracy". Although they mostly are discussing the Ensign artists inaccurate portrayal of the Book of Mormon translation process, much of the same reasoning could be applied to the Moroni visit as well.

http://en.fairmormon.org/Church_art_and_historical_accuracy

<http://www.lds.org/hf/art/display/0,16842,4218-1-4-116,00.html>

Note: LDS apologetic responses can be obtained on this and other issues by using the 'ask the apologist' (<http://www.fairmormon.org/contact>) feature on the FAIR web site <http://www.fairmormon.org/>.

Painting entitled "He Called Me By Name" by Liz Lemon Swindle
(<http://www.reparteegallery.com/p-10586-he-called-me-by-name.aspx>)

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MORMONS: WHO THEY ARE, WHAT THEY BELIEVE - - Discussion Guide

A Seer Stone and a Hat: Translating the Book of Mormon

<http://www.mrm.org/translation>



A Seer Stone and a Hat - "Translating" the Book of Mormon

By Bill McKeever and Eric Johnson

The founder of the LDS Church, Joseph Smith, claimed an angel named Moroni visited him in September of 1823. This heavenly messenger is reported to have told him about gold plates that contained a record of "former inhabitants of this continent, and the source from whence they sprang." The plates were said to contain "the fulness of the everlasting Gospel" as it was "delivered by the Savior to the ancient inhabitants." In order to translate the language contained on the plates (a language called "Reformed Egyptian"), two stones in silver bows, called the Urim and Thummim, were included with the plates (Joseph Smith History 1:34,35). According to Smith's testimony, four more years went by before the angel allowed him to retrieve the gold plates.

Joseph Smith said,

"each plate was six inches wide and eight inches long, and not quite so thick as common tin. They were filled with engravings, in Egyptian characters and bound together in a volume as the leaves of a book, with three rings running through the whole. The volume was something near six inches in thickness, a part of which was sealed" (*History of the Church* 4:537).

The question at hand, then, is whether or not Smith's translation of the *Book of Mormon* plates is true. If Smith truly was a prophet with the ability to decipher plates of an unknown language which were said to contain the story of Jesus' appearance in the Americas, then this man should be revered and his translation of this ancient work heralded as God's word to mankind. On the other hand, if the translation has no basis in fact, but instead is based on fraud, then it should

be exposed and the man's teachings about God and faith should be debunked. This is the difference between the way Mormons and critics of the LDS Church view Mormonism's first prophet. What is the evidence?

The method in which Joseph Smith "translated" the gold plates has been a source of interest to many people who have studied the origins of the LDS movement. While many paintings and pictures used in Mormon visitor's centers and books depict a prayerful Smith leaning over the plates, many contemporaries of Smith admit that he used a hat and a seer stone as a means of bringing about this "divine" record.

In his *Comprehensive History of the Church (CHC)*, LDS historian and Seventy Brigham H. Roberts quotes Martin Harris, one of the three witnesses whose name is found in every edition of the *Book of Mormon* since its original edition. Harris said that Smith possessed a seer stone, described by Roberts as a "chocolate-colored, somewhat egg-shaped stone which the Prophet found while digging a well in company with his brother Hyrum." Roberts goes on to state that it was by using this stone that "Joseph was able to translate the characters engraven on the plates" (*CHC* 1:129).

Martin Harris was one of the scribes Joseph Smith used to record the writing on the plates. This enabled him to give a first-hand account of how Smith performed this translation. Harris noted,

"By aid of the Seer Stone, sentences would appear and were read by the Prophet and written by Martin, and when finished he would say 'written;' and if correctly written, the sentence would disappear and another appear in its place; but if not written correctly it remained until corrected, so that the translation was just as it was engraven on the plates, precisely in the language then used" (*CHC* 1:29).

Harris' description concurs with that of David Whitmer, another one of the three witnesses whose testimony appears at the front of the *Book of Mormon*. Whitmer details exactly how the stone produced the English interpretation. On page 12 of his book *An Address to All Believers in Christ*, Whitmer wrote,

"I will now give you a description of the manner in which the Book of Mormon was translated. Joseph Smith would put the seer stone into a hat, and put his face in the hat, drawing it closely around his face to exclude the light; and in the darkness the spiritual light would shine. A piece of something resembling

parchment would appear, and under it was the interpretation in English. Brother Joseph would read off the English to Oliver Cowdery, who was his principal scribe, and when it was written down and repeated to brother Joseph to see if it was correct, then it would disappear, and another character with the interpretation would appear. Thus the Book of Mormon was translated by the gift and power of God, and not by any power of man."

Robert N. Hullinger, in his book: *Joseph Smith's Response to Skepticism*, cites a personal interview Emma Smith-Bidamon gave to a committee of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in 1879. He notes on pages 9-10: "Smith's wife Emma supported Harris's and Whitmer's versions of the story in recalling that her husband buried his face in his hat while she was serving as his scribe."

Dan Vogel also mentions Emma's 1879 interview on pages 98-99 of his book, *The Word of God*:

"Smith's wife, Emma Smith Bidamon, was interviewed late in her life by her son Joseph Smith III about her knowledge of the early [p.99] church. This interview took place in February 1879 in the presence of Lewis C. Bidamon, her husband. At one point Emma stated the following: 'In writing for your father I frequently wrote day after day, often sitting at the table close by him, he sitting with his face buried in his hat, with the stone in it, and dictating hour after hour with nothing between us... .'"

In volume two of "*A New Witness for Christ in America*," LDS writer Francis Kirkham notes that Joseph Smith's brother William also confirmed the use of the hat and seer stone. His account is also similar to the accounts given by Harris and Whitmer although he refers to the seer stone as the "Urim and Thummim." He stated, "The manner in which this was done was by looking into the Urim and Thummim, which was placed in a hat to exclude the light, (the plates lying near by covered up), and reading off the translation, which appeared in the stone by the power of God" (2:417). William's account leads us to wonder why Smith went through the bother of digging up the alleged plates if he didn't even have to look at them during the "translation."

Martin Harris, David Whitmer, and William Smith all agree that Joseph Smith used a seer stone and a hat in the translation process. Interestingly enough, an article in the January 1997 LDS Church publication *Ensign* leaves out any mention of the

hat and deemphasizes the seer stone. In fact, LDS Apostle Neal Maxwell, who authored the article, quotes Apostle Orson Pratt from 1874 as saying that Smith relied less and less upon the seer stones the more he learned how to translate (pg. 39). It seems odd that God would provide these instruments and then allow the translator to have more freedom as the translation went on. And it seems extremely curious that Maxwell makes no reference to the hat. In fact, a picture on page 38 shows the dutiful Oliver Cowdery writing down the English translation while Smith appears to be translating. In this picture there is no sign of the so-called seer stones or the hat. What could be the reason for leaving these items out of a publicity painting except to distance the translation from the occultic practices that really characterized the *Book of Mormon* translation! The use of similar types of seer stones, or *peep stones* as they were also called, was quite common among believers in folk magic during the time of Joseph Smith. There is plenty of evidence to show that Smith, the one whom Mormons claim God used to restore the "true" church, was quite fascinated with the occult, as were members of his immediate family.

According to a court record dated March 20, 1826, Smith was described as a "glass-looker," a common scam in which the glass looker claimed to have the ability to find buried treasure (for a fee, of course). Obviously, many Mormons have tried to deny that Smith had anything to do with glass looking or money digging. Joseph F. Smith, Mormonism's sixth president, concluded that such a title was used by enemies to injure the prophet's credibility. He wrote:

"He was called a 'money digger,' and many other contemptuous things. If you will look at his history, and at the character of his parents, and surroundings, and consider the object of his life, you can discover how much consistency there was in the charges brought against him. All this was done to injure him. He was neither old nor a 'money digger,' nor an impostor, nor in any manner deserving of the epithets which they applied to him."

The problem with Smith's conclusion is that Joseph Smith admitted to being a money digger in an interview printed in the "Elders' Journal" (v.1, num.2, pp.28,29). (See also *The Documentary History of the Church* 3:29, and the *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, pg.120.)

It seems apparent that the *Book of Mormon* was, in fact, brought about using an occultic method. If so many witnesses testify to Smith's use of a hat and a

magical rock, why don't Mormon books and periodicals, for the sake of accuracy, emphasize the fact? Why do the pictures of Smith translating from the plates--as shown in the January 1997 *Ensign*--have him deep in thought rather than looking into a hat?

In our opinion, the answer to these questions stems from the fact that the earlier accounts are embarrassing to the LDS Church, so a better, more "faith-promoting" account has been proposed. Despite the early documentation, as provided by some of the witnesses of the actual translation, history has been revised to restore credibility to the original creation of the LDS Church. For instance, tenth LDS President Joseph Fielding Smith, who previously served as an LDS Church historian for 50 years, denied Joseph Smith's use of the seer stone. He wrote:

"While the statement has been made by some writers that the Prophet Joseph Smith used a seer stone part of the time in his translating of the record, and information points to the fact that he did have in his possession such a stone, yet there is no authentic statement in the history of the Church which states that the use of such a stone was made in that translation. The information is all hearsay, and personally, I do not believe that this stone was used for this purpose. The reason I give for this conclusion is found in the statement of the Lord to the Brother of Jared as recorded in Ether 3:22-24.

"These stones, the Urim and Thummim which were given to the Brother of Jared, were preserved for this very purpose of translating the record, both of the Jaredites and the Nephites. Then again the Prophet was impressed by Moroni with the fact that these stones were given for that very purpose. It hardly seems reasonable to suppose that the Prophet would substitute something evidently inferior under these circumstances. It may have been so, but it is so easy for a story of this kind to be circulated due to the fact that the Prophet did possess a seer stone, which he may have used for some other purposes" (*Doctrines of Salvation* 3:225-226).

Apostle Maxwell says the translation process should strengthen the faith of the faithful Mormon. He writes:

"Our primary focus in studying the Book of Mormon should be on the principles of the gospel anyway, not on the process by which the book came forth. Yet

because its coming so amply fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy of a 'marvelous work and a wonder,' we may find strengthened faith in considering how marvelous and wondrous the translation was..."(*Ensign*, January 1997, pg. 39)

If this process should strengthen the believer's testimony, then why isn't the true process being told?

But Maxwell goes on. Although allowing for the possibility that seer stones could have been used by Smith, Maxwell says this did not mean Smith was translating letter by letter as the earlier witnesses suggest he did. If he was using these "divine instrumentalities" to translate the language into English,

"he was not necessarily and constantly scrutinizing the characters on the plates--the usual translation process of going back and forth between pondering an ancient text and providing a modern rendering...While the use of divine instrumentalities might also account for the rapid rate of translation, the Prophet sometimes may have used a less mechanical procedure. We simply do not know the details" (pg. 39).

What is interesting in this assertion is that Smith, whom Maxwell admits did not know any ancient languages and was said to be ignorant of the facts in his Bible, could have improved his translation abilities without becoming proficient in the language he was translating! It also goes against the explanations of the earlier witnesses.

Maxwell also makes it a point to concur with Emma Smith's account that there was probably no blanket or curtain hung between Joseph Smith and his various scribes during this process. Maxwell feels that a curtain/separator was used only to partition off the living area to keep the translator and scribe from the eyes of visitors. Again the LDS Church seems to be revising its history. When Bill McKeever visited the restored Peter Whitmer cabin at Fayette (NY) in April of 1990, a curtain was hanging between two tables where the translation supposedly took place. In the adjacent visitor's center a painting of Smith "translating" the plates also showed a curtain separating Smith and his scribe. Page 29 of the book, *Meet the Mormons* (1965 ed.), also shows a curtain separating Smith from his scribe Oliver Cowdery.

In conclusion, we feel that the move away from the actual facts of the translation process of the *Book of Mormon* demonstrates a lack of credibility on the part of

LDS leaders. No doubt they understand that most people would balk in accepting the *Book of Mormon* if it was known to have been "translated" by using a magical rock and a hat. Eyewitness accounts clearly conflict with the image the LDS Church is currently attempting to portray. We pray that both the LDS people, and those investigating the LDS Church, will take a closer look at how this supposedly "sacred" book came about.

Further Reading

- How Heavy Were Those Gold Plates? (www.mrm.org/topics/book-mormon/how-heavy-were-those-gold-plates)
- The Locations of Joseph Smith's Early Treasure Quests, by Dan Vogel (www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue_V27N03_211.pdf)

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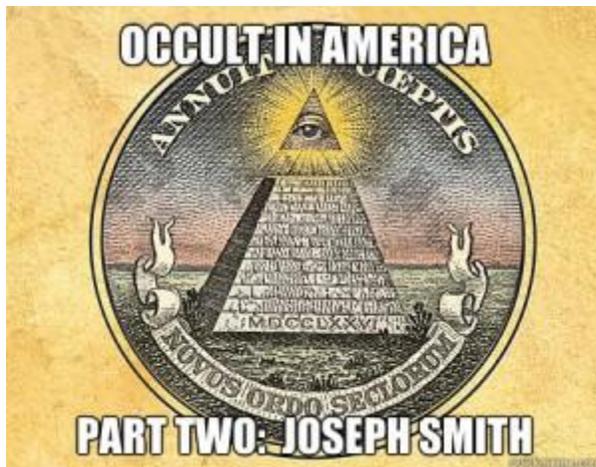
MORMONS: WHO THEY ARE, WHAT THEY BELIEVE - - Discussion Guide

Seer Stones- the Occult in Joseph Smith's Day

<http://www.patheos.com/blogs/panmankey/2013/07/josephsmith/>

Occult in America: Joseph Smith

July 19, 2013 by Jason Mankey



(This post is the second in a series based upon a lecture I began presenting this past Spring. That talk, "Magick and The Occult in America 1820-1952" surveys a large swath of American History and the occult and magickal practices contained within it. None of this is meant to be the last or only word on the subject, it's just a look into corners of history I find particularly interesting. The actual lecture has more information than the written

versions (and usually more jokes!) but I wanted to present at least some of that talk here on Raise the Horns. -jason)

When I first began putting this workshop together I never imagined that I would spend two months of my life delving into the history of Joseph Smith and the Church of Latter Day Saints. When it was over and all my research was done if I found myself really liking "Old Joe." Don't worry, converting to Mormonism never crossed my mind, but I'm drawn to religious outsiders, and Joseph Smith Junior might be the most famous religious outsider of the last 200 years.



I chose Smith for my workshop because he and his family were interested in a large range of occult and magical practices. They used divining rods, practiced ceremonial magic a la Francis Barrett's book *The Magus*, and were believers in astrology. Those beliefs did not make them outsiders either, it made them average. The idea that magic exists on the margins of history is just not true. People of all stripes and all religious persuasions have had flirtations with what are commonly considered "occult" practices. Later in life Joseph Smith would also become a proponent of Freemasonry. By looking at Smith I felt as if I was looking at a broad expanse of American spirituality and belief.

Many of Smith's early followers were also interested in magic and the

occult, which is not surprising when you think about it. Smith's message of a new religious text surviving on "golden tablets" and then translated with the use a peep stone is completely wondrous. The very essence of the Mormonism is founded upon the miraculous and I say that with complete respect. An America with visits from the angel Moroni and housing the relics of an ancient Jewish Civilization stirs the imagination, especially in early 19th Century America and England (Smith began his church in 1827). Joseph Smith's new religion began with the astounding; full of alleged revelations and visions directly from Jehovah-God and his angel Moroni. Incredibly such "visions" were a part of the religious landscape in the United States during the early part of the 19th Century. Rural newspapers reported on such occurrences with seriousness and frequency. A newspaper in Palmyra New York (Smith's local paper) ran the headline "Remarkable VISION and REVELATION, as seen and received by Asa Wild of Amsterdam New York." (1) Beginning in the 1700's people began to feel comfortable talking about such encounters and having them written about. People claiming to talk with God was nothing new in the 1820's (but



another book equal to The Bible is a completely different story).

During the years Smith was visiting with Moroni he also worked with his father and brothers as a treasure hunter. The Mormon church has long been embarrassed by the treasure hunting pursuits of Smith and his family, but they shouldn't be. Old Joe was simply a product of his times, and while most of us today probably scoff at the idea of searching for buried treasure, it was a fairly common pastime in early America. Newspapers reported people finding tens of thousands of dollars worth of gold buried in the ground and many Americans were convinced that the lost treasures of Capt. Kidd were buried somewhere in North America.

Like modern dowsers Joseph Smith's number one working tool in the pursuit of treasure was a divining rod. A neighbor of his was quoted as saying:

"Young Joe had a witch hazel bough with which he claimed he could locate buried money or hidden things, later he had a peep stone which he put into his hat and looked into it I have seen both." (2)

In the Mormon book *Doctrine and Covenants* Smith wrote:

"now this is not all, for you have another gift, which is the gift of working with the rod: behold it has told you things: behold there is no other power save God, that can cause this rod of nature to work in your hands"



Even though Smith never managed to find any riches he still had a very good reputation as a diviner. Many treasure hunters believed that the world was alive with spirits, and that spirits often guarded the stores of gold and silver buried in the Earth. Those spirits were said to be physically active and often moved the prizes men were attempting to raise from the ground. Stories circulated of Smith leading men to treasure, only to have it move

sideways several feet or burrow deeper into the Earth the moment it was touched by a spade or shovel. Joseph Smith could lead people to buried gold, but not even his skills were enough to overcome the spirits who greedily held onto their hoards in the afterlife.

Smith might be most famous for using a peep stone to reveal the Book of Mormon, a once common occult practice now gone by the wayside. Peep stones have a long history of being used in magic and the occult. John Dee's scribe Edward Kelly was said to use a "holy stone" according to Barrett's book *The Magus*. In 1839 a book on "witchcraft" noted that Dee firmly:

"believed that by means of the small Blackstone with the shining service and cut in the form of a diamond, he could hold converse with the elementary spirits." (3)

When I think of Joseph Smith using his peep stone to translate the Book of Mormon my brain conjures up ridiculous images of Smith in the dark with his peep stone in a top-hat. As silly as that sounds sometimes, Smith wasn't the only person to work that way with a peep stone. It was a pretty common practice among users of what are also called seer stones. In addition to translating "Reformed Egyptian Hieroglyphics" (the language of Moroni's Golden Tablets) peep stones were also used to find buried treasure and missing objects.

Brigham Young once quoted Joseph Smith as saying:

"Every man who lived on earth was entitled to a seer stone, and should have one, but they are kept away from them in consequence of their wickedness." (4)

Brigham Young himself was also a believer in magic stones. According to family members Young often carried an amulet with him that he called a bloodstone. He was said to wear his bloodstone when he went into "unknown or dangerous places." (5)

In addition to seer stones and divining rods Joseph Smith and family also practiced ceremonial magic. Again, this is not unique. In 1822 a magazine in New York stated that "we find textbooks of Kabbalah, necromancy, astrology, magic, fortune-telling, and various proofs of witchcraft" when writing about a local bookstore. By the early 1800s the American backwoods were filled with book peddlers and many of them sold books pertaining to the occult. Some of those peddlers were said to sell as many as 25,000 books a year. Occult books were even more widely distributed than most other volumes because they were more likely to be copied. (6)

Many of the occult tools, rituals, and beliefs held by the Smith family can be traced back to the book *The Magus* by Francis Barrett first published in 1801. *The Magus* contains a great deal of information on astrology, a belief that Smith carried with him throughout his life. The dates Smith chose for his nuptials with his many wives even revolved around astrological dates.

The Magus also includes instructions for the construction of a Mars talisman, which just so happens to match the symbols found on the Smith family dagger. Their magical knife was used to create magical circles, and Joseph Smith was said to have used it for that purpose on treasure hunting expeditions. (7)

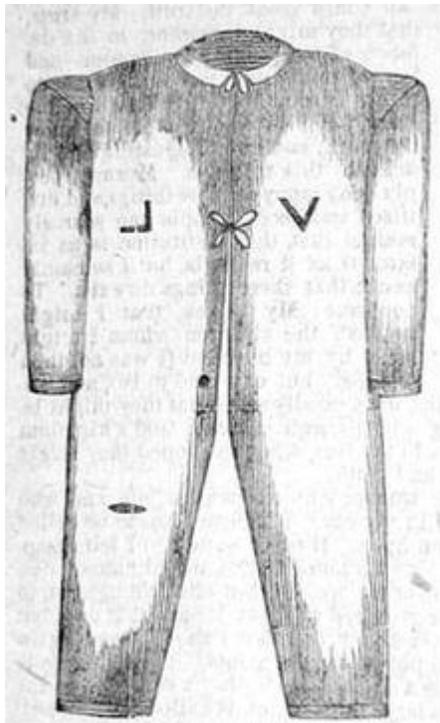


Members of the Smith family also used magical parchments on occasion, complete with instructions for calling up angels and keeping oneself safe from bodily harm. Many old Mormon houses in Utah have magical parchments built directly into the walls and foundations for good luck and safety. (8)

Joseph often wore Jupiter talisman around his neck, believing that no harm would come to him while he wore it.

(Sadly, he was wearing said medallion when murdered by an angry mob in Carthage Illinois in 1844.) LDS Church historians once claimed that Smith's medallion was "Masonic" in origin, but it's yet another formulation taken from *The Magus*. Smith's medallion contained the astrological symbol, seal, and sigil of the planet Jupiter on one side along with the the Latin words "Confirmo O Deus potentissimus" or "Oh God Make me All Powerful!" The flip side of his medallion contains the Hebrew word "abba" (for father, a reference to God) and a square of numbers in Hebrew that add up to 136, the magic number of Jupiter. Smith was born under the sign of Jupiter and took that information very seriously. (9)

Like many early Americans Joseph Smith had a complex relationship with Freemasonry. The Book of Mormon was written (revealed) in the 1820's during a period of anti-Mason hysteria in the United States. Several passages in the book allude to that. While the Book of Mormon doesn't literally ban the practice of Freemasonry, it does warn against secret groups, which many have taken to mean Freemasonry. However those warnings did not stop Joseph Smith himself from taking an interest in "The Craft" in the last few years before his death in 1844.



Most of the "secret Temple rites" that are a part of the Mormon Church were only added after Joseph Smith became a Freemason. Secret rituals, words, and handshakes all have their origins in Masonic tradition. Even the famous "Mormon Underwear" are not free of Masonic influence. Freemasonry's square and compass can both be found on Mormon Temple Garments, the square on the right and the compass on the left.

The largest "homegrown" religion in the United States is the Mormon Faith, a faith with very real occult roots. I have no interest in becoming a "Christo-Mormon-Pagan" but I'm fascinated that Modern Paganism shares at least a little of the same lineage. To some extent we both grew out of the Western Magical Tradition. Perhaps at the religious gathering table we'll all sit down one day and compare tarot cards and peep stones.

There are other bits in this series, including a write-ups of Albert Pike and *The Long Lost Friend*. While not originally a part of this series the lecture included material on Johnny Appleseed who I have written about previously. It also includes a section on The Church of Aphrodite which Aidan Kelly wrote about last year. (As

this was initially posted while on the road, depending on when you are reading this, those links may or may not work.)

Before being written down (or Dragon Dictated down) this post was part of a lecture. Since there are so many quotes in this piece I have tried to provide a few footnotes, but as this was originally designed as a spoken piece and I'm sure I've missed a few. I used the following books for research purposes, especially the first two.

Early Mormonism and the Magic World View by **D. Michael Quinn** published by Signature Books in 1998 is where all of the quotes in this piece come from. *Early Mormonism* is more than a just a peek into the lives of Joseph Smith Jr. and family, it's an extensive look at magick and the occult in the

early United States. Even if you don't have much interest in the early LDS Church this book is completely worth picking up.

No Man Knows My History by **Fawn Brodie** last revised in 1995 and published by Vintage remains the best available biography on Smith. Reviled by many in the Mormon Community, I think it paints a sympathetic portrait of Old Joe, I liked him after reading Brodie's work. It also contains a lot of information on Smith's borrowings from Freemasonry.

The Angel and Sorcerer by **Peter Levenda** from Ibis Press and published in 2012 is a decent introduction to the topic, but lacks much substance. Brodie, who originally wrote *History* in 1945, provides more depth on the overlap between Masonry and Mormonism than Levenda.

1. See Quinn page 14
2. Quinn page 33
3. Quinn page 40
4. Quinn page 245
5. Quinn page 88
6. Quinn page 21
7. Quinn page 341
8. Quinn page 134
9. Quinn page 83

Read more: <http://www.patheos.com/blogs/panmankey/2013/07/josephsmith/#ixzz38xzWFrTT>

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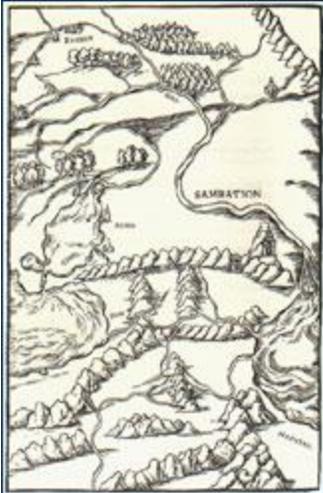
MORMONS: WHO THEY ARE, WHAT THEY BELIEVE - - Discussion Guide

Where Are the Ten Lost Tribes?

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/israel/losttribes.html>

Where are the Ten Lost Tribes?

Ever since the Assyrians exiled the Lost Tribes of Israel in the eighth century B.C., the mystery of what happened to the ten tribes has deepened inexorably with time. Where did they go? Are the claims by contemporary groups who say they are descended from the Lost Tribes legitimate? Here, we present an abbreviated history of the Lost Tribes and modern-day claims of descent. Excerpted with permission from *Beyond the Sambatyon: The Myth of the Ten Lost Tribes*, a CD-ROM released by MAXIMA New Media in 1995.



Beyond the Sambatyon

Over 2,700 years ago, the Assyrians exiled the ten tribes of the Kingdom of Israel. The ten tribes would have returned at once to the Holy Land had not the Lord encircled them with the legendary river, the Sambatyon. All week long, every week, the great and terrible river Sambatyon seethes with wild rapids, churning great rocks in billows up to the heavens. On the Sabbath, however, the river rests from its fury. But the ten tribes cannot cross because of their great piety and their reverence for the day of rest. And so, to this day, the search for the ten lost tribes continues... beyond the Sambatyon.

Historical Introduction

"In the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria captured Samaria and he carried them away to Assyria and placed them in Halah, and on the Habor, the river of Gozan, and in the cities of Medes." In the years 722-721 BC, the Ten Tribes who comprised the northern Kingdom of Israel disappeared. Conquered by the Assyrian King Shalmaneser V, they were exiled to upper Mesopotamia and Medes, today modern Syria and Iraq. The Ten Tribes of Israel have never been seen since. Or have they?

Let us begin our story from the beginning, with Abraham the Patriarch, or better yet with his grandson Jacob. Jacob was renamed Israel when God appeared to him when he was leaving Padn-Aram and blessed him. Jacob produced twelve sons, each of whom became the father of one of the twelve tribes of Israel. Reuven, Shimon, Levi, Yehuda, Issachar, Zevulun, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, Joseph, Benjamin. In the Land of Canaan, each of the twelve Israelite tribes settled a different region on either side of the Jordan River.



Abraham, center, with grandson Jacob, left.

During a later period, a monarchy was established, but with the death of King Solomon, the state was divided in two. The tribes split along territorial and political lines, with Judah and Benjamin in the south loyal to the Davidic house, and the rest of the tribes in the north ruled by a succession of monarchies. The southern tribes of Judah and Benjamin constitute the historical forbears of most of the Jewish People as it is known today. And the Ten Tribes of the Northern Kingdom? It appeared that they had been eliminated for eternity. But the prophet Ezekiel envisioned a different tomorrow: "Behold I will take the children of Israel... and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their land. And they shall be divided into two kingdoms no more."

Across centuries and continents, the prophetic words instilled hope that one day, brethren would join brethren, and together rebuild the kingdom of God. But first... the Ten Lost Tribes had to be found.



Benjamin of Tudela

Benjamin of Tudela

Benjamin, son of Jonah, was determined to see the world. In 1165, in an age when travel meant peril on road and sea, he set out from his native Tudela, Spain on an extended voyage. He spent several years visiting Jewish communities in the East and West. The great medieval Jewish traveler is familiarly known as Benjamin of Tudela. We know little about him other than what emerges in his famous *Book of Travels*. In whichever community he visited, and even in those he didn't, Benjamin recorded his observations, many of which are quite imaginative.

When visiting in Persia and in the Arabian peninsula, Benjamin came across Jewish tribesmen whom he was convinced were descendants of the Lost Israelites. The self-sufficiency and fierceness of these tribesmen deeply impressed him. He writes as follows:

"There are men of Israel in the land of Persia who say that in the mountains dwell four of the tribes of Israel, namely, the tribe of Dan, the tribe of Zevulun, the tribe of Asher, and the tribe of Naphtali. They are governed by their own prince, Joseph the Levite. Among them are learned scholars. They sow and reap and go forth to war as far as the land of Cush, by way of the desert. They are in league with the Kofar-al-Turak, pagan tribesmen who worship the wind and live in the wilderness."

During his visit to Arabia he came across the largest Jewish settlement in the region, the Jews of Kheibar. "These tribesmen," he writes, "are of the tribes Reuven and Gad, and the half-tribe of Menasseh. Their seat of government is a great city surrounded by the mountains of the North. The Jews of Kheibar have built many large fortified cities. The yoke of the gentiles is not upon them. They go forth to pillage and to capture booty in conjunction with the Arabs their neighbors." The diary of Benjamin, son of Jonah—translated into so many languages—inspired many in their quest for the independent kingdoms of the Ten Lost Tribes.

New World Part I

Boundless opportunity and fortune awaited Columbus and his crew as they set out on their voyage in 1492. The lands they discovered promised a new and better world. But for one Spanish missionary, the cruel



enslavement and exploitation of the native Americans was not the picture of the New World he envisioned.

In the early 16th century, Bartholeme de Las Casas became the champion of the Native American Indians, devoting his lifetime to improving the conditions—in the West Indies, Peru and Guatemala. Las Casas wrote: "These Indians can bring near the redemption. If we treat them humanely in this world and convert them to Christianity, we are preparing for the redemption of the Western world in the messianic era. Their conversion is apt indeed, as I am convinced the Indians originate in Ancient Israel. Indeed, I can bring proofs from the Bible that they are of the Lost Tribes."

The association of the Indians with the Lost Tribes was heard again and again. The report by Portuguese traveler Antonio Montezinos some 120 years later aroused remarkable interest. "It was a thrilling journey I took in South America. Now that I am back in Amsterdam, I must share with you some incredible news. There is a Jewish Indian tribe living beyond the mountain passes of the Andes. Indeed, I myself heard them recite the She'ma (the expression of the Jewish faith) and saw them observe the Jewish rituals." Christian theologians awaiting the Second Coming were thrilled to receive this welcome news. For tradition held that when the Ten Tribes were found, reunited and restored to the Holy Land, the messianic age was close at hand.



Native Americans from Peru.

New World Part II

Menasseh ben Israel, a Dutch Jewish scholar widely respected in both Christian and Jewish circles, played a central role in strengthening the association of the American Indians with the Lost Tribes. Deeply influenced by Montezinos' report and stimulated by his own mystical disposition, Ben Israel gradually fashioned his most important and best-selling book: *The Hope of Israel*. In 1655 Menasseh ben Israel met with Oliver Cromwell, Lord Protector of England, at Westminster. He dedicated *The Hope of Israel* to Parliament and submitted his petition for the recall of the Jews who had been expelled from England.

Ben Israel's approach was shrewd indeed. He reiterated the belief that the dispersion of Jews to all corners of the Earth was the beginning of the redemption. The first stage had been realized—Israelite tribes had been

discovered in the Americas! By completing the dispersion of the Jews, Cromwell himself could hasten the messianic era. He must readmit the Jews to England. Ben Israel associated the Hebrew word for "the end of the Earth" with the medieval term "Angle-Terre" or England. He wrote, "...All which things of necessity must be fulfilled, that so Israel at last being brought back, to his own place, peace which is promised under the Messiah may be restored to the world; and concord, which is the only Mother of all good things."

These words echoed the hopes for a better world, awakened in the second half of the 18th Century during the American and French revolutions. Many abolitionists, for example, claimed that the Messianic Age would be ushered in when the slaves were freed and when the native Americans, descendants of the Ten Lost Tribes, were converted to Christianity. It would have given Menasseh Ben Israel considerable satisfaction to know how deeply his ideas had influenced social theory and the human rights movement.

The False Messiah

In the year 1665, a fantastic manifesto made its way like lightning to all corners of the Islamic, Jewish and Christian worlds. Publicized by the charismatic rabbi, Nathan of Gaza, the letter announced that the Messiah had arrived:

"Hear ye, brethren in Israel that our Messiah is come to life in the city of Ismir and his name is Shabbetai Zevi. Soon, he will show forth his kingdom to all and will take the royal crown from the head of the Sultan and place it on his own. When nine months have passed, our Messiah shall vanish from before the eyes of Israel, and no one should be able to say if he is alive or dead. He will cross the river

Sambatyon, which as all men know no mortal has ever crossed. There, our Messiah shall ride forth through Jerusalem, with Moses and all the Jews of old mounted on horses. He himself shall ride on a dragon, and his bridle rein shall be a snake with seven heads. On his way, he will be attacked by Gog and Magog, the enemies of Israel, with a mighty arm. But the Messiah with the breath of his nostril shall he rout them, and by his word alone, shall he utterly destroy them. And when he is entered in Jerusalem, God will send down a temple of gold and precious stones from heaven, and it will fill the city with its brilliance. And on that day shall the dead throughout the world rise from their



A true portrait of Shabbetai Zevi, sketched by an eyewitness in Smyrna, 1666.

graves. I hasten to tell you these tidings."

The news that the Messiah had arrived brought a wave of excitement in country after country. In a Messianic fervor, many Jews began to sell off their property and prepare for the trip to the Holy Land.

Who was this so-called Messiah? His name was Shabbetai Zevi. He was born in Smirna in Asia Minor in 1626 and he was ordained as a rabbi when he was eighteen. Drawing upon the mystical teachings of the Kabbalah he proclaimed to the suffering Jewish world that redemption was at hand. His ideas reached Christians and Jews alike, in Morocco, Tunis, Egypt and Italy. Rumor was rampant that an army comprised of the lost tribes was marching up through Africa in the direction of Mecca. The Turkish authorities became concerned. In 1666, Shabbetai Zevi was arrested and not long after, he was converted to Islam. The story ends in bitter despair and disappointment. Following the example of their Messiah, thousands of Jews converted to Islam as well.



Members of the Lemba tribe.

Tribal Groups

Straddling the boundaries between Afghanistan, Pakistan and Kashmir lives the world's largest tribal grouping—the Pathans. All of the 15 million Pathans, who comprise some 60 tribes, claim descent from Kish, an ancestor of the Biblical King Saul. Many of them also claim to be them children of the

Lost Israelites. The Pathans perform circumcision of the eighth day, wear a fringed garment similar to the Jewish *tzizit*, light candles on Friday nights and observe food taboos similar to the laws of Kashrut. In South Africa, Zimbabwe and Mozambique, tens of thousands of blacks have, in recent years, declared themselves descendants of one of the Lost Tribes. The Lemba claim to have been cut off from mainstream Judaism hundreds of years ago. They are well-versed in the Old Testament and avoid marriage outside their community. From every imaginable corner of the world theories arise linking different peoples and tribes with the Ten Lost Tribes: the Crimea, the Caucasus, Kenya, Nigeria, Armenia, Persia, Central Asia, North Siberia, West Africa, Peru, South America, Australia, Ireland. While the evidence may at times seem flimsy, the Jewish elements in these tribal cultures continue to fascinate scholar and layman alike.

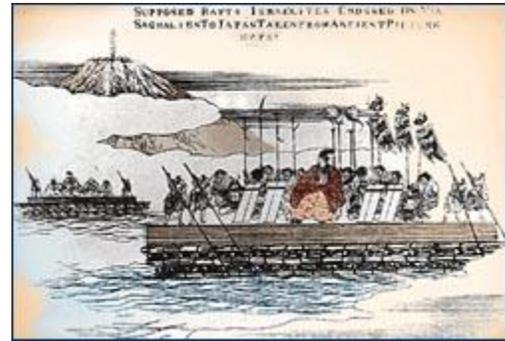
Japan

Daber: in Hebrew, to speak.
Daberu: Japanese for chatting.

Goi: a non-Hebrew or foreigner.
Gai'Jeen: prefix for a foreigner, a non-Japanese.

Kor: cold in Hebrew.
Koru: to freeze in Japanese.

Knesset: Parliament in Hebrew.
Kensei: Constitutional government in Japanese.



These are among the thousands of words and names of places with no real etymological meaning in Japanese. And they all correspond with Hebrew words. Even the Kings have similar names. The first known king of Japan, who was named Osee, ruled around 730 BC. This king has been identified with the last king of Israel, Hoshea, who died around the same time, at the time of the Assyrian exile of the ten tribes from Israel. The holy Japanese shinto temple strongly recalls the ancient holy Isrealite temple, which housed a holy of holies section and several gates. Several artifacts in Japan have been traced to Assyrian and Jewish sources, among them, a well in Koryugi with the words "well of Israel" inscribed on its side.

It has also been suggested that the carts of Otsu and Kyoto are of ancient biblical origin, as they are different from any others in Japan. Might the ancient Israelites and their wives and children have been conveyed to Japan in these carts? Among the Samurai sect, there is a tradition that their ancient ancestors came to Japan from western Asia around 660 BC. The name 'Samurai' recalls 'Samaria'. And to which tribe do the Japanese belong? There are those who claim that the Mikado, the Japanese emperor, is a descendant of the Hebrew tribe of Gad. 'Mikado' recalls the Hebrew word for 'his majesty the king,' 'Malchuto'.



Ethiopian women with qita, unleavened bread baked for passover.

Beta Israel-Ethiopia

In the latter part of the twelfth century, a legend appeared which persisted for several centuries and reached Egypt, Palestine and Europe. According to this legend, a Christian priest named Prester John ruled as monarch over a vast and wealthy Christian Empire. According to many traditions, Ethiopia was the land of the powerful Prester John's kingdom, as well as the home of the ten lost tribes. Persistent rumor had it that these African Israelite kingdoms were at constant war with Prester John, and that their armies were advancing on Rome.

Who are these African-Jewish tribesmen so central to the Prester John legend? These are the Ethiopian Jews known both as Falashas, the Amharic word for landless, wandering Jews, and as Beta Israel, the house of Israel. In Ethiopia, they engaged primarily in agriculture, but were known also for their exquisite crafts and jewelry. Today, most of the Beta Israel live in the state of Israel. In the 1970's and 80's, the Israeli government airlifted thousands of Ethiopian Jews to Israel, rescuing them from political and economic distress.

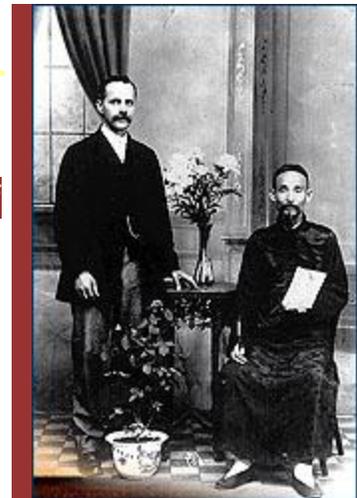
According to one tradition, the Ethiopian Jews are the descendants of one of the ten tribes, as their religion is an ancient form of biblical Judaism. Their religious practices are prescribed by the Orit, the Torah translated into their Ge'ez dialect. They possess none of the post-biblical laws. Over the centuries, the Beta Israel have been connected with the tribe of Dan. This association has eased the process of their return to the state of Israel in recent times.

Chiang-Min China

"Behold, These are coming from afar. These from the north and the west and these from the land of Sinim." This prophecy, spoken by Isaiah, promised the return of Lost Israelites from all corners of the Earth and from Sinim. Interestingly, Sinim is the Hebrew word for China. In fort-like villages in the high mountain ranges on the Chinese-Tibetan border live the Chiang-Min of West Szechuan. It has been claimed that the Chiang-Min are descendants of the ancient Israelites who arrived in China several hundred years before Christ.

The missionary Torrance, who visited Cheng-du in the early part of this century, insisted that the Chiang-Min strongly resemble the Israelite branch of the Semitic race. He observed that several of their customs were reminiscent of ancient Israelite tradition. Said Torrance: "The plough the Chiang use is similar to the ancient Israelite plough and is drawn by two oxen, never by an ox and an ass. This in accordance with the Biblical stipulation: 'You shall not plough with an ox and ass together.'" The Chiang-Min believe in one God. During "times of calamity or acute distress," writes Torrance, "they issue a moan or cry which sounds like 'Yawei', suggestive of the biblical name of God. The Scottish missionary also claims that the Chinese conception of Sacrifice came from the ancient Israelites.

Finally, Chiang-Min priests, like the ancient Israelite priests, wear girdles to bind their robes, and bear a sacred rod shaped like a serpent, reminiscent of the brass serpent fashioned by Moses in the wilderness.



The Scottish missionary Rev. Thomas Torrance in China, 1920s. Torrance claimed the Chiang-Min of West Szechuan were descendants of the ancient Israelites.

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MORMONS: WHO THEY ARE, WHAT THEY BELIEVE - - Discussion Guide

Setting the Record Straight About Native Peoples: Lost Tribes of Israel

<http://www.native-languages.org/iaq9.htm>

Setting the Record Straight About Native Peoples: Lost Tribes of Israel

Q: Are Native Americans a lost tribe of Israel, Ancient Egyptians, Canaanites, or any other people mentioned in the Bible?

A: No. These Biblical events happened only a few thousand years ago. Native Americans were already here. Also, Middle Easterners are Caucasians. American Indians are Mongoloid. (Indians have epicanthic eye folds, like the Chinese do.) Amerindian languages do NOT show any relation to Semitic languages, this data was faked.

Q: Did a lost tribe of Israel sail to America and join the Indians, maybe?

A: It's doubtful. It would have been a long trip, and there's no evidence to suggest it. No Israelite ruins have been found, no oral histories of native peoples mention it, no Semitic art or technology infusions happened in the Americas, and there aren't any Israelite records of such a journey. When the Vikings landed ships on Newfoundland in the 11th century, there were fewer than 100 of them and they stayed there less than ten years, yet they still left behind identifiable Norse ruins, two Viking sagas, and mention of the event in the oral history of the Mi'kmaq Indians. A permanent settlement of more than a thousand Israelites would surely have left behind even more substantial remains, yet there are none.

Q: But aren't there special similarities between Aztec/Mayan culture and ancient Middle Eastern cultures, such as hieroglyphs, pyramids, symbology, traditional religions, and ethical laws like the Ten Commandments?

A: Well, no. First of all, there is no special similarity between Mesoamerican and Ancient Egyptian writing systems (<http://www.native-languages.org/iaq3.htm#5>). "Hieroglyph" just means "arcane writing". You could as easily call Klingon writing "hieroglyphs" if you wanted to. None of the languages or writing systems of native America are related in any way to Semitic, Norse, or Celtic ones, and the websites we

have seen claiming this have been deliberately lying by providing made-up Indian words to "prove" the similarity. A quick glance at an Indian dictionary is enough to prove that the writers of these websites are inventing their "evidence" from thin air-- not behavior that lends much credence to their claims. See here (<http://www.native-languages.org/iaq3.htm#4>) for some further information about how to really determine linguistic relationships.

As for the rest, there is no more similarity between Native American and Ancient Egyptian civilizations than between any two ancient cultures. Traditional religions are particularly different. Most Native American traditional religions were animistic, unlike Middle Eastern religions. Some Central American cultures had pantheons of gods, as Egyptians (and Chinese, and Africans, and many other cultures) did, but these pantheons bore so little resemblance to the familiar Egyptian or Greek gods that it took European anthropologists centuries to even figure them out. Mayan and Egyptian pyramids were constructed so differently that modern anthropologists don't even class them as the same style of architecture, and the use of five- and six-sided stars in Mesoamerican decoration does not show a connection to Christianity and Judaism any more than the use of swastikas in ancient North American decoration shows a connection to Nazism. Stars and swastikas are common patterns that even children will doodle without being taught to. The best argument would be the one about ethical laws, for it is true that traditional Native American morality shares similarities to the Ten Commandments (not stealing, not murdering, and not committing adultery). However, it would be hard to envision an ancient society in which stealing, murdering, and adultery were encouraged. It is rather culturally imperialistic to say that such basic morality must have been learned from Egyptians, Israelites, or Christians. Perhaps it would be better, religiously, to say that the Creator made all human beings capable of understanding good and evil, no matter where they live. It certainly is more accurate anthropologically to observe that all human cultures developed such laws, and that one might as well say that the Chinese and Celts were lost tribes of Cherokee on this basis as that the American Indians were lost tribes of Israel.

Q: But I really, really want to believe that Native Americans are a lost tribe of Israel!

A: No one is stopping you, but using made-up vocabulary lists and implausible 'evidence' to prop up your beliefs is bad science and bad faith. If you want to believe, then believe; you shouldn't need evidence to have faith, and you certainly shouldn't need fake evidence.

I have been receiving quite a bit of profanity laced email from Mormons for showing that those word lists are not real Algonquian words. Please think before you hit the 'send' button: is cursing at people who don't tell lies to make it easier for you to believe things really the image of your church you want to be sending out?

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MORMONS: WHO THEY ARE, WHAT THEY BELIEVE - - Discussion Guide

Native Americans & Jews: The Lost Tribes Episode

http://www.myjewishlearning.com/history/Modern_History/1700-1914/America_at_the_Turn_of_the_Century/Regional_Judaism/Peddlers_and_Frontier_Judaism/Native_Americans_and_Jews.shtml?p=0

Native Americans & Jews: The Lost Tribes Episode

An all-too forgotten historical debate

By David Koffman

In the 8th century BCE, the Assyrians dispersed the Kingdom of Israel, giving life and legend to the Lost Tribes. The repatriation of these lost tribes eventually became an integral part of the Jewish--and Christian--messianic dream, and there have been Lost Tribe speculations about numerous "discovered" populations. One the most fascinating--and unfortunately forgotten--such discussions centered on the Native Americans. How did American Jews respond to this? Why and how did Jews accredit or discredit it? What did these theories signify about American Jewish agendas and anxieties?

A Theory is Born

One of the first books to suggest the Native American Lost Tribe theory was written by a Jew, the Dutch rabbi, scholar, and diplomat Manasseh ben Israel. In *The Hope of Israel* (1650), Ben Israel suggested that the discovery of the Native Americans, a surviving remnant of the Assyrian exile, was a sign heralding the messianic era. Just one year later, Thomas Thorowgood published his best seller *Jewes in America, Or, Probabilities that those Indians are Judaical, made more probable by some Additionals to the former Conjectures*. The Lost Tribe idea found favor among early American notables, including Cotton Mather (the influential English minister), Elias Boudinot (the New Jersey lawyer who was one of the leaders of the American Revolution), and the Quaker leader William Penn.

The notion was revived after James Adair, a 40-year veteran Indian trader and meticulous chronicler of the Israelitish features of Native American religion and



social custom wrote *The History of the American Indians...Containing an Account of their Origin, Language, Manners, Religion and Civil Customs* in 1775. Even Epaphras Jones, an American Bible professor engaged the theory in 1831, claiming that anyone "conversant with the European Jews and the Aborigines of America... will perceive a great likeness in color, features, hair, aptness to cunning, dispositions for roving, &s."

Religious Connotations

Some of these writers were interested in Native American history, but most of them were just interested in the Bible. Indeed, the Lost Tribe claim should be seen as part of a general 19th-century fascination with biblical history. Explorations of Holy Land flora and fauna, the geography of the Holy Land, the life of Jesus-the-man, were very much *en vogue*. A close identification among some 17th and 18th century Americans with the chosen people of Scripture helped Christian settlers see their colonization of New England as a reenactment of Israel's journey into the Promised Land.

It also contributed to a more general religious mythmaking scheme that helped define the national identity of the United States. To cite just one example, in a 1799 Thanksgiving Day sermon, Abiel Tabbot told his congregation in Massachusetts: "It has often been remarked that the people of the United States come nearer to a parallel with Ancient Israel, than any other nation upon the globe. Hence, 'OUR AMERICAN ISRAEL,' is a term frequently used; and common consent allows it apt and proper."

A curious incident that drew considerable attention and "proved," at least to some, that Native Americans had ancient Israelite origins unfolded when *tefillin* (phylacteries) were "discovered" in Pittsfield, Massachusetts in the early 19th century. Their discoverer wrote that this "forms another link in the evidence by which our Indians are identified with the ancient Jews, who were scattered upon the face of the globe, and to this day remain a living monument, to verify and establish the eternal truths of Scripture."

Prominent Jews Respond

Around the time of the Pittsfield tefillin incident, Mordecai Manuel Noah, the journalist, playwright, politician, and Jewish American statesman, began spilling ink about the subject. Noah wrote a play *She Would be a Soldier; or, The Plains of Chippewa* (1819), that resolved the tension between the Yankees and the British by identifying the Indian Great Spirit with the God of the Bible. Noah's ideas about Jewish-Native affinities grew in a distinctly political manner when he invited Natives Americans to help settle "Ararat," the separatist Jewish colony he hoped to establish on Grand Island on the Niagara River around 1825.

Noah's writings on Jewish Natives came to their full expression with his *Discourse on the Evidences of the American Indians Being the Descendants of the Lost Tribes of Israel* (1837). The work documented a host of theological, linguistic, ritual, dietary, and political parallels between Jews and Native Americans. Most importantly, he identified several essential character traits shared by the two peoples, all of which were, of course, highly laudable. For Noah, the conflation of Indians and Jews sanctioned the latter as divinely ordained Americans.

Another notable Jewish-Indian incident occurred in 1860, when stones hewn with Hebrew inscriptions were found near Newark, Ohio. The story unfolded over the course of many months and was followed closely by *The Israelite*, *The Occident*, and *The Jewish Messenger*, whose respective editors represented the intellectual vanguard of American Jewry. Isaac Mayer Wise, the leader of the Reform movement in America, employed philological proofs to undermine the stone's authenticity. He rejected any connections between Jews and Native Americans, though it's notable that he bothered to engage the story at all. Isaac Leeser, a traditionalist, sided in favor of the Lost Tribes theory. Reviewing the relics in question, *The Occident*, Leeser's newspaper, concluded, "The sons of Jacob were walking on the soil of Ohio many centuries before the birth of Columbus."

Implications

From a historical and scientific point of view, the Native American Lost Tribe claim is clearly *narishkeit*. But even a brief exploration of it--who was making it and why, who was refuting it and why, reveals important insights about American Jewry. Popular thought about who Jews were--their place in America, with whom they could or should be associated--helps us understand how Jews negotiated their place in American society. Theories about Ancient Israelite Indians should not be dismissed as mere fantasy. Rather they are important precisely *because* they are fantasy.

Jews responded to the Lost Tribes claim about Native Americans in sermons, plays, public statements, scholarly works, and popular writings. The critical responses are more understandable: from the perspective of Reform and science, the theory is flagrantly nonsensical. But there are other reasons some may have rejected it: so as not to be associated with that which was thought of as native, primitive, and barbarian, so as not to be thought of as atavistic or lower on the evolutionarily ladder than other Europeans, so as not to be thought of as immanently disappearing from history, and so as not to be in need of Christian civilizing (i.e. missionizing). Advocates, on the other hand, had to go against the scholarly consensus and side with religious figures who could be dismissed as fanatics.

Accepting Native Americans as ancient Israelites held several--sometimes mutually exclusive--implications for American Jews. Foremost, it meant that the Indians were, in some way, related. It could buttress the sentiment that America was the New Jerusalem. This was the destined place where the original exiles, scattered to unknown corners of the world, were ingathered to their God-chosen Promised Land. They were not "lost" at all. Rather, the near aboriginal connection of Jews to the American soil served as evidence of the end of exile, and another reason to support a new American Jewish identity.

Many of the major figures in nineteenth-century American Jewry weighed in--in one manner or another--on the Jewish-Indian controversy. The practical stakes were never high, but the claim--so ubiquitous and so fluid (since it was used for so many different functions by so many different people)--was taken seriously and fretted over by Jewish leaders of very different orientations. The Lost Tribe theory had significant symbolic stakes--for Jews, Christians, and Native Americans. Linking America and its earliest inhabitants with the Bible and its theology, meant staking a claim on America--and championing God's plan for the New World.



David Koffman is a doctoral student in New York University's Departments of History and Hebrew & Judaic Studies. David has produced several documentaries for film and television and is a member of the Jews/Media/Religion working group at the Center for Religion and Media.

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MORMONS: WHO THEY ARE, WHAT THEY BELIEVE - - Discussion Guide

The DNA Challenge to the Book of Mormon

<http://www.msbc.org/dnachal.htm>



The DNA Challenge to the Book of Mormon

What is at the heart of the DNA Challenge to the Book of Mormon? The Book of Mormon claims that Native Americans are *principally descended* from a people group called Lamanites, who are of Israelite origin. DNA research, however, indicates that Native Americans are from the region of Asia around Mongolia. The title page of *The Book of Mormon* claims that it was "written to the Lamanites, who are a remnant of the house of Israel."

The introduction page of *The Book of Mormon* goes on to say that "After thousands of years, all were destroyed, except the Lamanites, and they are the principal ancestors of the American Indians." Based on these claims of the *Book of Mormon*, the LDS Church has traditionally taught that modern-day Native Americans are descended from Lamanites, who were of Hebrew (Israelite) origin. What does the science say? The science says that there is no evidence of any connection between Native Americans and Hebrews. Archaeologist and anthropologist have long believed that Native Americans migrated to the Americas from Central and Northeast Asia in prehistoric times. The DNA evidence is backing these assumptions up quite solidly.

Mitochondrial and Y-chromosome DNA testing are effective means of determining the ancestries and relatedness of people and people groups. DNA tests have been performed on thousands of individuals from scores of Native American tribes, from Alaska to the tip of South America. The results of the test show that the overwhelming majority (96.4%) of DNA originated in northeastern and north-central Asia, which essentially corroborates what had already become a widespread consensus among archaeologists and anthropologists of varying disciplines. The post-Colonial era intermarriage easily accounts for the remaining 3.6% discrepancy.

In addition, the testing of the DNA in the pre-Columbian skeletal remains shows a 100% correlation with DNA from Northeastern and Central Asia. ***No indication of Hebrew ancestry has been found in the DNA of Native Americans.*** In other parts of the world, DNA has been used to positively identify people groups who do have a clear genetic link to Israel from ancient times. This shows that DNA *can* be used to clearly show a genetic link (or lack thereof) between people groups. If Native Americans really were descended from Israelites, then their DNA would back up that claim.

What are the implications for the Book of Mormon? It's not just a matter of the history in the Book of Mormon being unprovable; rather, it's that its history can be positively proven as *false*. So how are Latter-day Saints dealing with these challenges? This is proving to be a difficulty, because two "camps" have formed in response to this. The "camp" generally represented by the LDS hierarchy and church leaders is mistrust the science, and reason in general as "worldly" (that is, unspiritual) wisdom. In so doing, they dismiss the challenges as meaningless, since the story should be accepted on faith, and not based on any type of evidence or reason. Sometimes they will suggest that God changed the DNA of Native Americans, thus obscuring their Hebrew ancestry.

The second "camp" is represented by the LDS academic community, such as BYU, FARMS, and FAIR, among others. Their tactics in dealing with the challenge generally rely upon producing volumes of scientific jargon and conjecture. On the surface, it may appear to refute the challenges, at least to someone who is not well versed in the issues of DNA science.

In reality, however, what they put forth are "straw-man" arguments that don't address the challenges at all. These DNA counter-arguments do not hold up very well among scientists, which leave the LDS apologists with only one other option--to reinterpret the Book of Mormon to fit the science. For example, they may suggest that the Book of Mormon really doesn't teach that Native Americans as a whole are descended from Israel. They cite the probability that the Israelites were absorbed into a larger, pre-existing population, and so all DNA traces would be lost. Or they may say that the story was confined to a small geographic region and that the DNA evidence simply hasn't been found yet. The difficulty with this argument, however, is that the Book of Mormon teaches something very different.

There is no mention of other people groups or civilizations living on the land when the Israelite migration arrived or at any time afterwards. And there is nothing in the text that suggests the entire story was confined to a small geographic region. On the contrary, it speaks of a small group of Israelites who multiply and cover the face of the land, building huge cities and empires. The DNA evidence, when properly and fully examined, leaves us with only one conclusion: ***The Book of Mormon simply cannot be what it claims to be--an ancient history of the Americas.***

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MORMONS: WHO THEY ARE, WHAT THEY BELIEVE - - Discussion Guide

What about Reformed Egyptian?

<http://archive.org/stream/mormonismunvaile00howe#page/268/mode/2up>

CHAPTER XVIII.

It is asserted in the Mormon Bible, that the engravings upon the plates, were in the "Reformed Egyptian." In conformity to this, the Mormonite preachers, and others of the sect, have frequently declared that the engravings upon the plates were, by some of our learned men, who had a specimen shown them, pronounced to be "reformed Egyptian hieroglyphics," or "ancient short hand Egyptian."— Among others, Professor Anthon, of New York, was frequently mentioned as giving such an opinion. This act of deception and falsehood is only one among hundreds of others, equally gross, which are resorted to by these im-

postors, to gain proselytes. It being calculated to have considerable weight, when fully believed, we took the liberty to inform Mr. Anthon of the vile use that was made of his name, in this country; and to request of him a statement of the facts respecting it. The following is his reply:

New York, Feb. 17, 1834.

Dear Sir—I received this morning your favor of the 9th instant, and lose no time in making a reply. The whole story about my having pronounced the Mormonite inscription to be “reformed Egyptian hieroglyphics” is *perfectly false*. Some years ago, a plain, and apparently simple-hearted farmer, called upon me with a note from Dr. Mitchell of our city, now deceased, requesting me to decypher, if possible, a paper, which the farmer would hand me, and which Dr. M. confessed he had been unable to understand. Upon examining the paper in question, I soon came to the conclusion that it was all a trick, perhaps a *hoax*. When I asked the person, who brought it, how he obtained the writing, he gave me, as far as I can now recollect, the following account: A “gold book,” consisting of a number of plates of gold, fastened together in the shape of a book by wires of the same metal, had been dug up in the northern part of the state of New York, and along with the book an enormous pair of “*gold spectacles*”! These spectacles were so large, that, if a person attempted to look through them, his two eyes would have to be turned towards *one* of the glasses merely, the spectacles in question being altogether too large for the breadth of the human face. Whoever examined the plates through the spectacles, was enabled not only to *read* them, but fully to *understand* their meaning. All this knowledge, however, was confined at that time to a young man, who had the trunk containing the book and spectacles in his sole possession. This young man was placed behind a curtain, in the garret of a farm

house, and, being thus concealed from view, put on the spectacles occasionally, or rather, looked through one of the glasses, decyphered the characters in the book, and, having committed some of them to paper, handed copies from behind the curtain, to those who stood on the outside. Not a word, however, was said about the plates having been decyphered "by the gift of God." Every thing, in this way, was effected by the large pair of spectacles. The farmer added, that he had been requested to contribute a sum of money towards the publication of the "golden book," the contents of which would, as he had been assured, produce an entire change in the world and save it from ruin. So urgent had been these solicitations, that he intended selling his farm and handing over the amount received to those who wished to publish the plates. As a last precautionary step, however, he had resolved to come to New York, and obtain the opinion of the learned about the meaning of the paper which he brought with him, and which had been given him as a part of the contents of the book, although no translation had been furnished at the time by the young man with the spectacles. On hearing this odd story, I changed my opinion about the paper, and, instead of viewing it any longer as a hoax upon the learned, I began to regard it as part of a scheme to cheat the farmer of his money, and I communicated my suspicions to him, warning him to beware of rogues. He requested an opinion from me in writing, which of course I declined giving, and he then took his leave carrying the paper with him. This paper was in fact a singular scrawl. It consisted of all kinds of crooked characters disposed in columns, and had evidently been prepared by some person who had before him at the time a book containing various alphabets. Greek and Hebrew letters, crosses and flourishes, Roman letters inverted or placed sideways, were arranged in perpendicular col-

umns, and the whole ended in a rude delineation of a circle divided into various compartments, decked with various strange marks, and evidently copied after the Mexican Calender given by Humboldt, but copied in such a way as not to betray the source whence it was derived. I am thus particular as to the contents of the paper, inasmuch as I have frequently conversed with my friends on the subject, since the Mormonite excitement began, and well remember that the paper contained any thing else but "*Egyptian Hieroglyphics*." Some time after, the same farmer paid me a second visit. He brought with him the golden book in print, and offered it to me for sale. I declined purchasing. He then asked permission to leave the book with me for examination. I declined receiving it, although his manner was strangely urgent. I adverted once more to the roguery which had been in my opinion practised upon him, and asked him what had become of the gold plates. He informed me that they were in a trunk with the large pair of spectacles. I advised him to go to a magistrate and have the trunk examined. He said the "curse of God" would come upon him should he do this. On my pressing him, however, to pursue the course which I had recommended, he told me that he would open the trunk, if I would take the "curse of God" upon myself. I replied that I would do so with the greatest willingness, and would incur every risk of that nature, provided I could only extricate him from the grasp of rogues. He then left me.

I have thus given you a full statement of all that I know respecting the origin of Mormonism, and must beg you, as a personal favor, to publish this letter immediately, should you find my name mentioned again by these wretched fanatics. Yours respectfully,

CHAS. ANTHON.

E. D. Howe, Esq. Painesville, Ohio.

MORMONS: WHO THEY ARE, WHAT THEY BELIEVE - - Discussion Guide

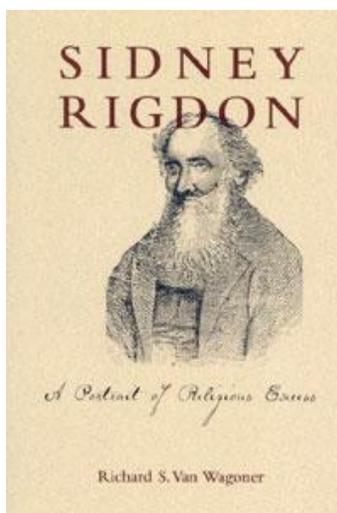
Review of Sidney Rigdon: A Portrait of Religious Excess.

<http://www.lds-mormon.com/sr.shtml>

Sidney Rigdon : A Portrait of Religious Excess

(<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/1560850302/rpcman>)

by *Richard S. Van Wagoner*



Few Mormons know the story of Sidney Rigdon. This is the case despite the fact that he influenced Mormonism between 1831 and 1839 more than perhaps anyone--including Joseph Smith. Such doctrines, policies, and key portions of Mormon history like the current two-tiered priesthood structure (<http://www.lds-mormon.com/mps.shtml>), moving to Kirtland, temple building, the belief of an immanent second coming in early Mormonism, the Joseph Smith "translation" of the Bible and portions of the Pearl of Great Price, the Word of Wisdom, the United Order, a First Presidency, a salary for some church leaders, the name of the church and the term "Latter-day Saint", the *Lectures on Faith*, a new Jerusalem and Zion in Jackson County, Zion's Camp, and settling in Nauvoo were all due in large part (or exclusively) to Sidney Rigdon. It is very safe to say that Mormonism would be a very different religion today were it not for Sidney Rigdon's influence. He delivered nearly every significant Mormon sermon in the 1830s.

Van Wagoner documents how Joseph Smith seldom went anywhere without him during the pre-Nauvoo period. Rigdon was Smith's spokesman. If something needed to be said, Rigdon was a far more likely source than Smith. When visiting other areas of the country or entertaining visitors at home, non-Mormons, who didn't know about Joseph Smith, thought that Rigdon was the leader of the church. In many ways, he was. Although the revelations (<http://www.lds-mormon.com/js1.shtml>) came through Joseph Smith, Rigdon's finger prints and influence are all over them (and the early changes the 'revelations' underwent).

So why is Rigdon a forgotten source in the LDS church? The answer can be found in the succession crisis (<http://www.lds-mormon.com/mhoop.shtml>) that took place after Smith's death. The history was re-written, modified, and the emphasis changed (<http://www.lds-mormon.com/history.shtml>). About the only story currently told in the LDS church about Rigdon deals with the transfiguration of Brigham Young--an event which never even occurred (<http://www.lds-mormon.com/vw.shtml>).

Another significant factor to Rigdon's demise in the eyes of Utah Mormons was the conflict between his daughter and Joseph Smith. Nancy Rigdon (<http://www.lds-mormon.com/bennet.shtml>), Sidney's daughter, was seduced by Joseph Smith when Smith was actively acquiring new wives. Nancy refused Smith's attempts and word leaked out to others (although Nancy and Sidney kept the issue private). The documentation for this event is abundant including a letter by Joseph Smith to Nancy which was included in the official *History of the Church* (<http://www.lds-mormon.com/history.shtml>). In order to make Joseph look good, many leaders of the church attempted to make Nancy look like the promiscuous one. Although Sidney reconciled with Smith, other polygamous church leaders never forgave Rigdon for not accepting and encouraging polygamy.

The most interesting portions of the book deal with the real reasons why the Mormons left Kirtland, Ohio and Missouri. The current faith-promoting version (<https://www.lds.org/topics/peace-and-violence-among-19th-century-latter-day-saints?lang=eng&query=persecution>) has the Mormons as complete victims who suffered countless, unprovoked persecutions. In reality, Rigdon and Smith left Kirtland in order to escape creditors, lawsuits, and possible jail time. The Missouri situation was more complex. Poor judgments were made on both sides which ultimately lead to the Boggs' Extermination Order and Rigdon and others spending time in jail. It also led to the unfortunate death of many Mormons and non-Mormons. Rigdon's "Salt Sermon" and 4th of July speech were two catalysts to the problems that arose. After Brigham Young excommunicated Rigdon, Elder Orson Hyde stated that Rigdon was the "cause of our troubles in Missouri". This is only partially true. Hyde and the others conveniently forgot to mention that Joseph Smith sanctioned both of Rigdon's speeches. Smith had the church's own publication entitled the *Elder's Journal* print one of the speeches and encouraged all church members to purchase a copy and read it. When the "Gentiles" and former Mormons saw and heard what Rigdon said, and experienced the effects of the Mormon aggressions, the troubles heated up. Rigdon's speech included a "war of extermination, for we will follow them, till the last drop of their blood is spilled or else they will have to exterminate us" which led to Apostle Parley P. Pratt's killing of a militiaman and severely wounding another. Boggs responded with the "Extermination Order" and Pratt, Rigdon, Smith and others did jail time before eventually escaping. The anti-Mormons were more

brutal in their revenge, however, and eighteen Mormons were murdered at Haun's Mill.

Van Wagoner captures Rigdon's eccentricities (which isn't too difficult to do). He was a man caught up with religion and an immediate second coming of Jesus which never occurred. He had a mental disorder throughout his life which caused his personality to swing from one end of the spectrum to the other. His religious excess left a permanent mark on Mormonism. It's difficult to tell if the religious fanatics are the way they are because of the influence of religion or if religions are the way they are because of fanatics.

The beginning of the book contains an interesting look at the Cambellites, their history, and the influence that the Alexander Campbell (<http://www.lds-mormon.com/campbell.shtml>) Reformed Baptist (later Disciples of Christ) movement had on Rigdon and subsequent Mormon theology. The last 100 pages or so include a fascinating look at the post-Nauvoo life of Rigdon--something I knew nothing about before reading this book.

This is one piece of Mormon history that should not be missed. One complaint I have is with regard to the type. It appears that in order to get the book down to 500 pages, the font size was reduced. A larger, more normal, font size would have made the book much easier to read.

The book finishes with six appendices including a very interesting one on the Book of Mormon authorship (<http://www.lds-mormon.com/voh.shtml>).

from an internet bulletin board:

I had to put in a plug for *Sidney Rigdon: A Portrait of Religious Excess* by Richard S. Van Wagoner (of "Mormon Polygamy" fame (<http://www.lds-mormon.com/polygamy.shtml>)) [even though I haven't finished reading it]. It's very interesting to read what amounts to history parallel to those I've read my whole life (kind of like reading "Ender's Shadow" (<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0812575717/rpcman>) for you Card fans).

Rigdon is both ignored and vilified in conventional LDS history, and wrongly takes the rap for many things. For example, during the succession crisis Brigham Young made much of Rigdon's July 4, 1838 speech as the incipient cause of the Saints' Missouri troubles. You may recall that the speech introduced the word "extermination" (<http://www.lds-mormon.com/tmpe.shtml>) into that volatile period, later used infamously by Gov. Boggs. The speech ended with Rigdon exclaiming "We

this day proclaim ourselves free, with a purpose and determination, that never can be broken, no never! No never! NO NEVER!" After the speech, which had been carefully prepared and pre-approved by Joseph Smith, the Prophet led the congregation in the Hosanna Shout. Yet, Brigham Young re-wrote this little episode to one in which Rigdon was the villain inciting the Missourians to riot.

Rigdon in all likelihood had what we now refer to as bi-polar disorder. He went periodically from highs represented by the July 4 speech to lows of the sort when the Mormons were expelled from Missouri: "If God did not care anything more about us than He seemed to do, allowing us to be hauled around as we had been, I did not care about serving such a God."

Permeating his entire life was his absolute conviction that the Second Coming was imminent, and that indeed he would be alive to see it. That conviction was undoubtedly shared by most members of the church - they really believed that they were engaged in the last gathering prior to the end of time. That Millenarian mindset prevailed in the church through most of its history, and only recently seems to have abated.

A vastly interesting read which I highly recommend.

And a reply:

It's been a while since I read the book, but I remember particularly being intrigued by the account of Sidney's response (quite moderate) to Joseph Smith's approaches to Nancy, Sidney's daughter, and Joseph Smith's efforts to get the Nauvoo postmaster position away from Sidney. I also was fascinated by the account of Sidney's post-Mormon days. He continued to report heavenly visions, in the spirit of 76, and other revelations in which God instructed Sidney's followers to support his material needs. But for his connection to Mormonism, I think most contemporary Mormons would be inclined to dismiss Sidney as a "kook." (I was searching for the right clinical term.)

I've been told, BTW, that the author of the 1999 novel *Dancing Naked* (<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/1560851309/rpcman>), Robert Van Wagoner, is Richard's son. Can anyone verify that? Anyway, I highly recommend the novel, though it's quite painful and dark. Last week Robert also read one of his unpublished short stories here in SLC, "Bishop Taylor Gets Lucky." He said it was the "darkest" of a group of stories that are apparently interrelated, and will be published together. I think he's a superb writer and am looking forward to reading them.

"This is a masterful piece of work. Based on extensive research, Richard Van Wagoner has written a most fulsome and objective portrait of Sidney Rigdon. Nowhere are the complexities of Rigdon's relationship with Joseph Smith so ably explored. In many ways, the story of Sidney Rigdon is the story of early Mormonism, and this well-written, carefully documented narrative immensely enriches our understanding of both. It is an outstanding book."

-- B. Carmon Hardy (<http://www.lds-mormon.com/sc.shtml>)

"*Sidney Rigdon: A Portrait of Religious Excess* is an outstanding study of one of the most significant early leaders of Mormonism. Rigdon's powerful rhetoric helped bring thousands to Mormonism. Van Wagoner shows how Rigdon contributed to church policy and was a lightning rod for backlash to it in the 1830s. Most importantly, Van Wagoner demonstrates that there is still much more to be said about the early history of Mormonism."

-- Roger D. Launius (<http://www.lds-mormon.com/jsiii.shtml>)

from the publisher:

In the late 1820s a fiery young minister in western Ohio converted nearly 1,000 proselytes to the Reformed Baptist Movement. As these schismatics organized themselves into the new Disciples of Christ church, the Reverend Sidney Rigdon was already aligning himself with another, more radical movement, the Latter-day Saints, where he quickly became the LDS prophet's principal advisor and spokesman. He served Joseph Smith loyally for the next fourteen years, even through a brief spat over the prophet's romantic interest in his teenage daughter.

Next to Smith, Rigdon was the most influential early Mormon. He imported Reformed Baptist teachings into Latter-day Saint theology, wrote the canonized Lectures on Faith, championed communalism and isolationism, and delivered many of the most significant early sermons, including the famous Salt Sermon and the Ohio temple dedicatory address.

Following Smith's death, Rigdon parted company with Brigham Young to lead his own group of some 500 secessionist Mormons in Pennsylvania. Rigdon's following gradually dwindled, as the one-time orator took to wandering the streets, taunting indifferent passersby with God's word. He was later recruited by another Mormon faction. Although he refused to meet with them, he agreed to be their prophet and send revelations by mail. Before long he had directed them to settle far-off Iowa and Manitoba, among other things. At his death, his followers numbered in the hundreds, and today they number about 10,000, mostly in Pennsylvania.

"Rigdon is a biographer's dream," writes Richard Van Wagoner. Intellectually gifted, manic-depressive, an eloquent orator and social innovator but a chronic indigent, Rigdon aspired to altruism but demanded advantage and deference. When he lost prominence, his early attainments were virtually written out of the historical record.

Correcting this void, Van Wagoner has woven the psychology of religious incontinence into the larger fabric of social history. In doing so, he reminds readers of the significance of this nearly-forgotten founding member of the LDS First Presidency. Nearly ten million members in over one hundred churches trace their heritage to Joseph Smith. Many are unaware of the importance of Rigdon's contributions to their inherited theology.

Richard S. Van Wagoner, M.S., Brigham Young University, is a clinical audiologist and Lehi city historian. He is the author of *Lehi: Portraits of a Utah Town, Mormon Polygamy: A History* (<http://www.lds-mormon.com/polygamy.shtml>), and *Sidney Rigdon: A Portrait of Religious Excess*; and the co-author of *A Book of Mormons*. He has been published in *Brigham Young University Studies*, *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* (<http://www.lds-mormon.com/dialogue.shtml>), *Sunstone*, *Utah Historical Quarterly*, and *Utah Holiday*, and has won awards from the Dialogue Foundation, John Whitmer Historical Association, and the Mormon History Association.

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MORMONS: WHO THEY ARE, WHAT THEY BELIEVE - - Discussion Guide

Sidney Rigdon and the Book of Mormon

<http://sidneyrigdon.com/criddle/rigdon1.htm>

(When we compiled this document the above site was inaccessible.
We have substituted the following one which contains similar information.)

<http://www.mormonsinshock.com/Origins.htm>

Amazing Hidden Facts About The Book of Mormon's Origins

*Hidden? If you've already heard all this....e-mail me and tell me.
I find that MOST people have not heard this, especially Latter-day Saints.*

I've promised FACTS, not speculation. Here they are. You be the judge.

*(Reference notes taken from "Who Really Wrote the Book of Mormon"
by Cowdery & Scales, unless otherwise stated.)*

1. FACT: A Rev. Solomon Spalding (sometimes spelled Spaulding in records), a retired Congregational minister, wrote a fiction novel (then called a romance, though this did not indicate that it was a love-story). The novel was called *Manuscript Found*, but has since at times been referred to as *Manuscript Story*. The story was written around 1812 and was inspired by the excavation of a nearby Indian mound, and was about the migration of a group of Israelites to the new world.

2. FACT: The manuscript was read to Spalding's friends, relatives, neighbors, and parishioners between 1812 and 1815.

3. FACT: Spalding died in 1816. The manuscript had previously been taken to a print shop for possible publication. The shop was in Pittsburgh and was owned by Mr. R & Mr. J Patterson. Their printer, a Mr. J.H. Lambdin was often seen by townsfolk with Sidney Rigdon.(pg. 95-96)

4. FACT: Spalding before his death told a minister friend named Joseph Miller (see page 100) that "Rigdon had taken it, or was suspected of taking it." Spalding's widow also (see page 94) stated as early as 1820 that she believed Sidney Rigdon had copied the manuscript (remember, this was years before the Book of Mormon was published).

5. FACT: Oliver Cowdery's law partner (Cowdery was one of the original three witnesses to the Book of Mormon) in Tiffin Ohio, Judge W. Lang, stated, "Rigdon got the original (Manuscript Found) at the job printing office in Pittsburgh."

6. FACT: A Dr. J. Winter testified that he saw Rigdon *with the manuscript*, and Rigdon told him that a Presbyterian minister had brought "this" to the printers to see if it would pay to publish it. (page 105)

7. Mrs. Amos Dunlap was the niece of Rigdon's wife. She stated that as a child she visited the Rigdon family (around 1826-27). "During my visit Mr. Rigdon went to his bedroom and took from a trunk which he kept locked a certain manuscript. He came out into the other room and seated himself by the fireplace and commenced reading it. His wife at that moment came into the room and exclaimed, "What! you're studying that thing again? Or something to that effect. She then added, "I mean to burn that paper." He said, "No, indeed, you will not. This will be a great thing someday." (pg, 107)

8. Harvey Baldwin tells that his father heard Rigdon preach in the church in Bainbridge and visited Rigdon's home several times. When he would arrive at the Rigdon home, he would often find Rigdon in a room by himself, and each time Rigdon would hurriedly put away books and papers he was examining, as if he did not wish them to be seen. (pg. 108)

9. FACT: Martin Harris, one of the three witnesses to the Book of Mormon, was snowbound in a hotel in Mentor Ohio, with a man named R.W. Alderman. Alderman states that he learned from Harris then that "Rigdon had stolen a manuscript from a printing office in Pittsburgh, Pa., which Spalding....had left to be printed....Jo (Smith) and Rigdon did (print it), as the Book of Mormon." (pg. 145)

10. FACT: Sidney Rigdon, during the 4-year period between 1823 and 1827, was a minister, who kept an official itinerary record, and in it were many gaps. He apparently made numerous trips from his home in Bainbridge, Ohio, to Palmyra NY (250 miles) where Joseph Smith lived, being gone for weeks at a time. (Ref. pages 118-120)

11. FACT: Although Rigdon denied having known Smith before the Book of Mormon was introduced (around 1829) he was seen at Joseph Smith's home and reported to be with Smith by all of the following according to their testimony: (see pages 125-on)

Able Chase, an acquaintance, a teenager at the time - "I saw a stranger there who they said was Mr. Rigdon. He was at Smith's several times, and it was in the year of 1827 when I first saw him there, as near as I can recollect."

Mr. Gilbert, proofreader for the Book of Mormon - he states that in a conversation with a Mr. Lorenzo Saunders, who knew the Smiths well, Saunders said "he knows that Rigdon was hanging around Smith's for eighteen months prior to the publishing of the Mormon Bible."

Mrs. S.F. Anderick, a neighbor stated (pg. 134) "Several times while I was visiting Sophronia Smith at old Jo's house, she told me that a stranger who I saw there several times in warm weather and several months apart, was Mr. Rigdon."

Daniel Hendrix, acquaintance of Joseph Smith and Rigdon: he related hearing Joseph Smith tell people in 1828 about the "bonanza he had found....golden tablets". "For the first month or two at least Joe Smith did not say himself that the plates were any new revelation or that they had any religious significance, but simply said that he had found a valuable treasure in the shape of a record of some ancient people....He (Rigdon) and Joseph Smith fell in with each other and were cronies for several months. It was after Rigdon and Smith were so intimate that the divine part of the finding of the golden plates began to be spread abroad.... Smith and Rigdon had hard work to get funds together for the new Bible."

Mr. Pearne, former neighbor of Smiths told others he saw Smith and Rigdon together before the Book of Mormon was published (pg. 143).

Mrs. Eaton, interviewed Smith's neighbors regarding Rigdon, and concluded that a stranger came to the Smith's home in the summer of 1827, whose name was Sidney Rigdon. (pg. 145)

12. FACT: Rigdon was a Campbellite Minister in 1827-29, who had been excommunicated from being a Baptist minister because of teaching heretical beliefs. During this time period before the Book of Mormon came out, his congregation heard him often preach about a coming new revelation (page 108) that would make the Bible outmoded, and he even seemed to know it would speak of America's ancient inhabitants, solve the mystery of the mounds, there would be the return of miracles, and a new system of sharing all things in common, and more. (pages 108-116) Some state this information was given as early as 1827, and was detailed enough that they

concluded that he must have known all about the Book of Mormon when he preached these things.

13. FACT: **Rigdon himself** told a man named James Jeffries the following information, according to Jeffries: "He and Joe Smith used to look over the M.S. and read it on Sundays. Rigdon said Smith took the MS. and said, "I'll print it," and went off to Palmyra, New York." (pg. 104)

14. FACT: An acquaintance of both Rigdon and Smith named Dr. J.C. Bennett stated the following in 1842:

"I will remark here...that the Book of Mormon was originally written by the Rev. Solomon Spaulding, A.M., as a romance, and entitled the "Manuscript Found," and placed by him in the printing-office of Patterson and Lambdin, in the city of Pittsburgh, from whence it was taken by a conspicuous Mormon divine, and re-modeled, by adding the religious portion, placed by him in Smith's possession, and then published to the world as the testimony exemplifies. *This I have from the Confederation*, and of its perfect correctness there is not a shadow of doubt." (the Confederation refers to the inner circle of Smith's friends).

15. FACT: Sarah Pratt, the wife of an early Mormon leader, read this view of Dr. Bennett's in a book he wrote, and said the following:

"This certifies that I was well acquainted with the Mormon Leaders and Church in general, and know that the principle statements of John C. Bennett's book on Mormonism are true."

16. FACT: (While the above could be referred to as a hostile witness, consider the following:) Isaac Butts who knew Rigdon from 1820 on, stated that when he came back to Ohio after Mormonism had made converts there, people he had known earlier in New York WHO WERE CONVERTS to the church told him that they had seen Sidney Rigdon much with Joseph Smith BEFORE THEY WERE CONVERTED. (Rigdon supposedly was converted about the same time as they were). (pages 142-43)

17. FACT: David Whitmer, the 3rd witness to the Book of Mormon did not believe the "Spalding theory", but stated in his booklet, "*An Address to All Believers in Christ*", that the story had been printed in the Encyclopedia Britannica and the American Cyclopaedia.

He believed Rigdon and Smith first met in the winter of 1830. But he also states that Rigdon and Smith immediately became intimate, and Rigdon was given the position

of first councilor and vice president of the church by the end of 1830. (The Bible prohibits putting a novice into leadership so quickly.)

Whitmer states that the whole idea of the Priesthood was not a part of the original church nor in the original revelations (compare early sections of the 1830 Book of Mormon with their counterparts in the Book of Commandments to see this is true), but it "*all originated in the mind of Sidney Rigdon.*" (Who is in control here?) Elder was the highest office of the church originally, and about two thousand had been baptized into the church by men who held only that office. Whitmer outlines other doctrinal problems in his booklet, and states "If you believe my testimony to the Book of Mormon;...then I tell you that in June, 1838, God spake to me again by his own voice from the heavens, and told me to "separate myself from among the Latter Day Saints.""

18. FACT: The manuscript of "Manuscript Found" was FOUND in Hawaii in 1884, and is now at Oberlin College in Oberlin, Ohio.

19. FACT: The manuscript body is handwritten by Spaulding, and is 116 pages long (does that number ring a bell?). The Book of Mormon is about 538 pages long. (There would have been over two years of time that Rigdon and Smith had to collaborate on and expand the manuscript, according to the above-mentioned records and testimony).

20. FACT: There are many parallels between the two documents:

Both have the same content or story line. The Book of Mormon has much more religious or doctrinal content. Both documents purport to give a *condensed history of the extinct inhabitants of ancient America.*

Both manuscripts describe in similar terms how the author came by the ancient records upon which the story is based. Spaulding says the records are found in an artificial cave on the top of a mound near his home. A lever is used to lift the heavy stone which covers the entrance to the cave. The Book of Mormon says the records were in a stone box buried in the ground near the top of a hill not far from his home. He, too, uses a lever to lift a large stone that serves as a cover to the box.

Both tell that the author encounters supernatural difficulties in removing the records from their hiding place.

Both relate that the author made a "translation of the Old World language used in the records and that this translation is a condensation of earlier civil and sacred records.

Both state that the condensed version thus produced will be reburied along with the original so that it will remain preserved to come forth in the future when the Gentiles (Europeans) inhabit America.

Both describe a sea voyage with a great storm which causes them to pray for deliverance; both describe light and dark-skinned people, the same arts and sciences being known to the ancient people, a God-person who is white, the use of seer stones, a war to the death between two nations who were once brothers, and a final battle fought on a hill.

Even in some details we see resemblance: Both Spalding and Smith have the group of travelers of *about the same number*; both find America teeming with wild beasts; both groups appoint judges, have all things in common, and urge each other not to intermarry with the natives. In both accounts, the native Americans wear animal skins about their loins, *shave their heads and paint them red*, and carry slings, bows and arrows as weapons.

Both writers make the same mistake of stating that the planets revolve about the sun, long before such knowledge would have been known by humans. Both stories describe modern horses, domesticated mammoths or elephants, the use of steel, and the cultivation of wheat in ancient America, even though there is no archaeological evidence of any of this.

Theological concepts that are similar are presented in the same order.

The first quarter of Spalding's manuscript is written in the first person, and the rest in the third person. The Book of Mormon follows that pattern, and the change occurs *at the same place in both stories*.

To quote Vernal Holley, who wrote *Book of Mormon Authorship: A Closer Look*, page 38:

Identical or similar word combinations, redundant sentences, parallelisms, contradictory thoughts in sentence structure, indecision in the use of words, poor sentence composition, the use of lengthy runs, biblical-like metaphors, and the use of King James Bible English by both Spaulding and the Book of Mormon author are all further arguments that Spaulding may have been the author of the Book of Mormon."

21. FACT: In 1839, Spaulding's widow, Matilda Spaulding Davison, made this statement:

"After the 'Book of Mormon' came out, a copy of it was taken to New Salem, the place of Mr. Spaulding's former residence, and the very place where the "Manuscript Found" was written. A Mormon preacher appointed a meeting there and in the meeting read and repeated copious extracts from the "Book of Mormon." The historical part was immediately recognized by all the older inhabitants, as the identical work of Mr. Spaulding in which they had been so deeply interested years before." (New Hampshire Patriot and State Gazette, Concord, N.H., May 6, 1839)

22. FACT: Eleven of Spaulding's relatives and friends, a former employee and landlord, and others all gave signed statements of their belief that Spaulding's writings were connected with Smith's Book of Mormon (E.D. Howe, Mormonism Unveiled, Painesville, Ohio, 1834).

23. FACT: Many of Smith's neighbors, in their testimony about him, also stated that he was lazy, was a liar, and in the mid 1820's often engaged in digging at nighttime for buried treasures, using a seer stone or peep-stone. Court records show he was convicted of being a "glass-looker" (he was charging for fortune-telling about treasures that did not materialize when dug for) in 1826. It is also a fact that as soon as he had a good number of converts, he led them to sell their homes and farms and *give the money to the church (him)* and go to Ohio. (OPINION: It would appear that Smith found the treasure that enabled him to live the rest of his life without having to do any manual labor.)

24. Before his death, Rigdon's final words on this subject were, "My lips are forever sealed." (Think, dear reader....innocent people have nothing to hide!)

While I understand the Mormon person's NEED to discredit all of the above, I would suggest that it is simply unreasonable to suggest that EVERY ONE of the above people whose testimony is mentioned above conspired against Joseph Smith in an ORGANIZED way to create such a dovetailed story of fraud, and he ALONE is to be believed. May I suggest that God has not asked us to make a PERSON the object of our faith.

While there are many differences between Spaulding's book and the Book of Mormon, it is also true that Sidney Rigdon's pastor wrote a book called View of Hebrews, and it presented the same ideas regarding the Indians being Jews, and the idea of a "restored" church was being taught in Smith's day as well. Some have found correlation between Marco Polo's writings, and at the website exmormon.org there is a great discussion of books Smith used that contributed to the material in the Book of Mormon.

I will not state any further editorial conclusions about the Book of Mormon's origin, but offer a final thought: You may have had a good FEELING, or have felt your life is better because of the Book of Mormon. If that is so, it is because I believe its original authors chose to model it after some BIBLICAL CONCEPTS. To whatever extent we follow God's truths (and simply do right), we will be blessed and will feel better about ourselves. But that does not qualify it as "divine" or a "new revelation" any more than any other inspirational book is. And in my article, "Facts and Feelings: Evaluating the Book of Mormon" (<http://www.mormonsinshock.com/facts.htm>), I show that even though this book urges people to do right, there are also in it many teachings that CONTRADICT the Bible. And that means it must not be given a higher status of trustworthiness than it deserves. God wants us to worship in spirit and IN TRUTH. John 12:48 says we will be judged by the words of Christ... not by those of any other human (prophet)! He commands us to TEST the spirits and the prophecies (II Thess 5:21, I John 4:1). It's time to get *back to the Bible*.

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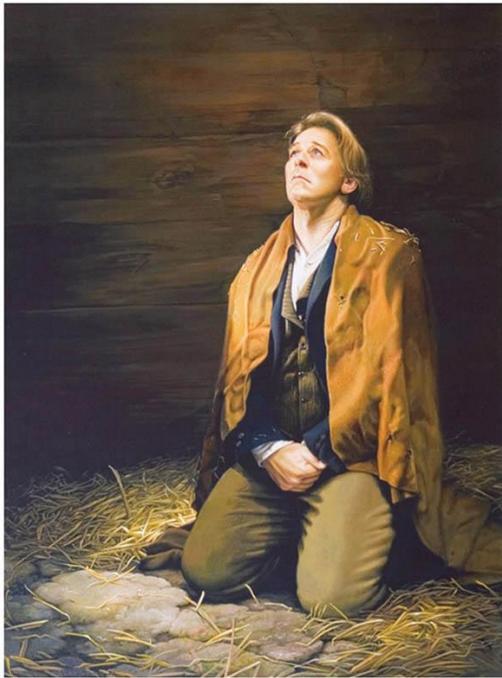
MORMONS: WHO THEY ARE, WHAT THEY BELIEVE - - Discussion Guide

Smith and Rigdon are Tarred and Feathered

<http://historyofmormonism.com/mormon-history/two-church-centers/tcc-1832/joseph-and-sidney-tarred/>

Joseph and Sidney Are Tarred and Feathered

This is the account of Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon being attacked by a mob in the middle of the night on March 24, 1832. They were torn from their beds, stripped naked, had hot tar poured over their bodies, and then had feathers stuck to the tar. Joseph recorded the event in the *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*:



“On the 24th of March, the twins [whom he and Emma had adopted- see <http://historyofmormonism.com/mormon-history/two-church-centers/tcc-1831/>] before mentioned, which had been sick of the measles for some time, caused us to be broken of our rest in taking care of them, especially my wife. In the evening I told her she had better retire to rest with one of the children, and I would watch with the sicker child. In the night she told me I had better lie down on the trundle bed, and I did so, and was soon after awakened by her screaming murder, when I found myself going out of the door, in the hands of about a dozen men . . .

“They then seized me by the throat and held on till I lost my breath. After I came to, as they passed along with me, about thirty rods from the house, I saw Elder Rigdon stretched out on the ground, whither they had dragged him by his heels. I supposed he was dead. I began to plead with them, saying, ‘You will have mercy and spare my life, I hope.’ . . .

“They ran back and fetched the bucket of tar, when one exclaimed, with an oath, ‘Let us tar up his mouth;’ and they tried to force the tar-paddle into my mouth; I twisted my head around, so that they could not . . . They then tried to force a vial into my mouth, and broke it in my teeth. All my clothes were torn off me except my shirt collar; and one man fell on me and scratched my body with his nails like a mad cat . . .

“They then left me, and I attempted to rise, but fell again; I pulled the tar away from my lips, so that I could breathe more freely, and after a while I began to recover, and raised myself up, whereupon I saw two lights. I made my way towards one of them, and found it was Father Johnson’s. When I came to the door I was naked, and the tar made me look as if I were covered with blood, and when my wife saw me she thought I was all crushed to pieces, and fainted. . . .

“My friends spent the night in scraping and removing the tar, and washing and cleansing my body; so that by morning I was ready to be clothed again. This being the Sabbath morning, the people assembled for meeting at the usual hour of worship, and among them came also the mobbers . . . With my flesh all scarified and defaced, I preached to the congregation as usual, and in the afternoon of the same day baptized three individuals. . . .

“During the mobbing one of the twins contracted a severe cold, continued to grow worse until Friday, and then died.”

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MORMONS: WHO THEY ARE, WHAT THEY BELIEVE - - Discussion Guide

What was Behind Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon being Tarred and Feathered?
<http://mormonthink.com/grant6.htm>

Sexual Allegations against Joseph Smith

Sexual allegations against Joseph Smith, 1829-1835
Grant H. Palmer

It is commonly known among LDS members that Joseph Smith Jr. practiced polygamy, beginning with his first documented polygamist marriage to Louisa Beaman on 5 April 1841. However, prior to these marriages, it is generally unknown that he was accused of illicit sexual conduct with six young women from 1829 -1835. What follows is a brief synopsis of each of these incidents.

Joseph Smith Jr. was arrested on a warrant for several charges on 30 June 1830. The following day a court trial was held before Judge Joseph Chamberlain at Bainbridge, New York. Twelve witnesses were called, including Miriam and Rhoda Stowell, daughters of Josiah Stowell of Bainbridge. Smith and Mr. Stowell had worked together searching for a silver mine from October 1825 to March 1826. During this five month period, Joseph frequently associated with the Stowell girls who were eighteen and twenty years of age.¹ The prosecutor seeking to determine the “character and conduct” [sexual behavior] of Joseph Smith called them as witnesses either because of rumors brought to his attention regarding Joseph and the girls, or because he was simply fishing to find something against his character. Both girls “were severally examined ... particularly as to my [Joseph Smith’s] behavior towards them, both in public and in private.” Apparently nothing came of these sexual accusations.²

The prosecutor may have called the Stowell girls as witnesses in the 1830 trial because of earlier sexual accusations made against Smith in nearby Harmony, Pennsylvania. When Joseph and his wife Emma Hale Smith were living in Harmony in 1828-1829, Emma’s cousin, Levi Lewis, accused Joseph of attempting “to seduce Eliza Winters,” Emma’s close friend. Lewis further said that he was well “acquainted with Joseph Smith Jr. and Martin Harris, and that he has heard them both say, [that] adultery was no crime. Harris said he did not blame Smith for his attempt to seduce Eliza Winters.”³ Elizabeth [Eliza] Winter was born in 1812, making her sixteen years old at the time. She “was often at Smith’s home and much in Mrs. Smith’s company. The young women were on very intimate terms,” said Harmony resident, Mrs. Rhamanthus M. Stocker.⁴ Joseph and Emma’s abrupt May 1829 departure from Harmony, may have been precipitated in part by Levi Lewis’s accusations that Joseph had acted improperly toward Miss Winters. Fifty years later, Levi’s brother, Hiel Lewis, repeated these same sexual accusations against Smith in the *Amboy [IL.] Journal*.⁵

Similar sexual allegations were made against Joseph Smith Jr., in Hiram, Ohio, at the John Johnson home on 24 March 1832. Joseph and Emma were living with the Johnson family at the time. Luke Johnson, later to be one of the twelve apostles, was still single at twenty-five and living with his parents when the incident occurred. He wrote:

[W]hile Joseph was yet at my father's, a mob of forty or fifty came to his house, a few entered his room in the middle of the night, and Carnot Mason dragged Joseph out of bed by the hair of his head; he was then seized by as many as could get hold of him, and taken about forty rods from the house, stretched on a board, and tantalized in the most insulting and brutal manner; they tore off the few night clothes that he had on, for the purpose of emasculating him, and had Dr. Dennison there to perform the operation [castration]; but when the Dr. saw the Prophet stripped and stretched on the plank, his heart failed him, and he refused to operate. The mob ... in attempting to force open his jaws, they broke one of his front teeth to pour a vial of some obnoxious drug [aqua-fortis, a poison] into his mouth. The mob [then] became divided [because they] did not succeed, ... but [instead had to settle for] poured tar over him, and then stuck feathers in it and left him ... [then] part of the mob went to the house that Sidney Rigdon occupied, and dragged him out, and besmeared him with tar and feathers.

Persons identified as being part of this attack besides Mason and Dr. Dennison, included Simonds Ryder, Warren Waste, Jacob Scott, a man named Fullar, and Eli Johnson. Many of these men had recently apostatized from the church.⁶ The mob action of March 24th, appears to have occurred for two reasons. Ryder said the attack occurred because “a plot was laid to take their property from them and place it under the control of Smith.”⁷ Eli Johnson was more specific. He was troubled because Smith and Rigdon were urging his brother John Johnson to “let them have his property,”⁸ and was “furious because he suspected Joseph of being intimate with his sister [actually she was his sixteen year old niece⁹], Nancy Mirinda Johnson, and he was screaming for Joseph's castration.”¹⁰ Unsolicited sexual behaviors may have been the more urgent reason. The attack took place “in the middle of the night,” suggesting a crime that would arouse immediate action. Procuring the services of Dr. Dennison prior to the attack also suggests a crime of passion may have been committed.

Rumors about Joseph Smith's sexual behavior multiplied in Kirtland, Ohio, from 1832-1835. Benjamin F. Winchester, a close friend of the prophet said the Kirtland accusations of scandal and “licentious conduct” against Smith was discussed, “especially among the women. Joseph's name was connected with scandalous relations with two or three families.”¹¹ Martin Harris in recalling a second incident from the early Kirtland period, said: “In or about the year 1833” Joseph's “servant girl” [a Ms. Hill] claimed that the prophet had made “improper proposals to her, which created quite a talk amongst the people.” When Smith came to him for advice, Harris, supposing that there was nothing to the story, told him to “take no notice of the girl, that she was full of the devil, and wanted to destroy the prophet of God.” But, according to Harris, Smith “acknowledged that there was more truth than poetry in what the girl said.” Harris then said that “he would have nothing to do in the matter,” and that Smith would have to “get out of the matter the best way he knew how.”¹²

William E. McLellin, a former Mormon apostle, relates the details of this incident, including how Joseph resolved “the matter” with Emma. Writing to their oldest son, Joseph Smith III, McLellin said: “Your Mother (if she feels disposed) can give you a rather *black catalogue* [of events] reaching back as far as your birth” [1832]. McLellin began with the “Miss Hill” incident:

I visited your Mother and family in 1847 [August 28th], and held a lengthy conversation with her, retired in the Mansion house in Nauvoo. I did not ask her to tell, but I told her some stories I had heard. And she told me whether I was properly informed. Dr. F[rederick] G. Williams [a member of the First Presidency of the Church during the Ms. Hill incident] practiced [medicine] with me in Clay Co. Mo. during the latter part of 1838. And he told me that at your birth [6 November 1832] your father committed an act with a Miss Hill—a hired girl. Emma saw him, and spoke to him. He desisted, but Mrs. Smith refused to be satisfied. He called in Dr. Williams ... [and others] to reconcile Emma. But she told them just as the circumstances took place. He found he was caught. He confessed humbly, and begged forgiveness. Emma and all forgave him. She told me this story was true!!

A third Kirtland incident occurred in 1835, with nineteen year old Fanny Ward Alger, one of ten children born to church members Samuel and Clarissa Alger. Continuing his narrative of events to Joseph III, McLellin said:

Again, I told her [Emma] I heard that one night she missed Joseph and Fanny Alger. She went to the barn and saw him and Fanny in the barn together alone. She looked through a crack and saw the transaction!!! She told me this story *too* was true.¹³

Associate President Oliver Cowdery said that he learned of this incident from Joseph Smith and that Joseph had confided to him that “he had confessed to Emma,” seeking her forgiveness.¹⁴ Fanny Alger and her family left Kirtland, in September 1836 and moved to Dublin, Indiana, where she married non-Mormon Solomon Custer shortly after on 16 November 1836. Joseph Smith never saw Fanny Alger again.¹⁵ Cowdery was probably the first to openly talk about the Alger affair. In November 1837, he “insinuate[d] that Joseph Smith Jr. was guilty of adultery” in a conversation with George W. Harris and again with Apostle David W. Patten.¹⁶ In a letter to his brother Warren Cowdery on 21 January 1838, Oliver was more blunt. He referred to Smith’s deed as “a dirty, nasty, filthy affair of his and Fanny Algers.”¹⁷ On 12 April 1838, Oliver was excommunicated, with nine charges listed, the second being for “seeking to destroy the character of President Joseph Smith jr by falsly insinuating that he was guilty of adultery.”¹⁸

During an eighteen month period from 1841-1843, documentary evidence reveals that Joseph Smith married thirty-three plural wives. Eleven were single girls, ages thirteen to nineteen; another eleven were single women over age nineteen; and eleven were married women.¹⁹ One Mormon scholar has claimed that Fanny Alger was Joseph’s first polygamist wife.²⁰ However, to make the case compelling; the following observations need to be addressed. (1) There is no marriage license or record of the ordinance. (2) There is no revelation authorizing polygamous marriages until 1840. Joseph Smith may have talked about polygamy in Kirtland, but there is no evidence that he practiced it until 1841, in Nauvoo, Illinois. (3) Joseph Smith did not claim the power to “bind on earth and seal in the heavens” eternally, until Elijah appeared to himself and Oliver Cowdery in the Kirtland temple on 3 April 1836, perhaps sometime after the Alger incident.²¹ (4) Fanny left the state and quickly rejected counsel by marrying a non-Mormon, something one would not expect from a Mormon plural wife.

Sometimes a spouse’s intuition tells them if their partner has been sexually unfaithful. Emma Smith said that with Joseph she “knew.” William McLellin later recorded in his notebook his extended conversation with Emma Smith on 28 August 1847: “Mrs. Joseph Smith, the widow of the Prophet, told me in 1847 that she **knew** her husband – the Prophet practiced both adultery and polygamy.”²²

Sexual allegations involving Eliza Winters, Nancy Miranda Johnson, Ms. Hill, Fanny Alger and perhaps Miriam and Rhoda Stowell were made against the character of Joseph Smith from 1829-1835. As a married man Joseph Smith must have been mortified to be accused of improper sexual conduct with at least four young women during this six year period. Each reader can evaluate these allegations for themselves.

Endnotes

1. William Henry Harrison Stowell, *Stowell Genealogy* (Rutland VT: Tuttle Co., 1922), 230. Miriam was born 22 May 1807; Rhoda, 11 March 1805.
2. Dean C. Jessee, ed., *The Papers of Joseph Smith: Autobiographical and Historical Writings* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1989), 1:314; Ibid, 254n2.
3. Affidavit of Levi Lewis, 20 Mar. 1834, *Susquehanna Register and Northern Pennsylvanian*, 1 May 1834, 1. For Harris's 1828-1829 alleged view that 'adultery was no crime,' see the following. Prior to 1829, Lucy Harris, Martin's wife, said of her husband's behavior with a Mrs. Haggard: "[H]e spent most of his leisure hours [with Mrs. Haggard]; and made her presents of articles from the store and [our] house. He carried these presents in a private manner, and frequently when he went there, he would pretend to be going to some of the neighbors, on an errand, or to be going into the fields. After getting out of sight of the house, he would steer a straight course for Haggard's house, especially if [Mr.] Haggard was from home, At times when Haggard was from home, he would go there in the manner above described, and stay till twelve or one o'clock at night, and sometimes until day light" (Affidavit of Lucy Harris, 1 Dec., 1833, in E. D. Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled* (Painesville, OH: by the Author, 1834, 256; qtd. in Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 2:36). In March 1830 a revelation addressed to Martin Harris warned him: "I command thee that thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife; nor seek thy neighbor's life" (D&C 19:25). Ezra Booth, a group companion to Martin Harris in Missouri, in 1831, wrote shortly after his apostasy to Rev. Ira Eddy, on 6 Dec. 1831: "[I]t has been made known by revelation [see revelation to Joseph Smith, July 1831, in H. Michael Marquardt, *The Joseph Smith Revelations: Text & Commentary* (Signature Books: Salt Lake City, 1999), 374-76.], that it will be pleasing to the Lord, should they [the single Elders] form a matrimonial alliance with the Natives; and by this means the Elders, who comply with the thing so pleasing to the Lord, and for which the Lord has promised to bless those who do it abundantly ... It has been made known to one [Harris], who has left his wife in the State of New York [Harris was in Missouri], that he is entirely free from his wife, and he is at pleasure to take him a wife from among the Lamanites. It is easily perceived that this permission was perfectly suited to his desires. I have frequently heard him state that the Lord had made it known to him, that he is as free from his wife as from any other women; and the only crime I ever heard alleged against her is, she is violently opposed to Mormonism" (qtd. in Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled*, 220).
4. *Early Mormon Documents* 4+ vols. ed., Dan Vogel (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1996-), 4:346.
5. Hiel Lewis, "That Mormon History – Reply to Elder Cadwell," *Amboy [IL.] Journal*, 5 Aug. 1879, 1.
6. *The Pioneer Camp of the Saints: the 1846 and 1847 Mormon trail Journals of Thomas Bullock*, ed., Will Bagley (Spokane, WA: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1997), 107; "The History of Luke Johnson (By Himself.)," *Deseret News* 8 (May 26, 1858): 57; Brigham Young, 15 Nov. 1864, *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (London and Liverpool: LDS Booksellers Depot, 1854-86) 11:4-6. Young was not yet a church member when this incident occurred.
7. Hayden, *Early History of the Disciples' Church in the Western Reserve*, 221, qtd. in William Alexander Linn, *The Story of the Mormons* (New York: Macmillan, 1923), 134-35; rpt. in Donna Hill, *Joseph Smith: The First Mormon* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., 1977), 146.
8. S. F. Whitney (Newel's brother), in Arthur B. Deming, ed., *Naked Truths About Mormonism* 1 (Oakland CA, Apr. 1888), 1; rpt. in Hill, *Joseph Smith: The First Mormon*, 466n10. Eliphaz Johnson was John Johnson's brother, not his son. See LDS Family History Library under the family group record of Israel Johnson, 2.
9. Nancy was born 28 June 1815, making her sixteen year's old, see LDS Family History Suite – CD Rom.
10. Hill, *Joseph Smith: The First Mormon*, 146, 466n10; also in Edmund L. Kelley and Clark Braden, *Public Discussion of the Issues between the RLDS Church and the Church of Christ (Disciples) Held in Kirtland, Ohio, Beginning February 12, and Closing March 8, 1884* (Lamoni, IA: Herald Publishing House, 1913), 202.

11. Benjamin Winchester, "Primitive Mormonism" *The Daily Tribune* (Salt Lake City), 22 Sept. 1889.
12. Martin Harris qtd. in Anthony Metcalfe, ca. 1873, *Ten Years before the Mast* (Malad ID: Author, 1888), 72.
13. William E. McLellin to Joseph Smith III, 10 Jan. 1861; and *ibid*, July 1872, 3, Library-Archives, Community of Christ (RLDS), emphasis mine. Fanny Alger was born 30 Sept. 1816, making her nineteen years old, LDS Family History Suite – CD Rom.
14. Donald Q. Cannon and Lyndon W. Cook, eds., *Far West Record: Minutes of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1830-1844* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1983), 167.
15. Richard S. Van Wagoner, *Mormon Polygamy: A History* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1986), 10, 227n14.
16. Cannon and Cook, *Far West Record*, 167.
17. Oliver Cowdery to Warren Cowdery, 21 Jan. 1838. Original in Huntington Library, copy LDS archives.
18. Cannon and Cook, *Far West Record*, 162-63.
19. Todd Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness: The Plural Wives of Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1997), 4-7.
20. *Ibid*, 26-33.
21. See Doctrine and Covenants 110:13-16; 128:10.
22. William E. McLellin Notebook, ca. 1880, John L. Traughber Collection, Ms 666, Manuscripts Division, J. Willard Marriott Library, U of U, Salt lake City, emphasis mine. A photograph from this document was published in *The Salt Lake Tribune*, 2 Dec. 1985. On 6 Sept. 1878, McLellin was visited by Joseph F. Smith and Orson Pratt. Joseph F. recorded in his diary: "He [McLellin] said Emma Smith told him that Joseph was both a polygamist and an adulterer ..." Joseph Fielding Smith, comp., *Life of Joseph F. Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1938), 239.

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MORMONS: WHO THEY ARE, WHAT THEY BELIEVE - - Discussion Guide

Joseph Smith's Kirtland Bank Failure

<http://www.utlm.org/onlineresources/josephsmithsbank.htm>

Joseph Smith's Kirtland Bank Failure

While it is common knowledge that Joseph Smith founded the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, few know of his attempt to found a bank in Kirtland, Ohio. This important event in Mormon history was reportedly done because of a revelation that Joseph Smith received. The following excerpt is from *Mormonism - Shadow or Reality?* page 531

((http://www.utlm.org/booklist/titles/mormonismshadoworreality_ub001.htm)):

Warren Parrish, who had been an officer in the bank and had apostatized from the Church, made this statement: "I have listened to him [i.e. Smith] with feelings of no ordinary kind, when he declared that the AUDIBLE VOICE OF GOD, INSTRUCTED HIM TO ESTABLISH A BANKING-ANTI BANKING INSTITUTION, who like Aaron's rod SHALL SWALLOW UP ALL OTHER BANKS (the Bank of Monroe excepted,) and grow and flourish and spread from the rivers to the ends of the earth, and survive when all others should be laid in ruins." (Painesville Republican, February 22, 1838, as quoted in *Conflict at Kirtland*, page 297)

Wilford Woodruff, who remained true to the Church and became the fourth President, confirmed the fact that Joseph Smith claimed to have a revelation concerning the bank. Under the date of January 6, 1837, he recorded the following in his journal: "I also herd [sic] President Joseph Smith, jr., declare in the presence of F. Williams, D. Whitmer, S. Smith, W. Parrish, and others in the Deposit office that HE HAD RECEIVED THAT MORNING THE WORD OF THE LORD UPON THE SUBJECT OF THE KIRTLAND SAFETY SOCIETY. He was alone in a room by himself and he had not only [heard] the voice of the Spirit upon the Subject but even an AUDIBLE VOICE. He did not tell us at that time what the Lord said upon the subject but remarked that if we would give heed to the commandments the Lord had given this morning all would be well." ("Wilford Woodruff's Journal," January 6, 1837, as quoted in *Conflict at Kirtland*, page 296)

A brief account of the failed bank is told in *Mormon Enigma*:
(http://www.utlm.org/booklist/titles/mormonenigma_xb073.htm)

"Construction of the temple had temporarily boosted the economy of Kirtland, but after the dedication the economy declined as poor converts arrived in ever increasing numbers. The old settlers attempted to keep them out of Kirtland by economic pressures, but the Mormon population increased twentyfold while the landholdings only quadrupled. In November 1836 Joseph and other church leaders drew up articles for a bank to provide capital for investments. It was a desperate gamble. Oliver Cowdery went to Philadelphia for plates to print bank notes, and Orson Hyde went to the legislature in Columbus with a petition for a bank license. It was refused. Oliver returned with plates for the Kirtland Safety Society Bank, but Orson Hyde came back without a charter. The plates were so expensive that they printed some specie anyway, writing in "Anti" before the word "Bank" and "ing" after it. The notes read, "Kirtland Safety Society Anti-Banking Company," and the paper passed as legal tender from a joint-stock company. At first the money circulated wildly. When merchants and businessmen who were more sophisticated than the Mormons began to redeem their notes, Joseph could see that a run would ruin the bank. After one month he and Sidney Rigdon resigned as officers but the bank failed. This affected Joseph's status.

People who were convinced that Joseph had intended a swindle at the outset attacked him verbally and threatened him physically. This disruption forced Joseph to leave the city frequently....

In April 1837 Joseph went into hiding without seeing Emma before he left.
(*Mormon Enigma*, pp. 62)



Photos of 3 dollar bills issued by the Kirtland Bank. The bill on the right
(http://www.utlm.org/images/3dollarbill_antibank.jpg) has "Anti" and "-ing Co." added. The bill on the left
(http://www.utlm.org/images/3dollarbill_bank.jpg) does not.

Fawn Brodie details this about the demise of the Kirtland Safety Society Anti-Banking Company:

"If the bank needed a final blow to shatter what little prestige it still held among the faithful, it received it when Warren Parrish resigned as cashier, left the church, and began openly to describe the banking methods of the prophet. Parrish was later accused of absconding with \$25,000, but if he took the sum it must have been in WORTHLESS BANK NOTES, since that amount of specie in the vaults would have saved the bank, at least during Joseph's term as cashier." (*No Man Knows My History*, page 198

(http://www.utlm.org/booklist/titles/nomanknowsmymyhistorypaperback_xb010.htm))

"The toppling of the Kirtland bank loosed a hornets' nest. Creditors swarmed in upon Joseph armed with threats and warrants. He was terribly in debt. There is no way of knowing exactly how much he and his leading elders had borrowed, since the loyal Mormons left no itemized account of their own claims. But the local non-Mormon creditors whom he could not repay brought a series of suits against the prophet which the Geauga county court duly recorded. These records tell a story of trouble that would have demolished the prestige and broken the spirit of a lesser man.

"Thirteen suits were brought against him between June 1837 and April 1839, to collect sums totaling nearly \$25,000. The damages asked amounted to almost \$35,000. He was arrested seven times in four months, and his followers managed heroically to raise the \$38,428 required for bail. Of the thirteen suits only six were settled out of court-about \$12,000 out of the \$25,000. In the other seven the creditors either were awarded damages or won them by default.

"Joseph had many additional debts that never resulted in court action. Some years later he compiled a list of still outstanding Kirtland loans, which amounted to more than \$33,000. If one adds to these the two great loans of \$30,000 and \$60,000 borrowed in New York and Buffalo in 1836, it would seem that the Mormon leaders owed to non-Mormon individuals and firms well over \$150,000." (*No Man Knows My History*, pp. 199-202)

Was Joseph Smith to blame for the failure of the bank or "anti-bank" as it was called? Robert Kent Fielding stated the following:

"It was natural that blame for the entire situation should be charged against the Prophet. They had gathered to Kirtland at his command; the idea of purchasing housing lots in the great subdivision scheme had his full support; he had inferred that

the bank would not only succeed, but would one day be the most powerful institution of its kind....the Church populace was genuinely disillusioned when the bank failed. It was difficult for them to comprehend that a man who claimed to have divine revelation in religious matters could fail so miserably in economic affairs.... No amount of shifting of blame could obscure the fact that a prophet had failed in a grand project.... As the Sheriff appeared ever more regularly with summons and as the fortunes and anticipations of one after another of the leaders faced the humiliating prospect of publicly acknowledged incompetence and bankruptcy, the discipline and sense of responsibility, which are the heart of all organizations, broke completely and plunged Mormondom into ecclesiastical anarchy." ("The Growth of the Mormon Church in Kirtland, Ohio," typed copy, pp. 233, 234, 237 & 238, as it appears in *Mormonism - Shadow or Reality?* pp. 533)

In a thesis written at Brigham Young University, Gary Dean Guthrie stated:

"The State legislature refused the Kirtland Safety Society its charter upon which the name of the bank was changed to Kirtland Anti-Banking Society....Joseph and Sidney Rigdon were tried in court for violating the law, were found guilty and fined \$1,000. They appealed on the grounds that the institution was an association and not a bank; the plea was never ruled upon as the bank suspended payments and closed its doors. Other lawsuits followed....

"During the summer of 1837, Joseph spent much of his time away from Kirtland to avoid these lawsuits.... Apostles Luke S. Johnson, Lyman E. Johnson, and John F. Boynton were rejected and disfellowshipped. "The blame of the bank failure fell heavily on Joseph. He had issued a formal invitation to his followers to take stock in the venture and the institution had been organized outside the law. Heber C. Kimball later was to comment that at this moment, 'there were not twenty persons on earth that would declare that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God.' Six of the apostles came out in open rebellion....Joseph first established the bank by revelation and then had to later admit that because of poor management and other internal and external conditions the project was a failure." ("Joseph Smith As An Administrator," M.A. thesis, Brigham Young University, May 1969, pp. 80, 81, 82, 85, 86 and 88, as it appears in *Mormonism - Shadow or Reality?* pp. 533

For more information on the Kirtland Bank see our book *The Mormon Kingdom*, Vol. 1, pp. 11-20 (http://www.utlm.org/booklist/titles/mormonkingdomvol1_ub029.htm).

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MORMONS: WHO THEY ARE, WHAT THEY BELIEVE - - Discussion Guide

Missouri State Archives—The Missouri Mormon War
<http://www.sos.mo.gov/archives/resources/mormon.asp>

MISSOURI STATE ARCHIVES The Missouri Mormon War

In the 1830s, “Mormonism” commanded center stage in Missouri politics. Joseph Smith and the church he founded in New York State in 1830 quickly gained converts, attracting considerable attention throughout the northeastern United States. Originally named the Church of Christ, it subsequently became the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Believers were referred to as “Mormons” because of the church’s adherence to “The Book of Mormon,” a companion scripture to the Bible that Smith claimed to have translated, wherein the story of Jesus Christ appearing to the ancestors of the Native Americans was told.

That same year, Smith dispatched a handful of missionaries to Missouri’s western border to preach the “restored gospel” to the Native American tribes concentrated there. In 1831 Smith proclaimed that God had designated western Missouri as the place where “Zion” would be “gathered” in anticipation of Christ’s second coming. His small band of missionaries soon became a steady stream of converts anxious to establish Zion in Missouri.

Within a few years, the migration and settlement of Latter-day Saints in frontier Missouri led to events that would earn Mormonism a painful place in Missouri history. The state’s “Old Settlers” (usually recent immigrants to the Missouri frontier themselves) characterized the Mormon settlers as fanatics whose clannish behavior made a mockery of republican institutions by placing power in the hands of a single man. The Mormons claimed that they had done nothing wrong, and were attacked for their religious beliefs. Violence broke out in 1833 as the “Old Settlers” under the guise of “extra-legal” justice took the law into their own hands.

It soon became clear that Missouri non-Mormons and Mormons could not live in the same area harmoniously. In 1836 a “separate but equal” proposal was finally devised to solve this problem, whereby the state legislature created a new county, “Caldwell,” in northwest Missouri as a sort of Mormon “Indian Reservation.” But the booming Mormon population, swelled by the immigration of thousands of eastern converts doomed this to failure, as Mormon settlers burst the borders of Caldwell County and spilled into neighboring counties. Violence broke out again at an election riot in 1838. Old Settler mobs and Mormon paramilitary units roamed the countryside. When the Mormons attacked a duly authorized militia under the belief it was an anti-Mormon mob, Missouri’s governor, Lilburn Boggs, ordered the Saints expelled from the state, or “exterminated,” if necessary. The conflict’s viciousness escalated, however, even without official sanction, when, on October 30, 1838, an organized mob launched a surprise attack on the small Mormon community of Haun’s Mill, massacring eighteen unsuspecting men

and boys. Over the next year, around eight thousand church members, often ragged and deprived of their property, left Missouri for Illinois.

The Missouri State Archives' "Mormon War Papers" shed light on this frequently misunderstood episode of Missouri history. This collection includes documents such as Governor Bogg's infamous "Extermination Order" (<http://www.sos.mo.gov/archives/resources/findingaids/miscMormonRecords.asp?rec=eo>), but also many lesser known, and less appreciated, documents that are well worthy of study, such as the report of the legislative joint committee appointed to investigate the "disturbances" between Mormons and non-Mormons. Included also are such items as legislative debates and the governors' state of the state addresses in which the "Mormon problem" is discussed. The collection also includes the criminal hearing of Joseph Smith and other church leaders for treason and other crimes.

The Missouri State Archives would like to express its thanks to the Genealogical Society of Utah, the St. Louis Mercantile Library (and its director John Hoover), the Columbia Stake of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and Stephen S .Davis for their assistance in making these documents available.

Records of the Missouri Mormon War

- Mormon War Papers, 1838-1841
(<http://www.sos.mo.gov/archives/resources/findingaids/rg005-01.asp>)
This collection includes records such as the journal of the joint legislative committee that investigated the difficulties with the Mormons, the report of the complaints against the Mormons, letters relating to the movement of the militia, a petition to Governor Boggs from Mormons in Carroll County asking for protection, reports to the governor from the field, and evidence given in the trial of Joseph Smith, Jr. and others.
- Document Containing the Orders, Correspondence, etc. in relation to the Disturbances with the Mormons
(<http://www.sos.mo.gov/archives/resources/findingaids/miscMormonRecords.asp?rec=doc>)
Publication by order of the General Assembly of evidence given before the Hon. Austin A. King, Judge of the fifth Judicial circuit of the State of Missouri, at the court house in Richmond, in a criminal court of inquiry, begun November 12, 1838, on the trial of Joseph Smith, Jr., and others, for high treason and other crimes against the State.
- Records of Thomas Reynolds, Office of Governor
(<http://www.sos.mo.gov/archives/resources/findingaids/rg003-07.asp>)
Finding aid for records of Governor Thomas Reynolds includes correspondence related to Mormons (<http://www.sos.mo.gov/archives/resources/findingaids/rg003-07.asp#b2f61>) and a petition regarding pardon of a prisoner in Caldwell County (<http://www.sos.mo.gov/archives/resources/findingaids/rg003-07.asp#b2f4>).
- Governor Boggs' Extermination Order and Governor Bond's Rescission Order
(<http://www.sos.mo.gov/archives/resources/findingaids/miscMormonRecords.asp?rec=eo>)
- Papers of James L. Minor, Office of Secretary of State
(<http://www.sos.mo.gov/archives/resources/findingaids/miscMormonRecords.asp?rec=min>)

or)

Requests for copies of the transcriptions of the Mormon disturbance.

- General Assembly of Missouri
(<http://www.sos.mo.gov/archives/resources/findingaids/miscMormonRecords.asp?rec=ga>)
Petitions of individuals for property lost during the Mormon War, claims for payments of troops and militia leaders, and unnumbered bills for claims, petitions, and relief.
- Journals of the Senate and House of Representatives of Missouri, 1838-1839
(<http://www.sos.mo.gov/archives/resources/findingaids/miscMormonRecords.asp?rec=journals>)
- Messages and Proclamations of the Governors of the State of Missouri
(<http://www.sos.mo.gov/archives/resources/findingaids/miscMormonRecords.asp?rec=msg>)
- Soldiers' Records (<http://www.sos.mo.gov/archives/soldiers/>)
The *Soldiers' Records* is a comprehensive database abstracted from the individual service cards and listing more than 576,000 Missourians who served in the military from territorial times through World War I. Included in this database is a transcription of the service cards of soldiers serving in the Mormon War.
- County Records
(<http://www.sos.mo.gov/archives/resources/findingaids/miscMormonRecords.asp?rec=county>)
Court records found in Ray and Jackson counties

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MORMONS: WHO THEY ARE, WHAT THEY BELIEVE - - Discussion Guide

The Battle of Crooked River

<http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~raymondfamily/BattleCrookedRiver.html>

The Battle of Crooked River

By Charles C. Rich

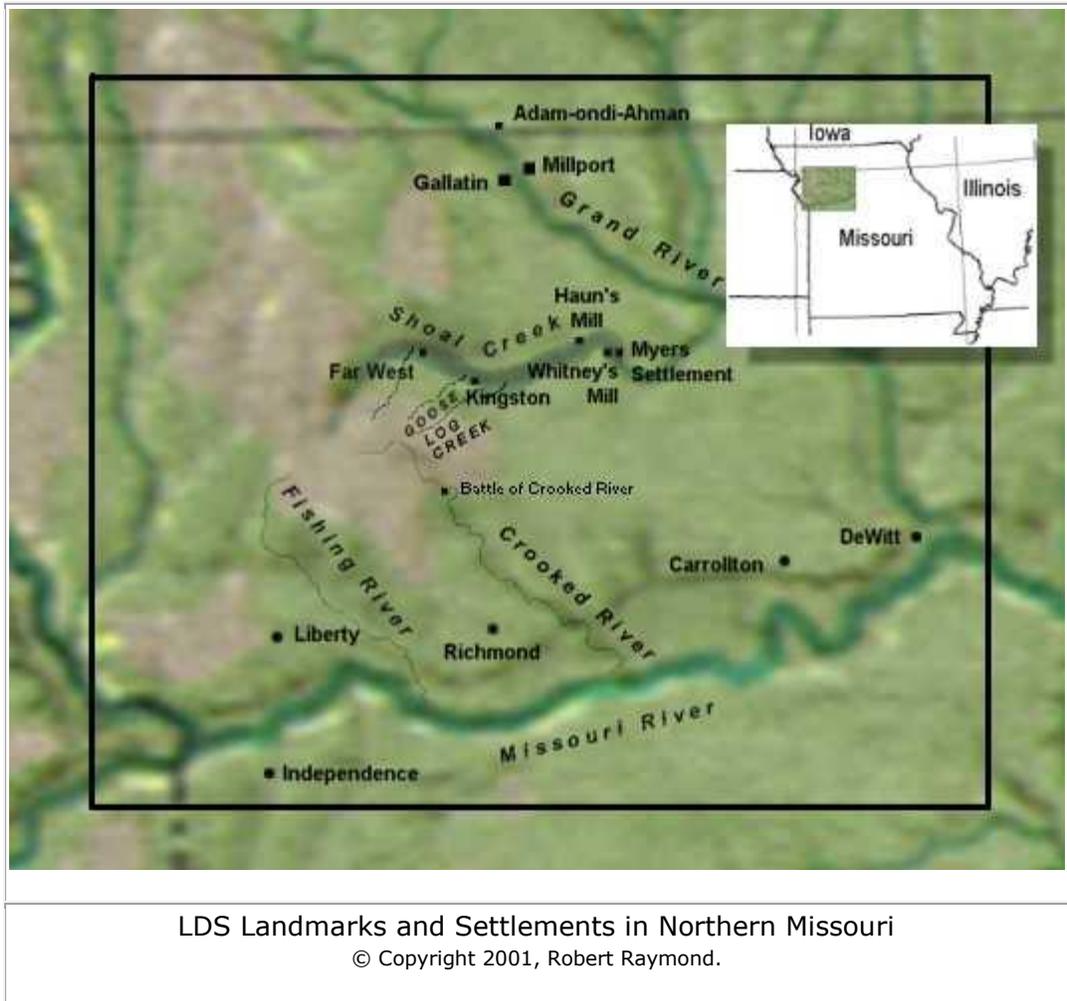
News came to Far West that the Rev. Samuel Bogart, with a mob of 75 men, were committing depredations on Log Creek, destroying property and taking prisoners. Whereupon Judge Higbee issued an order to raise a force to disperse the mob. A call to arms was sounded about 10 o'clock at night. Capt. D. [David] W. Patten and myself with about forty others volunteered, which number he thought would be sufficient, but as I believed a battle was inevitable I proposed to go and raise some more men and meet Captain Patten about six miles from Far West: which was agreed to. I rode through the settlements on Goose and Log creeks, and rallied the brethren as



"The Battle of Crooked River," by C.C.A. Christensen.
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Used by permission.

I went along. When we met we numbered about seventy-five, and were divided into companies of ten, and then proceeded by the main road, four miles, to near Crooked river, where we left our horses tied to Randolph McDonald's fence, and placed a few men to guard them. Captain Patten divided the party into three companies, taking command of the first himself, I commanded the second company, and James Durfee the third. Apprehending that the mob were encamped at Field's house—Captain Patten took his men and went round to the right of the field, Durfee through the field, and I round to the left. I arrived at the house about five minutes before the other companies, which gave me a little time to reconnoiter the premises, Captain Patten made a short speech, exhorted the brethren to trust on the Lord for victory, then ordered a march to the ford, along the road.

When near the top of the hill, the words, 'Who comes there,' were heard, and at the same instant the report of a gun; young P. [Pat] O'Banion reeled out of the ranks and fell mortally wounded; whereupon Captain Patten ordered a charge, and rushed down the hill; when within about fifty yards of the clump, we formed a line. Captain Patten's



LDS Landmarks and Settlements in Northern Missouri

© Copyright 2001, Robert Raymond.

company at the right, my company next, which brought me in the road, brother Patten's company was partly shielded by a club of trees, and brother Durfee's by a thicket of hazel brush.

The mob formed under the bank of the creek, below their tents, and fired upon us all their guns, brother James Hendricks (<http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~raymondfamily/ddorris5.htm>) fell wounded near me on my left, and brother Hodges fell wounded on my right. Captain Patten ordered the company to fire, which was obeyed immediately, after which a calm succeeded for a moment. I commenced calling our watch-word, 'God and liberty.' in which all the companies joined. Captain Patten ordered us to charge—the enemy fired a few shots and fled, two lingered behind, Brother Patten pursued one, and I the other; the man that he pursued wheeled and shot him. Brother Patten wore a white blanket coat which made him a conspicuous mark.

The mob left all their animals and camp equipage and dispersed in nearly all directions, and were so completely routed that almost every one of them reported that Bogart's whole company were destroyed and he alone was left to tell the tale.

We took three of our brethren whom they had prisoners, one of whom was severely wounded by the mob; we gathered up Captain Patten and the others who were wounded and put them in a wagon, and left for Far West; the sun was not yet risen. After travelling a few miles, brother Patten's sufferings became so great he wished to be left; he and Brother Seeley were then placed upon litters and carried by the brethren. When we arrived near Log creek, we met President Joseph Smith, Hyrum Smith, H. C. Kimball and others. At this place Brother [David] Patten became so ill, he was not able to be borne any further, we rested a short time."

Charles Rich Journal in "History," Millennial Star 26 (1864) - p.441

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MORMONS: WHO THEY ARE, WHAT THEY BELIEVE - - Discussion Guide

Missouri Governor Lilburn Boggs' Extermination Order

[http://www.sos.mo.gov/archives/resources/findingaids/miscMorm
Recs/eo/18381027_ExtermOrder.pdf](http://www.sos.mo.gov/archives/resources/findingaids/miscMormRecs/eo/18381027_ExtermOrder.pdf)

Head Quarters of the Mission
City of Jefferson
Oct. 27 1838

Sir
I send the order of this morning to you directing you to cause 400 mounted men to be raised within your division I have received by Amos Russer of Ray & White Williams one of my aide information of the most appalling character which entirely changes the face of things and places the Mormons in the attitude of an open and avowed defiance of the laws and of having made war upon the people of this State Your orders are therefore to hasten your operations with all possible speed The Mormons must be treated as enemies and must be exterminated or driven from the State if necessary for the public peace their outrages are beyond all description If you can increase your force you are authorized to do so to any extent you may consider necessary I have just issued

may consider necessary I have just issued
orders to Major Genl Willock of Marion Co to
raise 500 men and to march them to the
Northern part of Davids and then unite with
Genl Donphow of Clay who has been ordered
with 500 men to proceed to the same point for
the purpose of intercepting the retreat of the
army to the North. They have been directed
to communicate with you by express, you can
also communicate with them if you find it ne-
cessary. Instead therefore of proceeding to let
first directed to unite the Citizens of Davis
in their homes you will proceed immediately
to Richmond and then operate against the
53 Mormons. Brig Genl Parks of Ray has been
ordered to have four hundred of his Brigade

in readiness to join you at Richmond
The whole force will be placed under your
Command

I am very respectfully
Yr Obedt St
Silburn M Boggs
Com in Chief

To
Genl John Blount
Haystack Co.

MORMONS: WHO THEY ARE, WHAT THEY BELIEVE - - Discussion Guide

Did Joseph Smith order Missouri Governor Boggs' Assassination?

<http://www.truthandgrace.com/1842MOgovernor.htm>

Mormon History

Attempted Assassination of Former Missouri Governor - 1842

Daily Missouri Republican – May 12, 1842

A FOUL DEED. -- By the steamboat Thames, we learn that Liliburn W. Boggs, late Governor of this State, was most basely shot on the night of the 6th inst. at Independence, in this State. Gov. Boggs' residence was, we believe, in the suburb or edge of the town. The Clerk of the Thames has furnished us with the following statement of the particulars:

Gov. Boggs was shot by an assassin on Friday 6th inst., in the evening, while reading in a room in his own house, in Independence, Mo.

His son, a boy, hearing a report, ran into the room, and found the Governor sitting in his chair, with his jaw fallen down, and his head leant back; and on discovering the injury done his father, gave the alarm.

Foot tracks were found in the garden, below the window, and a pistol picked up, supposed to have been overloaded, and thrown from the hand of the scoundrel who fired it. Three buck shot, of a heavy load, took effect; one going through his mouth, one into the brain, and another probably in or near the brain, all going into the back part of the head and neck.

The Gov. was alive on the morning of the 8th, but no hopes of recovery by his friends, and but slight hopes from his physicians.

A man was suspected, and the Sheriff most probably has possession of him by this time.

The pistol was one of a pair stolen some days previous from a baker in Independence, and the legal authorities have the description of the other.

In addition to the foregoing, we have the following from the Governor's brother-in-law, who resides in Independence.

The Warsaw Signal – July 9, 1842

NAUVOO.

We understand that the very mischief is brewing in Nauvoo, since the threatening of Bennett to expose the villainy of Joe and his satellites. Several of Joe's right hand men, among them, one of the Pratts, G. W. Robinson, and Sidney Rigdon, have left the church and joined Bennett's party.

One disclosure particularly will prove interesting -- and that is in relation to Bogg's murder. -- Bennett states that a Mr. Rockwell started suddenly from Nauvoo, about two weeks before Boggs' assassination; that he (Bennett) asked Joe where Rockwell had gone; and that Joe replied, that 'HE HAD GONE TO MISSOURI TO FULFIL PROPHECIES!!' He says further, that Rockwell returned to Nauvoo on the very day that the news of Governor Boggs' assassination arrived. Since that, the Prophet has presented said Rockwell with a carriage and horse, or horses; and he has suddenly become very flush of money, and lives in style. These statements we give as we received them. It is said that Bennett has affidavits to prove every fact above stated, and will shortly present them to the world. If this be true, there will but little doubt remain, that Joe Smith was the real instigator of Boggs's assassination.

MORMONISM. -- The disclosures made by Gen. Bennett in relation to this sect, are far from being void of interest. We publish to-day some matters from Bennett in relation to the attempted assassination of Gov. Boggs, which are at least of sufficient importance to be inquired into. One of their own papers, the Nauvoo Wasp, while defending Smith from any participation in the matter, gloried in the act, for he says "*it remains to be known who did the noble deed.*" Apart from the act of which he is

accessory, there are now pending against him in this State indictments for crimes sufficient not only to predicate a demand upon but to induce the Governor of Illinois to give him up.

American Bulletin – July 14, 1842

FOR THE BULLETIN.

MESSRS. EDITORS: -- In accordance with your request I now proceed to give you some account of the attempt on the life of Ex-Governor Boggs of Missouri.

Joseph Smith, the Mormon Prophet, in a public congregation in Nauvoo, last season, (1841,) *prophecied* that Lilburn W. Boggs, Ex-Governor of Missouri, should die by *violent hands* within a year. Mr. C. S. Hamilton, of Carthage, Ill., stated in my presence, and in the presence of several other gentlemen, at the tavern house of Mr. Robinson, in Warsaw, Illinois, on Sunday, the 10th inst., that he was present and heard this prophecy; I was likewise present, as were many thousand people, and heard the prediction. The *faithful, Joe Smith* is called, from merited punishment.

In the Spring of 1842, Smith offered a reward of five hundred dollars to any man that would kill Boggs. I heard the offer made to some of the Danites, and told Smith that if he persisted in such a course, it would result in his ruin. Mr. Jonathan Clark, of Hancock county, Ill., stated in Carthage on the 6th inst., in the presence of Dr. Thomas L. Barnes, Jonas Hobart, myself and others, that Mr. Taylor, an English emigrant, told him that he heard Smith make the same offer and that he (Taylor) had, in consequence thereof *apostatized* and written home to his friends in Europe detailing the horrible facts.

Mr. O. P. Rockwell left Nauvoo from one to two months prior to the attempted assassination of Governor Boggs -- told Orson Pratt and wife that he (Rockwell) had been in Boggs' neighborhood, in Missouri, and had had the honor of standing on the corner of *Temple lot* in *Independence*, -- and returned to Nauvoo the day before the report of the attempted

assassination reached there -- said he came down the Missouri river to the Mississippi, then down to St. Louis, then up to Nauvoo, etc., etc. At that time the "Nauvoo Wasp" declared, "It remains to be *known* who did the NOBLE DEED." The Wasp was, and is yet, edited by Wm. Smith, brother to the Prophet.

Some weeks after Rockwell left Nauvoo I asked Smith where he had gone. "*Gone*," said he, "*gone to fulfil PROPHECY*," with a significant nod, giving me to understand that he had gone to fulfil his prediction in relation to the violent death of Boggs.

On the evening of the 29th ultimo, twelve of the Danites, dressed in female apparel, approached my boarding house, (Gen. Robinson's,) in Nauvoo, with their carriage wheels wrapped with blankets, and their horses' feet covered with cloths, to prevent noise, about 10 o'clock, for the purpose of conveying me off and assassinating me, and thus prevent disclosures -- but I was so admirably prepared with arms, as were also my friends, that after prowling around the house for some time, they retired.

On Friday, the 1st. inst., I went to Carthage; and on the 5th I had a call from Mr. O. P. Rockwell, the result of which is detailed in the following affidavits, to wit:

STATE OF ILLINOIS,
HANCOCK COUNTY,] ss.

Personally appeared before me, Samuel Marshall, a Justice of the Peace in and for said county, John C. Bennett, who being duly sworn according to law deposeth and saith, that on the 5th of July, 1842, at the house of Mr. Hamilton, in Carthage, Mr. O. P. Rockwell came to him and desired a private interview, to which deponent replied that if he (Rockwell) had any thing to say, he could speak it out before the gentlemen present. Rockwell said it was a private matter which interested them only -- deponent then went out with him. Rockwell said, "Doctor you do not know your friends, -- I am not your enemy -- and I do not wish you to make of my name in your publications;" deponent replied that he recognized Joe Smith and all his friends, as his personal enemies; to which Rockwell replied "I have been informed by Warner and Davis that you said Smith gave me fifty dollars and a wagon for shooting Boggs and I can and will whip any man that will tell such a cursed lie -- did you say so or not?" After looking at him for a

moment or two the deponent said, "I never said so, sir, but I did say, and I now say it to your face, that you left Nauvoo about two months before the attempted assassination of ex-Governor Boggs, of Missouri, and returned the day before the report of his assassination reached there; and that two persons, in Nauvoo, told me that you told them that you had been over the upper part of Missouri, and in Boggs' neighborhood," to which Rockwell replied, "well I was there; and if I shot Boggs they have got to prove it -- I never done an act in my life that I was ashamed of, and I do not fear to go any where that I have ever been, for I have done nothing criminal." Deponent replied, "certainly they have got to prove it on you if you did shoot him; I know nothing of what you *did*, as I was not there, I only know the *circumstances*, and from them I draw my own *inferences*, and the public will theirs -- and now, sir, if either you, or Joe Smith think you can intimidate me by your threats, you are mistaken in your man, and I wish you to understand distinctly that I am opposed to Joe and his holy host -- I shall tell the truth fearlessly, and regardless of consequences." Rockwell replied, "If you say that Joe Smith gave me fifty dollars and a wagon to shoot Boggs, I can whip you, and will do it in a crowd." Deponent then said -- "why are you harping on what I have *not* said, I have told you what *I have* said to your face and in presence of these gentlemen, and you have acknowledged the truth of all I have said, and I shall say it again, and if you wish to fight I am ready for you." The conversation then ceased on that subject. Rockwell told deponent that he had been accused wrongfully of wishing to assassinate him, or of being ordered by Smith to do so; but deponent said, "I believe that Joe ordered you to do it -- I know that orders were sent from him to the Danites for that purpose." Rockwell said that Smith had never given him any such orders, neither was it his intention; and further the deponent saith not. however, will deny this, in order to save "THE LORD'S ANNOINTED." as

JOHN C. BENNETT.

Sworn to, and subscribed, this 7th day of July, 1842, before me, at my office in Carthage.

SAMUEL MARSHALL, J. P.

{Seal.}

STATE OF ILLINOIS, }
HANCOCK COUNTY, } ss.

Personally appeared before me, Samuel Marshall, a justice of the peace in and for said county, Clayton Tweed, who being duly sworn according to law, deposes and saith, That on the 5th day of July, 1842, at the house of Mr. Hamilton, in Carthage, Mr. O. P. Rockwell came up to Gen. John C. Bennett, and said to him, "I wish to have some private conversation with you, will you come out of doors with me?" To which Bennett replied, "No, sir, if you have any thing to say to me, speak it out before these gentlemen." Rockwell then observed, "It is a matter which interests you and myself alone, and I should like much to see you a few minutes by ourselves." They then went out, and were some time in conversation, when loud words ensued, and deponent came up much agitated, fearing there would be a fight, and heard Bennett say, "I now say to your face what I said behind your back, that you left Nauvoo about two months before the attempted assassination of Ex-Governor Boggs, of Missouri, and returned the day before the report of his assassination reached there, and that two persons in Nauvoo told me that you told them that you had been over to the upper part of Missouri, and in Boggs' neighborhood," to which Rockwell replied, "If I shot Boggs, they have to prove it." Bennett said "Certainly, they have got to prove it on you, if you did shoot him. I know nothing of what you *did*, as I was not there. I only know the *circumstances*, and from them I draw my own *inferences*, and the public will theirs. And now, sir, if either you or Joe Smith think you can intimidate me by your threats, you are mistaken in your man; and I wish you to understand distinctly, that I am opposed to Joe and his holy host -- I shall tell the truth fearlessly, and regardless of consequences." Bennett further remarked, "why are you harping about what I have *not* said? I have told you what I *have* said, to your face, and you have acknowledged the truth of it, and I will say it again; and if you wish to fight I am now ready for you -- you will never have a better time." This conversation then ceased, and the parties separated -- and further this deponent saith not.

CLAYTON TWEED.

Sworn to and subscribed before me, this 7th day of July, 1842 at my office in Carthage.

SAMUEL MARSHALL, J. P.

{Seal.}

STATE OF ILLINOIS, }
HANCOCK COUNTY, } ss.

Personally appeared before me, Samuel Marshall, a justice of the peace in and for said county, Jonas Hobart, who being duly sworn accordingly to law, deposeth and saith, That, on the 5th day of July, 1842, at the tavern house of Mr. Hamilton, in Carthage, he came up to where Gen. John C. Bennett and Mr. O. P. Rockwell were in angry conversation, when he heard Rockwell say, that if any man said that Joe Smith hired him to shoot Boggs, he stated what was false. There was then some warm talk about fighting, and Bennett said, "I tell you sir, to your face what I have said behind your back, and if you are for fight now is as good a time as you will have." Rockwell said he had been up into Boggs' neighborhood, in Missouri; and said he, "if I shot Boggs they have got to prove it." Bennett said "certainly they have -- I do not know what you *did*, I only know the *circumstances* -- I have told them, and I have now told them to your face, and you have acknowledged them -- and I shall tell them again fearless of consequences," -- and further deponent saith not.

JONAS HOBART.

Sworn to and subscribed, this 9th day of July, 1842, before me, at my office in Carthage.

SAMUEL MARSHALL, J. P.

{Seal.}

STATE OF ILLINOIS, }
HANCOCK COUNTY, } ss.

Personally appeared before me, Samuel Marshall Justice of the Peace in and for said County, John H. Lawton, who being duly sworn according to

law, deposeth and saith, that on the 5th day of July, 1842, he came up to where Gen. John C. Bennett and O. P. Rockwell were in conversation, at the house of Mr. Hamilton in Carthage, and heard Rockwell say that he had been up in Boggs' neighborhood, in Missouri, and that if he had shot Boggs they had to prove it; and then began to talk of whipping Bennett, whereupon Bennett replied, "I have said nothing behind your back but what I now said to your face, and if you wish to fight now I am ready for you;" the conversation then ceased and the parties separated; and further this deponent saith not.

JOHN H. LAWTON.

Sworn to and subscribed, this 6th day of July, 1842, before me, at my office in Carthage.

SAMUEL MARSHALL, J. P.

{Seal.}

I would say further, that, before Rockwell left Nauvoo, he was abjectly poor. Since his return, he has left his family in the lower part of the city, taken up his residence at the tavern of Capt. Amos Davis -- has an elegant carriage and horses at his disposal, and his pockets filled with gold. Capt. Davis can, and will, if called upon, tell more about his former poverty, and present apparent affluence, at all events so far as *gold* is concerned. This is said to be the same carriage and horses that were *muffled* on the evening of the 29th of June.

If Smith is demanded, I will show by Col. F. M. Higbee and others, that he murdered a certain prisoner in Missouri.

These are *some* of the facts of this outrage upon civilized society. Now let the demand be made, and the truth shall appear. As Smith was an accessory before the fact in this case, he should be demanded on the *old indictments* for murder, treason, burglary, and arson and *secured* -- then the facts shall appear in this case. Rockwell can be demanded on affidavit. I expect Higbee on Tuesday next, if Smith does not have him murdered to prevent his developments.

I am aware that Smith now seeks my life, and is fortifying his Mormon witnesses *by revelation*; but if the demand is made as I have suggested, no

earthly force can save him.

JOHN C. BENNETT.

ST. LOUIS, July 13th, 1842.

Note: John C. Bennett's July 13, 1842 statement, alleging that Joseph Smith, Jr. had sent Elder Rockwell to Missouri to murder ex-Governor Boggs (and that Smith had subsequently said that Rockwell had "gone to fulfill prophecy") is an expansion of disclosures made in his "Second Letter," as published in the *Sangamo Journal* on July 15, 1842. Bennett's detailing of this allegation in the pages of the *Native American Bulletin* was quickly reprinted in the pages of the *Warsaw Signal* in mid-July 1842 and in the *Sangamo Journal* on July 22nd. Bennett supplies essentially the same information on pp. 281-285 (<http://olivercowdery.com/texts/ben1842c.htm#pg281a>) of his 1842 book, *History of the Saints*.

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MORMONS: WHO THEY ARE, WHAT THEY BELIEVE - - Discussion Guide

Mormon Quotes By and About The Danites
<http://mormonthink.com/QUOTES/danites.htm>

Danites

Danite Pledges:

“In the name of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, I do solemnly obligate myself ever to conceal, and never to reveal, the secret purposes of this society called the Daughters of Zion. Should I ever do the same, I hold my life as the forfeiture.”

- Portion of the Danite Constitution, as quoted in *Senate Document 189* of the 2nd session of the 26th Congress

“I from this day declare myself the Avenger of the blood of those innocent men, and the innocent cause of Zion.”

- Danite pledge to the Prophet, Alanson Ripley to “Dear brethren in Christ Jesus,” with Joseph Smith, Hyrum Smith, Caleb Baldwin, Alexander McRae, and Lyman Wight identified by initials at end of letter, April 10, 1839, see Hill, *Quest for Refuge*, p. 100 and Quinn, *The Mormon Hierarchy: Origins of Power*, p. 113

Prophet Joseph Smith, Jr. (1805 - 1844):

“We have a company of Danites in these times, to put to right physically that which is not right, and to cleanse the Church of very great evils which hath hitherto existed among us inasmuch as they cannot be put to right by teachings & persuasions.”

- Joseph Smith diary, Missouri Journal, 1838, March to September, under July 27, 1838; also Dean Jessee, ed., *The Papers of Joseph Smith*, 1992, v. 2, p. 262 (this quote is crossed out in this book); also in Faulring, *An American Prophet's Record*, p. 198

“I sent [Orrin] Rockwell [leader of the Danites] to kill Boggs, but he missed him, it was a failure; he wounded him instead of sending him to Hell.”

- Joseph Smith, Jr. as quoted by William Law in a statement on July 31, 1887, in William Law: Biographical Essay, Nauvoo Diary, Correspondence, Interview, 1994, pp. 166-117

More Primary Source Quotes

“The first presidency did not seem to have much to do with it at first: they would, however, go into their [Danite] meetings occasionally, and sanction their doings.”

- John Corrill, *A Brief History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints*, p. 31

“...it was the imperative duty of the Church to obey the word of Joseph Smith, or the presidency, without question or inquiry, and that if there were any that would not, they should have their throats cut from ear [to] ear.”

- Sidney Rigdon letter to Orson Hyde, October 21, 1844, in *Nauvoo Neighbor*, December 4, 1844; see also Quinn, *Mormon Hierarchy: Origins of Power*, p. 94; online at <http://www.exmormon.org/pattern/mos123.htm>

“While we were gone Jo. & Rigdon & their band of gadiantons kept up a guard and watched our houses and abused our families and threatened them if they were not gone by morning they would be drove out & threatened our lives if they [the Danites] ever saw us in Far West.”

- John Whitmer, McKiernan and Launius, *The Book of John Whitmer*, p. 165

“My sympathies were drawn toward the women and children, but I would in no degree let them deter me from duty. So while others were pillaging for something to carry away, I was doing my best to protect, as far as possible, the lives and comfort of the [non-Mormon] families who were dependent on getting away upon horseback.... While others were doing the burning and plunder, my mission was of mercy so far as duty would permit. But of course I made enemies at home [among fellow Mormons], and became more known by those who were our avowed enemies. Before noon we had set all [houses and barns] on fire and left upon a circuitous route towards home.”

- Benjamin Johnson, *My Life's Review*, 1947, p. 39

“Some of the [Danite] brethren did things they should not have done, such as appropriating to their own use things that did not belong to them.”

- James B. Bracken, Sr., statement, in *They Knew the Prophet*, 1974, p. 79

“Dear Sister,... I will tell you the reason why we could not leave this blood-stained land, I mean ten or twelve years ago. In the first place, we were a thousand miles from the nearest town East, eight hundred miles from the nearest settlement West, and God only knows how far to any place north and south. On all this vast tract of land no white man dwelt. No civilization was known, none but the red men roamed the dreary solitudes. To travel such a space required considerable food, a good wagon and team, in fact, everything necessary for a three month's pilgrimage. Nor was it safe for a few men to go together, unless they were well-armed. Again, every Bishop knew your business and was always on the lookout. If you started they would send men to drive off your stock, and thus you would be compelled to return. Then if you did not behave and act the hypocrite, the bishop would send the Danites to use you up and send you across lots to that bright brimstone home we read about. Thus you see it was almost impossible to get away.”

- Aaron DeWitt, letter online at <http://www.saintsalive.com/mormonism/murder.html>; see Abanes, *One Nation Under Gods*, p. 239

“I married Jesse Hartly, knowing he was a ‘Gentile’ in fact, but he passed for a Mormon, but that made no difference with me, although I was a Mormon, because he was a noble man, and sought only the right. By being my husband, he was brought into closer contact with the members of the Church, and was thus soon enabled to learn many things about us, and about the Heads of the Church, that he did not approve, and of which I was ignorant, although I had been brought up among the Saints; and which, if known among the Gentiles, would have greatly damaged us. I do not understand all he discovered, or all he did; but they found he had written against the Church, and he was cut off, and the Prophet required as an atonement for his sins,

that he should lay down his life. That he should be sacrificed in the endowment rooms; where human sacrifices are sometimes made in this way. This I never knew until my husband told me, but it is true. They kill those there who have committed sins too great to be atoned for in any other way. The Prophet says, if they submit to this he can save them; otherwise they are lost. Oh! that is horrible. But my husband refused to be sacrificed, and so set out alone for the United States: thinking there might be at least a hope of success. I told him when he left me, and left his child, that he would be killed, and so he was. William Hickman and another Danite, shot him in the canyons; and I have often since been obliged to cook for this man, when he passed this way, knowing all the while, he had killed my husband. My child soon followed after its father, and I hope to die also; for why should I live? They have brought me here, where I wish to remain, rather than to return to Salt Lake where the murderers of my husband curse the earth, and roll in affluence unpunished.”

- Miss Bullock of Provo, Utah, quoted by Mary Ettie V. Smith, in Nelson Winch Green, *Mormonism: its rise, progress, and present condition...*, 1858, 1870 ed., p. 273

“In the excavations made within the limits of Salt Lake City during the time I have resided there, many human skeletons have been exhumed in various parts of the city.... I have never heard that it was ever the custom to bury the dead promiscuously throughout the city; and as no coffins were ever found in connection with any of these skeletons, it is evident that the death of the persons to whom they once belonged did not result from natural causes, but from the use of criminal means.”

- R.N. Baskin, *Reminiscences of Early Utah*, 1914, pp. 154-155

“... the disposition manifested in J. Smith and S. Rigdon to pillage, rob, plunder, assassinate and murder, was never equaled in my estimation, unless by some desperate Bandit.”

- Thomas B. Marsh, letter to Brother and Sister Abbot, October 25, 1838, in Joseph Smith Letterbook, v. 2, p. 18, Smith Papers, in RLDS archives, Lee Library and Marriott Library; see also Abanes, *One Nation Under Gods*, p. 541, footnote 67

Others:

“He [Brigham Young] uttered this sentiment with such a wicked working of the lower jaw and lip, and such an almost demon spirit in his whole face, that quite disposed to be incredulous on those matters. I could not help thinking of the Mountain Meadows massacre, of Danites and Avenging Angels, and their reported achievements.”

- *New York Tribune*, July 15, 1865

[There is] “... only [one] known visit of Joseph or Hyrum Smith to Danite meetings... evidence indicates that Rigdon was present on more than one occasion, perhaps several.”

- Leland H. Gentry, “The Danite Band of 1838,” *BYU Studies*, v. 14, Summer 1974, p. 443

“The method chosen by the Latter-day Saints to rid themselves of their dissenting Brethren was unfortunate since it furnished the dissenters with further proof that the Saints were inimical to law and order.”

- Gentry, “History of the Latter-day Saints In Northern Missouri From 1836 to 1839,” Ph. D. dissertation, Brigham Young University, 1965, p. 171; see also LeSueur, *The 1838 Mormon War in Missouri*, p. 46

“There is no question that Latter-day Saint rangers burned buildings at Millport and Gallatin... It is certain that some Danites played the thief, and it is possible, although unproven, that one or two were murderers.”

- William G. Hartley, BYU professor, *My Best For the Kingdom*, p. 69, 42

Quotes From Danites

“The Church [at Far West] organized under captains... They called our organization ‘THE DANITE BAND’ [-] I belonged to the 3rd Fifty led by Reynolds Cahoon.”

- Elder Allen J. Stout journal, *Danite*, p. 7; see Quinn, *The Mormon Hierarchy: Origins of Power*, p. 95

“Punishment by death is the penalty for refusing to obey the orders of the Priesthood. I knew of many men being killed in Nauvoo by the Danites. It was then the rule that all enemies of the Prophet Joseph should be killed, and I knew of many a man who was quietly put out of the way by the orders of Joseph and his apostles while the church was there.”

- Elder John D. Lee (1812 – 1877), *Danite and adopted son of Brigham Young*, *John D. Lee Diaries*

"I always feel that it is my duty to look to myself, for I am in as much danger of apostatizing as any in the Church. If I ever do get led astray and depart from the principles of the gospel of salvation, it will be because I led myself off from the path; it was not my brethren who led me away, it was my own doing."

- Elder Hosea Stout (1810 - 1889), *Danite*, General Conference, 1858; online at <http://www.media.utah.edu/UHE/s/STOUT,HOSEA.html>

“I shot through the window and thought I had killed him [Boggs], but I had only wounded him; I was damned sorry that I had not killed the son of a bitch.”

- Orrin Porter Rockwell, in *Orrin Porter Rockwell: Man of God, Son of Thunder*, by Harold Schindler, 1966, p. 80

“As the Lord had raised up a prophet in these last days like unto Moses, it shall be the duty of this band [Danites] to obey him in all things, and whatever he requires, you shall perform, being ready to give up life and property for the advancement of the cause. When any thing is to be performed no member shall have the privilege of judging whether it would be right or wrong, but shall engage in its accomplishment and trust God for the result.”

- Danite commander Sampson Avard, in Reed Peck, *Reed Peck Manuscript*, p. 3

“If Joseph should tell me to kill [U.S. President Martin] Van Buren... I would immediately start and do my best to assassinate him [and] let the consequences be as they would.”

- Alexander McRae, in Reed Peck, *Reed Peck Manuscript*, p. 3

“He [Joseph A. Young, one of Brigham’s sons] hailed me (I being behind) and said his father wanted that

man [non-Mormon trader Richard] Yates killed, and that I would know all about it when I got to Jones' camp....

“Col. Jones and two others, Hosea Stout and another man whose name I do not recollect, came to my camp-fire and asked if Yates was asleep. I told them he was, upon which his brains were knocked out with an ax. He was covered up with his blankets... and a grave dug some three feet deep near the camp by the fire-light, all hands assisting. Flack and Meacham were asleep when the man was killed, but woke up and saw the grave digging. The body was put in and the dirt well packed on it.”

- William Hickman, *Brigham Young's Destroying Angel*, 1964, pp. 124-125. Brigham Young suspected Yates of “spying.” This murder is documented (along with many others) by Hickman in R.N. Baskin, *Reminiscences of Early Utah*, 1914

“It was one of the hot-beds of fanaticism, and I expect that more men were killed there, in proportion to population, than in any other part of Utah. In that settlement it was certain death to say a word against the authorities, high or low.”

- William Hickman, *Brigham Young's Destroying Angel*, 1964, p. 284

“If you want me to do anything, just let me know it.... If you want this or that, or whatever you may think, I will try. Or if you want my life you can have it without a murmur or a groan, just let me know late or early. I will be there, and there will be no tale left behind... I am on hand.”

- William Hickman, Letter to Brigham Young, April 25, 1865, in Hope A. Hilton, *“Wild Bill” Hickman and the Mormon Frontier*, 1988, p. 113

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MORMONS: WHO THEY ARE, WHAT THEY BELIEVE - - Discussion Guide

The Nauvoo Legion—Civil and Religious Rights

<http://jod.mrm.org/1/79>

The Nauvoo Legion—Civil and Religious Rights

A Speech by Mr. George A. Smith, Delivered in the Tabernacle, Great Salt Lake City, on the Anniversary of the Fourth of July, 1852.

Reported by G. D. Watt.



THE NAUVOO LEGION, ETC.

As a humble private from the ranks of the Deseret Mountaineers of the Nauvoo Legion, I have the honor, though unexpectedly, to rise and offer a few of our feelings in view of the great matters which have been presented before us this day, and of the great events of which this is the anniversary. From the remarks of the gentlemen who have occupied this stand previous to my rising, we might think, that a people who have been driven, and who have suffered so many difficulties, robbings; shaking of the ague, catching birds with hands, and for a time living on crickets, &c., that we would be very lean and poor; but my friends, I think I am a pretty fair specimen of the privates who compose the Nauvoo Legion. The experiment has been tried of living in the deserts, of wandering among mountains, and of solving the philosophical problem of almost living upon the air; and it has answered exceedingly well.

It is with the greatest pleasure that I address you; for I can assure you that the Nauvoo Legion view with the strictest jealousy, every violation of the provisions of the federal constitution; every infringement of the rights of the people is regarded by the Nauvoo Legion with the most fiery indignation. Whenever the rights of a religious body are invaded—whenever the privileges of a civil community are trampled upon with impunity—whenever any man in power, or any man out of power shall trample upon the provisions of that legacy bequeathed us by our ancestors, there rises in us an unbounded indignation; for our fathers' legacy was sealed with their blood, and we are determined to maintain it inviolable. When an executive of a state rises up and assumes to himself a dignity and a power that no autocrat of all the Russias dare presume to exercise, and issues a bloody order as did L. W. Boggs, for the utter extermination of all the “Mormons;” men, women, and children, that may belong to, or be in any way connected with them, it raises the indignation of the Nauvoo Legion to an unbounded pitch.

What is more curious than all the rest; it frequently occurs in all governments that corruption arises among the people; the people become corrupt, and to a great extent, it must affect the government also; no matter how good its form may be, the corruptions that arise among the body of the people, must in a great measure paralyze

the head of the government. The Roman Catholics in Philadelphia were attacked by a lawless mob, and thousands turned out to demolish their churches and dwellings, and murder their people, and the perpetrators of such deeds are suffered to go unpunished—this fills the Nauvoo Legion with burning indignation. The legacy bequeathed to us by our forefathers was a constitution which will protect every man in his civil and religious rights; and where this Legion is, woe to him that infringes upon these constitutional liberties. Being called upon without reflection, or time to prepare a speech; and not possessing the requisite talents for preparing notes, I must give you what I have to say in an offhand style.

Men will rise up in distant countries; and say that the inhabitants of these mountains are rebellious. Rebellious! Against what? Against the power of mobs, lawless robbery, and the infringement and violation of the constitution of the United States—against the lawless destruction of property and life—against the deprivation of human beings of religious liberty—that is what we are rebellious against; and the Nauvoo Legion are ready to rebel against every aggression of this kind, as long as there is one drop of blood left in their veins.

These bayonets now before me have been carried upon the shoulders of these men to extend “the area of the American Liberty,” over 4,000 miles, suffering almost every kind of distress and fatigue; sometimes traveling on foot ever a hundred miles of desert, from water to water. Such a march has not been equaled by any body of infantry in the world; and General Kearney said, that there was no other set of troops in his army that could endure such service.

Talk of rebellion! Or want of loyalty! Men might as well say the sun does not shine, as to argue that this people are enemies to their country's freedom. There is a spirit of religious intolerance that has arisen in the minds of a great many men against this people in the present age; they say, “you shall think as I think, or damn you, we'll destroy you.” General Joseph Smith, the commander of our Legion, was treacherously murdered, and his noble brother by his side also, while under the pledge of safety of Governor Thomas Ford. The grandfather of that murdered general (murdered while under the sacred pledge of the State of Illinois), his paternal grandfather; I say, was at the elbow of Colonel Ethan Allen, at Ticonderoga, and with Stark at Bennington; and his maternal grandfather was in the first naval battle, and at the elbow of the first Commodore of the American navy, when the first naval battle was fought by Americans against Great Britain, and served during the entire war. Why was he murdered? Because he thought different from his neighbors. Religious toleration was not in accordance with the feelings of narrow minded men; he must be butchered—basely murdered—and to accomplish it the faith of a sovereign state had to be pledged. We love the constitution of the United States in its organization; but we detest southern secession, and northern disunion, or anything that would be calculated to destroy our glorious Union, and the institutions which have been sealed by the blood of our fathers.

Gentlemen, appearing as I appear in your midst, lean though I may be (Mr. Smith now weighing 230 lbs.), I will tell you that I have the honor of having descended from an officer of the revolution, who marched 150 miles under the command of General Morgan, from the battle of the Cow Pens, with nothing to eat but the rawhide belt of his cartridge box. That cannot be the cause of my fine appearance; but it must be the noble living my ancestors have had, when fighting for the liberties we enjoy this day, in these mountains. And although I have passed through so many trials and afflictions to get here, having been driven out of three dwelling houses in different states, by mob force; as many times deprived of my property; and having buried most of my family from suffering on the plains; been three days at a time, without taking food, that there is now scarcely a hair left on my head between me and heaven; yet I am on hand, and with the Nauvoo Legion, rejoice that there is a place amid the mountains where men are free to enjoy civil and religious liberty and truth. Truth and Liberty forever! Amen.

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MORMONS: WHO THEY ARE, WHAT THEY BELIEVE - - Discussion Guide

Occultic and Masonic Influences on Early Mormonism

<http://mit.irr.org/occultic-and-masonic-influence-in-early-mormonism>

Occultic and Masonic Influence in Early Mormonism

By: Joel B. Groat

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The evidence of Joseph Smith's close connection to occultism and Freemasonry, and how this influenced the origin and development of the LDS Church is not well known outside of scholarly circles. This article summarizes the evidence for Joseph's personal involvement in both Freemasonry and occultism, and their influence on the Mormon religion.

Mormonism's Link to Occultism

Both Joseph Smith and his father were involved in the occult practice known as "money digging." This involved special rituals and ceremonies which were performed for the purpose of obtaining buried treasure thought to be guarded by evil spirits. Accounts of money digging during the late 1700s and early 1800s are documented in Alan Taylor's article "Treasure Seeking in the American Northeast, 1780-1830", published in *American Quarterly*, 38 [Spring 1986], pp. 6-34. This article specifically mentions Joseph Smith, Sr., and Jr., on pages 10-12, giving examples of their money digging activities. LDS seminary teacher Grant Palmer also documents the Smith family's occult beliefs and practices, as well as those of their close associates, in his book *An Insider's View of Mormon Origins*, (SLC, Signature Books, 2002, pp. 175-195).

Joseph's Involvement in Occultism. Joseph Smith, Jr.'s role in the quest for treasure was especially important since he had a seer stone. Joseph would place this small, special rock in his hat then pull the hat up to his face to block out all light. By doing this he claimed he could see supernaturally, and would help those who were digging by locating the place where the treasure was buried and observing the spirits that were guarding it. Joseph Jr., himself admitted to being a money digger, though he said it was never very profitable for him (*History of the Church*, V. 3, p. 29). He and his father's money digging continued until at least 1826. On March 20th of that year Joseph was arrested, brought before a judge, and charged with being a "glass-looker" and a disorderly person. The laws at that time had what was known as the "Vagrant Act." It defined a disorderly person as one who pretended to have skill in the areas of palmistry, telling fortunes or discovering where lost goods might be found. According to court records (<http://irr.org/mit/divination.html#masonry%20bookmark>) Justice Neely determined that Joseph was guilty, though no penalty was administered, quite possibly because this was a first offense (*Inventing Mormonism*, Marquardt and Walters, SLC: Signature Books, 1994, pp. 74-75).

Occultism and the Start of Mormonism. Shortly after this Joseph discontinued money digging but kept his seer stone. It was with the seer stone that he claimed to both find the plates and later produce the Book of Mormon. This was known by early converts but has since been replaced with later accounts of an angelic visitor. This transition was aided by downplaying the fact that Moroni was a dead Indian warrior, and by referring to him as an angel. Former BYU professor and historian D. Michael Quinn writes:

During this period from 1827 to 1830, Joseph Smith abandoned the company of his former money-digging associates, but continued to use for religious purposes the brown seer stone he had previously employed in the treasure quest. His most intensive and productive use of the seer stone was in the translation of the Book of Mormon. But he also dictated several revelations to his associates through the stone (*Early Mormonism and the Magic World View*, D. Michael Quinn, Signature Books, SLC, 1987, p. 143).

This fact is supported by LDS author Richard S. Van Wagoner who found,

This stone, still retained by the First Presidency of the LDS Church, was the vehicle through which the golden plates were discovered and the medium through which their interpretation came (*Sidney Rigdon: A Portrait of Religious Excess*, Signature Books, SLC, 1994, p. 57).

Thus we see that historians have documented a continuity between Joseph's early occultic practices and the origins of Mormonism. This link extends to the development of the LDS Temple ceremony.

Occultic Parallels in the LDS Temple Ceremony. Historian D. Michael Quinn has done extensive research on rites and ancient mysteries related to occultism. He states,

By drawing only on authorized descriptions of the endowment by LDS leaders, I believe it is possible to see within historical context how the Mormon endowment reflected the ancient and occult mysteries far closer than Freemasonry (*Early Mormonism and the Magic World View*, p. 186).

Quinn then outlines the following ten essential characteristics common to both occult rituals and the Mormon Temple ceremonies:

- They are revealed by God from the beginning, but distorted through apostasy.
- They place an emphasis on the worthiness of initiates.
- They include washings and anointings, a new name and garments
- They emphasize vows of non-disclosure.
- There are both "lesser" and "greater" rituals.
- They feature presentation of the ritual through drama.

- They contain an oath of chastity requiring strict purity and virtue of the participants.
- They feature prominent use of the sun, moon and stars as key symbols.
- The purpose of the ritual is to assist mortals to attain to godhood.
- They employ titles and offices of prophets, priests and kings to those in leadership.

After presenting this material Quinn comments,

To be sure Masonic rituals also shared some similarities with the ancient mysteries, but these were not linked to any concept of heavenly ascent, which was fundamental to both the occult mysteries and to the Mormon endowment. Therefore, what similarities may exist between Freemasonry and Mormonism seem more appropriately to be regarded as superficial, whereas the ancient occult mysteries and the Mormon endowment manifest both philosophical and structural kinship. (Ibid., p. 190).

Mormonism and Masonry

Masonry's influence on Mormonism and Joseph Smith has been noted by a number of historians. Some of the areas impacted by Masonic lore and ritual include the Book of Mormon, Joseph's personal life, and the LDS temple ceremony.

Masonic Themes Related to the Book of Mormon. John L. Brooke in his book *The Refiner's Fire: The Making of Mormon Cosmology, 1644-1844*, noted the following in reference to the story of the discovery of the gold plates and the narrative structure of the Book of Mormon:

Freemasonry provides a point of entry into this very complex story. As it had been in Vermont, Masonic fraternity was a dominant feature of the cultural landscape in Joseph Smith's Ontario County The dense network of lodges and chapters helps explain the Masonic symbolism that runs through the story of the discovery of the Golden Plates. Most obviously, the story of their discovery in a stone vault on a hilltop echoed the Enoch myth of Royal Arch Freemasonry, in which the prophet Enoch, instructed by a vision, preserved the Masonic mysteries by carving them on a golden plate that he placed in an arched stone vault marked with pillars, to be rediscovered by Solomon. In the years to come the prophet Enoch would play a central role in Smith's emerging cosmology. Smith's stories of his discoveries got more elaborate with time, and in June 1829 he promised Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer and Martin Harris that they would see not only the plates but other marvelous artifacts: the Urim and Thummim attached to a priestly breastplate, the 'sword of Laban,' and 'miraculous directors.' Oliver Cowdery and Lucy Mack Smith later described three or four small pillars holding up the plates. All of these artifacts had Masonic analogues.

... Smith's sources for these Masonic symbols were close at hand. Most obviously, Oliver Cowdery would have been a source, given that his father and brother were Royal

Arch initiates; one Palmyra resident remembered Oliver Cowdery as 'no church member and a Mason.' ... A comment by Lucy Mack Smith in her manuscript written in the 1840s, protesting that the family did not abandon all household labor to try 'to win the faculty of Abrac, drawing magic circles, or sooth-saying,' suggests a familiarity with Masonic manuals: the 'faculty of Abrac' was among the supposed Masonic mysteries (*Refiner's Fire*, Cambridge University Press, 1994, pp. 157-158).

However, it wasn't until later in life that Joseph's involvement became more personal.

Joseph's Personal Involvement in Freemasonry. Mormon Apostle John A. Widtsoe stated:

Many of the Saints were Masons, such as Joseph's brother Hyrum, Heber C. Kimball, Elijah Fordham, Newel K. Whitney, James Adams, and John C. Bennett With the acquiescence of the Prophet, members of the Church already Masons petitioned the Grand Master of Illinois for permission to set up a lodge in Nauvoo it was March 15, 1842, before authority was given to set up a lodge in Nauvoo and to induct new members. Joseph Smith became a member (*Evidences and Reconciliations*, 1 volume, pp. 357-358).

Joseph Smith admitted to being a Mason in his *History of the Church*, volume 4, page 551. Under the date of March 15, 1842 it reads: "In the evening I received the first degree in Free Masonry in the Nauvoo Lodge, assembled in my general business office." The record for the next day reads, "I was with the Masonic Lodge and rose to the sublime degree" (page 552).

How did Joseph's Masonic membership affect the development of the Mormon Church? The most significant area appears to be in the development of the Mormon temple ceremonies. As noted above, Joseph became a Mason on March 15, 1842 and "rose to the sublime degree" the following day. Less than two months later, on May 4, 1842, Joseph introduced the temple endowment ceremony (*History of the Church*, Vol. 5, pp. 1-2).

Masonry and Mormon Temple Ceremonies. The pervasive influence of Freemasonry in Mormon Temples is expressed well by LDS historian Dr. Reed Durham. Dr. Durham, who has served as president of the Mormon History Association, provides a number of interesting parallels between the two. He gives these as evidence for Masonry's clear influence on Mormonism.

I am convinced that in the study of Masonry lies a pivotal key to further understanding Joseph Smith and the Church. . . . Masonry in the Church had its origin prior to the time Joseph Smith became a Mason It commenced in Joseph's home when his older brother became a Mason. Hyrum received the first three degrees of Masonry in Mount Moriah Lodge No. 112 of Palmyra, New York, at about the same time that Joseph was being initiated into the presence of God . . . The many parallels found between early Mormonism and the Masonry of that day are substantial...

I have attempted thus far to demonstrate that Masonic influences upon Joseph in the early Church history, preceding his formal membership in Masonry, were significant. However, these same Masonic influences exerted a more dominant character as reflected in the further expansion of the Church subsequent to the Prophet's Masonic membership. In fact, I believe that there are few significant developments in the Church, that occurred after March 15 1842, which did not have some Masonic interdependence. Let me comment on a few of these developments. There is absolutely no question in my mind that the Mormon ceremony which came to be known as the Endowment, introduced by Joseph Smith to Mormon Masons, had an immediate inspiration from Masonry. This is not to suggest that no other source of inspiration could have been involved, but the similarities between the two ceremonies are so apparent and overwhelming that some dependent relationship cannot be denied. They are so similar, in fact, that one writer was led to refer to the Endowment as Celestial Masonry.

It is also obvious that the Nauvoo Temple architecture was in part, at least, Masonically influenced. Indeed, it appears that there was an intentional attempt to utilize Masonic symbols and motifs ...

Another development in the Nauvoo Church, which has not been so obviously considered as Masonically inspired, was the establishment of the Female Relief Society. This organization was the Prophet's intentional attempt to expand Masonry to include the women of the Church. That the Relief Society was organized in the Masonic Lodge room, and only one day after Masonry was given to the men, was not happenstance included in the actual vocabulary of Joseph Smith's counsel and instructions to the sisters were such words as: ancient orders, examinations, degrees, candidates, secrets, lodges, rules, signs, tokens, order of the priesthood, and keys; all indicating that the Society's orientation possessed Masonic overtones.

.... I suggest that enough evidence presently exists to declare that the entire institution of the political kingdom of God, including the Council of Fifty, the living constitution, the proposed flag of the kingdom, and the anointing and coronation of the king, had its genesis in connection with Masonic thoughts and ceremonies it appears that the Prophet first embraced Masonry, and, then in the process, he modified, expanded, amplified, or glorified it The Prophet believed that his mission was to restore all truth, and then to unify and weld it all together into one. This truth was referred to as 'the Mysteries,' and these Mysteries were inseparably connected with the Priesthood Can anyone deny that Masonic influence on Joseph Smith and the Church, either before or after his personal Masonic membership? The evidence demands comments ...

There are many questions which still demand the answers if we, as Mormon historians, respond to these questions and myriads like them relative to Masonry in an ostrich-like fashion, with our heads buried in the traditional sand, then I submit: there never will be 'any help for the widow's son' (*Mormon Miscellaneous*, October 1975, pp. 11-16, as cited in *Changing World of Mormonism*, Jerald and Sandra Tanner, 1981, pp. 546-547).

These statements demonstrate that much of the religious ritual within Mormonism finds its origin in both occultism and Freemasonry. It is not surprising that there is an overlap between occultism and Freemasonry within Mormonism since Masonry itself draws from occult lore and ritual. What becomes obvious is that Joseph neglected the Bible's clear prohibition regarding occult involvement. This is found in Deuteronomy 18:9-12 which states in part,

... thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations. There shalt not be found among you any one that ... useth divination, or is an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits [demons], or a wizard, or a necromancer [one who communicates with the dead]. For all that do these things are an abomination unto the LORD.

Resources

The following resources contain a more extensive treatment of Joseph Smith's magical and occultic practices and worldview:

John L. Brooke, *The Refiner's Fire: The Making of Mormon Cosmology, 1644-1844*, Cambridge University Press, NY, 1994, 421 pages. This non-Mormon author is an associate professor in the Department of History at Tufts University.

Grant H. Palmer, *An Insider's View of Mormon Origins*, (Signature Books, SLC, 2002, 281 pages). Palmer is an LDS seminary teacher and three-time director of LDS Institutes of Religion in California and Utah.

D. Michael Quinn, *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View*, Signature Books, SLC, revised and enlarged edition 1998, 646 pages. This work is comprehensive and thoroughly documented. The author is a former BYU professor and one of the most respected historians of Mormonism.

Jerald and Sandra Tanner, *Mormonism, Magic and Masonry*, Utah Lighthouse Ministry, SLC, 1983, 97 pages. This former Mormon husband and wife research/publishing team are well-known for their carefully documented critiques of Mormonism.

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MORMONS: WHO THEY ARE, WHAT THEY BELIEVE - - Discussion Guide

Freemasonry in Nauvoo

http://eom.byu.edu/index.php/Freemasonry_in_Nauvoo

Freemasonry in Nauvoo

Author: Godfrey, Kenneth W.

The introduction of Freemasonry in Nauvoo had both political and religious implications. When Illinois Grand Master Abraham Jonas visited Nauvoo on March 15, 1842, to install the Nauvoo Masonic Lodge, he inaugurated an era of difficulty with other Illinois Masons and introduced to Nauvoo ancient ritual bearing some similarity to the LDS temple ordinances (see Freemasonry and the Temple- (http://eom.byu.edu/index.php/Freemasonry_and_the_Temple)).

Regular Masonic procedure calls for an existing lodge to sponsor each new proposed lodge. Early in the summer of 1841, several Latter-day Saints who were Masons, including Lucius N. Scovil, a key figure in Nauvoo Freemasonry, asked Bodley Lodge No. 1, in Quincy, Illinois, to request that the Illinois Grand Lodge appoint certain individuals as officers of a Nauvoo lodge. Indicating that the persons named were unknown in Quincy as Masons, the lodge returned the letter with instructions for further action.

Less than a year later, Nauvoo had a lodge without the normal sponsorship. Grand Master Jonas apparently waived the rule and granted Nauvoo a "special dispensation" to organize. He also made Joseph Smith and his counselor, Sidney Rigdon, "Masons at sight." Some believe that Jonas was willing to follow this course because he envisioned the growing Mormon vote supporting his own political ambitions (see Nauvoo Politics- (http://eom.byu.edu/index.php/Nauvoo_Politics)). Although the action may have endeared him to some Latter-day Saints, it antagonized other Masons. Joseph Smith had reason to expect that the Saints might benefit from the network of friendship and support normally associated with the fraternal organization, but instead, the Nauvoo Lodge only produced friction.

Jonas published an account of the March 15 installation of the Nauvoo Lodge in his newspaper, *Columbia Advocate*. "Never in my life did I witness a better dressed or more orderly and well-behaved assemblage," he wrote (*HC* 4:565-66). During the installation ceremonies, held in the grove near the temple site, Joseph Smith officiated as Grand Chaplain. That evening, with the Masons assembled in his office, the Prophet received the first degree of Freemasonry. Nauvoo Masons then commenced weekly early morning meetings.

In August 1842, Bodley Lodge No. 1 protested the granting of a dispensation to the Nauvoo Lodge, resulting in a temporary suspension of activities. An investigation found that approximately three hundred Latter-day Saints had become Masons during the brief existence of the lodge, but found no irregularities warranting dissolution. The Grand Lodge not only authorized reinstatement of the Nauvoo Lodge but subsequently granted dispensations for other lodges nearby made up principally of Latter-day Saints. Eventually nearly 1,500 LDS men became associated with Illinois Freemasonry, including many members of the Church's governing priesthood bodies-this at a time when the total number of non-LDS Masons in Illinois lodges barely reached 150.

As long-time rivals of Nauvoo for political and economic ascendancy, neighboring Masons feared and resisted Mormon domination of Freemasonry. Charging the Nauvoo Lodge with balloting for more than one applicant at a time, receiving applicants into the fraternity on the basis that they reform in the future, and making Joseph Smith a Master Mason on sight, enemies forced an investigation in October 1843. The Grand Lodge summoned Nauvoo officials to Jacksonville, Illinois. Armed with pertinent books and papers, Lucius Scovil and Henry G. Sherwood answered the allegations. Though the examining committee reported that everything appeared to be in order, it expressed fear that there *might* be something wrong, and recommended a year's suspension. At this point, Grand Master Jonas, in an impassioned speech, declared that the books of the Nauvoo Lodge were the best-kept he had seen and stated his conviction that but for the fact that the Nauvoo Lodge was composed of Mormons, it would stand as the highest lodge in the state. A committee was appointed to make a thorough investigation in Nauvoo. Though the committee reported no wrongdoing, the Nauvoo Lodge was again suspended. The injunction was later removed, but the Nauvoo Lodge continued to lack the support of its fellow Masons.

In April 1844, the Nauvoo Lodge dedicated a new Masonic hall. By this time, the lodge had been severed from the Grand Lodge and one Illinois Mason had been expelled from his lodge for attending the dedication. The Nauvoo Lodge continued its activities in the newly built hall until April 10, 1845, when Brigham Young advised Lucius Scovil to suspend the work of the Masons in Nauvoo. Only a few additional meetings were held prior to the Latter-day Saints' departure for the Great Basin in 1846.

Joseph Smith participated minimally in Freemasonry and, as far as is known, attended the Nauvoo Masonic Lodge on only three occasions. Nonetheless, LDS Masons commented on his mastery of its orders, tenets, and principles and of his understanding of the allegorical symbolism of its instructions.

Most scholars who have looked carefully at the Nauvoo Masonic Lodge agree that it was more victim than villain. All agree that widespread anti-Mormon feelings and the extensive hatred of Latter-day Saints by local rivals, and not irregularities or misconduct, caused the controversy with regard to the Masonic Lodge in Nauvoo.

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KENNETH W. GODFREY

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MORMONS: WHO THEY ARE, WHAT THEY BELIEVE - - Discussion Guide

Joseph Smith—Prophet of the Restoration

<https://www.lds.org/general-conference/2009/10/joseph-smith-prophet-of-the-restoration?lang=eng>

Joseph Smith—Prophet of the Restoration

TAD R. CALLISTER

Of the Second Quorum of the Seventy

Through Joseph Smith have been restored all the powers, keys, teachings, and ordinances necessary for salvation and exaltation.

Suppose for a moment someone told you these three facts about a New Testament personality and nothing more: first, the Savior said of this man, “O thou of little faith” (Matthew 14:31); second, this man, in a moment of anger, cut off an ear of the high priest’s servant; and third, this man denied knowing who the Savior was on three occasions, even though he had walked with Him daily. If that is all you knew or focused upon, you might have thought this man a scoundrel or a no-good, but in the process you would have failed to come to know one of the greatest men who ever walked the earth: Peter the Apostle.

Similarly, attempts have been made by some to focus upon or magnify some minor weaknesses of the Prophet Joseph Smith, but in that process they too have missed the mark, the man, and his mission. Joseph Smith was the Lord’s anointed to restore Christ’s Church to the earth. When he emerged from the grove of trees, he eventually learned four fundamental truths not then taught by the majority of the contemporary Christian world.

First, he learned that God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, are two separate, distinct beings. The Bible confirms Joseph Smith's discovery. It tells us that the Son submitted His will to the Father (see Matthew 26:42). We are moved by the Savior's submission and find strength in His example to do likewise, but what would have been the depth and passion of Christ's submission or the motivational power of that example if the Father and the Son were the same being and in reality the Son was merely following His own will under a different name?

The scriptures give further evidence of this great truth: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son" (John 3:16). A father offering up his only son is the supreme demonstration of love that the human mind and heart can conceive and feel. It is symbolized by the touching story of Abraham and Isaac (see Genesis 22). But if the Father is the same being as the Son, then this sacrifice of all sacrifices is lost, and Abraham is no longer offering up Isaac—Abraham is now offering up Abraham.

The second great truth Joseph Smith discovered was that the Father and the Son have glorified bodies of flesh and bones. Following the Savior's Resurrection, He appeared to His disciples and said, "Handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have" (Luke 24:39). Some have suggested this was a temporary physical manifestation and that when He ascended to heaven He shed His body and returned to His spirit form. But the scriptures tell us this was not possible. Paul taught, "Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him" (Romans 6:9). In other words, once Christ was resurrected, His body could never again be separated from His spirit; otherwise He would suffer death, the very consequence Paul said was no longer possible after His Resurrection.

The third truth that Joseph Smith learned was that God still speaks to man today—that the heavens are not closed. One need but ask three questions, once proposed by President Hugh B. Brown, to arrive at that conclusion (see "The Profile of a Prophet," *Liahona*, June 2006, 13; *Ensign*, June 2006, 37). First, does God love us as much today as He loved the people to whom He spoke in New Testament times? Second, does God have the same power today as He did then? And third, do we need Him as much today as they needed Him anciently? If the

answers to those questions are yes and if God is the same yesterday, today, and forever, as the scriptures so declare (see Mormon 9:9), then there is little doubt: God does speak to man today exactly as Joseph Smith testified.

The fourth truth that Joseph Smith learned was that the full and complete Church of Jesus Christ was not then upon the earth. Of course there were good people and some components of the truth, but the Apostle Paul had anciently prophesied that the Second Coming of Christ would not come “except there come a falling away first” (2 Thessalonians 2:3).

Following Joseph Smith’s First Vision, the Restoration of Christ’s Church commenced “line upon line, precept upon precept” (D&C 98:12).

Through Joseph Smith was restored the doctrine of the gospel being preached to the dead in the spirit world to those who did not have a fair chance on earth to hear it (see D&C 128:5–22; see also D&C 138:30–34). This was not the invention of a creative mind; it was the restoration of a biblical truth. Peter had long ago taught, “For this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit” (1 Peter 4:6). Frederic W. Farrar, the well-known Church of England author and theologian, made the following observation about this teaching of Peter: “Every effort has been made to explain away the plain meaning of *this* passage. It is one of the most precious passages of Scripture, and it involves no ambiguity. ... For if language have any meaning, this language means that Christ, when His Spirit descended into the lower world, proclaimed the message of salvation to the once impenitent dead” (*The Early Days of Christianity* [1883], 78).

Many teach that there is one heaven and one hell. Joseph Smith restored the truth that there are multiple heavens. Paul spoke of a man who was caught up into the third heaven (see 2 Corinthians 12:2). Could there be a third heaven if there was no second heaven or first heaven?

In many ways the gospel of Jesus Christ is like a 1,000-piece jigsaw puzzle. When Joseph Smith came on the scene, perhaps 100 pieces were in place. Then Joseph Smith came along and put many of the other 900 pieces in place so that people could say, “Oh, now I understand where I came from, why I am here, and

where I am going.” As for Joseph Smith’s role in the Restoration, the Lord defined it clearly: “This generation shall have my word through you” (D&C 5:10).

In spite of this flood of restored biblical truths, some honest searchers have commented: “I can accept these doctrines, but what about all those angels and visions Joseph Smith claimed to have? It seems so hard to believe in modern times.”

To those honest searchers, we lovingly respond: “Were there not angels and visions in Christ’s Church in New Testament times? Did not an angel appear to Mary and to Joseph? Did not angels appear to Peter, James, and John on the Mount of Transfiguration? Did not an angel rescue Peter and John from prison? Did not an angel appear to Cornelius, then to Paul before he was shipwrecked and to John on the Isle of Patmos? Did not Peter have a vision of the gospel going to the Gentiles, Paul a vision of the third heaven, John a vision of the latter days, and Stephen a vision of the Father and Son?”

Yes, Joseph Smith did see angels and visions—because he was the instrument in God’s hands to restore the same Church of Jesus Christ as existed in primitive times—all of its powers as well as all of its doctrines.

Yet sorrowfully, on occasion, some are willing to set aside the precious gospel truths restored by Joseph Smith because they get diverted on some historical issue or some scientific hypothesis not central to their exaltation, and in so doing they trade their spiritual birthright for a mess of pottage. They exchange the absolute certainty of the Restoration for a doubt, and in that process they fall into the trap of losing faith in the many things they *do* know because of a few things they do not know. There will always be some seemingly intellectual crisis looming on the horizon as long as faith is required and our minds are finite, but likewise there will always be the sure and solid doctrines of the Restoration to cling to, which will provide the rock foundation upon which our testimonies may be built.

When many of Christ’s followers turned from Him, He asked His Apostles, “Will ye also go away?”

Peter then responded with an answer that should be engraved on every heart: "To whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life" (John 6:66-68). If someone turns from these restored doctrines, where will he go to learn the true nature of God as taught in the grove of trees? Where will he go to find the doctrines of the premortal existence, baptism for the dead, and eternal marriage? And where will he go to find the sealing powers that can bind husbands and wives and children beyond the grave?

Through Joseph Smith have been restored all the powers, keys, teachings, and ordinances necessary for salvation and exaltation. You cannot go anywhere else in the world and get that. It is not to be found in any other church. It is not to be found in any philosophy of man or scientific digest or individual pilgrimage, however intellectual it may seem. Salvation is to be found in one place alone, as so designated by the Lord Himself when He said that this is "the only true and living church upon the face of the whole earth" (D&C 1:30).

I bear my witness that Joseph Smith was the prophet of the Restoration, just as he claimed to be. I echo the strains of that stirring hymn: "Praise to the man who communed with Jehovah!" ("Praise to the Man," *Hymns*, no. 27). In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

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MORMONS: WHO THEY ARE, WHAT THEY BELIEVE - - Discussion Guide

Nauvoo Expositor

http://www.mormonismeg1i.net/pdf/nauvoo_expositor.pdf

Nauvoo Expositor

NAUVOO, ILLINOIS, JUNE 7, 1844.

We give this week to the following Preamble, Resolutions and Affidavits, of the Seceders from the Church at Nauvoo.-- The request is complied with on account of their deeming it very important that the public should know the true cause of their dissenting, as all manner of falsehood is spread abroad in relation to the schism in the Church. In our subsequent numbers several affidavits will be published, to substantiate the facts alleged. Hereafter, no further Church proceedings will appear in our columns, except in the form of brief communications. -
-ED.

Preamble.

It is with the greatest solicitude for the salvation of the Human Family, and of our own souls, that we have this day assembled. Feign would we have slumbered, and "like the Dove that covers and conceals the arrow that is preying upon its vitals," for the sake of avoiding the furious and turbulent storm of persecution which will gather, soon to burst upon our heads, have covered and concealed that which, for a season, has been brooding among the ruins of our peace: but we rely upon the arm of Jehovah, the Supreme Arbiter of the world, to whom we this day, and upon this occasion, appeal for the rectitude of our intentions.

If that God who gave bounds to the mighty deep, and bade the ocean cease--if that

God who organized the physical world, and gave infinity to space, be our front guard and our rear ward, it is futile and vain for man to raise his puny arm against us. God will inspire his ministers with courage and with understanding to consummate his purposes; and, if it is necessary, he can snatch them from the fiery furnace, or the Lion's den; as he did anciently the three Hebrews from the former, and Daniel from the latter.

As for our acquaintance with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, we know, no man or set of men can be more thoroughly acquainted with its rise, its organization, and its history, than we have every reason to believe we are. We all verily believe, and many of us know of a surety, that the religion of the Latter Day Saints, as originally taught by Joseph Smith, which is contained in the Old and New Testaments, Book of Covenants, and Book of Mormon, is verily true; and that the pure principles set forth in those books, are the immutable and eternal principles of Heaven, and speaks a language which, when spoken in truth and virtue, sinks deep into the heart of every honest man.--Its precepts are invigorating, and in every sense of the word, tend to dignify and ennoble man's conceptions of God and his attributes [sic]. It speaks a language which is heard amidst the roar of Artillery, as well as in the silence of midnight: it speaks a language understood by the incarcerated spirit, as well as he who is unfettered and free; yet to those who will not

see, it is dark, mysterious, and secret as the grave.

We believe that all men, professing to be the ministers of God, should keep steadily in view, the honor and glory of God, the salvation of souls, and the amelioration of man's condition: and among their cardinal virtues ought to be found those of faith, hope, virtue and charity; but with Joseph Smith, and many other official characters in the Church, they are words without any meanings attached-worn as ornaments; exotics nurtured for display; virtues which, throwing aside the existence of a God, the peace, happiness, welfare, and good order of society, require that they should be preserved pure, immaculate and uncorroded.

We most solemnly and sincerely declare, God this Day being witness of the truth and sincerity of our designs and statements, that happy will it be with those who examine and scan Joseph Smith's pretensions to righteousness; and take counsel of human affairs, and of the experience of times gone by. Do not yield up tranquilly a superiority to that man which the reasonableness of past events, and the laws of our country declare to be pernicious and diabolical. We hope many items of doctrine, as now taught, some of which, however, are taught secretly, and denied openly, (which we know positively is the case,)and others publicly, considerate men will treat with contempt; for we declare them heretical and damnable in their influence, though they find many devotees. How shall he, who had drank of the poisonous draft, teach virtue? In the stead thereof, when the criminal ought to plead guilty to the court, the court is obliged to plead guilty to the criminal. We appeal to humanity and ask, what shall we do? Shall we lie supinely and suffer ourselves to be metamorphosed into beasts by the Siren tongue? We answer that our country and our God require that we should rectify the tree. We have called upon him to repent, and as soon as he shewed fruits meet for repentance, we stood ready to seize him by the hand of fellowship, and throw around him

the mantle of protection; for it is the salvation of souls we desire, and not our own aggrandizement.

We are earnestly seeking to explode the vicious principles of Joseph Smith, and those who practice the same abominations and whoredoms; which we verily know are not accordant and consonant with the principles of Jesus Christ and the Apostles; and for that purpose, and with that end in view, with an eye single to the glory of God, we have dared to gird on the armor, and with God at our head, we most solemnly and sincerely declare that the sword of truth shall not depart from the thigh, nor the buckler from the arm, until we can enjoy those glorious privileges which nature's God and our country's laws have guarantied to us-freedom of speech, the liberty of the press, and the right to worship God as seemeth us good.-We are aware, however, that we are hazarding every earthly blessing, particularly property, and probably life itself, in striking this blow at tyranny and oppression: yet notwithstanding we most solemnly declare that no man, or set of men combined, shall, with impunity, violate obligations as sacred as many which have been violated unless reason, justice and virtue have become ashamed and sought the haunts of the grave, though our lives be the forfeiture.

Many of us have sought a reformation in the church, without a public exposition of the enormities of crimes practiced by its leaders, thinking that if they would hearken to counsel, and shew fruit meet for repentance, it would be as acceptable with God, as though they were exposed to public gaze,

"For the private path, the secret acts of men, If noble, for the noblest of their lives."

but our petitions were treated with contempt; and in many cases the petitioner spurned from their presence and particularly by Joseph, who would state that if he had sinned, and was guilty of the charges we would charge him

with, he would not make acknowledgment, but would rather be damned; for it would detract from his dignity, and would consequently ruin and prove the overthrow of the Church. We would ask him on the other hand, if the overthrow of the Church was not inevitable, to which he often replied, that we would all go to Hell together, and convert it into a heaven, by casting the Devil out; and say a lie, Hell is by no means the place this world of fools suppose it to be, but on the contrary, it is quite an agreeable place: to which we would now reply, he can enjoy it he is determined not to desist from his evil ways; but as for us, and ours, we will serve the Lord our God!

It is absurd for men to assert that all is well, while wicked and corrupt men are seeking our destruction, by a perversion of sacred things; for all is not well, while whoredoms and all manner of abominations are practiced under the cloak of religion. Lo! the wolf is in the fold, arrayed in sheep's clothing, and is spreading death and devastation among the saints: and we say to the watchmen standing upon the walls, cry aloud and spare not, for the day of the Lord is at hand—a day cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate.

It is a notorious fact, that many females in foreign climes, and in countries to us unknown, even in the most distant regions of the Eastern hemisphere, have been induced, by the sound of the gospel, to forsake friends, and embark upon a voyage across waters that lie stretched over the greater portion of the globe, as they supposed, to glorify God, that they might thereby stand acquitted in the great day of God Almighty. But what is taught them on their arrival at this place?—They are visited by some of the Strikers, for we know not what else to call them, and are requested to hold on and be faithful, for there are great blessings awaiting the righteous; and that God has great mysteries in store for those who love the Lord, and cling to brother Joseph. They are also notified that Brother Joseph will see them soon, and reveal the mysteries of

Heaven to their full understanding, which seldom fails to inspire them with new confidence in the Prophet, as well as a great anxiety to know what God has laid up in store for them, in return for the great sacrifice of father of mother, of gold and silver, which they gladly left far behind, that they might be gathered into the fold, and numbered among the chosen of God.—They are visited again, and what is the result? They are requested to meet brother Joseph, or some of the Twelve, at some insulated point, or at some particularly described place on the bank of the Mississippi, or at some room, which wears upon its front—Positively NO Admittance. The harmless, inoffensive, and unsuspecting creatures, are so devoted to the Prophet, and the cause of Jesus Christ, that they do not dream of the deep laid and fatal scheme which prostrates happiness, and renders death itself desirable; but they meet him, expecting to receive through him a blessing, and learn the will of the Lord concerning them, and what awaits the faithful follower of Joseph, the Apostle and Prophet of God, When in the stead thereof, they are told, after having been sworn in one of the most solemn manners, to never divulge what is revealed to them, with a penalty of death attached that God Almighty has revealed it to him, that she should be his (Joseph's) Spiritual wife; for it was right anciently, and God will tolerate it again: but we must keep those pleasures and blessings from the world, for until there is a change in the government, we will endanger ourselves by practicing it—but we can enjoy the blessings of Jacob, David, and others, as well as to be deprived of them, if we do not expose ourselves to the law of the land. She is thunder-struck, faints, recovers, and refuses. The Prophet damns her if she rejects. She thinks of the great sacrifice and of the many thousand miles she has traveled over sea and land, that she might save her soul from pending ruin, and replies, God's will be done and not mine. The Prophet and his devotees in this way are gratified. The next step to avoid public exposition from the common

course of things, they are sent away for a time, until all is well; after which they return, as from a long visit. Those whom no power or influence could seduce, except that which is wielded by some individual feigning to be a God, must realize the remarks of an able writer, when he says, "if woman's feelings are turned to ministers of sorrow, where shall she look for consolation?" Her lot is to be wooed and what her heart is like some fortress that has been captured, sacked, abandoned, and left desolate. With her, the desire of the heart has failed--the great charm of existence is at an end; she neglects all the cheerful exercise of life, which gladden the spirits, quicken the pulses, and send the tide of life in healthful currents through the veins. Her rest is broken. The sweet refreshment of sleep is poisoned by melancholy dreams; dry sorrow drinks her blood, until her enfeebled frame sinks under the slightest external injury. Look for her after a little while, and you find friendship weeping over her untimely grave; and wondering that one who but so recently glowed with all the radiance of health and beauty, should so speedily be brought down to darkness and despair, you will be told of some wintry chill, of some casual indisposition that laid her low! But no one knows of the mental malady that previously sapped her strength, and made her so easy a prey to the spoiler. She is like some tender tree, the pride and beauty of the grove--graceful in its form, bright in its foliage, but with the worm praying at its heart; we find it withered when it should be most luxuriant. We see it drooping its branches to the earth, and shedding leaf by leaf until wasted and perished away, it falls in the stillness of the forest; and as we muse over the beautiful ruin, we strive in vain to recollect the blast or thunder-bolt that could have smitten it with decay. But no one knows the cause except the foul fiend who perpetrated the diabolical deed.

Our hearts have mourned and bled at the wretched and miserable condition of females in this place; many orphans have been the victims of misery and wretchedness, through

the influence, that has been exerted over them, under the cloak of religion and afterwards, in consequence of that jealous disposition which predominates over the minds of some, have been turned upon a wide world, fatherless and motherless, destitute of friends and fortune; and robbed of that which nothing but death can restore.

Men solace themselves by saying the facts slumber in the dark caverns of midnight. But Lo! It is sudden day, and the dark deeds of foul fiends shall be exposed from the rooftops. A departed spirit, once the resident of St. Louis, shall yet cry aloud for vengeance.

It is difficult--perhaps impossible--to describe the wretchedness of females in this place, without wounding the feelings of the benevolent, or shocking the delicacy of the refined; but the truth shall come to the world. The remedy can never be applied, unless the disease is known. The sympathy, ever anxious to relieve, cannot be felt before the misery is seen.--The charity that kindles at the tale of woe, can never act with adequate efficiency, till it is made to see the pollution and guilt of men, now buried in the death-shades of heathenism.--Shall we then, how ever painful the sight, shrink from the contemplation of their real state? We answer, we will not, if permitted to live. As we have before stated, it is the vicious principles of men we are determined to explode. It is not that we have any private feelings to gratify, or any private pique to settle, that has induced us to be thus plain; for we can respect and love the criminal, if there is any hope of reformation: but there is a point beyond which forbearance ceases to be a virtue.

The next important item which presents itself for our consideration, is the attempt at Political power and influence, which we verily believe to be preposterous and absurd. We believe, it is inconsistent, and not in accordance with the Christian religion. We do not believe that God ever raised up a Prophet to christianize a world by political schemes and intrigue. It is not the way God captivates the heart of the unbeliever; but on the

contrary, by preaching truth in its own native simplicity, and in its own original purity, unadorned with anything except its own indigenous beauties. Joseph may plead he has been injured, abused, and his petitions treated with contempt by the general government, and that he only desires an influence of a political character that will warrant him redress of grievances; but we care not--the faithful followers of Jesus must bear in this age as well as Christ and the Apostles did anciently; although a frowning world may have crushed him to the dust; although un pitying friends may have passed him by; although hope, the great comforter in affliction, may have burst forth and fled from his troubled bosom; yet, in Jesus there is a balsom for every wound, and a cordial to assuage an agonized mind.

Among the many items of false doctrine that are taught the Church, is the doctrine of many Gods, one of the most direful in its effects that has characterized the world for many centuries. We know not what to call it other than blasphemy, for it is most unquestionably, speaking of God in an impious and irreverent manner. It is contended that there are innumerable gods as much above the God that presides over this universe, as he is above us; and if he varies from the law unto which he is subjected, he, with all his creatures, will be cast down as was Lucifer: thus holding forth a doctrine which is effectually calculated to sap the very foundation of our faith, and now, O Lord! shall we set still and be silent, while thy name is thus blasphemed, and thine Honor, power and glory, brought into disrepute? See Isaiah c 43, v 10; 44, 6-8; 45, 5,6, 21, 22; and Book of Covenants, page 26 and 39.

In the dark ages of Popery, when bigotry, superstition, and tyranny held universal sway over the empire of reason, there was some semblance of justice in the inquisitorial deliberations; which, however, might have been dictated by prudence, or the fear of consequences; but we are no longer forced to appeal to those states that are now situated

under the influence of Popery for examples of injustice, cruelty and oppression--we can appeal to the acts of the inquisitorial deliberations, which, however, might have been dictated by prudence, or the fear of consequences: but we are no longer forced to appeal to those states that are now situated under the influence of popery for examples of injustice, cruelty and oppression--we can appeal to the acts of the inquisitorial department organized in Nauvoo, by Joseph and his accomplices, for specimens of injustice of the most pernicious and diabolical character that ever stained the pages of the historian.

It was in Rome, and about the twelfth century, when Pope Innocent III, ordered father Dominic to excite the Catholic princes and people to extirpate heretics. But it is in this enlightened and intelligent nineteenth century, and in Nauvoo--a place professing to be the nucleus of the world, that Joseph Smith has established an inquisition, which, if it is suffered to exist, will prove more formidable and terrible to those who are found opposing the iniquities of Joseph and his associates, than ever the Spanish inquisition did to heretics as they termed them.

On Thursday evening, the 18th of April, there was a council called, unknown to the Church, which tried, condemned, and cut off brothers Wm. Law, Wilson Law, and sister Law, (Wm's. wife,) brother R . D. Foster, and one brother Smith, with whom we are unacquainted; which we contend is contrary to the book of Doctrine and Covenants, for our law condemnest no man until he is heard. We abhor and protest against any council or tribunal in this Church, which will not suffer the accused to stand in its midst and plead their own cause. If an Agrippa would suffer a Paul, whose eloquence surpassed, as it were, the eloquence of men, to stand before him, and plead his own cause, why should Joseph, with others, refuse to hear individuals in their own defence?--We answer, it is because the court fears the atrocity of its crimes will be exposed to public gaze. We wish the public to

thoroughly understand the nature of this court, and judge of the legality of its acts as seemeth them good.

On Monday, the 15th of April, brother R.D. Foster had a notice served on him to appear before the High Council on Saturday following, the 20th, and answer to charges preferred against him by Joseph Smith. On Saturday, while Mr. Foster was preparing to take his witnesses, 41 in number, to the council-room, that he might make good his charges against Joseph, president Marks notified him that the trial had been on Thursday evening, before the 15th, and that he was cut off from the Church; and that same council cut off the brother Laws', sister Law, and brother Smith, and all without their knowledge. They were not notified, neither did they dream of any such thing being done, for William Law had sent Joseph and some of the Twelve, special word that he desired an investigation before the Church or General Conference, on the 6th of Ap'l. The court, however, was a tribunal possessing no power to try Wm. Law, who was called by special Revelation, to stand as counsellor to the President of the Church. (Joseph,) which was twice ratified by General Conferences, assembled at Nauvoo, for Brigham Young, one of the Twelve, presided, whose duty it was not but the President of the High Council-See Book of Doctrine and Covenants, page 87.

Resolutions

Resolved 1st, That we will not encourage the acts of any court in this church, for the trial of any of its members, which will not suffer the accused to be present and plead their own cause; we therefore declare our decided disapprobation to the course pursued last Thursday evening, (the 18th inst,) in the case of William and Wilson Law, and Mrs. William Law, and R.D. Foster, as being unjust and unauthorized by the laws of the Church, and consequently null and void; for our law

judgeth no man unless he be heard; and to all those who approbate a course so unwarranted, unprecedented and so unjust, we would say beware lest the unjust measure you meet to your brethren, be again meeted out to you.

Resolved 2nd, Inasmuch as we have for years borne with the individual follies and iniquities of Joseph Smith, Hyrum Smith, and many other official characters in the Church of Jesus Christ, (conceiving it a duty incumbent upon us so to bear,) and having labored with them repeatedly with all Christian love, meekness and humility, yet to no effect, feel as if forbearance has ceased to be a virtue, and hope of reformation vain; and inasmuch as they have introduced false and damnable doctrines into the Church, such as a plurality of gods above the God of this universe and his ability to fall with all his creations; the plurality of wives, for time and eternity; the doctrine of unconditional sealing up to eternal life, against all crimes except that of shedding innocent blood, by a perversion of their priestly authority and thereby forfeiting the holy priesthood, according to the word of Jesus; "If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch and is withered, and men gather them and cast them into the fire, and they are burned." St. John, xv .6. "Whosoever transgresseth and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God, he that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, hath both the Father and the Son; if there come any unto you and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed, for he that abideth him God speed is a partaker of his evil deeds;" we therefore are constrained to denounce them as apostates from the pure and holy doctrines of Jesus Christ.

Resolved 3rd, That we disapprove and discountenance every attempt to unite church and state; and that we further believe the effort now being made by

Joseph Smith for political power and influence, is not commendable in the sight of God.

Resolved 4th, That the hostile spirit and conduct manifested by Joseph Smith, and many of his associates towards Missouri and others inimical to his purposes, are decidedly at variance with the true spirit of Christianity, and should not be encouraged by any people, much less by those professing to be the ministers of the gospel of peace.

Resolved 5th, that while we disapprove malicious persecutions and prosecutions, we hold that all church members are alike amenable to the laws of the land; and that we further discountenance any chicanery to screen them from the just demands of the same.

Resolved 6th, That we consider the religious influence exercised in financial concerns by Joseph Smith, as unjust as it is unwarranted, for the Book of Doctrine and Covenants makes it the duty of the Bishop to take charge of the financial affairs of the Church, and of all temporal matters pertaining to the same.

Resolved 7th, That we discountenance and disapprove the attendance at houses of reveling and dancing; dram-shops and theatres; verily believing they have a tendency to lead from paths of virtue and holiness, to those of vice and debauchery.

Resolved 8th, That we look upon the pure and holy doctrines set forth in the Scriptures of Divine truth, as being the immutable doctrines of salvation; and he who abideth in them shall be saved, and he who abideth not in them can not inherit the Kingdom of Heaven.

Resolved 9th, That we consider the gathering in haste, and by sacrifice, to be contrary to the will of God; and that it has been taught by Joseph Smith and others for the purpose of enabling them to sell property at most exorbitant prices, not regarding the welfare of the Church, but through their covetousness reducing those who

had the means to give employment to the poor, to the necessity of seeking labor for themselves; and thus the wealth which is brought into the place is swallowed up by the one great throat, from whence there is no return, which if it had been economically disbursed amongst the whole would have rendered all comfortable.

Resolved 10th, That, notwithstanding our extensive acquaintance with the financial affairs of the Church, we do not know of any property which in reality belongs to the Church (except the Temple) and we therefore consider the injunction laid upon the saints compelling them to purchase property of the Trustee in trust for the Church, is a deception practiced upon them; and that we look upon the sending of special agents abroad to collect funds for the Temple and other purposes as a humbug practiced upon the saints by Joseph and others, to aggrandize themselves, as we do not believe that the monies and property so collected, have been applied as the donors expected, but have been used for speculative purposes, by Joseph, to gull the saints the better on their arrival at Nauvoo, by buying the lands in the vicinity and selling again to them at tenfold advance; and further that we verily believe the appropriations said to have been subscribed by shares for the building of the Nauvoo House to have been used by J. Smith and Lym an Wight, for other purposes, as out of the mass of stock already taken, the building is far from being finished even to the base.

Resolved 11th, That we consider all secret societies, and combinations under penal oaths and obligations, (professing to be organized for religious purposes,) to be anti-Christian, hypocritical and corrupt.

Resolved 12th, That we will not acknowledge any man as king of law-giver to the church; for Christ is our only king and law-giver.

Resolved 13th, That we call upon the honest in heart, in the Church, and throughout the world, to vindicate the pure doctrines of Jesus Christ, whether set forth in the Bible, Book of Mormon, or Book of Covenants; and we hereby withdraw the hand of fellowship, from all those who practice or teach doctrines contrary to the above, until they cease so to do, and show works meet for repentance.

Resolved 14th, That we hereby notify all those holding licences to preach the gospel, who know they are guilty of teaching the doctrine of other Gods above the God of this creation; the plurality of wives; the unconditional sealing up against all crimes, save that of shedding innocent blood; the spoiling of the gentiles, and all other doctrines, (so called) which are contrary to the laws of God, or to the laws of our country, to cease preaching, and to come and make satisfaction, and have their licences renewed.

Resolved 15th, That in all our controversies in defence of truth and righteousness the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty through God to the pulling down of the strong holds of Satan; that our strifes are not against flesh, blood, nor bones; but against principalities and power, against spiritual wickedness in high places and therefore we will not use carnal weapons save in our own defence.

Affidavits.

I hereby certify that Hyrum Smith did, (in his office) read to me a certain written document, which he said was a revelation from God, he said that he was with Joseph when it was received. He afterwards gave me the document to read, and I took it to my house, and read it, and showed it to my wife, and returned it next day . The revelation (so called) authorized certain men to have more wives than one at a time, in this world and in the world to come. It said this was the law, and commanded Joseph to enter into the law.-

And also that he should administer to others. Several other items were in the revelation, supporting the above doctrines.

WM. LAW
State of Illinois,
Hancock County ,

I Robert D. Foster, certify that the above certificate was sworn to before me, as true in substance, this fourth day of May A.D . 1844.
ROBERT D. FOSTER J.P.

I certify that I read the revelation referred to in the above affidavit of my husband, it sustained in strong terms the doctrine of more wives than one at a time, in this world, and in the next, it authorized some to have to the number of ten, and set forth that those women who would not allow their husbands to have more wives than one should be under condemnation before God.

JANE LAW

Sworn and subscribed before me this fourth day of May, A.D. 1844.

ROBERT D. FOSTER, J.P.

To all whom it may Concern:

Forasmuch as the public mind hath been much agitated by a course of procedure in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, by a number of persons declaring against certain doctrines and practices therein, (among whom I am One,) it is but meet that I should give my reasons, at least in part, as a cause that hath led me to declare myself. In the latter part of the summer, 1843, the Patriarch, Hyrum Smith, did in the High Council, of which I was a member, introduce what he said was a revelation given through the Prophet; that the said Hyrum Smith did essay to read the said revelation in the said Council, that according to his reading there was contained the following doctrines; 1st the sealing up of persons to eternal life, against all sins, save that of shedding innocent blood or of consenting thereto; 2nd, the doctrine of a

plurality of wives, or marrying virgins; that "David and Solomon had many wives, yet in this they sinned not save in the matter of Uriah. This revelation with other evidence, that the aforesaid heresies were taught and practiced in the Church; determined me to leave the office of first counsellor to the president of the Church at Nauvoo, inasmuch as I dared not teach or administer such laws. And further deponent saith not.

AUSTIN COWLES.
State of Illinois, } ss.
Hancock County, }

To all whom it may concern I hereby certify that the above certificate was sworn and subscribed before me, this fourth day of May, 1844.

ROBERT D. FOSTER, J.P.

THE EXPOSITOR.

FRIDAY, JUNE 7, 1844

SYLVESTER EMMONS, Editor

Introductory

In greeting our patrons with the first number of the Expositor, a remark is necessary for the expression of some views, and certain principles by which we intend to be governed in our editorial duties. Many questions and surmises are made by those who suppose we will come in conflict with some of their darling schemes of self-aggrandisement. Others, more honest, desire to know whether our object is to advocate any particular religious tenets, or any favorite measures of either of the political parties of the country. To all such questions we answer to the negative. Free toleration in religious sentiments, we deem compatible with the organization of our government, and should not be abridged. On the other hand, we believe religious despotism to be incompatible with our free institutions. What we conceive

to be despotism, engendered by an assumption of power in the name of religion, we shall have occasion to show hereafter. In relation to politics, whatever our own views may be upon the federal measures that now, or may hereafter agitate the country, the Expositor will not be the exponent thereof, and all the strife and party zeal of the two great antagonistical parties for the success of their respective candidates for the Presidency, we shall remain neutral, and in an editorial capacity, inactive. Another party, however, has sprung up in our midst, the leader of which, it would seem, expects, by a flourish of Quixotial chivalry, to take, by storm, the Presidential chair, and distribute among his faithful supporters, the office of governor in all the different States, for the purpose, we resume, of more effectually consolidating the government. This party we may be disposed to treat with a little levity, but nothing more. As it respects the local questions which may arise in our own county, and the candidates for the legislature from this county, we reserve the right to expatriate upon the respective claims--not on account of their politics--be they whig or democrat, but on account of a combination which we believe has for its object the utter destruction of the rights of the old citizens of the county, who have borne the heat and burden of the day; who have labored hard as pioneers of the county; who have rights that should be respected by every principle of honor and good faith, and whose wishes should be consulted in the choice of officers, and not have men imposed upon them, who are obnoxious, for good and sufficient reasons. In relation to such questions, we intend to express our mind freely, as our duty dictates, regardless of consequences. If a fair and honorable course be taken by the dominant party at Nauvoo, we will have nothing to battle against; but if they do not pursue that course, we shall be prepared for the warfare. We must confess, however, if we are to judge of the future by the past, we have little to expect from that quarter: but apart from local

political considerations, we have a high and more noble duty to perform. We shall spread the banner to the breeze for a radical reform in the city of Nauvoo, as the departure from moral rectitude, and the abuse of power, have become intolerable. We shall speak out, and spare not, until certain grievances are redressed or corrected; until honor, virtue, and reputation shall take their accustomed habitations, and be respected; until we teach men that no exclusive privileges can be allowed to any individual under our form of government; that the law of the land, based upon the revealed laws of heaven, are paramount to all other earthly considerations; and he who sets the laws at defiance, and evades their operation, either by direct or indirect means, pursues a course subversive of the best interests of the country, and dangerous to the well-being of the social compact. That there does exist an order of things with the systematic elements of organization in our midst--a system which, if exposed in its naked deformity, would make the virtuous mind revolt with horror; a system in the exercise of which lays prostrate all the dearest ties in our social relations--the glorious fabric upon which human happiness is based--ministers to the worst passions of our nature, and throws us back into the benighted regions of the dark ages, we have the greatest reason to believe.

The question is asked, will you bring a mob upon us? In answer to that, we assure all concerned, that we will be among the first to put down any thing like an illegal force being used against any man or set of men. If any one has become amenable to the law, we wish to have him tried impartially by the laws of his country. We are among the number who believe that there is virtue and integrity enough in the administrators of the law, to bring every offender to justice, and to protect the innocent. If it is necessary to make a show of force, to execute legal process, it will create no sympathy in that case to cry out, we are mobbed. There is such a thing as persons being deceived into a false sympathy once,

who, the second time, will scrutinize very closely, to know who, or which party, are the persecutors. It is not always the first man who cries out, stop thief, that is robbed. It is the upright, honest, considerate and moral precepts of any class that will be respected in this or any other enlightened age--precepts which have for their end the good of mankind, and the establishment of fundamental truths. On the other hand, paradoxical dogmas, new systems of government, new codes of morals, a new administration of the laws by ignorant, unlettered, and corrupt men, must be frowned down by every lover of his country. The well-being of society demand it at our hands. Our country, by whose laws we are protected, asks us for a manifestation of that patriotism which should inspire every American citizen--the interests of the State of Illinois require it, and as a citizen of Illinois, we intend to respond to the voice of duty, and stand the hazard of the die.

We believe that the Press should not be the medium through which the private character of any individual should be assailed, delineated, or exposed to public gaze: still, whoever acts in an official character, who sets himself up as a public teacher, and reformer of morals and religion, and as an aspirant to the highest office in the gift of the people of this glorious republic institutions he publicly condemns, we assert and maintain the right of canvassing all the public acts and an imadverting, with terms of the severest reproach upon all the revolutionary measures that come to our notice, from any source. We would not be worthy of the name of an American citizen, did we stand by and see, not only the laws of the State, but the laws of the United States set at defiance, the authorities insulted, fugitives from justice fleeing for refuge, asking and receiving protection from the authorities of Nauvoo, for high crimes committed against the government of the United States, the Mayor of a petty incorporated town interposing his authority, and demanding the right of trial for the

fugitive on the merits of the case, by virtue of a writ of Habeas Corpus, issued by the Municipal Court of Nauvoo. It is too gross a burlesque upon common sense--a subterfuge too low to indicate anything but a corrupt motive.—Such acts, whether committed in a private or public capacity, will be held up to public scorn. An independent Press is bound by every sense of duty, to lay before the public every attack upon their rights: we, therefore, in the exercise of our duty, expect the support and the aid of our fellow citizens in our enterprise.

We hope all those who intend subscribing for the "Expositor," will forward their names as soon as possible; Editors, Postmasters, and others, to whom the Prospectus, and paper may be sent, will confer a favor upon us, by noticing, exchanging, and circulating the same, in their respective vocations, and forwarding accordingly.

In consequence of the importance of the cause in which we have engaged, and the assurances we have received from different sources, we have concluded to issue one thousand copies of the first number of the paper, that all who wish, may be supplied, and further, that none may plead ignorance of our complaints, or exonerate themselves from an interest in our behalf. We do not wish, or expect, the publication of the "Expositor " to prove a matter of pecuniary profit, neither do we believe the public will suffer it to prove a loss. It is a subject in which we are all interested, more particularly the citizens of this county, and surrounding country; the case has assumed a formidable and fearful aspect, it is not the destiny of a few that is involved in case of commotion, but that of thousands, wherein necessarily the innocent and helpless would be confounded with the criminal and guilty. We have anxiously desired, and strenuously advocated a peaceable redress of the injuries that have repeatedly been inflicted upon us, and we have now the means in our

hands, through which we can peaceably and honorably effect our object. For ourselves, we are firmly resolved not to quit the field, till our efforts shall be crowned with success. And we now call upon all, who prize the liberty of speech, the liberty of the press, the right of conscience, and the sacred rights of American citizenship, to assist us in this undertaking. Let us stand up and boldly and fearlessly oppose ourselves to any and every encroachment, in whatever form it may appear, whether shaped in superstitious domination or civil usurpation. The public abroad have not been informed in relation to facts as they really existed in our midst, many have supposed that all was rumor, and having no organ through which to speak, our silence has been to them sufficient proof.

The facts have been far otherwise, we have watched with painful emotion the progress of events in this city, for some time past, until we were sick with the sight; injury upon injury has been repeated, insult has been added to insult till forbearance has ceased to be virtuous, and we now have the proud privilege, we have long wished for, of defending ourselves against their foul aggressions and aspersions and of informing the public of things as they really are. We intend to tell the whole tale and by all honorable means to bring to light and justice, those who have long fed and fattened upon the purse, the property, and the character of injured innocence;—yes, we will speak, and that too in thunder tones, to the ears of those who have thus ravaged and laid waste fond hopes, bright prospects, and virtuous principles, to gratify an unhallowed ambition. We are aware of the critical position we occupy, in view of our immediate location; but we entertain no fears, our purpose is fixed [] our arm is nerved for the conflict, we [] upon our rights, and we will maintain those rights, whatever may be the consequence; let no man or set of men assail us at the peril of their lives, and we hereby give notice to all parties, that we are the last in attack, but the first and foremost in defence. We would be

among the last to provoke the spirit of the public abroad unnecessarily, but we have abundant assurance, in case of emergency, that we shall be all there.

An individual, bearing the cognomen of Jeremiah Smith, who has evaded the officers for some time, has taken refuge in the city of Nauvoo. It appears he is a fugitive from justice for the offence of procuring four thousand dollars from the United States Treasury at the city of Washington, under false pretences. A bill of indictment was found in the District of Columbia against him, and a warrant issued for his arrest. The Marshal of Iowa Territory got intelligence of his being in this place, and procuring the necessary papers for his arrest, proceeded to this place in search of him, about three weeks ago. After making inquiry, and becoming satisfied that he was secreted in Nauvoo, under the immediate protection of the Prophet, he said to him (the Prophet,) that he was authorised to arrest the said J. Smith, for an offence committed by him against the United States government, and wished to know where he was--to which the Prophet replied, that he knew nothing about him. The Marshal said he knew he was secreted in the city, and was determined to have him; and, unless he was given up, he would have the aid of the Dragoons to find and arrest him. Joseph Smith then replied, that was not necessary; but, if the Marshal would pledge his word and honor that he should have the benefit of a city writ of Habeas Corpus, and be tried before him, he would produce the fugitive in half an hour. After some hesitancy, the Marshal agreed to do so, when the prisoner was produced in the time specified. A writ of Habeas Corpus was issued, and the prisoner taken from the Marshal and brought before the Municipal court of Nauvoo for trial. The court adjourned until thursday, the 30th ult., when he was tried, and discharged, as a matter of course. In the interval, however, application had been made to Judge Pope, of

the District court of the United States for the State of Illinois, who issued his warrant, directed to the United States Marshal, who sent his deputy to make a second arrest, in the case the other officer did not succeed in taking him from the city. Smith was found by the Illinois Marshal and arrested, when it became necessary for the high corporate powers of the city again to interpose their authority. The potent writ was again issued—the prisoner taken from the Marshal--a trial had, during which, the attorneys for Smith relieved themselves of an insupportable burthen of legal knowledge, which completely overwhelmed the learned court, and resulted in the triumphant acquittal of the prisoner, with a judgement for costs against the U. States.

Now we ask if the executive and judicial authorities of Illinois deem it politic to submit to such a state of things in similar cases? Can, and will the constituted authorities of the federal government be quiescent under such circumstances, and allow the paramount laws of the Union to be set at defiance, and rendered nugatory by the action of a court, having no more than co-ordinate powers, with a common justice of the peace? If such an order of things is allowed to exist, there is every reason to believe that Nauvoo will become a sink of refuge for every offender who can carry in spoils enough to buy protection. The people of the State of Illinois will, consequently, see the necessity of repealing the charter of Nauvoo, when such abuses are practiced under it; and by virtue of said chartered authority, the right of the writ of Habeas Corpus in all cases arising under the city ordinance, to give full scope to the desired jurisdiction. The city council have passed ordinances, giving the Municipal court authority to issue the writ of Habeas Corpus in all cases when the prisoner is held in custody in Nauvoo, no matter whether the offender is committed in the State of Maine, or on the continent of Europe, the prisoner being in the city under arrest. It is gravely

contended by the legal luminaries of Nauvoo, that the ordinances give them jurisdiction, not only jurisdiction to try the validity of the writ, but to enquire into the merits of the case, and allow the prisoner to swear himself clear of the charges. If his own oath is not considered sufficient to satisfy the adverse party, plenty of witnesses are ready to swear that he is to be believed on oath, and that is to be considered sufficient by the court to put the uictus on all foreign testimony and the discharge of the prisoner follows, as a necessary consequence.

Joe. Smith -- The Presidency.

We find in the Nauvoo Neighbor of May 29th, a lengthy letter from Joseph Smith a candidate for the Presidency on his own hook, to Henry Clay, the Whig candidate for the same office. It appears to be a new rule of tactics for two rival candidates to enter into a discussion of their respective claims to that high office, just preceding an election. Smith charges Clay with shrinking from the responsibility of promising to grant whatever the Mormons might ask, if elected to the Presidency. Smith has not been troubled with any inquiries of committees as to what measures he will recommend if elected; nevertheless he has come out boldly and volunteered his views of certain measures which he is in favor of having adopted. One is for the General Government to purchase the slaves of the south and set them free, that we can understand. Another is to pass a general uniform land law, that certainly requires the spirit of interpretation to show its meaning as no explanation accompanies it. Another which no doubt will be very congenial to the candidate's nervous system, is to open all the prison doors on the country, and set the captives free. These with some other suggestions equally as enlightened, ought to be sufficient to satisfy any man that Joseph Smith is willing that his principles shall be publicly known. If however any individual

voter, who has a perfect right to know a candidate's principles, should not be satisfied, he may further aid his inquiries, by a reference to the record to the grand inquest of Hancock County.

Martin Van Bur en is charged with non-committalism; Henry Clay has not been the man to answer frankly the question whether he would restore to the Mormons their lands in Missouri. Joseph Smith is the only candidate now before the people whose principles are fully known; let it be remembered there are documents the highest degree of evidence before the people; a committee of twenty-four, under the solemnity of their oaths, have inquired into and reported upon his claims in due form of law. Shades of Washington and Jefferson-- Henry Clay the candidate of a powerful party, is now underbonds to keep the peace; Joseph Smith, the candidate of another "powerful" party has two indictments against him, one for fornication and adultery, another for perjury. Our readers can make their own comments.

We have received the last number of the "Warsaw Signal;" it is rich with anti-Mormon matter, both editorial and communicated. Among other things it contains a lengthy letter from J.H.Jackson, giving some items in relation to his connection with the "Mormon Prophet," as also his reasons for the same. It will be perceived that many of the most dark and damnable crimes that ever darkened human character, which have hitherto been to the public, a matter of rumor and suspicion, are now reduced to indisputable facts. We have reason to believe, from our acquaintance with Mr. Jackson, and our own observation, that the statements he makes are true; and in view of these facts, we ask, in the name of heaven, where is the safety of our lives and liberties, when placed at the disposal of such heaven daring, hell deserving, God forsaken villains. Our blood boils while we refer to these blood thirsty and murderous propensities of men, or rather demons in

human shape, who, not satisfied with practising their dupes upon a credulous and superstitious people, must wreak their vengeance upon any who may dare to come in contact with them. We deplore the desperate state of things to which we are necessarily brought, but, we say to our friends, "keep cool," and the whole tale will be told. We fully believe in bringing these iniquities and enormities to light, and let the majesty of violated law, and the voice of injured innocence and contemned public opinion, speak in tones of thunder to these miscreants; but in behalf of hundreds and thousands of unoffending citizens, whose only fault is religious enthusiasm, and for the honor of our own names and reputation, let us not follow their desperado measures, and thereby dishonor ourselves in revenging our own wrongs. Let our motto be, "Last in attack, but first in defence;" and the result cannot prove otherwise than honorable and satisfactory.

To Correspondents.

In consequence of a press of other duties in preparing our first number for the press, we have not had time to examine several communications that have been forwarded for publication. We respect the motives of our friends in the interest they manifest in carrying forward the work of reform; but we wish it to be distinctly understood, that we cannot depart from the conditions set forth in the Prospectus; that is the chart by which we intend to navigate the "Expositor," carefully avoiding anything that may tend to diminish the interest or tarnish the character of its columns. We already feel that we occupy an unenviable position in view of the variety of opinions that exist, but, we stand committed as to our course, and having faithfully and fearlessly adhered to those terms, without partiality to friends, or personality to foes, we shall consider ourselves honorably discharged of duty.

We offer an apology to our readers for the want of arrangement and taste in our first number on account of our materials and press not being in order; the short time we have had to get a press and materials has precluded the possibility of getting the first number out according to our wishes, and the absence of the Editor for several days preceding our first issue, renders this apology necessary. In our subsequent numbers we intend to make good the insufficiency by giving to our readers a good selection of miscellany, and an editorial of rich and interesting matter.

PROPRIETORS.

Circuit Court.

The May Term of the Circuit Court of this county closed on the 30th ult. after a session of ten days. We understand a large number of cases were disposed of, none, however of a very important character. The cases wherein Joseph Smith was a party, were transferred by a change of venue, to other courts; that of A. Sympton vs. J. Smith, for false imprisonment, to Adams County; that of F. M. Higbee vs. J. Smith, for slander, and that of C. A. Foster vs. Joseph Smith, and J. W. Coolidge for false imprisonment, and that of A. Davis vs. Joseph Smith, and J. P. Green, for trespass, were all transferred to the County of McDonough. The Grand Jury found two bills against Smith, one for perjury, and another for fornication and adultery; on the first of which Smith delivered himself up for trial, but the State not being ready, material witnesses being absent, the case was deferred to the October term.

The regular session of the Municipal Court of this City came off on Monday last. The cases of R. D. Foster, C. L. Higbee, and

C. A. Foster, on appeals from the Mayor's Court, wherein they had each been fined in the sum of one hundred dollars, "for the very enormous offence of refusing to assist the notorious O. P. Rockwell, and his "dignity" John P. Green, in arresting a respectable and peaceable citizen, without the regular process of papers) and of A. Spencer, wherein he was fined in the same sum on a charge of assault and battery, were all taken up and gravely discussed; after the most mature deliberation, with the assistance of the extinguished City Attorney, this honorable body concluded to dismiss the suit and issue a procedendo to the lower court, which was accordingly done.

The cases referred to above, afford abundant reason both for complaint and comment. We intend as soon as our time will allow, to express our views freely upon this feature of Mormon usurpation; first, enact a string of ordinances contrary to reason and common sense, and then inflict the severest penalties for not observing them.

We see that our friend the Neighbor, advocates the claims of Gen. Joseph Smith for the Presidency; we also see from the records of the grand Jury of Hancock Co. at their recent term, that the general is a candidate to represent the branch of the state government at Alton. We would respectfully suggest to the Neighbor, whether the two offices are not incompatible with each other.

NAUVOO, JUNE 5th, 1844

Citizens Of Hancock County.

It is well known to all of you that the August electing is fast approaching, and with it comes the great and terrible conflict. It is destined to be a day pregnant with big events; for it will be the index to the future. -- Should we be defeated upon that occasion, our die is cast, and our fate is sealed; but if successful, alike may Joseph Smith, Hyrum Smith, and their

devoted followers, as well as their enemies, expect that justice will be meted out. The present is portentous of the great effort that is to be made upon that occasion, by Joseph for power; Hiram Smith is already in the field as a candidate for the legislature, but will you support him, that same Hyrum Smith the devoted follower and brother of Joe, who feigned a revelation from God, directing the citizens of Hancock County to vote for J.P. Hoge, in preference to Cyrus Walker, and by so doing blaspheming the name of God? Will you, gentlemen of Hancock County, support a man like that, who claims to move in a different sphere, a sphere entirely above you, one who will trifle with the things of God, and feign converse with the Divinity, for the sake of carrying an election? I will unhesitatingly assume to my self the responsibility of answering in the negative. I flatter myself you are not so depraved, and so blinded to your own interests, as to support a man totally ignorant of the laws of your country, and in every respect alienated from you and your interests.

In supporting Hyrum Smith, you Citizens of Hancock County, are supporting Joseph Smith, for whom he (Hyrum) goes teeth and toe nails, for President of the United States. The question may arise here, in voting for Joseph Smith, for whom am I voting? You are voting for a man who contends all governments are to be put down and the one established upon its ruins. You are voting for an enemy to you or government, hear Phelps to Joe in his affidavit before Judge King of Missouri:-- "Have you come to the point to resist all law?" "I have," says Joe. You are voting for a sycophant, whose attempt for power find no parallel in history. You are voting for a man who refuses to suffer criminals to be brought to justice, but in the stead thereof rescues them from the just demands of the law, by Habeas Corpus. You are voting for a man who stands indicted, and who is now held to bail, for the crimes of adultery and perjury; two of the gravest crimes known to our laws. Query not then for whom

you are voting, it is for one of the blackest and basest scoundrels that has appeared upon the stage of human existence since the days of Nero, and Caligula.

In supporting Hyrum Smith, then are you not supporting Joseph Smith? most assuredly; pause then my countrymen, and consider coolly, calmly and deliberately, what you do? Support not that man who is spreading death, devastation and ruin throughout your happy country like a tornado. Infinite are the gradations which mark this man's attempts for power, which if not checked soon, must not only shed a deleterious influence on the face of this county, but on the face of the adjoining counties. He is already proudly boasting that he is beyond your reach; and I regret to think I am under the painful necessity of admitting the fact. Is it not a shame and a disgrace, to think we have a man in our midst, who will defy the laws of our country; the laws which shed so gentle and nourishing an influence upon our fathers, which fostered and protected them in their old age from insult and aggression; shall we their sons, lie still and suffer Joseph Smith to light up the lamp of tyranny and oppression in our midst? God forbid, lest the departed spirits of our fathers, cry from the ground against us. Let us arise in the majesty of our strength and sweep the influence of tyrants and miscreants from the face of the land, as with the breath of heaven. The eagle that is now proudly borne to earth's remotest regions by every gale, will perch himself in the solitude of mid-night if we do not arouse from our lethargy.

It is the worst of absurdities for any individual to say there is a man in our midst who is above the reach of violated law, and not lend a helping hand; all talk and nothing more will not accomplish that for your country and your God, which the acts of Washington did. Then gentlemen organize yourselves and prepare for the dreadful conflict in August; we go with you heart and hand, in the attempt to suppress this contaminating influence which is prostrating

our fairest prospects, and spreading desolation throughout our vale. Call into the field your best men under the solemn pledge to go for the unconditional repeal of the Nauvoo Charter, and you have our support; whether they be Whig or Democrat we care not; when a friend presents us with a draught of cool water, we do not stop to inquire whether it is contained in a silver vase, a golden urn or a long handled gourd. We want no base seducer, liar and perjured representative, to represent us in Springfield, but while Murrill represents Tennessee in Nashville, Munroe Edwards, New York, in Sing Sing, Br. Joseph may have the extreme goodness to represent Illinois in Alton, if his lawyers do not succeed in quashing the indictments found against him by the Grand Jurors of Hancock County, at the May term 1844.

FRANCIS M. HIGBEE.

The Mormons.

We last week gave some account of the dissensions and divisions which have sprung up in the holy city of Nauvoo -- growing out of the arbitrary conduct of "the Prophet." -- Since then, the breach has become still wider between the head of the church and his followers. The citizens have procured a press, and will soon commence a paper, for the purpose of exposing Smith on his own ground and among his own people. Last week, individuals of the Mormon faith, (Messrs. Blakesley and Higbee,) representing the dissenters, addressed a large number of our citizens, in reference to the "flare up," at Nauvoo. We were not present, but have it from others who were, that the dissenter s, made out that Joe Smith was pretty much of a rough customer, especially in relation to the "spiritual wife" doctrine. Their whole aim was principally against the church -- of which they still claimed to be members. They painted Smith, as anything but the saint he claims to be--and as a man, to the last degree, corrupt in

his morals and religion. On Wednesday night, Mr. John P. Green, a Mormon elder, addressed a crowded house in defence of "the Prophet." The principal portion of the worthy elder's speech, while we were in the house, was taken up, in an apology for addressing the meeting, and when he did come to the substance of his address, he could only disprove the statements made by the dissenters, from his own knowledge -- he said he had been a Mormon for the last twelve years -- and had always been intimate with Smith, and that such doctrines as were ascribed to Smith by his enemies, had never been taught to him. He further said that Smith was like a diamond, the more he was rubbed, the brighter he appeared -- and he strongly insinuated, that the characters of the individuals, who had assailed Smith on the second evening previous, were none of the best, & c.

We think these Mormon Missionaries are laboring under a mistake in one particular. It is not so much the particular doctrines, which Smith upholds and practices, however abominable they may be in themselves, that our citizens care about -- as it is the anti-republican nature of the organization, over which he has almost supreme control -- and which is trained and disciplined to act in accordance with his selfish will. The spectacle presented in Smith's case of a civil, ecclesiastical and military leader, united in one and the same person, with power over life and liberty, can never find favor in the minds of sound and thinking Republicans. The day has gone by when the precepts of Divine Truth, could be propagated at the point of the sword -- or the Bible made the medium of corrupt men to gratify their lustful appetites and sordid desires--[Quincy Whig.

We have received from Nauvoo a Prospectus for a new paper, to be entitled the "Nauvoo Expositor." It is intended to be the organ of the Reformed Mormon Church, which has lately been organized in that place,

and to oppose the power of 'the self-constituted Monarch,' who has assumed the government of the Holy City. We care no more about the New Church than the Old one, as a church; for we regard both with indifference. But if it can be a means of humbling the haughty miscreant who rules in that city and exposing his rank villianies, than we shall wish both Church and Paper a hearty God speed! The gentlemen who have the new paper in charge, have the reputation of being men of character and talent; and have commenced the work in which they are engaged, in real earnest. We hope the public will encourage their effort. -- Upper Mississippian.

Extract From "Gen. Smiths Views."

"The people may have faults but they never should be trifled with. I think Mr. Pitt's quotation in the British Parliament of Mr. Prior's couplet for the husband and wife, to apply to the course which the king and ministry of England should pursue to the then colonies, of the now United States, might be a genuine rule of action for some of the breath made men in high places, to use towards the posterity of that noble daring people.

"Be to her faults a little blind; Be to her virtues very kind."

"We have had democratic presidents; whig presidents; a pseudo democratic whig president: and now it is time to have a president of the United States; and let the people of the whole union, like the inflexible Romans, whenever they find a promise made by a candidate, that is not practiced as an officer, hurl the miserable sycophant from his exaltation, as God did Nebuchadnezzar, to crop the grass of the field, with a beast's heart among the cattle.

"Mr. Van Buren said in his inaugural address, that he went "into the presidential

chair the inflexible and uncompromising opponent of Congress, to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia, against the wishes of the slave holding states; and also with a determination equally decided to resist the slightest interference with it in the states where it exists." Poor little Matty made his rhapsodical sweep with the fact before his eyes, that the state of New York, his native state, had abolished slavery, without a struggle or a groan. Great God, ow independent! From henceforth slavery is tolerated where it exists: constitution or no constitution; people or no people; right or wrong; vox Matti; vox Diaboli: "the voice of Matty " -- "the voice of the devil;" and peradventure, his great "Sub-Treasury" scheme was a piece of the same mind: but the man and his measures have such a striking resemblance to the anecdote of the Welchman and his cart-tongue, that, when the constitution was so long that it allowed slavery at the capital of a free people, it could not be cut off; but when it was short that it needed a Sub-Treasury, to save the funds of the nation, it could be spliced! Oh, granny what a long tale our puss has got! As a Greek might say, hysteron proteron : The cart before the horse: but his mighty whisk through the great national fire, for the presidential chesnuts, burnt the locks of his glory with the blaze of his folly!

The above we extract from the celebrated state paper, entitled, "Gen. Smiths' views of the powers and policy of the Government of the United States," as a specimen of the original matter it contains. -- With such astute penetrating views, such exalted and dignified sentiments, emanating from a candidate for the Presidency, Father Miller must be pronounced a humbug, and the people of the nineteenth century may look for the dawn of a glorious era to burst upon their astonished vision in the fall of eighteen hundred and forty-four, an era in which a Prophet only can tell whether granny's cat has a long tail or not; or whether the Greek's cart will be before the horse or otherwise; the constitution we

presume will be as long as the Welchman's cart tongue, "peradventure" a little longer.

Prospectus Of The Nauvoo Expositor.

The undersigned propose publishing a Journal of the above title, which will appear on Friday of each week, on an Imperial sheet, with a new Press, and materials of the best quality, and rendered worthy of the patronage of a discerning and an enlightened public.

The Expositor will be devoted to a general diffusion of useful knowledge, and its columns open for the admission of all courteous communications of a Religious, Moral, Social, Literary, or Political character, without taking a decided stand in favor of either of the great Political parties of the country. A part of its columns will be devoted to a few primary objects, which the Publishers deem of vital importance to the public welfare. Their particular locality gives them a knowledge of the many gross abuses exercised under the pretended authorities of the Nauvoo City Charter, by the legislative authorities of said city; and the insupportable oppressions of the Ministerial powers in carrying out the unjust, illegal, and unconstitutional ordinances of the same. The publishers, therefore, deep it a sacred duty they owe to their country and their fellow citizens, to advocate, through the columns of the Expositor, the UNCONDITIONAL REPEAL OF THE NAUVOO CITY CHARTER; to restrain and correct the abuses of the Unit Power; to ward off the Iron Rod which is held over the devoted heads of the citizens of Nauvoo and the surrounding country; to advocate unmitigated disobedience to Political Revelations, and to censure and decry gross moral imperfections wherever found, either in the Plebian, Patrician, or self-constituted Monarch; to advocate the pure principles of morality, the pure principles of truth; designed not to destroy, but strengthen the main-spring of God's moral government; to advocate, and

exercise, the freedom of speech in Nauvoo, independent of the ordinances abridging the same; to give free toleration to every man's religious sentiments, and sustain all in worshipping God according to the monitions of their consciences, as guaranteed by the Constitution of our country; and to oppose, with uncompromising hostility, any Union of Church and State, or any preliminary step tending to the same; to sustain all, however humble, in their equal and constitutional rights, and oppose the sacrifice of the Liberty, the Property, and the Happiness of the many to the pride and ambition of the few. In a word, to give a full, candid, and succinct statement of facts as they exist in the city of Nauvoo, fearless of whose particular case they may apply, being governed by the laws of Editorial courtesy, and the inherent dignity which is inseparable from honorable minds; at the same time exercising their own judgment in cases of flagrant abuses, or moral delinquencies; to use such terms and names as they deem proper, when the object is of such high importance that the end will justify the means. We confidently look to an enlightened public for aid in this great and indispensable effort.

The columns of the Expositor will be open to the discussion of all matters of public interest, the productions of all correspondents being subject to the decision of the Editor alone, who shall receive or reject at his option. National questions will be in place, but no preference given to either of the political parties. The Editorial department will contain the political news of the day, proceedings of Congress, election returns, &c., &c. Room will be given for articles on Agriculture, the Mechanic Arts, Commercial transactions, &c.

The publishers bind themselves to issue the paper weekly for one year, and forward fifty-two copies to each subscriber during the year. Orders should be forwarded as soon as possible, that the publishers may know what number of copies to issue. The publishers take pleasure in announcing to the public, that they have engaged the services of SYLVESTER EMMONS, Esq., who will have entire charge of the editorial department. From an acquaintance with the dignity of character, and literary qualifications of this gentleman, they feel assured that the Nauvoo Expositor must and will sustain a high and honorable reputation.

Terms

Two Dollars per annum in advance,
Two Dollars and Fifty cents at the expiration of six months,
Three Dollars at the end of the year.
Six copies will be forwarded to one address for Ten dollars in advance; Thirteen copies for Twenty Dollars, &c.
Advertising and Job Work in all their varieties, done on short notice, and upon the most satisfactory terms.
All letters and communications must be addressed to "Charles A. Foster, Nauvoo, Illinois," postpaid, in order to insure attention.

William Law,
Wilson Law,
Charles Ivins,
Francis M. Higbee, } Publishers.
Chauncey L. Higbee,
Robert D. Foster,
Charles A. Foster.

[return to menu](#)

MORMONS: WHO THEY ARE, WHAT THEY BELIEVE - - Discussion Guide

The Order to Destroy the Nauvoo Expositor

<http://law2.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/carthage/expositororder.html>

"Better to Smash Than to Live": The Order to Destroy the *Nauvoo Expositor*



The *Nauvoo Expositor* building, where the press was destroyed on the order of Joseph Smith

1. City Council Resolution

***Resolved*, by the City Council of the City of Nauvoo, that the printing office from whence issues the "Nauvoo Expositor" is a public nuisance, and also all of said Nauvoo Expositors, which may be, or exist in said establishment, and the Mayor is instructed to cause said printing establishment and papers to be removed without delay, in such manner as he shall direct. Passed June 10th, 1844.**

GEORGE W. HARRIS
Prest. pro tem

2. Order of Joseph Smith, Mayor (June 10, 1844)

To the Marshal of said City [Nauvoo], greeting.

You are hereby commanded to destroy the printing press from whence issues the Nauvoo Expositor, and pi the type of said printing establishment in the street, and burn all the Expositors and libelous handbills found in said establishment; and if resistance be offered to your execution of this order by the owner or others, demolish the house: and if anyone threatens you or the Mayor or the

officers of the city, arrest those who threaten you, and fail not to execute this order without delay, and make due return thereon.

**By order of the City Council,
JOSEPH SMITH, MAYOR**

3. Marshal's Return

The within named press and type is destroyed and pried according to order, on this 10th of June, 1844, at about 8 o'clock p.m.

**J. P. GREENE, C.M.
HEADQUARTERS, NAUVOO LEGION
June 10th, 1844**

4. Joseph Smith's Order to Jonathan Dunham, acting Major-General of the Nauvoo Legion (June 10, 1844)

You are hereby commanded to hold the Nauvoo Legion in readiness forthwith to execute city ordinances, and especially to remove the printing establishment of the Nauvoo Expositor; and this is what you are required to do at sight, under the penalty of the laws, provided the Marshal shall require it and need your services.

**JOSEPH SMITH,
Lieut. General, Nauvoo Legion.**

June 8-10 Meeting of the Nauvoo City Council Concerning the *Nauvoo Expositor*

History of the Church, Volume VI (pp.435-448)

Synopsis of Proceedings in the City Council against the Nauvoo Expositor.

CITY COUNCIL, REGULAR SESSION, June 8th, 1844.

In connection with other business as stated in last week's paper, the Mayor remarked that he believed it generally the case, that when a man goes to law, he has an unjust cause, and wants to go before someone who wants business, and that he had very few cases on his docket; and referring to Councilor Emmons, editor of the *Nauvoo Expositor*, suggested the propriety of first purging the City Council; and, referring to the character of the paper and proprietors, called up Theodore Turley, a mechanic, who being sworn, said that the Laws (William and Wilson.) had brought bogus dies to him to fix.

Councilor Hyrum Smith inquired what good Foster and his brother and the Higbees and Laws had ever done. While his brother Joseph was under arrest from the Missouri persecution, the Laws and Robert D. Foster would have been ridden on a rail, if he had not stepped forward to prevent it, on account of their oppressing the poor.

Mayor said, while he was under arrest by writ from Governor Carlin William Law sued him for \$40 he was owing Law, and it took the last expense money he had to pay it.

Councilor Hyrum Smith referred to J. H. Jackson's coming to this city, &c. Mayor said that William Law had offered Jackson \$500 to kill him.

Councilor Hyrum Smith continued-Jackson told him he (Jackson) meant to have his daughter, and threatened him if he made any resistance. Jackson related to him a dream, that Joseph and Hyrum were opposed to him, but that he would execute his purposes; that Jackson had laid a plan with four or five persons to kidnap his daughter, and threatened to shoot anyone that should come near after he had got her into the skiff; that Jackson was engaged in trying to make bogus, which was his principal business. Referred to the revelation read to the High Council of the Church, which has caused so much talk, about multiplicity of wives; that said revelation was in answer to a question concerning things which transpired in former days. That when sick, William Law confessed to him that he had been guilty of adultery, and was not fit to live, and had sinned against his own soul, &c., and inquired who was Judge Emmons? When he came here he had scarce two shirts to his back; but he had been dandled by the authorities of the city, &c., and was now editor of the *Nauvoo Expositor*, and his right hand man, was Francis M. Higbee, who had confessed to him that he had had the ----!

Washington Peck sworn, said-"Soon after Joseph H. Jackson came here, he came to witness to borrow money, which witness loaned him and took some jewelry as security.

Soon after a man from across the river came after the jewelry.

Jackson had stolen the jewelry from him.

At another time wanted to get money of witness. Asked witness if he would do anything dishonorable to get a living. Witness said he would not. Jackson said witness was a damn fool, for he could get a living a deal easier than he was then doing, by making bogus; and some men high in the Church, are engaged in the business.

Witness asked if it was Joseph. "No." said Jackson; "I dare not tell it to Joseph." Witness understood him the Laws are engaged in it. Jackson said he would be the death of witness, if he ever went to Joseph, or anyone else, to tell what he had said.

Afternoon.-Ordered by the Council that Sylvester Emmons be suspended until his case could be investigated, for slandering the City Council. That the Recorder notify him of his suspension, and that his case would come up for investigation at the next regular session of the Council. (The order is in the hands of the Marshal).

Councilor John Taylor said that Councilor Emmons helped to make the ordinances of the city, and had never lifted his voice against them in the Council, and was now trying destroy the ordinances and the charter.

Lorenzo Wasson sworn, said Josoph H. Jackson had told witness that bogus-making was going on in the city; but it was too damned small business. Wanted witness to help him to procure money, for the General (Smith) was afraid to go into it; and with \$500 he could get an engraving for bills on the Bank of Missouri, and one on the State of New York, and could make money. Said many times witness did not know him. Believed the General had been telling witness something. "G-o-d-d-n him; if he has, I will kill him. Swore he would kill any man that should prove a traitor to him." Jackson said, if he could get a company of men to suit him, he would go into the frontiers and live by highway robbery; had got sick of the world.

Mayor suggested that the Council pass an ordinance to prevent misrepresentations and libelous publications and conspiracies against the peace of the city; and, referring to the reports that Dr. Foster had set afloat, said he had never made any proposals to Foster to come back to the Church. Foster proposed to come back; came to Mayor's house, and wanted a private interview. Had some conversation with Foster in the hall, in presence of several gentlemen, on the 7th inst. Offered to meet him and have an interview in presence of friends, three or four, to be selected by each party; which Foster agreed to, and went to bring his friends for the interview; and the next notice he had of him was the following letter: -

To GENERAL JOSEPH SMITH

June 7th, 1844.

SIR,-I have consulted my friends in relation to your proposals of settlement, and they as well as myself, are of opinion that your conduct, and that of your unworthy, unprincipled clan, is so base, that it would be morally wrong, and detract from the dignity of gentlemen, to hold any conference with you. The repeated insults and abuses I, as well as my friends, have suffered from your unlawful course towards us, demands honorable resentment. We are resolved to make this our motto.

Nothing on our part has been done to provoke your anger, but have done all things as become men. You have trampled upon everything we hold dear and sacred. You have set all law at defiance, and profaned the name of the Most High to carry out your damnable purposes; and I have nothing more to fear from you than you have already threatened; and I, as well as my friends, will stay here and maintain and magnify the law as long as we stay; and we are resolved never to leave until we sell or exchange our property that we have here.

The proposals made by your agent, Dimick Huntington, as well as the threats you sent to intimidate me, I disdain and despise as I do their unhallowed author. The right of my family and my friends demands at my hand a refusal of all your offers. We are united in virtue and truth, and we set hell at defiance, and all her agents. Adieu.

R. D. FOSTER.

Mayor continued-And when Foster left his house, he went to a shoe shop on the hill, and reported that Joseph said to him, if he would come back he would give him Law's place in the Church, and a hat-full of specie.

Lucien Woodworth sworn. Said that the conversation as stated by the Mayor was correct. Was at the Mansion June 7th, when Dr. Foster rode up and inquired if General Smith was at home. Dr. Foster went into the house; witness followed. Dr. Foster was there, the General, and others, looking at some specimens of penmanship. Something was said respecting a conversation at that time between the General and the Doctor. Gen. Smith observed to Foster, if he had a conversation, he would want others present. The Doctor said he would have a word with him by himself, and went into the hall. Witness went to the door that he might see and hear what was passing. They still continued to talk on the subject of a conversation that they might have afterwards with others present, whom Mr. Smith and Foster might choose. Foster left, and went for those that he said he wanted present, and would return soon with them. He heard all the conversation. Heard nothing about Gen. Smith's making any offers to Foster to settle.

Mayor said he wished it distinctly understood that he knew nothing about Dimick Huntington going to see Foster.

Woodworth said he sent Dimick Huntington to Foster, and Joseph knew nothing about it.

Councilor Hyrum Smith said Dimick Huntington came to him on the 7th inst. and said he had had an interview with Dr. Foster, and thought he was about ready to come back, and a word from him or Joseph would bring it about.

Mayor said-"The conduct of such men and such papers are calculated to destroy the peace of the city, and it is not safe that such things should exist, on account of the mob spirit which they tend to produce." He had made the statements he had, and called the witnesses to prepare the council to act in the case.

Emmons was blackguarded out of Philadelphia, and dubbed with the title of Judge (as he had understood from citizens of Philadelphia); was poor, and Mayor helped him to cloth for a coat before he went away last fall, and he (Emmons) labored all winter to get the post office from Mr. Rigdon (as informed).

Mayor referred to a writing from Dr. Goforth. showing that the Laws presented the communication from the Female Relief Society in the *Nauvoo Neighbor* to Dr. Goforth, as the bone of contention, and said if God ever spake by any man, it will not be five years before this city is in ashes and we in our graves, unless we go to Oregon, California or some other place, if the city does not put down everything which tends to mobocracy, and put down murderers, bogus-makers, and scoundrels. All the sorrow

he ever had in his family in this city has arisen through the influence of William Law.

Councilor H. Smith spoke in relation to the Laws, Fosters, Higbees, editor of the *Signal*, &c., and of the importance of suppressing that spirit which has driven us from Missouri, &c.; that he would go in for an effective ordinance.

Mayor said, at the time Governor Carlin was pursuing him with his writs, William Law came to his house with a band of Missourians for the purpose of betraying him. Came to his gate, and was prevented by Daniel Carn, who was set to watch. Law came within his gate and called, "Mayor," and the Mayor reproved Law for coming at that time of night with a company of strangers.

Daniel Carn sworn. Said that about ten o'clock at night a boat came up the river with about a dozen men. William Law came to the gate with them. Witness, on guard, stopped them. Law called Joseph to the door, and wanted an interview. Joseph said; "Brother Law, you know better than to come here at this hour of the night," and Law retired. Next morning Law wrote a letter to apologize, which witness heard read, which was written apparently to screen himself from the censure of a conspiracy; and the letter betrayed a conspiracy on the face of it.

Adjourned at half-past 6 p. m. till Monday, 10th, 10 o'clock a. m.

Adjourned session, June 10th, 10 o'clock a.m. Alderman Harris presiding.

Mayor referred to Dr. Foster, and again read his letter of the 7th instant (as before quoted).

Cyrus Hills (a stranger) sworn. Said one day last week, believed it Wednesday, a gentleman whom witness did not know, came into the sitting room of the Nauvoo Mansion, and requested the Hon. Mayor to step aside; he wanted to speak with him. Mayor stepped through the door into the entry by the foot of the stairs, and the General (Mayor) asked him what he wished? Foster (as witness learned since was his name) said he wanted some conversation on some business witness did not understand at the time. The General refused to go any farther, and said he would have no conversation in private, and what should be said should be in public, and told Foster, if he would choose three or four men, he would meet him with the same number of men (among whom was his brother Hyrum), and they would have a cool and calm investigation of the subject; and by his making a proper satisfaction, things should be honorably adjusted. Witness judged, from the manner in which Foster expressed himself, that he agreed to the Mayor's proposals, and would meet him the same day in the presence of friends. Heard no proposals made by Mayor to Foster for settlement. Heard nothing about any offer of dollars, or money, or any other offer except those mentioned before. Nothing said about William Law. Was within hearing of the parties at the time conversation was going on.

Orrin P. Rockwell sworn. Some day last week saw Dr. Foster ride up to the Nauvoo Mansion and go in. Witness went in and found the Mayor and Dr. Foster in conversation. General Smith was naming the men he would have present, among whom were Hyrum Smith, William Marks, Lucien Woodworth, and Peter Haws; and Dr. Foster had leave to call an equal number of his friends, as witness understood, for the purpose of having an interview on some matters in contention.

The Doctor's brother was proposed. General said he had no objection; wanted him present. Dr. Foster started, saying he would be back shortly. Before Dr. Foster left, the men whom General Smith had named to be present at the conversation were sent for.

Cross-examined. Witness went into the house as Mayor and Dr. Foster were coming out of the bar-room into the hall. Nothing said by the Mayor to Dr. Foster about his coming back. Made no offer to Foster about a settlement.

Mayor said the first thing that occurred to his mind, when he stepped into the ball with Foster, was that he wanted to assassinate him. He saw something shining below his vest. Mayor put his finger on it and said-"what is that?" Foster replied-"It's my pistol," and immediately took out the pistol, and showed it openly, and wanted the Mayor to go with him alone. Mayor said he would not go alone. Mayor never saw the pistol before. Had a hook on its side to hang on his waist-band.

Andrew L. Lamoreaux sworn. Said that in 1839 or '40, while President Joseph Smith, Elder Rigdon, Judge Higbee, Orrin P.

Rockwell, and Dr. Robert D. Foster were on their way to Washington, called at witness' house in Dayton, Ohio; that the evening was spent very agreeably, except some dissatisfaction on the part of certain females with regard to the conduct of Dr. Foster. On their return from Washington, witness informed President Smith of Foster's conduct. President Smith said he had frequently reprov'd Foster for such conduct, and he had promised to do better, and told witness to reprove Foster, if he saw anything out of the way. That evening Foster refused to join the company, and walked through the town till about 8 o'clock, when he came in and interrupted President Smith, who was expounding some passages of the Scripture, and changed the conversation. Soon after the company were invited to Mr. Brown's at the next door, whither they all repaired. While at Mr. Brown's, conversation was going on, and the room much crowded. Dr. Foster and one of the ladies he had paid so much attention to before took their seats in one corner of the room. [Here follows statement of such lewdness in speech and conduct on the part of Foster that it would violate propriety to print it.] Next morning witness went in while Foster and others were at breakfast, and related what he had seen. Foster denied it. President Smith told him not to deny it, for he saw it himself, and was ashamed of it. Foster confessed it was true, and promised to reform.

Peter Hawes sworn. Said that he came to Nauvoo before the Laws and brought considerable property. It was a short time after the Church had been driven out of Missouri, and had arrived in this place. The families having been robbed of all in Missouri were in a starving condition. By the counsel of the Presidency, witness converted his funds to feeding the poor, bringing in meat and flour, &c.; and while thus engaged, drew upon the Laws, who were at that time engaged in merchandise, to the amount of some six hundred dollars, which, on account of expenditure for the poor, he was not able to pay within seventy or eighty dollars, which they pressed him for as soon as they wanted it, although he offered them good property at considerable less than the market value, as witness was obliged to leave the city on Church business for a little season. William Law threatened and intimidated witness' family during his absence for the pay.

Dr. Foster made a public dinner on the 4th of July. Witness was obliged to be absent, and deposited meat, flour, &c., with William Law to give to the poor at that dinner, and Law handed it out as his own private property. Witness carried a load of wheat to Law's mill to be ground. Law would not grind it only to give a certain quantity of flour in return by weight. Law used up the flour, promising from time to time he would refund it. As witness was about to start on a mission to the south with his valise in his hand saw Law before his door talking with Hyrum Smith. Called on Law, and told him he was going away, and his family wanted the flour. Law promised on the honor of a gentleman and a Saint, that his family should have the flour when they wanted.

Councilor Hyrum Smith said he recollected the time and circumstance.

Hawes said when he returned he found his family must have starved, if they had not borrowed money to get food somewhere else; could not get it of Law; and Law was preaching punctuality, *punctuality, punctuality*, as the whole drift of his discourses to the Saints, and abusing them himself and grinding the poor.

Mayor said, if he had a City Council who felt as he did, the establishment (referring to the *Nauvoo Expositor*) would be declared a nuisance before night; and then he read an editorial from the *Nauvoo Expositor*. He then asked who ever said a word against Judge Emmons until he attacked this Council or even against Joseph H. Jackson or the Laws, until they came out against the city? Here is a paper (*Nauvoo Expositor*) that is exciting our enemies abroad. Joseph H. Jackson has been proved a murderer before the Council, and he declared the paper a nuisance-a greater nuisance than a dead carcass. They make it a criminality for a man to have a wife on the earth while he has one in heaven, according to the keys of the Holy Priesthood; and he then read a statement of William Law's from the *Expositor*, where the truth of God was transformed into a lie concerning this thing. He then read several statements of Austin Cowles in the *Expositor* concerning a private interview, and said he never had any private conversations with Austin Cowles on these subjects; that he preached on the stand from the Bible, showing the order in ancient days. What the opposition party want is to raise a mob on us and take the spoil from us, as they did in Missouri. He said it was as much as he could do to keep his clerk, Thompson, from publishing the proceeding of the Laws and causing the people to rise up against them. Said he would rather die tomorrow and have the thing smashed, than live and have it go on, for it was exciting the spirit of mobocracy among the people, and bringing death and destruction upon us.

Peter Hawes recalled a circumstance which he had forgotten to mention concerning a Mr. Smith who came from England and soon after died. The children had no one to protect them. There was one girl sixteen or seventeen years old, and a younger sister. Witness took these girls into his family out of pity. Wilson Law, then Major-General of the Nauvoo Legion, was familiar with the oldest daughter. Witness cautioned the girl. Wilson was soon there again, and went out in the evening with the girl, who, when charged by the witness' wife, confessed that Wilson Law had seduced her. Witness told her he could not keep her. The girl wept,

made much ado, and many promises. Witness told her if she would do right she might stay; but she did not keep her promise. Wilson came again and she went out with him. Witness then required her to leave the house.

Mayor said certain women came to complain to his wife that they had caught Wilson Law with the girl [in compromising relations] at Mr. Hawes' in the night.

Councilor Hyrum Smith proceeded to show the falsehood of Austin Cowles in the *Expositor*, in relation to the revelation referred to.

Mayor said he had never preached the revelation in private; but he had public. Had not taught to the anointed in the Church in private, which statement many present confirmed; that on inquiring concerning the passage on the resurrection concerning "they neither marry nor are given in marriage," &c., he received for answer, "Man in this life must marry in view of eternity, otherwise they must remain as angels, or be single in heaven," which was the doctrine of the revelation referred to; and the Mayor spoke at considerable length in explanation of this principle, and was willing, for one, to subscribe his name to declare the *Expositor* and whole establishment a nuisance.

Two o'clock p. m. Willard Richards, the clerk of the Council, bore testimony of the good character and high standing of Mr. Smith and his family, whose daughter was seduced by Wilson Law, as stated by the last witness before the morning council; that Mrs. Smith died near the mouth of the Mississippi, and the father and eldest daughter died soon after their arrival in this place; and that the seduction of such a youthful, fatherless and innocent creature, by such a man in high standing as the Major-General of the Nauvoo Legion, was one of the darkest, damndest, and foulest deeds on record.

Councilor Hyrum Smith concurred in the remarks made by the clerk concerning the excellent character of Mr. Smith and his family.

Mayor said the Constitution did not authorize the press to publish libels, and proposed that the Council make some provision for putting down the *Nauvoo Expositor*.

Councilor Hyrum Smith called for a prospectus of the *Expositor*. Councilor Phelps read article 8, sec. I, Constitution of Illinois. Mayor called for the charter.

The clerk read the prospectus of the *Nauvoo Expositor* as follows:

PROSPECTUS OF THE "NAUVOO EXPOSITOR."

The *Nauvoo Expositor* will be issued on Friday of each week, on an imperial sheet, with a new press and materials of the best quality, and rendered worthy of the patronage of a discerning and enlightened public.

The *Expositor* will be devoted to a general diffusion of useful knowledge, and its columns open for the admission of all courteous communications of a religious, moral, social, literary, or political character without taking a decided stand in favor of either of the great political parties in the country. A part of its columns will be devoted to a few primary objects, which the publishers deem of vital importance to the public welfare. Their particular locality gives them a knowledge of the many *gross abuses exercised under the "pretended" authorities of the Charter of the City of Nauvoo*, by the legislative authorities of said city and the *insupportable oppression of the Ministerial powers in carrying out the unjust, illegal and unconstitutional ordinances of the same*. The publishers therefore deem it a sacred duty they owe to their country and their fellow-citizens to advocate through the columns of the *Expositor* THE UNCONDITIONAL REPEAL OF THE NAUVOO CITY CHARTER, to restrain and correct the abuses of the UNIT POWER, to ward off the iron rod which is held over the devoted heads of the citizens of Nauvoo and the surrounding country, to advocate unmitigated DISOBEDIENCE TO POLITICAL REVELATIONS, and to censure and decry gross moral imperfections wherever found, either in the plebeian, patrician or SELF-CONSTITUTED MONARCH-to advocate the pure principles of morality, the pure principles of truth, designed not to destroy, but to strengthen the mainspring of God's moral government-to advocate and exercise the freedom of speech in Nauvoo, independent of the ordinances abridging the same-to *give free*

toleration to every man's religious sentiment, and sustain ALL in worshipping their God according to the monitions of their consciences, as guaranteed by the Constitution of our country, and to oppose with uncompromising hostility any UNION OF CHURCH AND STATE, or any preliminary step tending to the same-to sustain ALL, *however humble*, in their equal and constitutional rights, and oppose the sacrifice of the liberty, the property and the happiness of the MANY, to the *pride* and *ambition* of the FEW; in a word, to give a full, candid and succinct statement of FACTS AS THEY REALLY EXIST IN THE CITY OF NAUVOO *fearless of whose particular case the facts may apply* -being governed by the laws of editorial courtesy, and the inherent dignity which is inseparable from honorable minds, at the same time exercising their own judgment in cases of flagrant abuses of moral delinquencies,-to use such terms and names as they deem proper, when the object is of such high importance that the end will justify the means. In this great and indispensable work, we confidently look to an enlightened public to aid us in our laudable effort. The columns of the *Expositor* will be open to the discussion of all matters of public interest, the production of all correspondents, subject to the decision of the editor alone, who shall receive or reject at his option. National questions will be in place, but no preference given to either of the political parties. The editorial department will contain the political news of the day, proceedings of Congress, election returns &c. Room will be given for articles on agriculture, the mechanic arts, commercial transactions, &c.

The first number of the *Expositor* will be issued on Friday, the 7th day of June, 1844. The publishers bind themselves to issue the paper weekly for one year, and forward 52 copies to each subscriber during the year. Orders should be forwarded as soon as possible, that the publishers may know what number of copies to issue.

The publishers take pleasure in announcing to the public that they have engaged the service of Sylvester Emmous, Esq., who will have entire charge and supervision of the editorial department. From an acquaintance with the dignity of character and literary qualifications of this gentleman, they feel assured that the *Nauvoo Expositor* must and will sustain a high and honorable reputation.

All letters and communications must be addressed to Charles A. Foster. Nauvoo, Ill., postpaid, in order to insure attention.

WILLIAM: LAW,
WILSON LAW,
CHARLES IVINS, FRANCIS M. HIGBEE, CHAUNOBY L. HIGBEE, ROBERT D. FOSTER, CHARLES A. FOSTER,
Publishers.

Nauvoo, Ill., May 10th, 1844.

Mayor read the statements of Francis M. Higbee from the *Expositor*, and asked-"Is it not treasonable against all chartered rights and privileges, and against the peace and happiness of the city?"

Councilor Hyrum Smith was in favor of declaring the *Expositor* a nuisance.

Councilor Taylor said no city on earth would bear such slander, and he would not bear it, and was decidedly in favor of active measures.

Mayor made a statement of what William Law said before the City Council under oath, that he was a friend to the Mayor, &c., and asked if there were any present who recollected his statement, when scores responded, Yes.

Councilor Taylor continued-Wilson Law was President of this Council during the passage of many ordinances, and referred to

the records. "William Law and Emmons were members of the Council, and Emmons has never objected to any ordinance while in the Council, but has been more like a cipher, and is now become editor of a libelous paper, and is trying to destroy our charter and ordinances." he then read from the Constitution of the United States on the freedom of the press, and said-"We are willing they should publish the truth; but it is unlawful to publish libels. The *Expositor* is a nuisance, and stinks in the nose of every honest man."

Mayor read from Illinois Constitution, article 8, section 22, touching the responsibility of the press for its constitutional liberty.

Councilor Stiles said a nuisance was anything that disturbs the peace of a community, and read Blackstone on private wrongs, vol. 2, page 4; and the whole community has to rest under the stigma of these falsehoods (referring to the *Expositor*) and if we can prevent the issuing of any more slanderous communications, he would go in for it. It is right for this community to show a proper resentment; and he would go in for suppressing all further publications of the kind.

Councilor Hyrum Smith believed the best way was to smash the press and pi the type.

Councilor Johnson concurred with the Councilors who had spoken.

Alderman Bennett referred to the statement of the *Expositor* concerning the Municipal Court in the case of Jeremiah Smith as a libel, and considered the paper a public nuisance.

Councilor Warrington considered his a peculiar situation, as he did not belong to any church or any party. Thought it might be considered rather harsh for the Council to declare the paper a nuisance, and proposed giving a few days limitation, and assessing a fine of \$3,000 for every libel; and if they would not cease publishing libels, to declare it a nuisance; and said the statutes made provisions for a fine of \$500.

Mayor replied that they threatened to shoot him when at Carthage, and the women and others dare not go to Carthage to prosecute; and read a libel from the *Expositor* concerning the imprisonment of Jeremiah Smith.

Councilor Hyrum Smith spoke of the *Warsaw Signal*, and disapproved its libelous course.

Mayor remarked he was sorry to have one dissenting voice in declaring the *Expositor* a nuisance.

Councilor Warrington did not mean to be understood to go against the proposition; but would not be in haste in declaring a nuisance.

Councilor Hyrum Smith referred to the mortgages and property of the proprietors of the *Expositor*, and thought there would be little chance of collecting damages for libels.

Alderman Elias Smith considered there was but one course to pursue that the proprietors were out of the reach of the law; that our course was to put an end to the things at once. Believed by what he had heard that if the City Council did not do it, others would.

Councilor Hunter believed it to be a nuisance. Referred to the opinion of Judge Pope on "*habeas corpus*", and spoke in favor of the charter, &c. Asked Francis M. Higbee, before the jury, if he was not the man he saw at Joseph's house making professions of friendship' Higbee said he was not. (Hundreds know this statement to be false.) He also asked R. D. Foster if he did not state before hundreds of people that he believed Joseph to be a Prophet. "No," said Foster. They were under oath when they said it.

(Many hundreds of people are witness to this perjury).

Alderman Orson Spencer accorded with the views expressed, that the *Nauvoo Expositor* is a nuisance. Did not consider it wise to give them time to trumpet a thousand lies. Their property could not pay for it. If we pass only a fine or imprisonment, have we any confidence that they will desist? None at all. We have found these men covenant breakers with God, with their wives, &c. Have we any hope of their doing better? Their characters have gone before them. Shall they be suffered to go on, and bring a mob

upon us, and murder our women and children, and burn our beautiful city? No! I had rather my blood would be spilled at once, and would like to have the press removed as soon as the ordinance would allow; and wish the matter might be put into the hands of the Mayor, and everybody stand by him in the execution of his duties, and hush every murmur.

Councilor Levi Richards said he had felt deeply on this subject, and concurred fully in the view General Smith had expressed of it this day; thought it unnecessary to repeat what the Council perfectly understood; considered private interest as nothing in comparison with the public good. Every time a line was formed in Far West, he was there-for what! To defend it against just such scoundrels and influence as the *Nauvoo Expositor* and its supporters were directly calculated to bring against us again. Considered the doings of the Council this day of immense moment, not to this city alone, but to the whole world; would go in to put a stop to the thing at once. Let it be thrown out of this city, and the responsibility of countenancing such a press be taken off our shoulders and fall on the State, if corrupt enough to sustain it.

Councilor Phineas Richards said that he had not forgotten the transaction at Haun's Mill, and that he recollected that his son George Spencer then lay in the well referred to on the day previous, without a winding-sheet, shroud or coffin. He said he could not sit still when he saw the same spirit raging in this place. He considered the publication of the *Expositor* as much murderous at heart as David was before the death of Uriah; was prepared to take stand; by the Mayor, and whatever he proposes; would stand by him to the last. The quicker it is stopped the better.

Councilor Phelps had investigated the Constitution, Charter, and laws. The power to declare that office a nuisance is granted to us in the Springfield Charter, and a resolution declaring it a nuisance is all that is required.

John Birney sworn. Said Francis M. Higbee and Wm. Law declared they had commenced their operations, and would carry them out, law or no law.

Stephen Markham sworn. Said that Francis M. Higbee said the interest of this city is done the moment a hand is laid on their press.

Councilor Phelps continued, and referred to Wilson Law in destroying the character of a child-an orphan child, who had the charge of another child.

Warren Smith sworn. Said F.M. Higbee came to him and pro- posed to have him go in as a partner in making bogus money. Higbee said he would not work for a living; that witness might go in with him if he would advance fifty dollars; and showed him (witness) half-dollar which he said was made in his dies.

Councilor Phelps continued and he felt deeper this day than ever he felt before, and wanted to know, by "Yes," if there was any person who wanted to avenge the blood of that innocent female who had been seduced by the then Major-General of the Nauvoo Legion, Wilson Law; when "Yes!" resounded from every quarter of the house. He then referred to the tea plot at Boston, and asked if anybody's rights were taken away with that transaction; and are we offering, or have we offered to take away the rights of anyone these two days ("No!" resounded from every quarter.) He then referred also to Law's grinding the poor during the scarcity of grain, while the poor had nothing but themselves to grind; and spoke at great length in support of active measures to put down iniquity, and suppress the spirit of mobocracy.

Alderman Harris spoke from the chair, and expressed his feelings that the press ought to be demolished.

The following resolution was then read and passed unanimously, with the exception of Councilor Warrington:

"Resolved, by the City Council of the city of Nauvoo, that the printing-office from whence issues the *Nauvoo Expositor* is a public nuisance and also all of said *Nauvoo Expositor* which may be or exist in said establishment; and the Mayor is instructed to cause said printing establishment and papers to be removed without delay, in such manner as he shall direct."

W. RICHARDS, Recorder.

The following order was immediately issued by the Mayor:

STATE OF ILLINOIS,

CITY OF NAUVOO

Ordinance Concerning Libels and Other Purposes

(Nauvoo City Council action in response to the first issue of the *Nauvoo Expositor* (June 10, 1844))

History of the Church, Volume VI (pp.433-434)

Ordinance Concerning Libels and for Other Purposes

Whereas the Saints in all ages of the world have suffered persecution and death by wicked and corrupt men under the garb of a more holy appearance of religion; and whereas the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter day Saints, from the moment that its first truth sprang out of the earth till now, has been persecuted with death, destruction, and extermination; and, whereas men to fulfill the Scriptures that a man's enemies are they of his own household, have turned traitors in the Church, and combined and leagued with the most corrupt scoundrels and villains that disgrace the earth unhung, for the Heaven-daring and damnable purpose of revenge on account of disappointed lust, disappointed projects of speculation, fraud. and unlawful designs to rob and plunder mankind with impunity; and, whereas such wicked and corrupt men have greatly facilitated their unlawful designs, horrid intentions, and murderous plans by polluting, degrading and converting the blessings and utility of the press to the sin-smoking and blood-stained ruin of innocent communities-by publishing lies, false statements, coloring the truth, slandering men, women, children, societies, and countries - by polishing the characters of blacklegs, highwaymen, and murderers as virtuous; and whereas a horrid, bloody, secret plan, upheld, sanctioned and largely patronized by men in Nauvoo and out of it, who boast that all they want for the word *go*, to exterminate or ruin the Latter day Saints, is for them to do one unlawful act, and the work shall be done, is now fostered, cherished, and maturing in Nauvoo - by men, too, who helped to obtain the very charter they would break, and some of them drew up and voted for the very ordinances they are striving to use as a scarecrow to frighten the surrounding country in rebellion, mobbing, and war; and whereas, while the blood of our brethren from wells, holes and naked prairies, and the ravishment of female virtue from Missouri, and the smoke from the altars of infamy, prostituted by John C. Bennett, and continued in the full tide of experiment and disgraceful damnation by the very self-called fragments of a body of degraded men that have got up a press in Nauvoo to destroy the charter of the city-to destroy Mormonism, men, women, and children as Missouri did; by force of arms-by fostering laws that emanate from corruption and betray with a kiss; wherefore to honor the State of Illinois, and those patriots who gave the charter, and for the benefit, convenience, health, and happiness of said city: -

Sec. 1. Be it ordained by the City Council of Nauvoo that if any person or persons shall write or publish in said city any false statement or libel any or the citizens, for the purpose of exciting the public mind against the chartered privileges, peace, and good order of said city, or shall slander (according to the definition of slander or libel by Blackstone or Kent, or the act in the statute of Illinois,) any portion of the inhabitants of said city, or bribe any portion of the citizens of said city for malicious purposes, or in any manner or form excite the prejudice of the community against any portion of the citizens of said city, for evil purpose, he, she, or they shall be deemed disturbers of the peace; and, upon conviction before the Mayor or Municipal Court, shall be fined in any sum not exceeding five hundred dollars, or imprisoned six months, or both, at the discretion of said Mayor or court.

Sec. 2. Be it further ordained that nothing in the foregoing section shall be so construed as to interfere with the right of any person to be tried by a jury of his vicinage, with the freedom of speech or the liberty of the press, according to the most liberal meaning of the Constitution, the dignity of freemen, the voice of truth, and the rules of virtue.

Sec. 3. And be it further ordained that this ordinance shall be in force from and after its passage.

Passed June 10th, 1844.

GEO. W. HARRIS, President, pro tem.

W. RICHARDS, Recorder.

Personal Narrative of Joseph Smith (June 10, 1844))

History of the Church, Volume VI (pp.432-434)

Monday, June 10, 1844.-

I was in the City Council from 10 a. m., to 1:20 p. m., and from 2:20 p. m. to 6:30 p. m. investigating the merits of the *Nauvoo Expositor*, and also the conduct of the Laws, Higbees, Fosters, and others, who have formed a conspiracy for the purpose of destroying my life, and scattering the

Saints or driving them from the state.

An ordinance was passed concerning libels. The Council passed an ordinance declaring the *Nauvoo Expositor* a nuisance, and also issued an order to me to abate the said nuisance. I immediately ordered the Marshal to destroy it without delay, and at the same time issued an order to Jonathan Dunham, acting Major-General of the Nauvoo Legion, to assist the Marshal with the Legion, if called upon so to do.

About 8 p. m., the Marshal returned and reported that he had removed the press, type, printed paper, and fixtures into the street, and destroyed them. This was done because of the libelous and slanderous character of the paper, its avowed intention being to destroy the municipality and drive the Saints from the city. The *posse* accompanied by some hundreds of the citizens, returned with the Marshal to the front of the Mansion, when I gave them a short address, and told them they had done right and that not a hair of their heads should be hurt for it; that they had executed the orders which were given me by the City Council; that I would never submit to have another libelous publication established in the city; that I did not care how many papers were printed in the city, if they would print the truth: but would submit to no libels or slanders from them. I then blessed them in the name of the Lord. This speech was loudly greeted by the assembly with three-times-three cheers. The *posse* and assembly then dispersed all in good order. Francis M. Higbee and others made some threats.

East wind. Very cold and cloudy.

Proclamation of Mayor Joseph Smith (June 11, 1844))

History of the Church, Volume VI (pp.449)

Tuesday 11.-Spent the forenoon in council with the brethren at my house. Went to the office and conversed with my brother Hyrum, Dr. Richards, George G. Adams, and others.

I issued the following:

PROCLAMATION

By virtue of my office as Mayor of the city of Nauvoo, I do hereby strictly enjoin it upon the municipal officers and citizens of said city to use all honorable and lawful means in their power to assist me in maintaining the public peace and common quiet of said city. As attempts have already been made to excite the jealousy and prejudice of the people of the surrounding country, by libels and slanderous articles upon the citizens and City Council, for the purpose of destroying the charter of said city, and for the purpose of raising suspicion, wrath, and indignation among a certain class of the less honorable portion of mankind, to commit acts of violence upon the innocent and unsuspecting, in a certain newspaper called the *Nauvoo Expositor*, recently established for such purposes in said city, and which has been destroyed as a nuisance, according to the provision of the charter. I further call upon every officer, authority, and citizen to be vigilant in preventing, by wisdom the promulgation of false statements, libels, slanders, or any other malicious or evil-designed concern that may be put in operation to excite and ferment the passions of men to rebel against the rights and privileges of the city, citizens, or laws of the land; to be ready to suppress the gathering of mobs; to repel, by gentle means and noble exertion, every foul scheme of unprincipled men to disgrace and dishonor the city, or state, or any of their legally-constituted authorities; and, finally to keep the peace by being cool, considerate, virtuous, unoffending, manly, and patriotic, as the true sons of liberty ever have been, and honorably maintain the precious boon our illustrious fathers won.

In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the seal of said corporation at the city of Nauvoo, this 11th day of June, 1844.

JOSEPH SMITH, Mayor.

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MORMONS: WHO THEY ARE, WHAT THEY BELIEVE - - Discussion Guide

Final Moments at Carthage Jail and the Death of Joseph Smith

<http://www.mrm.org/death-of-joseph-smith>

Final Moments at Carthage Jail and the Death of Joseph Smith

By Bill McKeever

The events leading to the death of Mormon founder Joseph Smith are much like the events surrounding his life—full of contradiction. To hear Mormons tell the story, Smith did no wrong; for others, he did no right. Like most stories, the truth lies somewhere in the middle.



In his book *Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi*, author Robert B. Flanders lays the groundwork for what was to become one of the darker days in Mormon history. On page 308 Flanders writes:

"When an opportunity to murder Smith finally came, it grew paradoxically out of events within the Mormon Church. Conflict over the issues of plurality of wives and other "ultraist" doctrines, including plurality of gods, had grown within the circle of Mormon leaders until an open break occurred in the spring of 1844. A number of prominent men withdrew and formed their own reform church. They were led by William Law, a member of the First Presidency since 1841, Wilson Law, a brigadier general in the Legion, Austin Cowles, a member of the Nauvoo High Council, James Blakeslee, a prominent Seventy, and Robert D. Foster, Chauncey Higbee, and Charles Ivins, prominent businessmen. They resolved to publish their views and to 'expose' the secret and abominable teachings of the Mormon hierarchy in an opposition newspaper, to be named *The Nauvoo Expositor*. On June 7 they issued the first and only edition of their paper."

In response, Smith (who was also Nauvoo's mayor) and the Nauvoo city council voted to declare the paper a public nuisance and sent an order to the city marshal that stated, "You are here commanded to destroy the printing press from

whence issues the Nauvoo Expositor, and pi [scatter] the type of said printing establishment in the street, and burn all the expositors and libelous handbills found in said establishment" (*History of the Church* 6:448). The act was carried out as ordered on June 10th.

This rash decision caused the publishers to go to the nearby town of Carthage to obtain an arrest warrant for Smith and the council, charging them with riot. The municipal court of Nauvoo, composed of Mormons sympathetic to Smith, did not see it this way and acquitted all of the accused.

When it was learned that the municipal court had no right to decide such a case, the defendants were then examined by Justice Daniel H. Wells. Again they were acquitted. But because Wells did not have authority in such a case, this led to a third examination. This too ended with the defendants being found not guilty.

Joseph Smith sought the help of Illinois Governor Thomas Ford. In order to have this matter settled, Ford believed that Smith and the others who were originally charged should submit themselves to the constable at Carthage (David Bettisworth) and there await trial. In his letter Governor Ford also promised Smith and the others that they would "be protected from violence."

Refusing to believe the governor's promises, Smith made plans to escape capture and flee to the Rocky Mountains. Orrin Porter Rockwell arrived with a message from his wife who urged her husband to return and give himself up because several of his followers were accusing him of cowardice. Smith returned to Nauvoo, spent the night, and in the morning was told that he had to report to Carthage by 10 a.m. However, no escorts were provided.

According to the testimony of John Taylor, Smith commented,

"I am going like a lamb to the slaughter; but I am calm as a summer's morning. I have a conscience void of offence towards God, and towards all men. I shall die innocent, and it shall yet be said of me. 'He was murdered in cold blood'" (*D&C* 135:4).

It was a typically hot, early summer day in western Illinois when Joseph and Hyrum Smith rode into Carthage to turn themselves in to local authorities.

When they arrived, the two checked into a local hotel but were later met by Constable Bettisworth, who placed them under arrest and escorted them to the local jail. The jail at Carthage was made of stone and had two stories. The upper level had two rooms, one equipped with steel bars and the other styled more like a regular bedroom. There were no bars on this room, and the door was so warped that it would not latch.

On the afternoon of June 27th, the Smiths, Willard Richards, and John Taylor were in this latter "cell" when, in the words of John Taylor,

"Elder Cyrus H. Wheelock came in to see us, and when he was about leaving, drew a small pistol, a six-shooter, from his pocket, remarking at the same time 'Would any of you like to have this?' Brother Joseph immediately replied, 'Yes, give it to me,' whereupon he took the pistol, and put it in his pantaloons pocket. The pistol was a six-shooting revolver, of Allen's patent; it belonged to me, and was one that I furnished to Brother Wheelock when he talked of going with me to the east, previous to our coming to Carthage" (*History of the Church* 7:100. See also *The Gospel Kingdom*, p.358).



Wheelock later left "on some errand" and was not "suffered to return."
The *History of the Church* states that:

"Sometime after dinner we sent for some wine. It has been reported by some that this was taken as a sacrament. It was no such thing; our spirits were generally dull and heavy, and it was sent for to revive us. I think it was Captain Jones who went after it, but they would not suffer him to return. I believe we all drank of the wine, and gave some to one or two of the prison guards. We all of us felt unusually dull and languid, with a remarkable depression of spirits. In consonance with those feelings I sang a song, that had lately been introduced into Nauvoo, entitled, 'A Poor Wayfaring Man of Grief', etc." (7:101).



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Soon afterwards, Taylor "saw a number of men, with painted faces, coming around the corner of the jail, and aiming towards the stairs." Immediately Willard Richards and Hyrum Smith leaned against the door to prevent the mob from entering the room.

"While in this position, the mob, who had come upstairs, and tried to open the door, probably thought it was locked, and fired a ball through the keyhole; at this Dr. Richards and Brother Hyrum leaped back from the door, with their faces towards it; almost instantly another ball passed through the panel of the door, and struck Brother Hyrum on the left side of the nose, entering his face and head." Hyrum fell back and cried out, 'I am a dead man!'"

Wrote Taylor,

"I shall never forget the deep feeling of sympathy and regard manifested in the countenance of Brother Joseph as he drew nigh to Hyrum, and, leaning over him, exclaimed, 'Oh! my poor, dear brother Hyrum!' He, however, instantly arose, and with a firm, quick step, and a determined expression of countenance, approached the door, and pulling the six-shooter left by Brother Wheelock from his pocket, opened the door slightly, and snapped the pistol six successive times; only three of the barrels, however, were discharged. I afterwards understood that two or three were wounded by these discharges, two of whom, I am informed, died."

Several accounts given by Taylor shows that he never changed the particulars of this account, and many LDS historians have also used his eyewitness account to retell the final moments of Smith's life.

A Lamb to the Slaughter?

In a 1-star review of *Mormonism 101* from an LDS reader on Amazon.com, the reviewer rebuts our criticism of Smith's use of Isaiah 53:7. Was Smith making some kind of messianic statement and comparing his death to that of the Savior when he said he was being a lamb led to the slaughter? This Mormon argues that he was doing no such thing and that this was nothing more than a common expression of the day that made perfect sense since Smith was unarmed when he made the statement. While this may be true to a point, it was only true until Smith accepted the offer of Wheelock's pistol. From that moment on everything changed, making any comparison to an innocent lamb or a willing martyr a perversion of the facts.

It would indeed be difficult to know for sure what exactly Smith meant by his reference to Isaiah 53:7, but we do know that several Mormons have made the messianic connection. In a conference message delivered in 1948, Seventy Milton R. Hunter said Smith decided not to flee Nauvoo as a result "of his deep love for the Saints." Hunter said he returned voluntarily "to give his life as a sacrifice for them" (*Conference Report*, April 1948, p.31, emphasis mine).



1967 – Edna Budvarson, co-founder of Utah Christian Tract Society, stands next to a glass frame covering what was believed to be the blood of Joseph Smith.

There is no question that many modern LDS continue to make the messianic comparison. When my good friends Art and Edna Budvarson, the founders of Utah Christian Tract Society, visited the jail in 1967, there was a glass frame covering a bloodstain just a few feet from the door of Smith's cell. They were told at the time that it was the blood of Joseph Smith that was shed for the church.

When I visited the jail in 1980, the glass frame had been removed. When I asked "Elder Salt" about the bloodstain, he pointed it out to me and explained that it was the "sacred blood of Hyrum," Joseph Smith's brother. Saying the blood was that of Hyrum makes more sense. Joseph Smith was shot near the window, not the door. It is unlikely that a bloodstain of that size would be located so far away from the window if it was indeed the blood of Joseph. I don't know why the LDS Church removed the glass frame from off of the floor.

When I visited the Carthage Jail again in June of 2002, "Sister Thorpe," after speaking reverently of Joseph Smith, told the crowd that "he sacrificed his blood for us." Two days earlier, a personal friend of mine visited the jail and was told by his tour guide that Carthage was the Mormon "Calvary." In 1988, Ted Cannon, then director of the Mormon Visitor Centers at Carthage and Nauvoo, told reporter Doug Schorpp that Carthage "...holds the same significance...as Calvary

holds for Christians all over the world" (*Journal Star*, Peoria, IL, Sunday, June 26, 1988 D3).

In an April 5, 1896 conference address, Franklin D. Richards said, "Well before the temple was completed our Prophet laid down his life, having been led like a lamb to the slaughter" (*Collected Discourses* 5:109). Two facts make me think that this appraisal is misleading.

1. Smith's decision to use the smuggled pistol demonstrates that he did not have any intention of voluntarily laying down his life.
2. Smith's last words were, "Oh Lord my God." Standing alone these words do not mean much, but Mormon historian Reed C. Durham notes on page 28 of the booklet *No Help for the Widow's Son* that Smith, with hands raised, was actually attempting to give the "Masonic distress call to fraternal Masons who were present in the mob." His call for help went unheeded, and Smith was shot at the jail window, unable to complete the words, "is there no help for the widow's son." Again, if Smith was actually planning to give his life willingly, such an action seems entirely unnecessary.

Typically, Christian martyrs are known for willingly and peacefully giving their lives for the cause of Christ. Our history is full of examples, both ancient and modern, of Christians who chose not to fight back when death for their faith was imminent.

Am I somehow condoning Smith's death? Not hardly! The mob acted outside of the law and, in my opinion, their actions can in no way be justified. I agree with Mormons who say that Smith was murdered in cold blood, but I'm uncomfortable with going so far as to say he was totally innocent. There is no escaping the fact that he was guilty of being involved with the destruction of the *Expositor*, and history has shown that many of the accusations made in the paper regarding Smith's secret involvement with polygamy were accurate.

Was Smith wrong in trying to defend himself? Perhaps not. Is it wrong for Mormons to portray his last moments as that of an innocent lamb and willing martyr? Absolutely.

Video Transcript: “The Untold Story of the Death of Joseph Smith” with Bill McKeever

Bill McKeever: My name’s Bill McKeever, I’m founder and director of Mormon Research Ministry. We’ve been around since 1979 mainly trying to help Christians better understand the Mormon faith and hopefully help them in ways that they can more effectively dialogue with their Mormon friends.

Unfortunately, a lot of Mormons, I don’t think, really understand all the things that went on that lead to Joseph Smith’s death. All they see is a lot of what they perceive as just unjust persecution—the fact that he was jailed several times. But I find in my experience that a lot of Mormons really don’t understand what were all the reasons for all these things. Why was he in jail for this? All they ever understood is that because of his righteousness, and unrighteous people trying to silence him, that this is why he was incarcerated, when there’s really more to the story than that.

One of the things that I find very interesting about Mormonism is its tie with American history, and of course studying the subject I’ve been able to go and visit a lot of the very special sites—even sacred sites—of Mormonism; sites that Mormons consider to be very special to them. Of all the places that I’ve been the one that I find to be the most intriguing would have to be the Carthage Jail.

In order to give you a better understanding of what this is all about, I probably should give you a little bit of history there. Joseph Smith was the mayor of Nauvoo which was about twenty miles away on the banks of the Mississippi in Illinois—about twenty miles away from Nauvoo. He was the mayor of the town. And of course, he was a very controversial figure, and he was doing some things that had really upset a lot of very close followers; so much so that a lot of these followers started to fall away from him. And were really upset with his lifestyle.

Seven men got together to produce a newspaper called the Nauvoo Expositor. This is supposed to be a weekly newspaper, it ended up only coming out with one edition. And the reason was because Joseph Smith was just furious over this edition that was really attacking his abuse of power as mayor and also was exposing the fact that Joseph Smith was practicing polygamy secretly. Smith had been lying about polygamy and actually had condemned polygamy outright. But he was practicing it secretly and these men knew this and they were wanting to expose it.

Interviewer: How many wives did he have at this point?

Bill McKeever: How many wives Joseph Smith actually had is a matter of controversy, but some say that he had probably as many as twenty, maybe thirty wives. And a lot of these wives, at least ten... Richard L. Bushman, a Mormon historian admits that Joseph Smith had at least ten wives that were simultaneously married to living men at the time. Todd Compton in his book “The Sacred Loneliness” mentions that he thinks there were eleven women that he was married to that were also married to living men at the time.

Why this is important is because it seems to nullify the one argument that many Mormons raise when it comes to the subject of polygamy. And that the reason God instituted it in the first place was because he needed to raise up seed. Well that doesn’t even seem necessary if Joseph Smith is marrying married

women and we have no evidence whatsoever to show us that any of these husbands were either impotent or sterile so that argument doesn't really hold. Joseph Smith is probably the best argument against that, it's found in Jacob 2:30 in the Book of Mormon. And plus we really don't have any proof that Joseph Smith had children from any of these relationships. There's speculation but there's really no concrete evidence.

Narrator: How young were some of these women?

Bill McKeever: Some of these women were actually in their teens. Joseph Smith at this time you have to understand was in his thirties.

Well, Joseph Smith, because of this behavior, as I mentioned it caused quite a few enemies, so they tried to expose this through this newspaper. Joseph Smith was outraged by the things that they were saying and he ordered the printing press destroyed—which it was. And in order to protect himself and his church from the outcry from the locals he calls the Nauvoo Legion, which was a standing army—some estimate there could have been as many as five thousand men in this army. But he calls his Nauvoo Legion into effect and declares martial law.

Well, Joseph Smith is ordered eventually by the governor to meet in Carthage and to get this matter straightened out. Governor Thomas Ford was involved at the time. But Joseph Smith, knowing that he had so many enemies that really hated him—and there were threats against his life—and instead of going to Carthage, Joseph is going to flee the area. He crosses the Mississippi with his brother Hyrum and he is over near a town called Montrose, Iowa which is directly across the river from Nauvoo.

Members in the church talk Emma, his wife, into writing a letter to encourage Joseph Smith to return. And in the letter it purportedly has a comment in there which refers to Joseph Smith as being a coward for leaving his church behind.

Joseph Smith makes this romantic comment that if his life isn't worth anything to his friends that it's not worthy anything to him. So he's going to go back to Illinois and he's going to face these charges knowing full well—at least in the way history is written now—that he's probably not going to live.

Before he leaves Nauvoo he makes the comment that he is going “as a lamb led to the slaughter”—this Messianic connection that I have often heard going to Carthage Jail and going through various tours—a you hear this Messianic connection made many times regarding Joseph Smith. In fact, you hear comments such as the Carthage Jail is like the Mormon Calvary—where Jesus shed His blood for the Christian Church on Mount Calvary, Joseph Smith shed his blood for the Mormon Church in Carthage.

Joseph Smith ends up going to Carthage, Illinois and he is going to stay at a hotel. He's eventually confronted by a constable by the name of Bettisworth. And he learns through this constable that now the charge—instead of being riot as it was originally—is now treason, apparently connected with him declaring martial law. So now these charges have become very serious.

And so Smith is incarcerated at the Carthage Jail and it was at the Carthage Jail that he is waiting for this to all be settled. During that time he is allowed to visit with friends and he is in the jail cell. At the end he

is in the jail cell with his brother Hyrum, another gentleman by the name of John Taylor who would later become the third president of the Mormon Church, and also a man by the name of Willard Richards.

While they are waiting in the jail he is visited by a man by the name of Cyrus Wheelock. Now there's an interesting story about all this. Joseph Smith received this smuggled pistol from Cyrus Wheelock. If you were to ever take the tour at Carthage Jail, they never mention the smuggled pistol. I've been there several times—never do the tour guides volunteer the information regarding the smuggled pistols that Joseph Smith and his brother had. But it all goes back to this man by the name of Cyrus Wheelock.

Well one of the times when I was going through the tour the tour guide again left that part of the story out. So when he opened up for questions and answers I raised my hand and I asked about the smuggled pistol. And I actually quoted from "The Documentary History of the Church", volume 7 where it talks about this (page 101-103). And when I mentioned that book to the tour guide he said, "Well, you have to be careful about the books that you read because there's a lot of erroneous material out there." And I went, "But wait a minute, 'That Documentary History of the Church'—that's your book, that's put out by the Mormon Church. This is where I'm getting that story." And He goes, "Oh, oh, 'The Documentary History of the Church', yes, that's a good book, that's a good book." And he said, "Well, I'll tell you about the smuggled pistol..."

And he starts to tell me this elaborate story of how Cyrus Wheelock actually went up to the guard who was guarding the entrance to the jail, and opened up his coat and said, "I have a gun here and I've come here to kill Joseph Smith." And the guard lets him in.

Now, I've never heard this story before. I don't know where this guy is getting this story. And this is the first time I'm hearing it and this is just intriguing to me. And I'm thinking about this. If we were to transport ourselves back into that time period and imagine, "Here we are in 1844, it's June in 1844 and a man comes up to a guard and says, "I have a gun and I'm going to go inside and I'm going to kill the prisoner that you're supposed to be guarding and you let him in..." Okay, that sounds pretty strange to begin with. But then the guy went on to tell us—the tour guide went on to say that eventually the guard was relieved and a new guard came on duty.

Now think about this. You just let a guy go into a jail with a gun to assassinate your prisoner. And he hasn't come out yet, okay? And you haven't heard a gun go off. So you leave your post and allow someone new to come and take your place and you don't look into this? I mean the story is just so far fetched. But this man firmly believed that this is what happened.

Basically, Cyrus Wheelock leaves the gun with Smith and there's another Derringer that is involved that is given to Hyrum, Joseph Smith's brother. And as they were there in the jail they were waiting for this thing to all be settled. And there's another section in Joseph Smith's story where he talks about how they had very heavy spirits. It was probably a very depressing time for them, because they know the situation does not look very good for them. And so they order some wine to be brought to the jail. And Smith admits that this wine was not for sacrament purposes, but that it was to relieve their spirits and so it was actually meant to, I guess be somewhat intoxicating to make them feel better. Which is kind of

odd because Mormons aren't supposed to drink alcoholic beverages but yet it seems perfectly okay for Joseph Smith to do that.

Eventually the jail is approached by a mob. How many are in the mob we really don't know. Again the numbers fluctuate. Some say as many as two hundred people were involved in this mob. And a group of men go up the stairs toward the upstairs room where Joseph Smith was being held, and they're rushing the door.

Now you have to understand that the jail cell that Joseph Smith was in did not have bars on it. It had merely a door and the door didn't even latch. It was warped and the lock didn't really even work. I remember the first time that I went to the Carthage Jail was back in the 1980's. And we had a tour guide by the name of Elder Salt from Salt Lake City. (It's hard to forget that name.) And I remember Elder Salt telling us the story of how the only defense that Joseph Smith and the others that were in the jail cell with him had was by holding themselves against the door and fighting off their attackers with their walking sticks. And he repeats this three times: the only defense they had was by holding themselves against the door and fighting off their attackers with their walking sticks.

And after telling this very emotional story, and we were the only non-Mormons there, and the rest of the people there were all a group from BYU- it was a busload of BYU students that had just been dropped off. And so he tells this story and he bears his testimony to the truthfulness of it and of course there's this resounding Amen. And then he says, "Are there any questions?"

So I raised my hand and I said, "You had mentioned three times that the only defense that Joseph Smith and the others had was by holding themselves against the door and fighting off their attackers with their walking sticks." I said, "But I remember reading in volume 7, p. 101-103 of 'The Documentary History of the Church' that Joseph Smith had a smuggled pistol and that he used that pistol to shoot three people, two of whom died." And it was interesting because you could hear—it was like the proverbial tabernacle tour—you could hear a pin drop; it was dead silence.

And I'll never forget, Elder Salt, the tour guide, put his arms behind his back, he rocked on his heels, looking at the floor, and he said, "Yes, there was a gun." And he proceeded to also mention the Derringer that Hyrum had that I did not bring up.

It made me wonder, this man gave this emphatic story that the only defense Joseph Smith had, and the others in the jail, was by holding themselves against the door, fighting off their attackers with their walking sticks. Yet all the time this man knew he had a smuggled pistol. He didn't deny the fact that Joseph Smith fired the pistol, but he did say, "We don't know where the bullets went."

To which I said, "Well, John Taylor seemed to know, he said that he shot three people, two of whom died. Obviously we know that at least three of the bullets went into somebody."

Of course he didn't really want to readily admit to that part of the story but he did know that there was a gun. But at the same time he kept insisting that the only defense was holding themselves against the door; which now we know—and he was admitting—was not the case. That I found very disconcerting.

Every time I go and I visit the Carthage Jail, like I say, I've never heard them bring up the gun. One time I asked one of our tour guides, "Wasn't there a smuggled pistol?" She said, "Well, it wasn't smuggled, it was brought in." What does that mean? Was it legal at that time to bring guns into prisoners? I mean, come on, this is silly. What kind of an answer is that? But they will not tell you anything about this.

So the last time I went to Carthage we had a sister missionary and she also failed to mention the gun. I had a long discussion with her afterwards and she knew all about it. She knew all about the gun. She probably had done more homework on the story than I've seen in many tour guides in the Carthage Jail. But yet she wasn't going to divulge that part of the story mainly because it didn't make Joseph Smith look very heroic I guess.

The fact is Smith did have a gun. According to John Taylor he shot three people, two of whom died. John Taylor never changed his story. He stuck with that story, as far as I know, until the day he died.

You still find it written in various accounts, "The Comprehensive History of the Church" I think also mentions this account as well as "The Documentary History of the Church."

The way we get to that part of him using the gun is while they are holding themselves against the door—which they really did do—so the tour guide, Elder Salt, was correct—they were holding themselves against the door, there's no doubt about it. But while they're doing that one of the people attacking the jail fires a shot through the door. The bullet penetrates Hyrum's face near the bridge of the nose. Hyrum Smith falls back, and according to the account he makes some statement like, "I am a dead man."

Now, first of all, he's just got a musket ball into his brain. I mean, is he really going to be thinking of words like "I am a dead man"? Is this really what happened, or is this again, just Mormon folklore?

The way the story goes, Joseph Smith goes to the aid of his fallen brother and says something to the effect, "O, my dear brother Hyrum". Did Joseph Smith really say that? Sounds a little cheesy to me, it's not something that I would probably think if it was my brother.

But nonetheless, he sees his brother who's dying here or is probably dead at the time. And so at that time, according to John Taylor's account, Joseph Smith grabs the pistol that's in his pants pocket and he sticks his arm through the door and fires off these three rounds. So this is where he shoots them.

Joseph Smith afterward realizes that this is pretty much a lost cause, so he's going to try to escape, going out the window. Now you have to understand this jail is pretty thick. I forget exactly how thick the walls are, but you have to basically go up on a ledge to get to the window. And when he goes to the window there's a mob—part of the mob is waiting outside for him. And they're firing through the glass and Smith is hit by the bullets. I think he was hit four times. Once in the chest, a couple times in the back, and I can't remember where the other bullet went, but nonetheless he's fired upon by the mob outside and he falls out the window and he dies.

What's interesting about all this is when I was at the Carthage Jail the first time back in the 1980's I knew that there was a blood stain that was on the floor, and I knew also that there used to be a glass frame that covered the blood stain. I knew this for a fact because I'd actually seen pictures of it, and we

have a picture of it on our website. I learned this through some friends of ours—of my wife and I—who had gone to the Carthage Jail back in the 60's when this frame was still in place. And they were told at the time that it was covering the blood of Joseph Smith.

Now anybody who knows the history of this story would know that that could not have been the blood of Joseph Smith. The blood happened to be around six or seven feet away from the door, about the length of a man. So when you think about it, that was probably the blood of Hyrum that was in the wood and wouldn't come out—the blood soaked into—I think the floor was made of an oak and so it stained the floor.

When I went and asked about the bloodstain, there was no frame on the ground to even know where it was. But Elder Salt knew about it and he pointed it out to me. It happened to be in between two benches so you would have walked right on top of it without even knowing it was there. And he pointed it out to me and told me that that was the sacred blood of Hyrum. That would make more sense, that that would be Hyrum's blood, because if he was shot near the door he fell back, that's probably about where his head would have been. Joseph Smith—it could not have been his blood because he was shot over by the window, there's no way that much blood would get over so many feet away—it was impossible, it wouldn't have happened. But that was the story I was given.

Now you don't even know about the blood stain, they don't even talk about the bloodstain. But I had an interesting talk with the sister missionary this last time. She knew about the bloodstain. She told me, and I haven't verified this story, but she told me that it was Spencer Kimball, President Spencer Kimball who tried to make a concerted effort to get rid of the bloodstain. But it's still there, you can still faintly see the outline of the bloodstain in the floor but they just don't talk about it.

But it's interesting that there's a lot of things about this story that failed to get into the tour. And I think one of the reasons is because it would show Joseph Smith as being a man just like the rest of us, reacting in a very normal way, a defensive way. Hardly acting in the way that we would probably think of first century martyrs who willingly went to their deaths. Not volunteering—you didn't volunteer to be a martyr in the early Church—but when you were going to be martyred you went realizing that you were going to die for the cause of Christ. And we don't see that with Joseph Smith.

We see him instead going out in a gun battle. We see him trying very hard to escape his assassins. And I guess, technically, Mormons might try to say, "Well, yes, he still basically died for his cause because he wouldn't have been there if it hadn't been for all the things he stood for..." Okay, perhaps. But I think when they use the word "martyr" so flippantly I think they actually detract, at least in my mind, from the ancient Christians for instance who, in my mind, went willingly for their faith in Christ. I don't see that with Joseph Smith. I don't see him going willingly like first century Christians.

The romanticizing of Joseph Smith's death is really illustrated, I think, with this film "Joseph Smith, Prophet of the Restoration" that is currently being shown downtown at the Joseph Smith Memorial Building. It's supposed to be an accurate account of Joseph Smith's life during the Nauvoo period and it also shows his death at Carthage.

But what's interesting is after Hyrum is shot, and as he's laying there in Joseph Smith's arms in this very dramatic scene, instead of Joseph Smith grabbing the smuggled pistol he had in his pocket which is what history tells us he did—Joseph Smith turns towards the window. And as you see bullets flying through the glass of this window you see the camera angle going towards the window—and its supposed to be through the eyes of Joseph Smith—goes up towards the window and as it crashes through the window instead of falling to the ground the camera angle goes up in the air as if in an ascension.

And what's interesting is then it kind of fades to black and then you see Joseph Smith looking up into the sky with the words, "Oh, Lord, my God." Now this is misleading. It's not that Joseph Smith didn't say that, because he most certainly did. But he certainly didn't say it the way the film portrays.

I have a book here by Richard L. Bushman. It's a biography of Joseph Smith called "Joseph Smith, Rough Stone Rolling." What I find intriguing about this book is that Richard Bushman is a Mormon, a faithful Mormon—he admits he's a faithful Mormon at the very beginning of the book. And he describes what happened in the final moments of Joseph Smith's life. Let me read to you what it says on page 550. It says,

Hyrum was the first to fall. A ball through the door struck him on the left side of the nose, throwing him to the floor. Three more balls entered his hot thigh, torso, and shin, killing him. John Taylor was hit in the thigh and fell against the windowsill, breaking his watch. Crawling toward the bed he was struck again in the hip. Joseph pulled the trigger...

See, he's admitting to the gun—

Joseph pulled the trigger six times into the hail, dropped the pistol on the floor and sprang to the window. With one leg over the sill he raised his arms in the Masonic sign of distress. A ball from the doorway struck his hip, and a shot from the outside entered his chest. Another hit under the heart and a fourth his collarbone. He fell outward crying, "Oh, Lord, my God."

Hardly the calm method that it's portrayed in the film.

Landing on his left side he struggled to sit up against the curve of the well and died within seconds. Richards raised his head above the sill far enough to see that Joseph was dead and then turned to help John Taylor. Taylor's watch had stopped at sixteen minutes past five.

What's so significant about this phrase, "Oh, Lord, my God" is that there are Mormon historians who admit that what Joseph Smith was trying to do was give the Masonic signal of distress. There's a phrase in Masonry that when you're in trouble that you say something to the effect, "Oh, Lord, my God, is there no help for the widow's son?" And that Smith was trying to give this signal of distress but was shot before he was able to give all of it.

Basically, "Is there no help for the widow's son" refers to Hiram Abiff who is a familiar figure in Masonry, and Joseph Smith was a Mason. He became a Mason in 1842. And not long after becoming a Mason he incorporates the Mormon Endowment Ceremony. So he was familiar with this. But what's interesting is, voice inflection is very important, context is very important. I have a real hard time believing that Joseph

Smith just calmly said, “Oh, Lord, my God.” I don’t think the situation called for such a calm response. I think he was probably screaming at the top of his lungs, hoping that somebody would come to his rescue—and unfortunately for him, they didn’t.

I think the fact that the Mormon Church has to leave out so much important information about Joseph Smith tells us not only a lot about him, but it tells us a lot about the [Mormon] Church itself. Do you really want to place your trust in a man whose character has to be doctored—who has to be air-brushed, if you will? Do you really want to place your trust in a Church that has to do that, that feels compelled to do that.

Trust is a big thing. As a Christian I have no problem trusting completely in the work and the promises of Jesus Christ. But I’ll tell you, when it comes to Joseph Smith, I can’t have that same kind of trust. This man is not deserving of my trust. If Joseph Smith lived today the way he lived back then, I don’t think even many Mormons would want to place their trust in him.

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MORMONS: WHO THEY ARE, WHAT THEY BELIEVE - - Discussion Guide

Six Days in August: Brigham Young and the Succession Crisis of 1844

<http://rsc.byu.edu/archived/firm-foundation/8-six-days-august-brigham-young-and-succession-crisis-1844>

Six Days in August: Brigham Young and the Succession Crisis of 1844

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Every Latter-day Saint knows the importance of the six days in August 1844 when Brigham Young and the Twelve Apostles were sustained at Nauvoo as Joseph Smith's successors. Yet no narrative has a daily summary of what went on using the rich documents compiled at the time or the growing body of historical literature on the topic. Such a day-by-day approach yields new understanding. We learn, for example, the uncertainty of the times. *Crisis* is a strong word, but it comes close to describing events surrounding the succession. During these days, the Church might have taken several paths or, with the passing months, fractured beyond remedy. As we look at the different positions leading men and women took on what the Church should be, we also learn more about early Mormonism and its leaders. Joseph Smith's recent revelations about plural or eternal marriage, the temporal kingdom of God, the endowment, and the apostolic keys were important issues in the succession. And no leader was more important than Brigham Young, whose religious experience and leadership were crucial. In particular, Young's earlier religious experience at Peterborough, New Hampshire, had a major role in the events that unfolded.

Sidney Rigdon

On Saturday, August 3, 1844, Sidney Rigdon arrived in Nauvoo, the Church headquarters, located on the big bend of the Mississippi just above the Des Moines rapids. "Few, if any, locations along this mighty river can compare with Nauvoo," said one man who had made the circuit from St. Paul to New Orleans.[1] The city sat on a promontory that rose to the east. It was known for its religion but also for its work and

workers. However, grief, uncertainty, and hard economic times had wrung from the Latter-day Saints much of their bustle.[2] Six weeks earlier, a black-faced mob had killed Joseph and Hyrum Smith, the brothers who served as Prophet and Patriarch. What lay ahead for the Saints, and who would be the new shepherd? Was there a future for them and their religion?

Some looked to fifty-three-year-old Rigdon to lead the Saints. He had credentials. He had been with the Church almost from the beginning. For the past eleven years, he had served as Joseph Smith's First Counselor in the First Presidency, the Church's highest quorum. He had helped to shape events and played a role in them, even joining in some of Smith's visions.[3] Few could match his words once he stood behind a speaker's stand. His words flowed with natural eloquence, seldom as friends might talk, but with storm and stir. He was a preacher's preacher, full of history and learned scripture references. One of his fortes was the last days.[4]

Rigdon had been gone from the city for a month and a half. In the middle of June, nine days before his death, Joseph and other well-wishers had walked Sidney to the Nauvoo quay, not far from where Rigdon kept a public house for river travelers.[5] Rigdon had a new duty: Joseph wanted him to raise up a branch of Saints at Pittsburgh. About forty converts were already there, and perhaps Rigdon could make it an important center. With Rigdon was his son-in-law, Ebenezer Robinson, who had been asked to begin a new Latter-day Saint newspaper. "He is a good man," Robinson remembered Smith saying of his counselor as they walked down to the river, "and I love him better than I ever loved him in all my life, for my heart is entwined around him with chords that can never be broken." [6]

There was another reason for Rigdon's Pittsburgh mission. Joseph Smith was a candidate for the United States presidency and had chosen Rigdon as a running mate. Law and reason said that the two men should come from different states and even different parts of the country. Smith's motives for his improbable electioneering are unclear to this very day. Did he wish to awaken the country to Mormonism and to its past grievances? Neighbors had mistreated the Saints from the beginning. Or was the campaign a part of Smith's millennial expectation—some kind of step or sign of the last days? Whatever the reason, the political campaign was neither a stunt nor a "symbolic gesture," one historian concluded. Smith was serious. During the April 1844 general conference, 244 volunteered to be campaigners, and by April 15 the number had risen to 337.[7] By summer the best of the Latter-day Saint talent was barnstorming through the United States to support Smith's candidacy.[8]

Rigdon arrived in Pittsburgh on June 28, the day after the murder of the Smith brothers, and spoke to the local people several times before rumors of the assassination began to catch up with him. George J. Adams, the official Nauvoo courier, was asked to carry the news but failed to complete his mission.[9] But within a week, Elder Jedediah M. Grant sent Rigdon an "Extra" edition of the *Nauvoo Neighbor* announcing the murders, and followed up with a personal visit. At last, Rigdon's reluctance to believe reports of Smith's death gave way to "stern reality." [10] Rigdon was soon doing what he knew best: he was preaching on "Mr. Broadhurst's green, and directed the whole tide and strength of his eloquence to extol and eulogize Joseph Smith, and also the city and people of Navuoo." [11]

At first Rigdon said that he wanted to work on postassassination events with members of the Quorum of Twelve of Apostles. Two of the Apostles had been in the same room at Carthage, Illinois, when the Smith brothers had been killed, and they remained in Nauvoo. Elder John Taylor, editor of the *Times and Seasons*, received in a “savage manner” four balls, while Elder Willard Richards, Smith’s secretary, had miraculously escaped with only a forehead wound from a bullet graze (see D&C 135). The rest of the Apostles were out preaching and electioneering. Parley P. Pratt and George A. Smith were in the Midwest, while seven were in the eastern states: Orson Hyde, Heber C. Kimball, Orson Pratt, William Smith, Lyman Wight, and Wilford Woodruff, as well as Brigham Young, the Apostles’ president and leader. Elder John E. Page was in Pittsburgh with Rigdon.

Rigdon asked Jedediah Grant, who was going east, to invite the Apostles to come to Pittsburgh as they returned to Nauvoo. He wanted to hold a council.[12] Young and the Apostles in the Boston area declined. They wanted to return to Nauvoo “immediately,” they explained in a letter, and believed the route through the Great Lakes was quicker and safer. The Smith murders had not cooled the fierce anti-Mormonism in the Midwest. Moreover, it was the desire of the Twelve, the Apostles’ letter continued, that Rigdon and Page should meet them at Nauvoo, and “after we had rested and mourned for our martyred brethren, we would sit down together and hold a council on the very ground where sleeps the ashes of our deceased friends.”[13] The careful words of both Rigdon and Young had a subtext: each of the men wanted to control the succession, and the issues of the location of the meeting and who would organize it were important.

Once Rigdon got Young’s letter, Rigdon hurried to Nauvoo.[14] William Marks, president of the Nauvoo Stake, may have sent him a letter encouraging him to come quickly.[15] Rigdon would also claim that religious visions and revelations had summoned him, including, as one historian later wrote, the “voice of Joseph Smith.”[16]

When Rigdon arrived in Nauvoo, there were four Apostles in town. Elders Richards and Taylor had been joined by Parley P. Pratt and George A. Smith, the men closest to headquarters when the killings took place. Pratt immediately sought out Rigdon, who was crowded by the handshaking of well-meaning friends. “You are busy today,” Pratt told Rigdon. “We will not interrupt you today, but tomorrow morning the few of the Twelve who are here will want to meet with you, and sit down in council together.”[17] The two men agreed to meet the following morning at 8:00 a.m.—Sunday—at the home of John Taylor, who was still convalescing and bedridden.

The appointment came and went—without Rigdon. The Apostles sent Pratt to find out why. Pratt found Rigdon talking to a Nauvoo outsider not very far from Taylor’s home. As near as Pratt could tell, the conversation was rather aimless, but Rigdon refused to be pulled away. Rigdon and Pratt had known each other from their pre-Mormon days in Ohio’s Western Reserve when the two men were ministers in the Primitive Christian movement of Barton W. Stone and Thomas and Alexander Campbell (which became one wing of today’s Church of Christ). Pratt had introduced Rigdon to Mormonism. “Well, well! Brother Pratt,” Rigdon finally said, “I must go with you now without delay.” But as the two men started toward Taylor’s home, there was another excuse. A large crowd was gathering to worship at 10:00 a.m., and Rigdon claimed he had to preach. A meeting between Rigdon and the Apostles would have to wait. The Apostles were left to

“do their own counselling,” Pratt said sourly. He felt that Rigdon had avoided their meeting, and he felt misused.[18]

Some said that as many as six thousand Saints were at the meeting grounds east of the rising temple that Sunday. Many knew that Rigdon had arrived in town and wanted to hear what he had to say. He chose as his text a verse from the ancient prophet Isaiah, “my ways [are] higher than your ways” (Isaiah 55:9). He wanted to prepare the Saints for something new. He told them of an extraordinary vision he had received in the upper room of his Pittsburgh lodging. He announced that he “was the identical man that the ancient Prophets had sung about, wrote and rejoiced over; and that he was sent to do the identical work that had been the theme of all the Prophets in every preceeding generation.”[19] Again, he turned to Isaiah’s poetry: “The Lord shall hiss for the fly that is in the uttermost part of the rivers of Egypt, and for the bee that is in the land of Assyria,” he quoted (Isaiah 7:18). He gave these words apocalyptic meaning. The day would come when he would see “one hundred tons of metal per second thrown at the enemies of God, and that the blood would be to the horses bridles.” At that time, Rigdon “expected to walk into the palace of Queen Victoria and lead her out by the nose.”[20]

The report of Rigdon’s sermon was preserved by his rivals and no doubt did not reflect his humor or the full meaning of his words. But one claim was clear. He wanted to be Joseph’s successor, or as he phrased it, the Church’s “guardian.” He had seen Joseph in the heavens, he said, and he, Rigdon, held the “keys of this dispensation.” He would stand as a “god” to the people, like Moses, and he would preserve the Church as Joseph “had begun it.”[21] These last words seemed to indicate Rigdon’s willingness to go back to the first teachings of Smith, whose ministry had been progressive and unfolding.

The argument was part of his claim for succession. According to Rigdon, the death of Joseph Smith had not dissolved the First Presidency. As the last surviving member of this group, Rigdon should be the new leader. After all, one of Joseph Smith’s revelations described Rigdon (and another counselor) as “equal” with Smith in “holding the keys of this last kingdom. . . . And this shall be your business and mission in all your lives, to preside in council and set in order all the affairs of this church and kingdom” (D&C 90:6, 16). Still another revelation had made Rigdon the Prophet’s “spokesman” (D&C 100:9–11), and in 1841, Rigdon had been ordained to the office of “Prophet, Seer and Revelator”—the series of titles reserved for the Church’s most important leaders.[22]

That afternoon, after his dramatic speech, Rigdon and his allies made another move. As Elder Charles C. Rich preached in the worship meeting, he was interrupted by President Marks with a surprising announcement. Marks declared that on Thursday morning, August 8, President Rigdon would hold a “special meeting” of the Saints to consider his claims. Rigdon wanted the succession question settled in four days. Such a meeting had been on the lips of the Nauvoo Saints since the death of the Smith brothers, only the assumption had been that the Twelve Apostles would conduct the meeting, not Rigdon.[23]

After Rigdon’s forenoon address, the Apostles continued to hope for a meeting with Rigdon, but Marks’s announcement showed that events were moving rapidly and might

spin out of control. Rigdon and Marks had consulted neither with the Apostles nor with the local high council of elders, who normally might help decide on a special meeting—nor with Rich, who served as Marks’s counselor. Pratt, who apparently was in the afternoon congregation, tried to challenge Marks. Weren’t Brigham Young and the other Apostles expected to return to Nauvoo soon, he asked, perhaps within several days or even hours? Shouldn’t a special meeting wait for their arrival? Marks replied that Rigdon actually wanted the special meeting to take place on Tuesday. Marks had granted two extra days and was unwilling to go further. Rigdon had family matters in Pittsburgh that required his immediate attention, Marks explained.[24]

By evening, William Clayton, one of Joseph Smith’s personal secretaries and a close friend, was upset. Both Bishop Newel K. Whitney and Charles C. Rich had come to his home with news and questions. “It seems a plot [has been] laid for the saints to take advantage of their situation,” Clayton wrote in his diary.[25]

The best that the Apostles could do was to meet with Rigdon the following day. They arrived in force—Parley P. Pratt, Willard Richards, and George A. Smith, and, if one source is to be believed, the ailing John Taylor. With them was Bishop Whitney and Elder Amasa Lyman, whom Smith had chosen to be his counselor, though the Saints never had the chance to sustain him formally. Everyone agreed to meet that evening at Elder Taylor’s home.[26]

On Monday evening, whether because of his excitable personality or perhaps by strategy, Rigdon paced furiously before the Church leaders. The local political situation was out of control, he warned. The coming election might bring into office anti-Mormons who might further hurt the Saints. “You lack a great leader,” he said. “You want a head, and unless you unite upon that head you’re blown to the four winds, the anti-Mormons will carry the election—a guardian must be appointed.”[27]

The Apostles and their friends were not convinced. They continued to ask Rigdon to put off any meeting of the Saints until the Apostles arrived from the eastern missions.[28] But the only thing that they could wring from Rigdon was the promise that the coming meeting on Thursday would be a “prayer meeting” for discussion, an “interchange of thought and feeling . . . [to] warm up each other’s hearts.” It would not be a business meeting to make binding decisions.[29]

On Tuesday, August 6, at 2:30 p.m., Rigdon once again sermonized. The audience and the occasion is unclear, but he seemed to continue to be agreeable. He spoke of mobs coming upon Nauvoo and remembered old Missouri difficulties. These events no longer were a context for his claims to leadership, however. He insisted that he wanted no office “in the kingdom of god,” even if it were offered. Instead, he would rather be a “constable upon earth” than a priestly king.[30] Things seemed to be settling down.

That evening, Brigham Young and four other Apostles—Elders Kimball, Orson Pratt, Wight, and Woodruff—came down the river on the steamboat *St. Croix*. The name of the vessel was apt: Rigdon and Young with their respective parties were on a mission that would determine the future of the Church. Two days before landing, Elder Kimball, Young’s closest friend, had a dream of a natural-looking Joseph Smith. Smith was preaching to a large congregation, Kimball reported, and when morning came and Kimball woke, he told his friends that he believed he understood what the dream meant.

Joseph had “laid the foundation for a great work and it was now for us to build upon it.”[31] The dream was meant to remind the Apostles of their own leadership claims.

The Apostles had done just as they told Rigdon they would do, only their trip to Nauvoo took longer than they at first had hoped. While still in the East, Elder Young wanted as many of the Apostles as possible at Nauvoo when the succession would be decided, and he had waited a week in Boston for a stragglng Elder Wight. The Apostles joined together in upstate New York and went by railroad to Buffalo, where they secured passage on Lake Erie to Cleveland and then to Detroit. They continued on the lake route to Chicago. The company of fellow passengers was not congenial. Elder Woodruff complained of the passengers’ “prejudice” and “nonsens[e] and folly.” He noted that they “wish to speak evil of us while we walk uprightly.”[32] The 160-mile leg across Illinois was a grueling forty-eight hours as their coach stopped only for food, fresh teams, and to pry themselves and other wagons from the mud. At one point, a heavily loaded wagon belonging to Norwegian immigrants was bogged in the mire, and the Norwegians were whipping and bawling at their oxen. According to one account, Young looked over the situation, stepped from the coach, and coaxed the animals in a language unknown to either the Norwegians or the Americans. Then a light touch of the whip got the calmed animals to lift the wagon, and the Norwegians went ahead with their journey—to “the surprise and amusement of the passengers” in the coach.[33]

The last 120 miles downriver from Galena to Nauvoo were pleasant because of the Apostles’ excitement to return home. The men had been gone for more than three months and longed for the last bend of the river that would reveal their city and their families. “We were hailed with Joy by all the Citizens we met,” remembered Elder Woodruff, when they stepped from the wharf near Nauvoo’s landmark, “the upper stonehouse.” Despite their happiness, Woodruff felt something else. “When we landed in the City,” he reported in his diary, “there was a deep gloom [that] seemed to rest over the City of Nauvoo which we never experi[en]ced before.”[34] The place was a deposit of not only grief and sorrow but also fear of the future.

Brigham Young

Brigham Young had no idea events would turn so badly when he left Nauvoo on May 21. From Nauvoo, he took a side trip to Kirtland, Ohio, where Mormonism had first really begun to mold him. Kirtland was also the place where he began his friendship with Joseph Smith, which became the lodestone for the rest of Young’s life. Young visited the old sites in Kirtland and preached in the temple, trying to breathe new life into the old disciples who had let the Church go on without them. He found them “dead and cold to the things of God.” Continuing his trip, Young visited his brother, John Young, and also his sister, Nancy Kent, who lived in Chester, Ohio. He then headed for Boston, the center of his operations for the next several months.[35] Joseph Smith had given him the duty of drawing up the fields of labor for all the missionaries involved in the political campaign. He had chosen Boston for himself.[36]

Young was now forty-three years old, and the spring in his step for long preaching tours was not what it had once been. Just outside of Kirtland while waiting for an eastbound

boat, he had confessed as much in a letter to his wife Mary Ann, who was back home in Nauvoo. “I feele lonsom,” he began his letter. “O that I had you with me this somer I think I should be happy. Well I am now [happy] because I am in my cauling and duing my duty, but [the] older I grow the more I desire to stay at my own home insted of traveling.”

Once at Albany, New York, he continued his writing. He had not gotten much sleep on his way east and was “perty well tired out,” he said. “Last night I felt for sometime as though I had got to get a new const[it]jution or [I would] not last long. How I due want to see you and [the children]. Kiss them for me and kiss Luny [Luna] twice or mor. Tel hir it is for me. Give my love to all the famely. I nead not mension names. . . . Don’t you want for eney thing. You can borrow monney to get what you want. . . . After taking a grate share of my love to your self then deal it out to others as you plese.”[37]

Once in Boston, his routine included the familiar duties of traveling and preaching. “We have Baptized a good many since we left,” he wrote in still another letter.[38] Whenever possible, he went to Salem to visit his daughter Vilate, who was being schooled there. And there were the demands of the political campaign. The famed Boston Melodeon Concert Hall on Washington Street held one Latter-day Saint rally, which was supposed to elect delegates to the upcoming Baltimore Convention. The meeting began promisingly. The seats were crowded and the business going forward when Abigail Folsom, a feminist and abolitionist, staged a protest. Rowdies in the galley continued the uproar. Soon the meeting was broken up and had to be adjourned until the next day to the green at Bunker Hill.[39]

These were the perils of Latter-day Saints on the campaign circuit. Several days later, Young had the chance to look back on events. Elder Erastus Snow was at the speaker’s stand delivering one of his long sermons, and Young, sitting in an alcove, had a chance to write to Willard Richards in Nauvoo. He wanted Richards to stop in on his family and speak words of comfort to them. He reported favorably on William Smith and Lyman Wight, with whom he had never before had the opportunity to serve. Wight “is a great, good, noble-hearted man,” he wrote. “I love my brethren more and more.”

Many of his words to Richards were about the campaign trail, and he wrote with irony, “I should suppose that there is an election about to take place or the Prophet had offered himself for some office in the United States, for of all the howlings of Devils and Devil[s] whelps.” The rumors were thick. “Sometimes the Mormons are all killed; sometimes they are half killed, and sometimes the blood is knee deep in Nauvoo. Sometimes old Joe, as they call him is taken by the mob and carried to Missouri, sometimes he is gone to Washington, sometimes he has runaway, given up to the authorities, etc. etc. One might suppose him to be a sectarian God, without body, parts or passions—his center everywhere and his circumference no where.” If Young thought Smith’s election prospects were dim, he did not acknowledge it. “We shall do all we can [with the campaign],” he told Richards, “and leave the event with God.”[40]

There was a terrible irony working. Young’s letter to Richards was written on July 8, a week and a half *after* the assassinations. Several days before their deaths and with events closing in on them, Joseph and Hyrum Smith had written a plaintive letter asking

Young and other Church leaders to return to Nauvoo and help in this moment of great crisis.[41] But the mail was not getting through—in either direction.

In the next day or two, Young heard other rumors about the deaths of the Smiths, which he again dismissed.[42] Traveling with Orson Pratt, Young went on Church business to out-of-the-way Peterborough, New Hampshire, a few miles north of the Massachusetts border. His sermon there suggested that he might be coming to grips that some of these awful rumors. “The death of one or a dozen could not destroy the priesthood,” he told the local Saints, “nor hinder the work of the Lord from spreading throughout all nations.”[43]

The ambiguity ended on July 16. Young and Pratt were leaning back in their chairs at Brother Bement’s house in Peterborough when a letter arrived from Nauvoo telling of the killings. Later in the day, Elder Woodruff’s letter with the same news arrived. “I felt then as I never felt bef[ore],” Young later said. There were no tears but an awful, paralyzing headache. “My head felt as tho my head [would] crack.” His thoughts went everywhere. Had Joseph and Hyrum taken the keys or the authority of the Church with them?

At last, his despair lifted “like a clap,” he said. The answer came to him like revelation: “The keys of the kingdom [are] here.” He brought his hand to his knee to make the point.[44] He later confessed that the idea of assuming Joseph’s office had never occurred to him.[45] It had been an interesting psychological study, resisting reality until he could resist it no longer—followed by an emotional and religious outburst of feeling.

There was another meaning to Young’s revelation. It showed that the Church’s procedures for succession were by no means clear, even to the leading Apostle. Young, of course, had been present during those almost daily private council meetings with Smith earlier in the year. During these councils, Smith had laid out the endowment or temple rituals step-by-step, the capstone of his revelation. He concluded with what should have been a portentous warning: “Brethren, the Lord bids me hasten the work in which we are engaged. . . . Some important scene is near to take place. It may be that my enemies will kill me, and in case they should, and the keys and power which rest on me not be imparted to you, they will be lost from the Earth.” Joseph and Hyrum Smith then anointed the Apostles and other men who were present in the room, after which Joseph paced before them and dramatically pushed back upon his shoulders the collar of the coat he was wearing. “I roll the burden and responsibility of leading this church off from my shoulders on to yours,” he said. “Now, round up your shoulders and stand under it like men; for the Lord is going to let me rest a while.”[46]

This event, now known in Church history as the “last charge,” was memorialized by several of the men who were present, but perhaps most significantly by an unpublished and unsigned statement that currently resides in the Church History Library. “Joseph Smith did declare that he had conferred upon the Twelve every key and every power that he ever held himself before God,” the statement said. “This our testimony we expect to meet in a coming day when all parties will know that we have told the truth and have not lied, so help us God.”[47] For Young, the last charge was a final act in a series of events. “Joseph more than one score of times told . . . [the apostles] both in private and in public, that he rolled the Kingdom on to their shoulders,” Young would

later say.[48] Joseph's conferral of authority included priesthood keys of authority but also a fullness of the endowment ritual, "everything necessary for the salvation of man."[49]

Young and a majority of the other Apostles had been present during these occasions and heard Joseph's words. But their hopes and wishes, like those of Jesus' disciples before Calvary, did not permit them to accept the last charge at face value. Only the actual killings, months later, made Joseph Smith's warning clear.[50]

But Young's religious experience at Peterborough was more certain, especially as the days wore on and he continued to feel religiously prompted. He was convinced that he, as President of the Twelve, had authority to lead the Church, or to at least name Joseph's successor. He also believed that at some point a new First Presidency of three men would be required, though he was willing to let that issue rest for the moment.[51] And he hoped that a general assembly of the Saints would give its approval to the succession. One of Joseph's revelations declared such a gathering to be the highest authority in the Church—the collective inspiration of leaders and members (D&C 107:32).[52]

The day after hearing of the Smith brothers' deaths, Young hurried from Peterborough to Boston. That night he shared a room with Elder Woodruff at Sister Voice's home. Young slept in the bed while Woodruff, who was grieving the Prophet's death, slept in a large chair and did his best to shield his convulsive tears.[53] Young's grief, in contrast, was clear-eyed and determined. On July 18, he held a council with the Apostles who could be quickly gathered together in the East. The result was a letter that the Church's eastern newspaper, the *Prophet*, soon published. The Apostles told Church leaders to head quickly to Nauvoo for the general council.[54] That evening Young briefly preached. He tried to cheer the local Saints: "When God sends a man to do a work all the devils in hell cannot kill him untill he gets through his work. So with Joseph[,] He prepared all things[,] gave the keys to men on the earth[,] and said[,] I may be soon taken from you." [55] He was already using the last charge as a text.

Deciding the Succession

On Wednesday, August 7—the fifth day of the succession crisis—the Apostles spent much of the day huddled in conference at John Taylor's house. They held two meetings early in the day. It was the first time that a legal quorum of seven or more Apostles gathered since Carthage—and they actually had not met since months before that because of their missions. Richards had been the Saints' "principal counselor" during the previous five anxious weeks, answering "calls and inquiries" by the hundreds.[56] Before the others returned, he had been the only healthy Apostle in Nauvoo. He knew the Church's business as well as anyone in the city and had a reputation for good judgment and good works.

People may have deferred to Richards for another reason. Less than two weeks after the killings, Richards, in the course of his usual correspondence, signed one preacher's license as "Clerk and *acting President*." Other preaching licenses reportedly had a still more interesting signature. An entry in the historical record of these licenses explained,

“From the murder of President Joseph Smith to this Date [September 2, 1844] licenses were signed ‘*Twelve Apostles, President.*’” This last piece of evidence was confirmed by the Church’s official chronological history.[57] Since these materials were written weeks and even years after the succession controversy and may represent a later view of events, they require some skepticism. On the other hand, they may also suggest that Richards, early on, was asserting the leadership claims of a united Quorum of the Twelve and some people were accepting them.

It is unfortunate that someone who attended the meetings held on Wednesday did not leave a record of the issues discussed. These two meetings had to be among the most important during the succession crisis. For one thing, the newly arrived Apostles had to be brought up to date. There had been difficulties in Nauvoo from the first week of the murders. “The greatest danger that now threatens us is dissensions and strifes amongst the Church,” William Clayton had written on July 6. Clayton reported that the Saints were discussing four or five possible successors to Smith in his twin offices as Church President and trustee-in-trust.[58] Clayton regrettably did not identify these men, though they may have included Rigdon and Young, as well as William Marks and Samuel Smith, another of the Smith brothers.

The office of trustee-in-trust, which managed the Church’s property, posed a serious problem. Someone had to receive property and pay the bills for the temple, which meant an immediate appointment. More explosive was the conduct of Emma Smith, the Prophet’s widow, who was determined that the family’s property should not be swallowed by the Church’s claims—Joseph had mixed personal and official accounts and many of his debts were unresolved. Emma opposed the stopgap idea of having Clayton serve until the Apostles returned, and during July repeatedly inserted herself into the trustee-in-trust issue.[59] Her feelings were deep. She accused such opponents as Richards of not treating her “right” and warned if they should “trample upon her,” she would “look to herself”—lawyers were obviously on her mind. By the middle of July, she threatened that she “would do the church all the injury” she could if a new trustee-in-trust were appointed without her approval. Her choice, apparently, was Marks, whose views on Church policy and doctrine more closely agreed with her own. Clayton, in the middle of controversy, despaired. Bills were coming due, and Lucy Mack Smith, the Prophet’s mother, was also restive.[60] Clayton felt that a public disturbance over Smith’s estate and the trustee would bring clamoring creditors and a costly settlement. With proper management, however, there was enough “to pay the debts and plenty left for other uses.”[61]

There were other topics that the Twelve must have discussed in their Wednesday meetings. Some were crucial to the future of Mormonism. Did the Smith family have a special claim to the Church’s leadership? For several months Joseph and Hyrum Smith had been acting closely together, and Hyrum, as the Church’s Assistant President and Patriarch, had the authority to carry on had he survived Carthage.[62] The Old Testament and the Book of Mormon were full of examples of prophetic primogeniture—passing a prophet’s mantle of leadership to a son or perhaps to a family member. For the moment, this question of family succession was not pressing. Joseph Smith’s brother, Samuel Smith, had died on July 30, and Joseph Smith’s sons were young.

Another brother, William Smith, was erratic, and no one saw him as a serious candidate.

There were underground issues, too. Historian Ronald K. Esplin has argued that Nauvoo in early 1844 had been a city of secrets. During the several years before his death, Joseph Smith had introduced a breathtaking array of new doctrines and practices: “The plurality of gods, new temple ordinances, new theocratic practices, and even plural marriage.” This “Nauvoo ‘package’” was known unevenly among the Saints, according to Esplin. The result were insider Saints who possessed a “private *gnosis*,” while the majority of Church members were either unaware or not fully informed.[63]

In addition to new doctrines, Smith had also created three new organizations. The first was the Female Relief Society. This organization was publicly known and open to the women living in Nauvoo, though most of its members were drawn from the city’s leading women. The two other organizations were semisecret. The Council of Fifty sought to redress past wrongs, increase the Church’s political influence, and expand Mormonism’s borders into the American West. The Council of Fifty also was a contingency plan for the last days when earthly governments would fall at Christ’s Second Coming and a new religious and political order would be necessary. While some historians have suggested that this new council was not much more than a symbol, the weight of inconclusive evidence suggests that Joseph Smith was serious about his political outreach. His 1844 political campaign and the later Mormon settlement in the Great Basin were not speculative patterns or decorations.[64]

The second semisecret group was Joseph Smith’s prayer circle. Known in furtive references in diaries and minutes as the “Holy Order,” the “Quorum of the Anointed,” the “First Quorum,” or still more often as the “Quorum” or “Council,” this group was making Church decisions in July along with Richards.[65] He was a member of the group and influenced many of its decisions, but not without some tension and hurt feelings along the way.[66]

Like the Council of Fifty, the Quorum of the Anointed began in 1842 and two years later was meeting weekly and sometimes daily.[67] Members were the first initiates of the empowering “ancient order of things,” or the endowment, that later was introduced in the Nauvoo Temple. By the summer of 1844, membership was limited to about sixty-five specially devoted men and women. These anointed members met in special priesthood robes, discussed the matters of the kingdom, and offered special prayers. Their July devotions were fervent. According to Brigham Young, a few of the select group met twice “every day . . . to offer up the signs and pray to our heavenly father to deliver his people.” It had been the “cord which bound the people together.”[68] Some of their soulful petitions were pleas to return the Apostles back to the city.[69]

Many of Smith’s new teachings went against the grain of commonplace or sectarian Christian tradition—and the views of conservative Saints. But within this circle, the Prophet felt at ease.[70] “Brother Joseph feels as well as I Ever see him,” wrote Heber C. Kimball to Parley P. Pratt in 1842. “One reason is he has got a Small company, that he feels safe in thare ha[n]ds. And that is not all, he can open his bosom to[o] and feel him Self safe.”[71] The groups who knew of Smith’s advanced teaching were the Twelve Apostles, the Council of Fifty, and the Anointed Quorum, as well some of the

officers of the Relief Society. Sometimes their meetings merged into a single assembly—an informal fusion of the three or four groups—and as a result there were disorderly lines of authority. The March 1844 meeting in which Smith gave his last charge almost certainly was such an example. On that occasion, there had been an assembly of about sixty men—probably a meeting of the Council of Fifty and the Twelve Apostles with others.[72] Altogether, there were probably no more than one hundred such select disciples in Nauvoo, and perhaps only one member in twenty knew about them.[73] But these few members held in their bosom knowledge of the explosive ideas of plural marriage and the temporal kingdom.[74]

Understandably, Smith's last agenda had little space on the public stage. But privately it gave context to the events surrounding the succession. The succession of 1844 was not simply about appointing a man or group of men to lead the Church. Rather, it was about what kind of Church would survive. When Marks was being pushed for the position of trustee-in-trust, Bishop Whitney objected. He remembered Marks's past association with William Law and Emma Smith, both of whom had a recent history of opposing Joseph Smith and the Twelve. "If Marks is appointed Trustee our spiritual blessings will be destroyed inasmuch as he is not favorable to the most important matters," Whitney told Clayton, referring to the temple ordinances. Moreover, Whitney believed the office of trustee was inseparably tied to the Presidency. One office entailed the other, and that combination put Joseph Smith's last teachings in jeopardy. Whitney favored the appointment of Samuel Smith before Samuel died.[75]

As the events leading to Joseph Smith's death closed in on Joseph in June, he seemed to retreat from some of his advanced teachings. According to D. Michael Quinn, immediately before he went to Carthage, Smith turned his back on polygamy, the endowment, and the Council of Fifty.[76] Whether the retreat was meant to be temporary or permanent, or whether the steps were expedient or heartfelt, the most likely conclusion was that Smith was stabilizing Nauvoo while privately holding firmly to his teachings. His closest disciples accepted this view. But the possibility of a turnabout gave comfort to Emma Smith and Marks during the succession crisis. A rumor circulated through Nauvoo on August 7 claiming that Rigdon had cemented his alliance with Marks by offering him the office of Patriarch, while Rigdon would become the Church's President.[77] Emma Smith could be expected to lend her quiet support. Still more likely, these people never worked out an agenda of offices or goals. They were united vaguely by their lack of belief in Joseph Smith's last teachings and probably never organized themselves into a formal group or opposition.

The Apostles concluded their meetings on August 7 with a decision: a general assembly would be convened within the week on Tuesday, August 13, at 10:00 a.m. They intended to put forward their claims and follow it with a formal, ratifying vote.[78] For the Apostles, there was no turning back. Most had accepted plural marriage at great emotional and psychological cost. Their days of fervent councils with the founding Prophet were at odds with a pre-Nauvoo program and a pre-Nauvoo Church. The idea of Joseph Smith conducting a fallen ministry was out of the question.

The Apostles made two other decisions. They wanted a semipublic airing of Rigdon's claims and scheduled a meeting at Nauvoo's still uncompleted Seventies Hall later in the day. Rigdon would have the opportunity of speaking before the Church's local and

general leaders. The Apostles also agreed to meet the following morning, August 8, for another private meeting.

Minutes and reports of the 4:00 p.m. meeting at the Seventies Hall are incomplete, but it is possible to reconstruct what took place. Rigdon once more put forward his claims and gave more detail about the vision he revealed earlier about putting the Church in order. It was not an “open vision,” he explained, but a stirring that had come to his mind—a continuation of what Joseph Smith and he had experienced in their vision revealing the three degrees of heaven.[79] His future calling, Rigdon said, was to build up the Church for Joseph, because all future blessings must come through Joseph. He was again asserting his position as Joseph Smith’s councilor and spokesman. Elder Wilford Woodruff probably spoke for his fellow Apostles with a curt dismissal. “A long story,” Woodruff said, and a “second class vision.”[80]

William Clayton, who attended the meeting, said that Brigham Young concluded with a few blunt sentences that had his characteristic sting. He did not care who led the Church, he told the Church leaders; even old Ann Lee would do if that was the mind of God. (Ann Lee had helped found the Believers in Christ’s Second Appearing, or Shakers, a century before.) But on the question of who would manage the succession, there was no compromise. Young alone held “the keys and the means of knowing the mind of God,” he said.[81] On these grounds, Young did not accept Rigdon’s claims.

Young’s claim was extraordinary. During the last years of Joseph Smith’s life, Smith had increasingly turned to Young. He was the first to receive his full endowment, and Smith later allowed him to perform the endowment ceremonies in his absence. Young was given many other prominent duties as he became one of Smith’s closest collaborators.[82] But the last charge had not singled Young out—Smith had spoken expansively about most members of the Twelve and some members of the Council of Fifty having the full blessings of the endowment or patriarchal power. Still more important, Smith recognized the Apostles’ special priesthood authority, and one of his revelations described the Twelve (along with other quorums) as forming a group “equal in authority and power” to the First Presidency (D&C 187:24). But this revelation described the Apostles’ collective power and said nothing about their president being a special revelator. Nor did Young use this revelation as a source for his authority. The one thing that seemed to give Young assurance in the early days of August was his Peterborough experience, though he did not say a word about it.

By Thursday, August 8, events were finally coming to a climax. The Apostles had scheduled their private meeting for 9:00 a.m. Rigdon’s prayer meeting was to take place an hour later, though there was a great deal of confusion about it. Some Saints recalled that Rigdon had pledged that the gathering would be an informal worship session like most midweek meetings at the time. Still others claimed that Rigdon had shifted back and forth about the meeting and at last called it off.[83] One thing appears certain: the Apostles did not think Rigdon’s meeting would be important enough for them to attend.

What happened was happenstance—one of those imponderables that intrude into human affairs that men and women often call chance, fortune, luck—or providence. The Apostles gathered at Richards’s office, but Young did not show up. Several years later when his colleagues reminded him of his error, Young was disbelieving. “Does any of

you know of my making an appointment & not being there?" he bristled. "I don't own to that & if such an item goes into the history [of the Church] I'd tear it out if written in [a] book of Gold." But a recollection came after this outburst. "By talking about it, I begin to recollect it." [84] Young, in fact, had missed a meeting. The exhaustion of the past month had caught up with him.

By midmorning, Young saw people streaming into the grove where the Saints held their public meetings and must have known it was Rigdon's prayer meeting. Young decided to go although the meeting had already started. Apparently no Church minutes survive, and probably none were taken. What does exist are several dozen reminiscences describing events that took place. Helen Mar Whitney, Heber C. Kimball's daughter, remembered a large multitude, half of whom were standing. [85] People were concerned about the succession. A stiff wind was blowing, which tossed Rigdon's words back upon him. In order to go on speaking, he stepped out into the congregation and stood on a wagon bed either opposite to the speaker's stand or to one side. Before he was through, he spoke for an hour and a half. [86]

One narrative of the event emphasized its drama, and it may be true. As Rigdon was concluding and about to call for a vote, Young stepped to the speaker's stand, and his sudden appearance must have been electrifying. [87] The people had not seen him for almost four months, and many were unaware he had returned. At first he was not in the angle of their vision, and they turned at the sound of his voice. "I did not ask . . . if I might speak," Young remembered. "I just spoke as I did." [88]

"I will manage this voting for Elder Rigdon," Young said. "He does not preside here. This child [Young himself] will manage this flock for a season." [89] Young complained of "a hurrying Spirit" and spoke of "the true Organization of the Church," which required a formal voting by the people in a special seating arrangement. Anxious to forestall a morning vote, he on the spot announced such a meeting for 2:00 p.m. the same day. After hearing Rigdon, he was unwilling to wait for the coming week. [90]

"Who of the Apostles defended this Kingdom when Sidney was going to lead this people to hell?" he would later ask rhetorically. "I magnified my calling and scarce a man stood by me to brunt the battle." [91] In fact, his confused fellow Apostles remained at Richards's office until they came looking for him just as he was ending his brief remarks. [92] Woodruff gave his reading of the situation: "In consequence of some excitement among the People and a disposition by some spirits to try to divide the Church, it was thought best to attend to the business of the Church in the afternoon." [93]

What would have happened had Young not taken charge at the grove that morning? Would the people have voted to sustain Rigdon? Today it is easy to dismiss Rigdon because the flow of history makes past events seem inevitable. However, historical records and recent scholarship suggest that many Saints were uncertain about who should be their new leader and the question of succession was fluid. [94] James Blakesley, a Church member who lived a few miles up the river at Rock Island, Illinois, wrote of the confusion: "The church is left without an earthly head, unless the promise of the Lord shall be fulfilled, which saith, that if he removed Joseph, he would appoint another in his stead. But as this has not yet been done, what is the church to do? Now

sir, if I have been correctly informed, some of the members of the church at Nauvoo, want Stephen Markham for their head, and others Sidney Rigdon, and others President Marks, and others Little Joseph [Joseph Smith's son], and others B. Young, and some others P. P. Pratt, and if they can all have their choice, we shall soon have a multiplicity of church[e]s of Latter Day Saints.”[95] Still another view was that of Ezra T. Benson, who at the time of Smith's death was in New Jersey campaigning. “The question arose by Bro[ther] Pack [his companion] who will now lead the Church,” Benson later wrote. “I told [him] I did not know but I knew who would lead me and that would be the twelve apostles.”[96] Benson would later become a member of that body.

Rigdon's claims were not easily put aside. He still held many Church titles and was easily among the most accomplished of the Saints. His pulpit voice remained strong. Rigdon spoke “with all the eloquence possible for a man to have,” recalled George Romney, who was in the congregation. His remarks left “quite an impression,” said Maria Wealthy Wilcox. Latter-day Saint stalwart Benjamin F. Johnson's account had the overtone of apology. “I sat in the assembly near President Rigdon, closely attentive to his appeal,” Johnson said. “And was, perhaps, to a degree, forgetful of what I knew to be the rights and duties of the apostleship.”[97]

Events were moving rapidly. At the Apostles' meeting, Elder Kimball, probably acting on a decision made the previous day, instructed Clayton to pay Emma Smith \$1000 to quiet the simmering trustee-in-trust matter. Together with Richards and Kimball, he delivered the money and assured her of the “good feelings of the Twelve towards her. She seemed humble and more kind.”[98]

The afternoon general assembly meeting started forty-five minutes late. No doubt much hurrying was needed to get everyone in place. Rigdon and Young and at least seven members of the Twelve were on the stand, and apparently also Marks and his high council. The high priests were seated nearby to the right. Seventies had the front seats, and the Aaronic Priesthood the rear seats. Elders were to the right of the seventies, and the sisters were on the left. Around this formal assembly were other Saints, many standing.[99] The wind continued to blow. The congregation included perhaps six thousand or more. The meeting was what Latter-day Saints later called a solemn assembly, the Church's highest authority on matters of teaching and doctrine.

Young looked at the people and tried to take their pulse.[100] While grieving and a bit uncertain, they also appeared hopeful. They were sheep without their shepherd, he said to himself. When Young spoke to the people, he tried to catch this spirit. He began by likening the congregation to the days of King Benjamin, the Book of Mormon prophet who blessed his people before his death (see Mosiah 2–4). “We have all done the best we could,” he said encouragingly. Without Joseph Smith, the Saints would now have to walk “by faith and not by sight.” He did not like doing Church business so soon after the murders. If he could have had his way, he would have postponed the assembly for more mourning. “I feel to want to weep for 30 days—& then rise up & tell the people what the Lord wants with them.” But Rigdon had forced his hand.

No shorthand reporter was present during the assembly, and surviving records preserve only sporadic phrases and sentences. But it is clear that Young wanted everyone to understand the order of the Church and the authority of the Apostles. “The Twelve

[were] appointed by the finger of the Almighty,” he insisted. They were “an independent body” that held “the keys of the Kingdom to all the whole world so help me God.” Together, they were the Church’s new “first presidency.” The congregation might choose Rigdon or another man, but such an action “would sever all.” “You can’t put any one at the head of the 12 again.” And Young wanted the people to remember his own service. Had he ever faltered? Along the way, Young’s remarks, or perhaps those of some of the speakers who followed him, flatly challenged Rigdon’s standing. He had lost his position as “prophet, seer, and revelator” due to “unfaithfulness.”[101]

Young’s speech had humor, anecdotes, and some bite directed at his opponents. But it also taught, blessed, and uplifted. Young remembered his feeling. As he began to speak, he felt “compass[s]ion” and a “swol[l]en” heart for the Saints. “The power of the Holy G[h]ost even the spirit of the Prophets” seemed to rest upon him. It had been a difficult speech to deliver: It was “a long and laboras [laborious] talk of a bout two [h]ours in the open air with the wind blowing.”[102]

Usually Young’s sermons flowed from one idea to the next to the next. This address, however, lacked order. “For the life of me,” said one of Young’s critics, Bishop George Miller. “I could not see any point in the course of his remarks other than a wish to overturn Sidney Rigdon’s pretensions.” Everything seemed “anarchy and boisterous confusion.”[103]The independent-minded Miller had earlier shown a willingness to go against the Apostles, and nothing he now heard turned him from his course.[104] The criticism of Latter-day Saint historian Elder B. H. Roberts was more thoughtful. Roberts wondered why Young had not given a more scriptural defense. Neither Young nor others who spoke on Thursday afternoon, Roberts believed, offered a discussion of the “relationship of the respective presiding councils.”[105] Roberts wanted a defense based upon Joseph Smith’s revelation on Church government, now published as section 107 in the Doctrine and Covenants.

There was a good reason why Young spoke as he did. When section 107 was given in 1835, few regarded it as a blueprint for the Apostles’ succession—or for that matter, that the revelation established the Twelve as the Church’s second most important quorum.[106] These ideas came during the early years at Nauvoo when Joseph Smith for the first time made the Apostles his right-hand men.[107] It was during these years that Smith had given them the full endowment and the commission to lead out in his absence. These last teachings were private and wrapped around sensitive issues such as plural marriage, theocracy, and the endowment ordinances, which, if known, might have turned some men and women in the congregation against Young and the Apostles. In short, there were many things that Young did not say because they were neither appropriate nor timely.

Elder Amasa Lyman spoke later in the meeting. He wanted the people to know that he had no special claims because he had served as Joseph Smith’s recent (but unsustainable) counselor. Lyman’s remarks were aimed at Rigdon. When it finally came time for Rigdon to defend his claims, he asked Elder W. W. Phelps to speak in his behalf—Rigdon’s hour-and-a-half morning speech had worn him out. The choice of Phelps was a disaster. Phelps stunningly defended the Twelve, as did the popular Parley P. Pratt a few moments later.

After so much confusion and hand-wringing during the past six days, the matter ended rather easily. Looking back, the reasons appear clear. There really was no viable alternative to the Twelve. From the Church's early days at Kirtland, Rigdon had been brilliant but unsteady, which biographer Richard S. Van Wagoner suggested was the result of a manic-depressive illness that grew more serious with age.[108] In Kirtland, he had once declared that God's keys no longer rested with Joseph Smith or perhaps even in the Church. Smith swiftly removed him from his office as counselor, but Rigdon, after repenting "like Peter of old and after a little suffering by the buffeting of Satan," was restored.[109] Rigdon's experiences in Missouri in the late 1830s brought episodic bouts of malaria and still more depression. Rigdon's illness was so severe by the time he settled at Nauvoo there were times that he did not function. At the Church's October 1843 conference, Joseph Smith suggested that Rigdon might step down, and Smith appears to have questioned his loyalty. But the conference (and eventually Smith himself) hoped that Rigdon might do better, and Rigdon continued to be sustained as First Counselor.[110]

While those who saw Rigdon up close during the first week of August knew that his moods and behavior seesawed, neither insiders nor outsiders understood the nature and extent of his illness. In contrast, there was the strong figure of Brigham Young. His experience at Peterborough increased his already high self-confidence. He felt driven. The events of succession were a time when the "power of the priesthood sat upon me," he later said. It was a time when he could "sling mountains." [111]

The people felt it too. The sensation began when Young spoke at Rigdon's prayer meeting and continued in the afternoon and even through several months after. William Burton, a missionary returning to Nauvoo in the spring of 1845, was surprised. The places of Joseph and Hyrum Smith had been taken "by others much better than I once was supposed," he wrote in his diary. "The spirit of Joseph appeared to rest upon Brigham." [112] For many Saints, Young and the Twelve held and personified Joseph Smith's last doctrines. Said one Saint, "The twelve have been ordained[,] sealed and anointed[,] in fine have received all the Power necessary to preside." It was a matter of ordination—and more.

The idea that Young had been transformed (or transfigured) by the spirit of Joseph Smith became one of the great traditions of Latter-day Saint history. The story has been told many times and with many variations. A recent compilation has more than one hundred testimonies, fifty-seven of them firsthand, and many written by men of women of ability and reputation. For some, the confirmation had been a "feeling" or "spiritual witness" that they had felt during one of those long meetings of August 8 or in the days that came later. This version often used the word *mantle* to describe what they had seen—the symbolic cloak of the Old Testament prophet Elijah falling upon his successor Elisha. "It was evident to the Saints that the mantle of Joseph had fallen upon [Young]," said Wilford Woodruff less than a year later, and "the road that he pointed out could be seen so plainly." [113]

Within a decade, the Saints were building upon these memories and describing the event with many details. When Young first rose to speak, it was said, he had cleared his voice just like Joseph Smith used to do. Others said that Young's gestures and voice were Smith's, or perhaps it was the manner of Young's reasoning or the expression on

his face that seemed so remarkable. Still others claimed to have seen the “tall, straight and portly form of the Prophet Joseph Smith.” Young’s body had grown larger before their spiritual eyes.[114] “If you had had your eyes shut, you would have thought it was the Prophet,” said one man.[115] These memories were remarkable for their detail and their number, and they are hard to put aside.

Some skeptical historians have a different view. “When 8 August 1844 is stripped of emotional overlay, there is not a shred of irrefutable contemporary evidence to support the occurrence of a mystical event either in the morning or afternoon gatherings of that day,” writes Van Wagoner. “A more likely scenario was that it was the force of Young’s commanding presence, his well-timed arrival at the morning meeting, and perhaps a bit of theatrical mimicry.”[116]

Young himself never made any special claims about his transfiguration beyond saying that on August 8 he had felt the Holy Ghost and the spirit of the prophets.[117] He recognized as well as any modern social scientist the power of memory to transform events and give memories details and meaning. He sat through several recitals of the event in later years without giving them his approval. It was enough for him, and many of his closest associates too, that the solemn assembly had worked God’s will. Whatever else happened on that afternoon—the mysteries of spiritual feeling and experiences can only be narrated but not verified by the historian—the people had been drawn together and for the moment had assurance. “The church was of one h[e]art and one mind,” Young said of the events, which, after all, was miracle enough.[118] Many years later, President Woodruff wrote that this highly celebrated day in August 1844 and Brigham Young’s role in the succession became the “pivot” on which the rest of Latter-day Saint history turned—and he was right.[119]

Notes

[1] O. F. Berry, “The Mormon Settlement in Illinois,” in *Papers in Illinois History and Transactions: Illinois State Historical Society* (Springville, IL: Illinois State Journal, 1906), 91.

[2] Statement of George Edmunds, a longtime settler, in Berry, “Mormon Settlement in Illinois,” 97. For want and hard economic times, see William Huntington, “Reminiscences and Journal, April 1841–August 1846,” July 8 and 11, 1844, 16, Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City.

[3] Richard S. Van Wagoner, *Sidney Rigdon: A Portrait of Religious Excess* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1994), ix.

[4] “Veritas to James G. Bennett,” *New York Herald*, February 19, 1842.

[5] J. Wickliffe Rigdon, “Life of Sidney Rigdon,” 178–79, Church History Library. *Speech of Elder Orson Hyde, Delivered Before the High Priest’s Quorum, in Nauvoo, April 27th, 1845* (City of Joseph, IL: John Taylor, 1845), 27.

[6] *Latter Day Saints’ Messenger and Advocate* (Pittsburgh), December 6, 1844, 4, in Richard S. Van Wagoner, “The Making of a Mormon Myth: The 1844 Transfiguration of Brigham Young,” *Dialogue* 28, no. 4 (Winter 1995): 4.

- [7] *Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 1801–1844*, comp. Elden Jay Watson (Salt Lake City: by the compiler, 1969), 165; D. Michael Quinn, *The Mormon Hierarchy: Origins of Power* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1994), 119, 145; Glen M. Leonard, *Nauvoo: A Place of Peace, A People of Promise* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book; Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 2002), 339; Joseph Smith, *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1957), 6:325, 335–40.
- [8] Quinn, *The Mormon Hierarchy*, 119, 145; see also Leonard, *Nauvoo*, 339.
- [9] Willard Richards, statement, in Church Historian's Office, History of the Church, July 2, 1844, 7:249, Church History Library, also found in *Selected Collections of the Archives from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, <http://ldsarch.lib.byu.edu/CD Volume 1/Disc1/v1/seg13.htm>; Willard Richards, certificate, about July 2, 1844, Willard Richards Papers, Church History Library, also found in *Selected Collections from the Archives*, <http://ldsarch.lib.byu.edu/CD Volume 1/Disc31/MS 1490/b3f1-14/seg5.htm>.
- [10] Jedediah M. Grant, *A Collection of Facts, Relative to the Course Taken by Elder Sidney Rigdon . . .* (Philadelphia: Brown, Bicking & Guilbert, 1844), 16.
- [11] *Speech of Elder Orson Hyde*, 11.
- [12] Grant, *Collection of Facts*, 17.
- [13] Church Historian's Office, General Church Minutes, September 8, 1844, Church History Library, also found in *Selected Collections of the Archives*, <http://ldsarch.lib.byu.edu/CD Volume 1/Disc18/CR 100 318/b1f1-38/seg13.htm>.
- [14] Church Historian's Office, General Church Minutes, September 8, 1844.
- [15] David B. Clark, "Sidney Rigdon's Rights of Succession," *Restoration*, April 6, 1987, 9.
- [16] Van Wagoner, "Making of a Mormon Myth," 5; see also Andrew F. Ehat, "Joseph Smith's Introduction of Temple Ordinances and the 1844 Mormon Succession Question" (master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1982), 197.
- [17] Church Historian's Office, General Church Minutes, September 8, 1844.
- [18] Church Historian's Office, General Church Minutes, September 8, 1844; *Speech of Elder Orson Hyde*, 11–12.
- [19] Church Historian's Office, History of the Church, August 4, 1844, 7: addenda, p. 10; also found in *Selected Collections from the Archives*, <http://ldsarch.lib.byu.edu/CD Volume 1/Disc1/v7/seg17.htm>.
- [20] Church Historian's Office, History of the Church, August 4, 1844, 7: addenda, p. 10.
- [21] William Clayton, *An Intimate Chronicle: The Journals of William Clayton*, ed. George D. Smith (Salt Lake City: Signature Books in association with Smith Research Associates, 1991), 140; Huntington, "Reminiscences and Journal," July 14 to August 4, 1844, 17–18.
- [22] Notice, *Times and Seasons*, June 1, 1841, 431.
- [23] Huntington, "Reminiscences and Journal," July 8 and 11, 1844, and July 14 to August 1, 1844, 16–18.
- [24] Church Historian's Office, General Church Minutes, September 8, 1844; *Speech of Elder Orson Hyde*, 12–13.
- [25] Clayton, *Intimate Chronicle*, 140.
- [26] Church Historian's Office, History of the Church, August 5, 1844, 7:294, also found in *Selected Collections from the Archives*, <http://ldsarch.lib.byu.edu/CD Volume 1/Disc1/v7/seg16.htm>.
- [27] Church Historian's Office, History of the Church, August 5, 1844, 7: addenda, p. 10.
- [28] Clayton, *Intimate Chronicle*, 140.

- [29] Church Historian's Office, History of the Church, August 5, 1844, 7:294.
- [30] Church Historian's Office, General Church Minutes, April 6, 1844, also found in *Selected Collections from the Archives*, [http://ldsarch.lib.byu.edu/CD Volume 1/Disc18/CR 100 318/b1f1-38/seg10.htm](http://ldsarch.lib.byu.edu/CD%20Volume%201/Disc18/CR%20100%20318/b1f1-38/seg10.htm).
- [31] Wilford Woodruff, journal, August 6, 1844, Wilford Woodruff Journal and Papers, 1831–1898, Church History Library.
- [32] Woodruff, journal, July 30, 1844.
- [33] Church Historian's Office, General Church Minutes, August 3, 1844, 7:293, also found in *Selected Collections from the Archives*, [http://ldsarch.lib.byu.edu/CD Volume 1/Disc1/v7/seg15.htm](http://ldsarch.lib.byu.edu/CD%20Volume%201/Disc1/v7/seg15.htm).
- [34] Woodruff, journal, August 6, 1844.
- [35] *Manuscript History of Brigham Young*, May 21, 1844, to June 30, 1844, 167–69.
- [36] *Manuscript History of Brigham Young*, May 10 and 15, 1844, 165.
- [37] Brigham Young to Mary Ann Young, June 12, 1844, original in possession of Dr. Wade Stephens, Bradenton, Florida, in Dean C. Jessee, "Brigham Young's Family: Part I, 1824–1845," *BYU Studies* 18, no. 3 (Spring 1978): 326.
- [38] Brigham Young to Willard Richards, July 8, 1844, Willard Richards Papers, Church History Library, also found in *Selected Collections from the Archives*, [http://ldsarch.lib.byu.edu/CD Volume 1/Disc31/MS 1490/b3f15-23/seg29.htm](http://ldsarch.lib.byu.edu/CD%20Volume%201/Disc31/MS%201490/b3f15-23/seg29.htm).
- [39] Woodruff, journal, July 1, 1844.
- [40] Brigham Young to Willard Richards, July 8, 1844; spelling and punctuation standardized.
- [41] Joseph Smith, *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 2nd ed. rev. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1957), 6:486–87, 519.
- [42] *Manuscript History of Brigham Young*, July 9, 1844, 170.
- [43] Church Historian's Office, History of the Church, August 14, 1844, 7:266–67; Brigham Young, journal, July 14, 1844, Brigham Young Office Files, 1832–1878, Church History Library; Journal History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, July 9 and 14, 1844, Church History Library.
- [44] Church Historian's Office, General Church Minutes, February 12, 1849, also found in *Selected Collections from the Archives*, [http://ldsarch.lib.byu.edu/CD Volume 1/Disc18/CR 100 318/b2f1-20/seg12.htm](http://ldsarch.lib.byu.edu/CD%20Volume%201/Disc18/CR%20100%20318/b2f1-20/seg12.htm); *Manuscript History of Brigham Young*, July 16, 1844, 170–71; Church Historian's Office, History of the Church, July 16, 1844, 272–73, also found in *Selected Collections from the Archives*, [http://ldsarch.lib.byu.edu/CD Volume 1/Disc1/v7/seg14.htm](http://ldsarch.lib.byu.edu/CD%20Volume%201/Disc1/v7/seg14.htm), also Church Historian's Office, journal, June 22, 1863, 27:81–82, Church History Library, also found in *Selected Collections from the Archives*, [http://ldsarch.lib.byu.edu/CD Volume 1/Disc17/b3v26-27/seg55.htm](http://ldsarch.lib.byu.edu/CD%20Volume%201/Disc17/b3v26-27/seg55.htm).
- [45] Brigham Young, "Remarks Before a Family Gathering," December 25, 1857, Brigham Young Papers, Church History Library.
- [46] Declaration of the Twelve, about 1844, in "The Work of God Rolls Forward," <http://josephsmith.net/josephsmith/v/index.jsp?vnextoid=e8b5fe1347df101...> spelling standardized.
- [47] Declaration of the Twelve, about 1844; see also Church Historian's Office, General Church Minutes, September 8, 1844.
- [48] Brigham Young, discourse, October 7, 1866, in Brigham Young, *The Complete Discourses of Brigham Young, Volume 4: 1862–1867*, ed. Richard S. Van Wagoner (Salt Lake City: Smith-Pettit Foundation, 2009), 4:2379.

- [49] Samuel W. Richards to Franklin D. Richards, August 23, 1844, quoting Elder Orson Hyde, Church History Library.
- [50] Orson Hyde, in *Journal of Discourses* (London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1854–86), 13:180; Wilford Woodruff, in *Journal of Discourses*, 13:164. Andrew F. Ehat summarizes, "The full meaning of this meeting [when the last charge was given] at first escaped all those who attended it and only after the Martyrdom was it appreciated" ("Joseph Smith's Introduction of Temple Ordinances," 96).
- [51] Church Historian's Office, General Church Minutes, December 5, 1847; see also Brigham Young to Orson Spencer, January 23, 1848, Brigham Young Papers. Describing the establishment of the First Presidency consisting of Young, Kimball, and Richards, Young wrote, "Nothing more has been done to day than what I knew would be done when Joseph died."
- [52] B. H. Roberts, *Comprehensive History of the Church*, 6 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1930), 2:416; see also Doctrine and Covenants 20:65.
- [53] Woodruff, journal, July 17, 1844.
- [54] Journal History, July 18, 1844, quoting the *Prophet*.
- [55] Woodruff, journal, July 18, 1844.
- [56] Church Historian's Office, History of the Church, August 6, 1844, 7: addenda, p. 10. Examples of this correspondence may be found in the Willard Richards Papers, also found in *Selected Collections from the Archives*, [http://ldsarch.lib.byu.edu/CD Volume 1/Disc31/MS 1490/contents.htm](http://ldsarch.lib.byu.edu/CD%20Volume%201/Disc31/MS%201490/contents.htm).
- [57] General Church Recorder, Far West and Nauvoo Elders' Certificates, Church History Library; emphasis added Smith, *History of the Church*, 7:212–13.
- [58] Clayton, *Intimate Chronicle*, 137.
- [59] Clayton, *Intimate Chronicle*, 137–39.
- [60] Clayton, *Intimate Chronicle*, 139; Ehat, "Joseph Smith's Introduction of Temple Ordinances," 13.
- [61] James B. Allen, "One Man's Nauvoo: William Clayton's Experience in Mormon Illinois," *Journal of Mormon History* 6 (1979): 57–58n57.
- [62] Leonard, *Nauvoo*, 428.
- [63] Ronald K. Esplin, "Joseph, Brigham and the Twelve: A Succession of Continuity," *BYU Studies* 21, no. 3 (Summer 1981): 304–6.
- [64] The topic of the Council of Fifty has elicited much scholarly attention. The authoritative secondary sources are Klaus J. Hansen, *Quest for Empire: The Political Kingdom of God and the Council of Fifty in Mormon History* (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press, 1967); D. Michael Quinn, "The Council of Fifty and its Members, 1844 to 1845," *BYU Studies* 20, no. 2 (Winter 1980): 163–97; and Quinn, *Mormon Hierarchy*, especially 120–34, 137–41, and 196–97.
- [65] Allen, "One Man's Nauvoo," 47; Devery S. Anderson and Gary James Bergera, eds., *Joseph Smith's Quorum of the Anointed, 1842–1845: A Documentary History* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2005), 80–82.
- [66] Clayton, *Intimate Chronicle*, 137–39.
- [67] Quinn, "Meetings and Initiations of the Anointed Quorum (Holy Order), 1842–45," appendix 4, in *Mormon Hierarchy*, 491–519; Anderson and Bergera, eds., *Joseph Smith's Quorum of the Anointed*, 80–82.
- [68] Allen, "One Man's Nauvoo," 47, 48n29.

- [69] Church Historian's Office, General Church Minutes, October 8, 1848, also found in *Selected Collections from the Archives*, [http://ldsarch.lib.byu.edu/CD Volume 1/Disc18/CR 100 318/b2f1-20/seg10.htm](http://ldsarch.lib.byu.edu/CD%20Volume%201/Disc18/CR%20100%20318/b2f1-20/seg10.htm).
- [70] This is the argument of Esplin, in "Joseph, Brigham and the Twelve," 303.
- [71] Heber C. Kimball to Parley P. Pratt, June 17, 1842, Parley P. Pratt Papers, Church History Library.
- [72] Hyde, in *Journal of Discourses*, 13:180; Ehat, "Joseph Smith's Introduction of Temple Ordinances," 93.
- [73] In *Mormon Hierarchy*, 170, Quinn suggested that 5 percent of the Saints knew about these practices.
- [74] Todd Compton, foreword, in Anderson and Bergera, *Joseph Smith's Quorum of the the Anointed*, ix–xii.
- [75] Clayton, *Intimate Chronicle*, 138.
- [76] Quinn, *Mormon Hierarchy*, 145–48.
- [77] Clayton, *Intimate Chronicle*, 141.
- [78] Woodruff, journal, August 7, 1844.
- [79] Clayton, *Intimate Chronicle*, 141. The vision that Rigdon mentions is recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 76.
- [80] Woodruff, journal, August 7, 1844.
- [81] Clayton, *Intimate Chronicle*, 141.
- [82] Ehat, "Joseph Smith's Introduction of Temple Ordinances," 112–13, 118, 121, 147.
- [83] Church Historian's Office, General Church Minutes, December 5, 1847.
- [84] Church Historian's Office, General Church Minutes, December 5, 1847.
- [85] Helen Mar Whitney, "Scenes in Nauvoo after the Martyrdom of the Prophet and Patriarch," *Woman's Exponent*, February 1, 1883, 130. Van Wagoner notes that the multitude was of more than five thousand Saints ("Making of a Mormon Myth," 9).
- [86] Van Wagoner, "Making of a Mormon Myth," 9.
- [87] *Speech of Elder Orson Hyde*, 13–14. See also Van Wagoner, "Making of a Mormon Myth," 9.
- [88] Church Historian's Office, General Church Minutes, December 5, 1847.
- [89] Jacob Hamblin statement as cited in Lynne Watkins Jorgensen and *BYU Studies* staff, "The Mantle of the Prophet Joseph Passes to Brother Brigham: A Collective Spiritual Witness," *BYU Studies* 36, no. 4 (1996–97): 162.
- [90] Joseph Fielding, in Andrew F. Ehat, "'They Might Have Known That He Was Not a Fallen Prophet': The Nauvoo Journal of Joseph Fielding," *BYU Studies* 19, no. 2 (Winter 1979): 155.
- [91] Church Historian's Office, General Church Minutes, October 8, 1848.
- [92] Church Historian's Office, General Church Minutes, December 5, 1847.
- [93] Woodruff, journal, August 8, 1844.
- [94] Quinn, *Mormon Hierarchy*, 143–85.
- [95] James Blakesley to Jacob Scott, August 16, 1844, in Heman C. Smith, "Succession in the Presidency," *Journal of History* 2, no. 1 (January 1909): 3–4. Blakesley wrote before learning of the meetings on August 8.
- [96] Ezra Taft Benson, "A Brief History of Ezra Taft Benson Written by Himself," in Church Historian's Office, *Histories of the Twelve, 1856–1858*, Church History Library.

- [97] These memories are respectively those of George Romney and Maria Wealthy Wilcox, as well as Johnson. They are printed in Jorgensen and *BYU Studies* staff, "Mantle of the Prophet," 174, 178, and 167.
- [98] Clayton, *Intimate Chronicle*, 142.
- [99] Church Historian's Office, General Church Minutes, August 8, 1844, also found in *Selected Collections from the Archives*, [http://ldsarch.lib.byu.edu/CD Volume 1/Disc18/CR 100 318/b1f1-38/seg12.htm](http://ldsarch.lib.byu.edu/CD%20Volume%201/Disc18/CR%20100%20318/b1f1-38/seg12.htm). There are four copies of proceedings, and each has unique details.
- [100] In addition to the four summaries of the August 8 afternoon meeting in the Church History Library, Wilford Woodruff left an account in his diary. My narrative is a reconstruction based upon these five sources.
- [101] Huntington, "Reminiscences and Journal," August 8, 1844, 18.
- [102] Brigham Young, journal, August 8, 1844, Church History Library. While parts of the diary were written by secretaries, these sentences, significantly, were written in Young's own hand. See Dean C. Jessee, "The Writings of Brigham Young," *Western Historical Quarterly* 4, no. 3 (July 1873): 284.
- [103] H. W. Mills, "De Tal Palo Tal Astilla," *Historical Society of Southern California: Annual Publications* 10, no. 3 (1917): 135.
- [104] William Huntington, "Reminiscences and Journal," July 8 and 14, and August 4, 1844, 17–18.
- [105] B. H. Roberts, *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Period 2: Apostolic Interregnum*, 2nd ed. rev. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1932), 7:234n.
- [106] Quinn, *Mormon Hierarchy*, 156–60.
- [107] Esplin, "Joseph, Brigham and the Twelve," 308–12.
- [108] Van Wagoner, *Sidney Rigdon*, viii.
- [109] Joseph Smith to W. W. Phelps, July 31, 1832, *Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*, ed. Dean C. Jessee, rev. ed. (Salt Lake City and Provo, UT: Deseret Book and Brigham Young University Press, 2002), 273.
- [110] Van Wagoner, *Sidney Rigdon*, 323–24.
- [111] Church Historian's Office, General Church Minutes, December 25, 1857.
- [112] Cited in Jorgensen and *BYU Studies* staff, "Mantle of the Prophet," 135.
- [113] Wilford Woodruff, "To the Officers and Members," *Millennial Star*, February 1845, 138.
- [114] Jorgensen and *BYU Studies* staff, "Mantle of the Prophet," 167. For more accounts of the mantle of Joseph, see Jorgensen's full article.
- [115] Rachel Ridgeway Ivins, cited in Jorgensen and *BYU Studies* staff, "Mantle of the Prophet Joseph," 167.
- [116] Van Wagoner, "Making of a Mormon Myth," 21; see also Reid L. Harper, "The Mantle of Joseph: Creation of a Mormon Miracle," *Journal of Mormon History* 22, no. 1 (Fall 1996): 35–71.
- [117] Brigham Young, journal, August 8, 1844, Church History Library.
- [118] Sermon, December 25, 1857, Church minutes.
- [119] Wilford Woodruff, in *Journal of Discourses*, 15:81.

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MORMONS: WHO THEY ARE, WHAT THEY BELIEVE - - Discussion Guide

Mormon Power Grab?

<http://exmormon.org/d6/drupal/Poisoning-in-Mormon-Power-Grab-Samuel-H-Smith>

Poisoning of Samuel H. Smith - Joseph Smith's Brother

by steve benson

--The Strange Death of Samuel H. Smith, Brother of Joseph Smith and Heir Apparent to the Assassination-Emptied Mormon Throne--

In a previous thread, RfM poster "Charley" mentioned the suspicious death of Samuel Harrison Smith, younger sibling of Joseph Smith.

As with circumstances surrounding the agonizing and mysterious death of Brigham Young, allegations have been made over the years that Samuel, too, was the victim of deliberate poisoning deviously administered by those angling for power in the time period following the assassination of Joseph Smith.

Notes "Charley":

"There's . . . the rumor that Brigham Young was behind the suspicious death of Samuel Smith who is also believed to have been poisoned. Instant Karma's gonna get you."

("Re: Hard to Swallow: Mormon Apologists Refuse to Consider That Brigham Young May Have Been Deliberately Poisoned In His Own Household . . .," posted by "Charley," on "Recovery from Mormonism" board, 20 June 2011, 9:39 p.m.; see also, "Hard to Swallow: Mormon Apologists Refuse to Consider That Brigham Young May Have Been Deliberately Poisoned In His Own Household," by Steve Benson, on "Recovery from Mormonism" board, 20 June 2011, 2:08 p.m.)

That rumor appears to be well-grounded.

Samuel Harrison Smith was an early baptized member of the Mormon Church, one of its original founders and one of the so-called "Eight Witnesses." He was also one of the Church's first missionaries and served on the Kirtland, Ohio, High Council.

That apparently wasn't enough to protect him, however.

Samuel died under mysterious circumstances on 30 July 1844, at the age of 36, barely a month after Joseph and Hyrum Smith were shot to death in the jailhouse siege at Carthage, Illinois.

Perhaps not coincidentally, Joseph Smith had chosen his brother Samuel to take on the leadership mantle for the Church if both he and Hyrum were killed. According to Joseph Smith's private secretary William Clayton, Joseph had "said that if he and Hyrum were taken away, Samuel H. Smith would be his successor."

After their deaths in Carthage, Samuel personally transported Joseph's body by wagon--laid in a plain pine box covered with prairie grass--back to Nauvoo.

Soon thereafter, he became violently ill and was himself dead in a matter of weeks.

(see: "Samuel Harrison Smith," at <http://today.answers.com/topic/samuel-harrison-smith>; H. Michael Marquardt, "The Rise of Mormonism: 1816-1844" [Longwood, Florida: Xulon Press, 2005], p. 635; Dallin H. Oaks and Marvin S. Hill, "Carthage Conspiracy: The Trial of the Accused Assassins of Joseph Smith" (Urbana, Illinois, University of Illinois Press, 1976), p. 21); and Ernest H. Taves, "Trouble Enough: Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon" [Buffalo, New York: Prometheus Books, 1984], p. 216)

--Cries of Foul Play from Members of Joseph Smith's Family--

Despite efforts by the Mormon Church to dismiss allegations that Samuel Harrison Smith was a victim of a murder plot at the hands of LDS Church leaders conspiring to succeed Joseph Smith, members of the Smith family vigorously contended that Samuel had been purposely killed in a power grab that took place in the aftermath of Joseph's assassination.

Five years after Samuel's death, published media accounts by the only Smith brother to survive the Nauvoo period, William, charged that Samuel had been deliberately poisoned:

"In the October 1849 issue of his newspaper, the 'Melchisedek & Aaronic Herald,' William Smith publishe[d] a list of Mormon martyrs, including Samuel H. [Smith], 'who died from the effects of poison administered to him. He died within one month after the martyrdom of his brother.'"

("Martyrs of the Latter Day Saints," in 'Melchisedek & Aaronic Herald' (Covington, Kentucky) 1, no. 7, Oct. 1849)

A few years later, in a letter to the "New York Tribune," William Smith provided further details on the suspicious death of his brother, Samuel, pointing a direct finger at Brigham Young and Willard Richards, accusing them of orchestrating Samuel's murder:

"I have good reason for believing that my brother Samuel H. Smith, died of poison at Nauvoo, administered by order of Brigham Young and Willard Richards, only a few weeks subsequent to the unlawful murder of my other brothers, Joseph and Hiram Smith, while incarcerated in Carthage jail.

"Several other persons who were presumed to stand between Brigham Young and the accomplishment of his ambitions and wicked designs, mysteriously disappeared from Nauvoo about the same time, and have never been heard from since."

(William Smith, "Mormonism," letter to the "New York Tribune," 28 May 1857)

In private correspondence in 1892, William Smith further asserted that Willard Richards asked Hosea Stout (who happened to be Samuel's caretaker) to kill Samuel in order to prevent Samuel from taking office as Mormon Church president before the Quorum of the Twelve (which happened to be led by Brigham Young) could convene to handpick a successor.

(William Smith, letter to "Bro. [. . .] Kelley," 1 June 1892)

Samuel H. Smith's own daughter, Mary B. Smith, expressed her belief that her father and her uncle Arthur Milliken were simultaneously poisoned through the administration of a powdery toxin purported to be medicine--noting, as well, that the same doctors attended both men.

According to Mary, Milliken stopped taking the fatal substance but Samuel continued to the last dose, which "he spit out and said he was poisoned. But it was too late--he died."

(Mary B. Smith Norman, letter to Ina Coolbrith, 27 March 1908; the above citations found in "Samuel H. Smith (1808-1844)," under "Death and Succession Crisis," in "Saints Without Halos," at:http://www.saintswithouthalos.com/b/smith_s.phtm)

Moreover, Samuel H. Smith's wife, Levira Clark Smith, also concluded that her popular husband had, in reality, been murdered--and proceeded to name the murderer.

Writes author Richard Abanes:

"[In the wake of Joseph Smith's death,] Samuel Smith . . . seemed a reasonable choice to many Saints [for the Church's next president]. In fact, he nearly took control of the Church before the Twelve had returned [to Nauvoo], much to the irritation of Willard Richards, who wanted no leader to be named until all the Apostles were present.

"Richards may have gone so far as to have Samuel murdered to prevent any succession. Samuel's wife believed this to be the case, naming as her husband's murderer the Chief of Police--Hosea Stout, a Danite widely known for having a violent streak and a cold-hearted disposition.

"Everyone knew he was more than capable of homicide. He had already been, and would continue to be, connected with several murders and assaults involving apostates and Church critics. . . .

"In the case of Samuel Smith, Stout had acted as Samuel's care-giver when he fell ill, and in that capacity had given Samuel 'white powder' medicine daily until his death. Samuel's wife, daughter, and brother . . . all believed the powder to be poison."

(Richard Abanes, "One Nation Under Gods: A History of the Mormon Church" [New York, New York: Four Walls Eight Windows, 2002], p. 207)

--Brigham Young Denies Ordering the Murder of Samuel Smith--

Brigham Young hotly denied allegations that he had also been involved in the death of Samuel H. Smith, instead offering up a questionable alibi:

". . . William Smith has asserted that I was the cause of the death of his brother Samuel when brother Woodruff, who is here to day, knows that we were waiting at the depôt in Boston to take passage east at the very time when Joseph and Hyrum were killed.

"Brother Taylor was nearly killed at the time and Doctor Richards had his whiskers nearly singed off by the blaze from the guns. In a few weeks after, Samuel Smith died and I am blamed as the cause of his death."

(Brigham Young, "Journal of Discourses," vol. 5, July 1857, p.77)

--Dissecting Young's Shaky Denial--

Former "Recovery from Mormonism" poster "Perry Noid" raises serious questions about the truthfulness of Young's denial of involvement in the death of Samuel H. Smith:

". . . I [am] struck at how weak [Young's] defense [is].

"He simply seem[s] to be relying on the 'Hey, I was out of town' alibi that Mafia types like to rely on after giving instructions to an agent who just happens to be 'in town.'

"It seems like he's counting on suckers not asking the next obvious question, i.e., '[S]ince [Young] and his polygamy faction obviously were the prime beneficiaries of Sam[uel] Smith's untimely demise, doesn't it stand to reason that [Young] could have given instructions to a subordinate or have knowingly approved of the plan in advance?

"At the very least, isn't it possible that [Young] knew what happened after the fact and covered it up because it worked out so nicely for himself?"

"The pattern of denial by [Young] in this instance sure does feel similar to that used in the Mountain Meadows Massacre case.

"But it's also highly likely that [Young] literally got a 'taste of his own medicine' since his own death followed a prolonged episode of painful, violent vomiting and discomfort that may have been the result of a revenge poisoning."

"Perry Noid" offers additional intriguing and compelling information which makes it entirely possible to conclude that Samuel H. Smith could well have been seen as a dire threat to the interests of Young's conniving inner circle of power-mongering polygamists:

" . . . Samuel was probably the last best hope that the Smith clan had to maintain a dominant leadership position in the Church.

"If he had succeeded Hyrum to the office of Patriarch, that position could have been leveraged into a hereditary presidency that only Smiths were eligible to attain.

"Samuel probably wasn't capable of being a strong leader like Joseph, or even Hyrum, but the Smith clan was likely hoping that he would be able to hold things together long enough for Joe III to ascend to the throne.

"Samuel's claim, in addition to being supported by the fact that he was the eldest Smith male in line after Joe and Hyrum, was also supported by the fact that he was the third official convert to Mormonism, after Joe and Oliver.

"So, I believe that, first and foremost, he was a serious obstacle to the ambitions of the strong pro-polygamy faction that was coalescing behind Brigham.

"I don't know whether or not Samuel would have continued to go along with polygamy but my impression was that he was not an enthusiastic supporter and the remainder of the Smith clan would probably have intended to dump it all together, knowing that it would be a continuing source of trouble for their Church.

"One biography of Samuel indicates that he had no plural wives, but only married his second wife after his first wife had died."

"Perry Noid" further adds that Hosea Stout, former police chief of Nauvoo, may indeed have been the administrator of deadly toxins to Samuel Smith during a power struggle over the issue of polygamy:

" . . . Samuel was possibly intentionally poisoned by an agent of Brigham Young in 1844. (Samuel was considered by many to be well ahead of Brigham Young in the contest for succession to Joseph Smith, but suddenly fell ill and died on July 30, 1844--barely a month after the deaths of his brothers, Joseph and Hyrum.) . . .

"[Historian D. Michael] Quinn argues that Willard Richards instructed Hosea Stout, a former Danite and police chief of Nauvoo, to poison Samuel Smith. He died not long after Joseph died. While most of the Church leaders were away from Nauvoo at the time, the Church leadership quickly split along the lines of polygamy. Those who favored the continued practice of polygamy and secret ordinances were partial to Brigham Young and wanted to wait until the Quorum of Twelve Apostles returned to Nauvoo before choosing a successor.

"Those who were opposed to the practice of polygamy and secret ordinances favored the leadership of William Marks. Sidney Rigdon quickly made a proposal to become guardian of the Church and Marks threw his support behind Rigdon. However, the day before the meeting to decide whether Rigdon should be appointed guardian, the Apostles returned to Nauvoo." (Garn LeBaron, Jr., "The Mormon Hierachy: Origins of Power"--A Review," 1995, at:<http://www.exmormon.org/hierarch.htm>)"

("Thanks for the re-post," by "Perry Noid," Recovery from Mormonism board, 5 June, year unknown; and "My understanding of the situation . . .," idem, RfM board, 5 June, year unknown, at:<http://www.exmormon.org/mormon/mormon248.htm>)

--Further Reasons to Question Brigham Young's Attempts at Distancing Himself from the Dastardly Deed--

Noting the documentation amassed by historian D. Michael Quinn as well as others, avid student of Mormon history and former RfM poster "Deconstructor" asks, "Why would such an accusation be laid against Brigham Young?," then explains:

"This troubling piece of information came from a Church talk Brigham Young gave in 1857:

"And William Smith has asserted that I was the cause of the death of his brother Samuel, when brother Woodruff, who is here to day, knows that we were waiting at the depôt in Boston to take passage east at the very time when Joseph and Hyrum were killed. Brother Taylor was nearly killed at the time, and Doctor Richards had his whiskers nearly singed off by the blaze from the guns. In a few weeks after, Samuel Smith died, and I am blamed as the cause of his death." (Prophet Brigham Young, July 1857, 'Journal of Discourses,' vol. 5, p.c77)

"I checked Church history sources and found these clues about the death of Joseph Smith's brother [Samuel] in Nauvoo, who died little over a month after Joseph was killed:

"Samuel Harrison Smith, born in Tunbridge, Vt., March 13, 1808. Died July 30, 1844, broken-hearted and worn out with persecution. Aged 36. The righteous are removed from the evils to come.' ("Times and Seasons," Vol.5, No.24, p. 760)

"Hyrum & Joseph w[ere] murdered in Carthage Jail in Hancock Co[,] Illinois. Samuel Smith died in Nauvoo, supposed to have been the subject of conspiracy by Brigham Young.' ("Joseph Smith Family Testimony, William Smith Notes," circa 1875, in Vogel, "Early Mormon Documents," p. 488)

"Deconstructor" observes;

"To understand the context, you have to remember that after Smith and Hyrum were killed, there was some conflict over who should be his successor.

"Brigham Young was not in Nauvoo when Smith was killed but started to head back as soon as he heard the news.

"Meanwhile in Nauvoo, several potential leaders were positioning to take the reins of leadership. The most popular replacement was Samuel Smith, the brother of Joseph Smith. William Clayton had recorded Joseph declaring his brother William his successor if both he and Hyrum were killed.

"But Brigham Young's first cousin and Church apostle, William Richards, insisted that nothing should be decided until Brigham Young could return to Nauvoo.

"However, many members did not want to wait, and more and more support was gathering behind Samuel Smith, Joseph Smith's brother, to become the next Prophet and leader of the Church.

"For a select few, this presented a problem because Samuel was violently against polygamy. It was looking like Samuel Smith would become the next prophet and promised to denounce the practice of plural marriage.

"Michael Quinn, from 'The Mormon Hierarchy: Origins of Power,' explains what happened next:

"Then Samuel Smith suddenly became violently ill and died on 30 July 1844. This added suspicion of murder to the escalating drama.

"Council of Fifty member and physician John M. Bernhisel told William Smith that anti-Mormons had somehow poisoned his brother.

"William learned from Samuel's widow that Hosea Stout, a Missouri Danite and senior officer of Nauvoo's police, had acted as his brother's nurse. Stout had given him "white powder" medicine daily until his death. Samuel became ill within days of the discussion of his succession right, and by 24 July was "very sick."

"There had been enough talk about Samuel's succession claims that the newspaper in Springfield, Illinois, reported, "A son of Joe Smith [Sr.] it is said, had received the revelation that he was to be the successor of the prophet."

"William Smith eventually concluded that Apostle Willard Richards asked [Hosea] Stout to murder (his brother) Samuel H. Smith.

"The motive was to prevent Samuel from becoming Church president before Brigham Young and the full Quorum of Twelve arrived (in Nauvoo).

"William's suspicions about Stout are believable since Brigham Young allowed William Clayton to go with the pioneer company to Utah three years later only because Stout threatened to murder Clayton as soon as the apostles left.

"Clayton regarded Hosea Stout as capable of homicide and recorded no attempt by Young to dispute that assessment concerning the former Danite.

"One could dismiss William Smith's charge as a self-serving argument for his own succession claim, yet Samuel's daughter also believed her father was murdered.

"My father was undoubtedly poisoned,' she wrote. 'Uncle Arthur Millikin was poisoned at the same time--the same doctors were treating my father and Uncle Arthur at the same time. Uncle Arthur discontinued the medicine--without letting them know that he was doing so. (Aunt Lucy [Smith Millikin] threw it in the fire).

"Father continued taking it until the last dose [which] he spit out and said he was poisoned. But it was too late--he died.'

"Nauvoo's sexton recorded that Samuel Smith died of 'bilious fever,' [which was] the cause of death listed for two children but no other adults that summer.

"This troubling allegation should not be ignored but cannot be verified.

"Nevertheless, Clayton's diary confirms the efforts of Richards to avoid the appointment of a successor before his first cousin Brigham Young arrived.

"Stout's diary also describes several occasions when Brigham Young and the apostles seriously discussed having Hosea "rid ourselves" of various Church members considered dangerous to the Church and the apostles. Stout referred to this as "cut him off--behind the ears--according to the law of God in such cases."

"Stout's daily diary also makes no reference whatever to his threat to murder Clayton in 1847. When the Salt Lake "municipal high council" tried Hosea Stout for attempted murder, he protested that "it has been my duty to hunt out the rotten spots in the Kingdom." He added that he had "tried not to handle a man's case until it was right."

"Evidence does not exist to prove if the prophet's brother was such a "case" Stout handled.'" (D. Michael Quinn, "The Mormon Hierarchy: Origins of Power" {Salt Lake City, Utah: Signature Books, 1994}, pp.152-53)."

("Did Brigham Young Murder Joseph Smith's Brother? (References)," posted by "Deconstructor," on "Recovery from Mormonism" board, 6 April, year unknown, at:<http://www.exmormon.org/mormon/mormon248.htm>)

In support of William Smith's charge that Samuel H. Smith was rubbed out on the orders of Brigham Young in order to prevent him from becoming head of the LDS Church, historian Dan Vogel repeats testimony from members of Joseph Smith's own family:

"Hyrum & Joseph w[ere] murdered Carthage Jail in Hancock Co[,] Illinois. Samuel Smith died in Nauvoo, supposed to have been the subject of conspiracy by Brigham Young."

(Dan Vogel, "Joseph Smith Family Testimony, William Smith Notes," circa 1875, in "Early Mormon Documents," p. 488; and "Was Joseph Smith's brother Samuel Murdered?," by "Deconstructor,"

at:http://www.i4m.com/think/leaders/brigham_murder.htm)

--Mormon Supporters Claim Samuel Smith's Death Was Due to Accidental Injury or Fever--

Despite numerous indications fueling deep suspicions that Samuel H. Smith may have died of deliberate poisoning at the hands of an inner Mormon circle cabal, the LDS Church-owned and -published "Encyclopedia of Mormonism" makes the suggestion that he actually died from a conveniently unidentified horse-riding injury, supposedly sustained during Samuel's dramatic effort to save the lives of his brothers Joseph and Hyrum:

"Upon hearing of the dangers to his brothers at Carthage, Samuel attempted to ride to their aid, but arrived too late to intervene. He died within the month, apparently of an injury sustained in that ride."

(Sydney Smith Reynolds, "Smith Family," in "Encyclopedia of Mormonism: The History, Scriptures, Doctrine, and Procedure of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints," vol. 3 (New York, New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1992), p. 1360)

--Other Mormon Historians Don't Parrot the LDS Apologist Spin--

LDS historian Donna Hill mentions nothing about Samuel suffering a riding injury, claiming instead that in his gallop to Carthage to save his brothers, he was chased by a mob, arrived too late to rescue them, carried the murdered bodies of Joseph and Hyrum back to Nauvoo and, amid this ordeal, "[c]ontracted a fever and survived his brothers by only a few weeks."

Fellow LDS historians Leonard J. Arrington and Davis Bitton agree with Hill's explanation of Samuel Smith's death, adding only that the mob that chased Samuel on his ride to Nauvoo had "mud-daubed faces."

(Donna Hill, "Joseph Smith, the First Mormon: The Definitive Story of a Complex and Charismatic Man and the People Who Knew Him" [Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, 1977], p. 448; and Leonard J. Arrington and Davis Bitton, "The Mormon Experience: A History of the Latter-day Saints" [New York, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1979], p. 82)

--The Assessment of Samuel Harrison Smith's Death from Non-Mormon Historical Circles--

Other professional observers--notably the non-Mormon variety--aren't as willing to shrug off Samuel H. Smith's death to a riding injury or a fever.

Richard N. and Joan K. Ostling, in their book, "The Power and the Promise: Mormon America," note that Joseph Smith designated his brother Samuel to be his successor, adding that Samuel "would have succeeded [his assassinated brother] Hyrum as [Church] Patriarch and thus had a claim [to succeed Joseph as prophet], but died just weeks after Joseph and Hyrum, amid rumors he had been poisoned."

(Richard N. Ostling and Joan K. Ostling, "The Power and the Promise: Mormon America" [San Francisco, California: HarperSanFrancisco, 1999], p. 337)

--Conclusion: In Mormonism, the Living Prophets Are More Important Than the Dead Prophets--

Could it be that some of the dead prophets became dead at the hands of those who wanted to become the living prophets?

You might be inclined to drink to that.

Just don't swallow.

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MORMONS: WHO THEY ARE, WHAT THEY BELIEVE - - Discussion Guide

Brigham Young's Rise to Power

<http://www.mrm.org/topics/historical-issues/brigham-youngs-rise-power>

Brigham Young's Rise to Power

By Lane Thuet

Perhaps the most well known story of prophetic succession in the LDS Church would be that of Brigham Young after the death of Joseph Smith, Jr. Most Mormons are familiar with this miraculous story. A special conference for the church had been called on August 8, 1844 at 10:00 am. Brigham Young believed the 12 apostles should lead the church from that point on. Sidney Rigdon claimed he was to be the next prophet. Each got up to plead his case to the church. When Brigham Young got up, it is said that the mantle of Joseph Smith fell upon him and that he both looked like Joseph Smith and sounded like Joseph Smith as he spoke. Thus, those who witnessed the transfiguration knew Brigham Young had been called by God to lead the church as the next prophet.

But did this really happen? Researcher and scholar D. Michael Quinn wrote, "*...not everyone present at the August 1844 conference experienced this manifestation. About twenty people voted against the apostles. Most accepted the calm logic of the apostles without seeing a miraculous transfiguration of Young.*" (, p.167). Quinn cites several examples that show the vote was not unanimous in favor of Brigham Young, as most Mormons are led to believe. He even quotes others who were there - including future apostle Ezra T. Benson (b. 1811) - that did not witness this miraculous vision.

There was hard evidence that Joseph Smith, Jr. had already set apart his son, Joseph Smith III, to be the next prophet of the church. This was given in a Patriarchal Blessing. So what was to be done? One of the contenders had a "*miraculous manifestation.*" Another had physical proof of his calling. There were still others who felt led by the Spirit to be the next leader. Because of these problems, the church membership sidestepped the succession dilemma by leaving it up to the Quorum of Twelve Apostles to decide the matter themselves.

Among quorum members, they could not decide what should be the determining factor. Should it be decided by one's position in the Council of Fifty (a parapolitical body organized on 10 March 1844, to advance the Kingdom of God in a political sense), or perhaps by the order in which they received their "second anointing" (the highest temple ceremony in the Church – anointing men as Kings and Priests to God). Perhaps the Quorum of Seventy should be the ruling authority, the High Priests group, or the Nauvoo high council.

But if the matter were to be settled by referring to the Council of Fifty, then William Marks would be the next prophet. This council ranked their membership by age, and Marks was the oldest of the group. If the date of second anointing were the determining factor, then Marks was once again in seniority to the other apostles who were in this Quorum of the Anointed.

Brigham Young wanted the office for himself. This was evident by a statement he made to the general conference of the Church on October 6, 1844. He said, "*If you don't know whose right it is to give revelations, I will tell you. It is I.*" (*History of the Church* 7:288).

Young was determined to remove every obstacle to his ascension. Under his direction as president of the Quorum of Twelve Apostles, Sidney Rigdon was excommunicated. The Council of Seventy was put in subordination to the Quorum of the Twelve. William Marks was publicly repudiated and only kept from excommunication by the intervention of the other apostles. Young also reduced the powers of the Nauvoo high council. On September 29, 1844, he ordained 63 men to the First Quorum of Seventy, all of them in submission to the current apostles.

By the time of the October general conference that year, the Quorum of Twelve ranked alone as the highest authority for the Church. That same day, Young removed William Marks as president of the Nauvoo Stake. Many high priests, whom the Quorum of Apostles did not have jurisdiction over, were sent on missions or assigned to be presidents over the various branches of the church abroad – thereby forcing them under the control of the apostles (*The Mormon Hierarchy: Origins of Power*, pp.173-178).

Young was determined that nothing would stand in his way of becoming the next prophet. He even signed a letter on December 5, 1844 as "Priest of the Church of

L.D.S." (Brigham Young to David Rogers, Dec. 5, 1844, Beinecke Library; cited in Quinn, p. 175).

Finally, on April 7, 1845, at a conference of the Church in Nauvoo, Brigham got his wish. The manuscript minutes of that conference show that Young was sustained at that time "*as the President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles to this Church and nation, and all nations, and also as the President of the whole Church of Latter Day Saints.*" (*Minutes of Conference April 7, 1845*; also in Daniel Davis Diary, December 1845 – both in LDS Archives). He must have feared the reaction of those he had sent abroad, however, because when the Conference Report was printed in *Times and Seasons* 6 (April 15, 1845, p.870), this portion of the meeting was deleted. It was further omitted from the *History of the Church* as well (7:391-392). Thus, only those who were present at the conference knew that Brigham had been sustained as the next prophet. They found out long after his place had been solidified as the second prophet of the church.

When the facts are examined, the truth becomes evident. Brigham Young's succession to the presidency of the LDS Church was determined more by shrewd planning and manipulation by Brigham himself than it was by a miraculous manifestation at the special conference.

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MORMONS: WHO THEY ARE, WHAT THEY BELIEVE - - Discussion Guide

Abraham Lincoln's Connections to Joseph Smith and Brigham Young

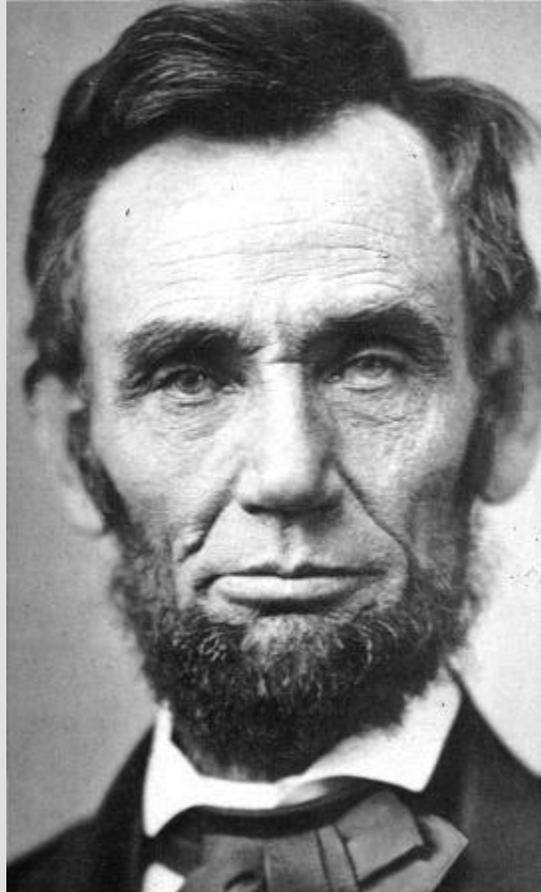
<http://www.deseretnews.com/article/700259675/Lincoln-frequently-worked-with-LDS-faithful.html?pg=all>

Lincoln frequently worked with LDS faithful

Interaction, though, was not always seen as positive

By Lynn Arave, Deseret News

Published: Friday, Sept. 19 2008 12:01 a.m. MDT



Abraham Lincoln

Abraham Lincoln's political career led to frequent association with members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Although he isn't often thought of as a consistent friend of the church, the final years of Lincoln's life did help foster a positive memory for many Mormons.

Michael K. Winder, who recently authored a new book, "Presidents and Prophets" (Covenant Communications, 2007), said Lincoln's towering character and enduring example continue to reverberate through the church today.

Winder presented a paper, "Abraham Lincoln and the Mormons," during a lecture at the Salt Lake City Library on Sept. 12, as part of the 56th annual Utah State History Conference.

Lincoln's upcoming 200th birthday on Feb. 12, 2009, makes new reflections on the 16th U.S. president very timely.

Winder said Lincoln's association with Mormons predated his presidency by a few decades. He was an Illinois Senator and may have had a connection with Joseph Smith, possibly knowing the Prophet quite well.

Winder said some have speculated that Joseph Smith may have attended a party for Lincoln. He also said Lincoln and Joseph Smith were in the Illinois State Capitol on several occasions at the same time.

Lincoln helped Mormons secure the Nauvoo Charter, but Winder said Lincoln didn't show any special favoritism toward the church and had initially referred to Mormonism as a "strange, new sect."

LDS Church President Brigham Young made unfavorable comments about Lincoln at times. For example, he once referred to Lincoln as "King Abraham."

As a Republican, Lincoln was committed to that party's 1856 platform of abolishing the "twin relics of barbarism — polygamy and slavery." He also signed the nation's first anti-polygamy bill on July 8, 1862.

However, slavery and the Civil War occupied much of his efforts as president from 1861-65, and Lincoln's own policy was more of a "let the Mormons alone" stance.

In a letter to President Young dated June 7, 1863, Thomas B.H. Stenhouse, an LDS representative to Washington, wrote that Lincoln had said, "You go back and tell Brigham Young that if he will let me alone I will let him alone."

History also shows that Lincoln checked out a copy of the Book of Mormon from a library on Nov. 18, 1861, and kept it for eight months. He had also checked out three other books on Mormons, though they were all unfavorable to the church.

Lincoln was also well-aware of Utah's great natural resources and once referred to the state as "the treasurehouse of the nation."

When Lincoln needed help to protect the telegraph line in Utah, he contacted President Young, not the territorial governor, for assistance.

"I always had a liking for Abe Lincoln," President Young once said. "And if he had come out here and known us, he would have understood us and liked us and I'd have told him 'another' story to match his every time and then we wouldn't have heard so much rot about our ways."

Mormons in Utah celebrated Lincoln's inauguration on March 4, 1865, not seeing him as an enemy, according to Winder. The church was greatly grieved when Lincoln was assassinated on April 15, 1865. Some 3,000 people were in the Salt Lake Tabernacle to pay respects to the late leader on April 19. The next day was declared a day of mourning and all businesses in Salt Lake City were closed.

Elder Hyrum M. Smith, an apostle, said in April 1905 general conference, "I believe Abraham Lincoln was raised up to do God's will."

President Heber J. Grant also once referred to Lincoln as "that great and wonderful man."

Lincoln has also been the subject of some humorous LDS references. For example, President James E. Faust stated in a talk at Brigham Young University in 1996 that "even Abraham Lincoln couldn't qualify for admission to the J. Reuben Clark Law School." Then-BYU President Rex Lee quipped, "He showed up one day, but he had a beard."

On Lincoln's 100th birthday in 1909, former apostle Matthias F. Cowley participated as proxy in a Salt Lake Temple sealing for President Lincoln and his wife, Mary Todd. Lincoln was then sealed to his former sweetheart, Ann Mayes Rutledge, too. Rutledge's untimely death from a typhoid fever in 1835 at age 22 broke Lincoln's heart.

Elder Cowley had resigned as apostle in 1905, about four years before he did Lincoln's sealing work in the temple. However, Elder Cowley's priesthood wasn't suspended until 1911. (He returned to full membership in the church in 1936.)

Lincoln's other temple work was previously done in the St. George Temple during 1877, when it was performed for many other former U.S. presidents and leaders.

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MORMONS: WHO THEY ARE, WHAT THEY BELIEVE - - Discussion Guide

Brigham's Destroying Angel

http://www.utlm.org/onlinebooks/brighamsdestroyingangel_intro.htm

INTRODUCTION TO 1964 REPRINT

by Jerald and Sandra Tanner

The following is a photomechanical reprint of the 1904 edition of Brigham's Destroying Angel. J. H. Beadle claimed that Bill Hickman wrote this manuscript, and gave it to him for publication. In this book Bill Hickman claims that he committed murders by the orders of Brigham Young and the Apostle Orson Hyde. Dr. Hugh Nibley, of the Brigham Young University, claims that "The Hickman stories were not true." Dr. Nibley also accuses J.H. Beadle of inventing these stories. He stated:

"...we believe that those tales are Beadle's invention,..." (*Sounding Brass*, by Hugh Nibley, page 264)

There is little doubt that J.H. Beadle was very opposed to the Mormon Church (see chapter one of this book which was written by Mr. Beadle), however, there is evidence that Mr. Beadle did not invent the stories. R.N. Baskin, who was mayor of Salt Lake City and a member of the supreme court of the State of Utah, made this statement in his book, *Reminiscences of Early Utah*:

"One evening in 1872, Samuel Gilson, who discovered the gilsonite deposits in eastern Utah, came to my office and informed me that the United States marshal held a warrant for the arrest of Bill Hickman, and that he was hiding to avoid arrest by the marshal and escape assassination by members of the Danite organization of which he had formerly been an active member. That having piloted General Connor's soldiers into Utah, and having severed his connection with that organization, his former Danite associates had become suspicious of him, and were seeking his life, and that he wanted to employ me as his attorney. I most positively refused to become Hickman's attorney. Mr. Gilson then stated that Hickman had expressed a desire to make a confession, and that even if I did not accept the offer of employment, that if I would agree to meet him he thought Hickman was in such a state of mind that he would tell me what he knew regarding the numerous murders which had been committed in the Territory. As I was desirous of ascertaining whether such an organization as the Danites or 'Destroying Angels'—which was so much talked about and feared, especially by apostate Mormons—actually existed, and as Hickman—if it did exist—would know, I consented to meet him and instructed Mr. Gilson to inform him of that fact. In a short time afterward Mr. Gilson returned to my office and said that Hickman was ready to meet me if I would promise not to have him arrested. This I promised. Hickman, about eleven o'clock at night, in company with Mr. Gilson, came to my office. I had never seen Hickman before. After we had been formally introduced by Gilson, I stated to

Hickman what Gilson had told me respecting his inclination to tell what he knew about the matters before mentioned. He hesitated, and I said to him that if, as generally asserted, he was or had been a member of such an organization, and had participated in the numerous murders which had been committed in the Territory, that the only atonement now within his power was to reveal the facts, as it might aid in preventing the commission of other like crimes. After deliberating for about a minute, he said that during his seclusion his mind had been greatly disturbed by the matter, and that he had finally concluded to reveal the facts to me, although in doing so he would acknowledge his own guilt. Procuring a pad and pencil I took down all that he said and also cross-examined him closely. We were together several hours. At that meeting he revealed most of the numerous crimes contained in his published confession, but in more minute detail. I told him that I wanted him to meet me again and repeat his statements. This he consented to do. Within two or three weeks thereafter I met him a second time and, as before, took down what he said and cross-examined him. My purpose in doing this was to test the truth of his confession, because if not true, his several statements would in all probability be inconsistent. At various times when I had leisure I critically examined and compared the statements, and while in the second one he mentioned two cases of murder which he had omitted in the first one, and in the second added some details which were not contained in the first, I failed to detect any contradictory statements. The statements of other persons made to me tended to corroborate his confessions." (*Reminiscences of Early Utah*, by R.N. Baskin, pp. 36-37)

On pages 150 and 152 of the same book, Mr. Baskin states:

"The Danites were an organization in the Mormon church. Its existence was stated by Bill Hickman in his confession made to me. He gave me the names of more than a score of its active members, among whom were a number of reputed notorious Danite assassins. He stated that the members were bound by their covenants to execute the orders of the priesthood, and that when a direct order or intimation was given to "use up" anyone, it was always executed by one or more of the members according to the circumstances of the case. That such an organization existed is conclusively shown by the numerous mysterious murders which were never investigated by the executive officers of the Territory, or any attempt made to prosecute the guilty parties. The Mormon sermons, the confessions of Hickman and Lee, and numerous other circumstances made plain its existence. Hickman confessed to me that he personally knew of thirteen persons having been murdered, some of them by him, and others by various Danites; that at one time he murdered a man by the name of Buck at the personal request of Brigham Young. Hickman's statement of this affair in his published confession is substantially the same as given to me, in fuller detail,...

"I remember distinctly that Hickman in relating that occurrence to me, said that Buck, when he was shot, sprang out of the wagon, and while he was struggling on the ground, Meacham dismounted and drove his bowie knife twice into his body. He was up to this event the sole survivor of the Aiken party, who were murdered by Porter Rockwell and his ever-ready assistants at the 'point of the mountain' on the road to Lehi." (*Reminiscences of Early Utah*, pages 150-151)

On page 264 of his book, *Sounding Brass*, Dr. Nibley makes the following statement:

"The patent absurdity of the 'Confessions' become apparent on the most superficial investigation and grows with every monotonous episode.

"...how could Beadle and everybody else back East know all about Hickman and his Danites for years before Hickman ever divulged his deep secrets?" (*Sounding Brass*, page 264)

R.N. Baskin shows, however, that Hickman's crimes were well known at least 13 years before:

"Among the many heartless murders committed by the Danites was that of Jesse P. Hartley, published in Hickman's confession as follows:

" 'Hartley was a young lawyer who had come to Salt Lake City the fall before, and had married a Miss Bullock of Provo,... at the April conference, Brigham Young, before the congregation, gave him a tremendous blowing up, called him all sorts of bad names, and saying he ought to have his throat cut, which made him feel very bad. He declared he was not guilty of the charges. I saw Orson Hyde looking sour at him, and after he had been in camp an hour or two, Hyde told me he had orders from Brigham Young, if he (Hartley) came to Fort Supply, to have him used up. 'Now,' said he, 'I want you and George Boyd to do it.' I saw him and Boyd talking together; then Boyd came to me and said, 'its all right Bill, I'll help you to kill that fellow.'... Orson Hyde then whispered to me, 'now is your time; don't let him come back.' We started, and in about half a mile we had to cross the canyon stream, which was mid-side to our horses. While crossing, Hartley got a shot and fell dead in the creek....

"In the early days of my experience in Utah, I frequently had cases which required me to go to the city of Provo, and when attending court there I lodged at Mr. Bullock's hotel. Having heard of the murder of Hartley, and that his wife was a sister of Mr. Bullock, I asked him on one occasion, while stopping at his hotel, whether what I had heard respecting the murder of Hartley was true. He stated that Hartley had incurred the displeasure of Brigham Young, who at a public meeting had used strong language against Hartley, and had ordered him to leave the speakers stand; that on account of the charges made by Brigham, which Bullock said were not true, Hartley was put under the ban of the church, and decided to change his residence. He joined the company of Judge Appleby, and while leaving the Territory was murdered by Hickman. I asked Mr. Bullock if the matter had ever been investigated by the executive authorities, and he said it had not been, although it was generally known that Hickman had committed the crime. I also asked him why he had not instituted proceedings against Hickman. He shook his head significantly and replied, 'Don't press me for an answer to that question.'

"The following account of the murder of Hartley, given by his wife THIRTEEN YEARS BEFORE THE CONFESSION OF HICKMAN, is contained in Mrs. Mary Etta V. Smith's book entitled, 'Fifteen Years Residence with the Mormons,' pages 309-310, and is as follows:

" 'I married Jesse Hartley knowing he was a gentile in fact, though he passed for a Mormon; but that made no difference with me, because he was a noble man and sought only the right. Being my husband, he was brought into close contact with the heads of the church, and thus was soon enabled to learn of many things he did not approve of, and of which I was ignorant though brought up among the Saints, and which if known to the Gentiles would have greatly damaged

us. I do not understand all he discovered, or all he did; but they found he had written against the church, and he was cut off, and the prophet required as an atonement for his sins that he should lay down his life; that he should be sacrificed in the endowment rooms, where such atonement is made. This I never knew until my husband told me—but it is true. They kill those there who have committed sins too great to be atoned for in any other way. The prophet says if they submit to this he can save them, otherwise they are lost. Oh, that is horrible! But my husband refused to be sacrificed, and so set out alone for the United States, thinking that there might be at least a hope of success. I told him when he left me and left his child, that he would be killed; and so he was.

"William Hickman and another Danite shot him in the canyons, and I have often since been obliged to cook for this man when he passed this way, knowing all the while he had killed my husband. My child soon followed his father, and I hope to die also, for why should I live? They have brought me here, where I wish to remain rather than return to Salt Lake where the murderers of my husband curse the earth, and roll in affluence, unpunished." (*Reminiscences of Early Utah* pp. 152-154)

In a sermon delivered Dec. 25, 1859, the Mormon Apostle Amasa Lyman made it clear that the people in the east associated Bill Hickman's name with crime:

"The spirit of thieving stalks abroad in our land,... say some, we hear that there is stealing done over yonder (pointing towards the west), and that it is BILL HICKMAN and his gang that do it. (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 7, page 307)

Dr. Nibley claims that the Mormon Church was not aware of Bill Hickman's crimes:

"To Beadle's mind the significant thing about Hickman was that the Mormons knew he was bad, and yet did not prosecute him. Prosecute him for what? The West was full of bad and dangerous men who couldn't be prosecuted until they were caught in a crime. Hickman's early crimes were ALL MOST SECRET, KNOWN ONLY TO HIMSELF, until he confessed to Beadle." (*Sounding Brass*, page 258)

Notice that Dr. Nibley says that Bill Hickman and other bad men could not "be prosecuted until they were caught in a crime." Evidence shows, however, that Bill Hickman was caught stealing horses, and that the Mormon Apostle Orson Hyde "Gave it as the word of the Lord" that he should be set free. In footnote 67 on page 328 of *A Mormon Chronicle, the Diaries of John D. Lee*, Vol. 1, the following appears:

"John Bennion, who was Hickman's neighbor in Taylorsville, told an interesting story of the efforts made by the local Bishop and council to punish Hickman for horse stealing. When the Bishop and council had prepared their case against Hickman, ORSON HYDE appeared at the meeting in time to stop public action. 'After meeting Bp., council,' & Elder Hyde had a long talk at my house,' wrote Bennion. 'Br. Hyde said, speaking of the stealing, that a man MAY STEAL AND BE INFLUENCED BY THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD TO DO IT—THAT HICKMAN HAD DONE IT YEARS PAST—Said that he never would institute a trial against a BROTHER

FOR STEALING FROM THE GENTILES, but stealing from his brethern, he was down on it. He laid down much on the subject.

"Sund., 14 Oct., 1860, Br. Hyde... spoke on last nights intention to try HICKMAN. Gave it as THE WORD OF THE LORD TO SET HIM FREE for the past, bid him go & sin no more....' "

It was Brigham Young himself who said:

"And if the Gentiles wish to see a few tricks, we have 'Mormons' that can perform them. WE HAVE THE MEANEST DEVILS ON THE EARTH in our midst, and WE INTEND TO KEEP THEM, FOR WE HAVE USE FOR THEM and if the Devil does not look sharp, we will cheat him out of them at the last, for they will reform and go to heaven with us." (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 6, page 176)

Brigham Young also stated:

"If men come here and do not behave themselves, they will not only find the DANITES, whom they talk so much about, biting the horses' heels, but the scoundrels will find them biting their heels. In my plain remarks, I merely call things by their RIGHT NAMES. Brother Kimball is noted in the States for calling things by their right names, and you will excuse me if I do the same." (*Journal of Discourses*, V. 5, p. 6)

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MORMONS: WHO THEY ARE, WHAT THEY BELIEVE - - Discussion Guide

Latter-day Saints World Statistics

<http://www.ldschurchtemples.com/statistics/units/world/>



Statistics

World

Following are the church units and temples of the world categorized by country. The classification of stakes is determined by the name of the stake.

World

COUNTRY	TEMPLES	MISSIONS	STAKES	DISTRICTS
Afghanistan	0	0	0	1
Albania	0	1	1	0
American Samoa	0	0	5	0
Angola	0	1	0	1
Antigua and Barbuda	0	0	0	0
Argentina	2	12	73	31
Armenia	0	1	1	0
Aruba	0	0	0	0
Australia	5	6	37	9
Austria	0	0	2	0
Bahamas	0	0	0	0

Bahrain	0	0	0	1
Barbados	0	0	0	1
Belarus	0	0	0	0
Belgium	0	0	2	0
Belize	0	0	0	2
Benin	0	1	0	1
Bermuda	0	0	0	0
Bolivia	1	4	27	10
Bonaire	0	0	0	0
Botswana	0	1	1	0
Brazil	8	34	250	41
Bulgaria	0	1	0	0
Burundi	0	0	0	0
Cambodia	0	1	2	4
Cameroon	0	0	0	1
Canada	9	7	47	3
Cape Verde	0	1	3	1
Cayman Islands	0	0	0	0

Central African Republic	0	0	0	0
Chile	2	10	74	22
China	0	0	0	4
Colombia	2	5	29	11
Cook Islands	0	0	0	1
Costa Rica	1	1	6	4
Cote d'Ivoire	0	2	6	3
Croatia	0	1	0	1
Cuba	0	0	0	0
Curacao	0	0	0	0
Cyprus	0	0	0	1
Czech Republic	0	1	0	2
Democratic Republic of Congo	1	2	12	4
Denmark	1	1	2	0
Djibouti	0	0	0	0
Dominica	0	0	0	0
Dominican Republic	1	3	20	9
Ecuador	1	5	36	9

Egypt	0	0	0	0
El Salvador	1	3	18	2
Estonia	0	0	0	1
Ethiopia	0	0	0	1
Falkland Islands	0	0	0	0
Fiji	1	1	4	1
Finland	1	1	2	2
France	1	2	10	0
French Guiana	0	0	0	0
French Polynesia	1	1	8	4
Gabon	0	0	0	0
Georgia	0	0	0	0
Germany	2	3	15	3
Ghana	1	4	12	8
Greece	0	1	0	0
Greenland	0	0	0	0
Grenada	0	0	0	0
Guadeloupe	0	0	0	1

Guam	0	1	1	0
Guatemala	2	6	43	17
Guernsey	0	0	0	0
Guyana	0	0	0	1
Haiti	0	1	4	3
Honduras	1	4	23	7
Hong Kong	1	1	4	1
Hungary	0	1	1	2
Iceland	0	0	0	0
India	0	2	1	6
Indonesia	0	1	2	1
Ireland	0	0	1	1
Isle of Man	0	0	0	0
Israel	0	0	0	1
Italy	1	2	10	1
Jamaica	0	1	1	1
Japan	3	7	28	12
Jersey	0	0	0	0

Jordan	0	0	0	0
Kazakhstan	0	0	0	0
Kenya	0	1	1	2
Kiribati	0	0	2	1
Kosovo	0	0	0	0
Kuwait	0	0	0	0
Latvia	0	1	0	1
Lebanon	0	0	0	1
Lesotho	0	0	0	0
Liberia	0	1	0	3
Lithuania	0	0	0	1
Luxembourg	0	0	0	0
Macau	0	0	0	0
Madagascar	0	1	2	2
Malawi	0	0	0	1
Malaysia	0	0	0	8
Malta	0	0	0	0
Marshall Islands	0	1	1	1

Martinique	0	0	0	0
Mauritius	0	0	0	0
Mexico	13	34	227	37
Micronesia	0	0	1	3
Moldova	0	0	0	1
Mongolia	0	1	1	2
Montenegro	0	0	0	0
Mozambique	0	1	0	2
Namibia	0	0	0	0
Nauru	0	0	0	0
Netherlands	1	1	3	0
New Caledonia	0	0	1	0
New Zealand	1	3	28	3
Nicaragua	0	2	9	6
Nigeria	1	5	25	20
Niue	0	0	0	0
Northern Mariana Islands	0	0	0	0
Norway	0	1	2	0

Oman	0	0	0	0
Palau	0	0	0	0
Panama	1	1	7	4
Papua New Guinea	0	2	2	11
Paraguay	1	2	10	10
Peru	3	12	100	21
Philippines	3	21	90	81
Poland	0	1	0	3
Portugal	1	1	6	4
Puerto Rico	0	1	5	0
Qatar	0	0	0	0
Republic of Congo	0	1	1	0
Reunion	0	0	0	1
Romania	0	1	0	2
Russia	0	7	2	2
Rwanda	0	0	0	0
Saint Kitts and Nevis	0	0	0	0
Saint Lucia	0	0	0	0

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	0	0	0	0
Samoa	1	1	20	0
Serbia	0	0	0	1
Sierra Leone	0	1	1	5
Singapore	0	1	1	0
Sint Maarten	0	0	0	0
Slovakia	0	0	0	0
Slovenia	0	0	0	1
Solomon Islands	0	0	0	1
South Africa	2	3	14	3
South Korea	1	4	16	6
Spain	1	3	14	4
Sri Lanka	0	0	0	1
Suriname	0	0	0	1
Swaziland	0	0	0	1
Sweden	1	1	4	1
Switzerland	1	0	5	0

Taiwan	1	2	11	2
Tanzania	0	0	0	1
Thailand	0	1	2	5
Togo	0	0	1	0
Tonga	1	1	19	2
Trinidad and Tobago	0	1	1	0
Turkey	0	0	0	0
Turks and Caicos Islands	0	0	0	0
Tuvalu	0	0	0	0
Uganda	0	1	1	1
Ukraine	1	3	1	3
United Arab Emirates	0	0	1	0
United Kingdom	2	6	45	0
United States	81	120	1,524	9
Uruguay	1	2	18	3
Vanuatu	0	1	0	4
Venezuela	1	4	34	6
Virgin Islands	0	0	0	0

Virgin Islands of the United States	0	0	0	0
Zambia	0	1	0	2
Zimbabwe	0	1	6	2
TOTAL	170	406	3,089	554

† Country has a Church presence but no organized stake or district.

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MORMONS: WHO THEY ARE, WHAT THEY BELIEVE - - Discussion Guide

Who are Mormon Missionaries?

<http://www.mormon.org/missionaries>

Who are the Missionaries?

If you've seen them walking, riding their bikes or driving around your town, you've probably wondered what Mormon missionaries are doing, exactly.

Why would these young men and women choose to put on their dress clothes and traipse around strange parts of the world for two years? The Lord's Church has always been a missionary church. Just as Jesus Christ and His disciples preached the gospel, more than 84,000 missionaries for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are spreading His word today. They are called to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ in all parts of the world. Most missionaries are about 20 years old, though many older married couples also choose to serve. Missionaries voluntarily put aside school, work and dating for about two years in order to serve the Lord at their own expense.

Communication with family is even limited to letters or email and very occasional phone calls so that they can focus wholeheartedly on serving the Lord and the people where they serve. During their two years of full time service they devote themselves to studying, meeting people and teaching about Jesus Christ and His restored Church. Their work is a labor of love, and most missionaries end up feeling they gained more than they gave by serving.

What to Expect

These get-togethers are very casual. You won't be asked to buy anything or make a donation, only to learn more about Jesus Christ and the Church that means so much to



us.

You will be contacted within two to three days. Male or female missionaries can meet with you in your home where you'll probably be most comfortable, or, if you prefer, in one of our chapels or some other public place. A typical visit lasts about 45 minutes, though it can be shortened according to your schedule. The missionaries will introduce our basic beliefs—such as faith, repentance and obedience to God's commandments - and discuss any other questions you have about the Church or about religion or life in general. These get-togethers are very casual. You won't be asked to buy anything or make a donation, only to learn more about the Church that means so much to us.

If the things the missionaries share are interesting and meaningful to you, you can set up another appointment to discuss them in more depth and learn more. They can give you a Book of Mormon and accompany you to church meetings so that you can see for yourself what our faith is about.

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MORMONS: WHO THEY ARE, WHAT THEY BELIEVE - - Discussion Guide

Why We Need Creeds

<http://www.beliefnet.com/Faiths/Christianity/2003/09/Why-We-Need-Creeds.aspx>

Why We Need Creeds

An acclaimed scholar explains how the Christian creed developed and how it continues to shape churches.

BY: Interview with Jaroslav Pelikan

Read more at <http://www.beliefnet.com/Faiths/Christianity/2003/09/Why-We-Need-Creeds.aspx#rFLCQ3rcqgtpuRyl.99>

World-renowned historian Jaroslav Pelikan has spent decades researching and analyzing Christian confessions of faith. He recently spoke with Beliefnet about Credo, his comprehensive overview of the development of creeds.

Many spiritual seekers are not comfortable with very idea of creeds. Why are creeds important to Christianity--and all religions? Why do we need them?

A faith that is completely personal and subjective has its ups and downs. You can't count on having only ups. Therefore, what's needed is some kind of continuity both within the faith life of an individual from month to month and year to year, and for that individual with the community of believers from previous ages. The fluctuations of personal belief need to be protected from going off the page by some kind of assertion, a shared faith which provides a floor and a ceiling.

Creeds function the way a constitution functions in a political society--as a statement of shared principles and convictions, and a celebration of those convictions. Just as we, in the American political order, cherish and value individual freedom but believe that freedom is protected both from external force and from its own internal threat by a constitution and the bill of rights, so a creed is a way of enshrining faith in such a way that people can go on affirming it.

Your book indicates that Jesus sanctioned the idea of creeds by the emphasis he placed on the Shema. You're saying the Shema is the basis of all Christian creeds?

Sure. The most important Christian creed, the Nicene Creed, begins with the words "I believe in one God," which of course is the statement of the Shema.

Jesus quotes the Shema in the gospel of Mark. Mark says many important and exalted things about the person of Jesus, and speaks of him as divine in his words and deeds and person. So how can someone whom the Christian faith affirms to be divine say "Hear O Israel, the Lord our God is one"? How do you reconcile the oneness that he confesses with the more-than-oneness of the divine that he represents? In a simple sense, that's what the creed, and the doctrine of the Trinity confessed in the creed, try to do.

They try to hold those together without weakening either one or pretending to know more about the unknowable than the human mind is capable.

How did the creed as we know it come about?

The creed grew out of a baptismal creed. Baptism was administered by a bishop or priest with the formula "You are baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit." Baptism involved faith and confession--some kind of statement of your faith. A lot of local [statements] developed across the Mediterranean world. What was eventually adopted in 381 at the Council of Constantinople as what we call the Nicene Creed appears to be the adaptation of a creed that was being used for baptism, maybe in the city of Caesarea.

The most important thing that happened after its adoption was the decision to make a recitation--a chanting, singing, or statement--of that creed a part of the liturgy of Holy Communion.

It was an official statement of a council, it became an indispensable part of the daily and Sunday Eucharist, and it was the basis for the instruction of the young and of prospective believers.

The creed, the Ten Commandments, and the Lord's Prayer was the core of the catechism. Every child was to be instructed in the meaning of those three texts. Those are the ones you need to be able to recite all your life. Anyone who came in from the outside and said, "You know, I think I'd like to be a Christian--what does it take?" Well, this is what it takes.

When St. Paul says faith, hope, and love, faith meant the creed--"I believe." Hope meant the Lord's Prayer--what we hope for, we pray for. And love meant the 10 Commandments, because they tell us what love does when it goes into action. I get this from St. Augustine.

There aren't many sets of words that have been recited every single day for nearly two thousand years. It embeds itself in the individual and collective memory of the church.

Historically speaking, what has been the most disputed part of the Nicene Creed? The filioque?

Yes, that's the one on which the most ink has been shed. I once wrote that that there must be one circle of Dante's hell reserved for the people who wrote all those things. [laughs]

Many of Beliefnet's Orthodox readers seem concerned about the Catholic-Orthodox split, wondering if they should engage in dialogue or keep their distance.

I'm a historian, and I answer all such questions by history. I would say they would find it useful to look at what has happened in 150 years in the West. To read the decrees of the First Vatican Council, 1869 and 1870, and then the decrees of the Second. The first was the one that proclaimed the infallibility of the pope. It's defiant, rigid, "take it or leave it." The Second Vatican Council does not deny what has been previously said, but it breathes a completely different spirit. The Second Vatican Council is based on a fresh reading of the Bible, the Church Fathers, especially the Greek Church Fathers, and on the liturgy rather than canon law. The Church is not defined in legal terms as a corporation, but in liturgical terms as a *corpus*, the body of Christ.

Those three ways of looking at things are the very ones that define the Orthodox tradition: scripture, the Fathers, and the liturgy. For all the differences that still remain even after Vatican II, the perspective has shifted. What the Second Vatican Council says about the East, considering all the history, is very fraternal.

Going back to other parts of the Creed, was "light from light" ever disputed? It's beautiful, but I always wondered why it's in there.

I've got a book on that too. In the first chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews, Christ is called the radiance of the Father. The New Testament says God is light. Radiance proceeds from a source--in our case, the sun or a light bulb--and is distinct from that source, because the sun is not here in my room right now. It's distinct from that source but it's not separate from it or different in its nature from it. It's the same light. So light comes from light, being both distinct and identical. So is Christ in relation to the Father.

Why was it necessary to include that when they'd already said "God from God"?

Partly because they were already using that in their worship and their hymns. If anything is worth saying, it's worth saying more than once.

Your book traces many schisms. What perspective does history give you about ecumenism today? Is there hope, or do you think churches will keep splitting?

In the third volume of the collection, there are a number of joint statements of the faith, usually by two groups who had been separated for a long time; for example, a recent Catholic-Lutheran statement on the doctrine of justification.

There's a joint statement by Pope John Paul II and the head of the Armenian Church. They'd been separated since 451. Both of them, respecting their own traditions, met, discussed, and concluded that not only were there strong political factors that had originally driven them apart, but also misunderstanding--partly as a consequence of language (Armenian, Greek, and Latin are very different). And that since Christian truth is never just a mathematical formula but is dialectical--it says two things at the same time--if you emphasize one of those at the expense of the other, you tilt in one or the other direction.

What they said was that over the course of the centuries, in the heat of theological battle, such a tilt had indeed come in. But that now having looked at the questions carefully, they concluded that whatever differences [existed] were differences of emphasis within a single faith and should not keep people apart any more. It's a hopeful sign, and there are a number of such, like the document that brought together the church of South India. Out of a number of countries--Ghana, Madagascar, China--has come the effort to express in their own language the faith that they have together, to do it with their own cultural setting and vocabulary. Out of that have come reunions and their own fresh way of stating the faith. That's a very hopeful sign. My favorite is the Masai Creed.

That's an amazing creed. It includes a part about Jesus' burial: "the hyenas did not touch him."

Here in Africa, suddenly these new Christian believers--reading the gospels and receiving their faith and having to fight the hyenas around them--suddenly they read that Jesus was buried in a rock tomb, rather than underground as we bury, to keep the wild animals away. In none of these other creeds had anyone ever said anything about his being buried in a rock tomb. Suddenly "and the hyenas did not touch his body." That Jesus was "always on safari."

Did you have concerns that in creeds like this one, they added or removed material from the Nicene Creed?

That's true in other statements of faith as well after Nicea. In the Tome of Leo the First (449), it says "it was a human nature that wept when Lazarus died, and it was the divine nature that raised Lazarus from the dead." So it takes a gospel incident and finds there an expression of a question that was being debated, namely the relation between the divine and the human. They are distinct; the divine nature did not weep, and the human nature was not capable of raising a

friend from the dead. But one person, who was both divine and human, wept and raised him from the dead. So a gospel story becomes the most effective way to articulate an answer to distortions on both sides.

Your book talks about the 'deeds and creeds' conflict--how creeds are criticized for coming at the expense of actions. You say it's agreed that dogma and ethics should be inseparable. How can the creed help guide practice?

What's that Gilbert and Sullivan line? "I have a little list." [laughs] Any consideration of Christian life and ethics must always ask "what is distinctive about the Christian life?" What's the difference between being a Christian and being a nice guy, a good neighbor, an upright citizen, or an honest businessman? We all know people to whom we will give our house keys and the combination of our safe who don't believe what Christians believe. So it's quite possible, despite what some evangelists may say, even without faith in God, to be an honest and upright citizen.

So what's the value added of being a Christian? Part of the answer is the motivation for doing [good], and the safety net when human weakness brings about a minor or major violation of the code of conduct we profess. What do you do with others or yourself as a sinner?

The trouble with morality is it's not self-perpetuating. You need to have some way of coping with the human propensity to hypocrisy and deception and self-deception. You could say the creed is there to motivate, on the positive side, and to heal when there is a violation. The word salvation in Greek really means healing. Without that, a code of moral conduct by itself--the Scout oath--won't sustain you. That's why St. Paul says all those things about the law without faith.

Would meditating on a certain part of the creed impel you to a certain action?

It often does. Start at the beginning: when you take the interpretation of our environmental responsibility--one that's been articulated so beautifully and powerfully by the current Patriarch of Constantinople, Bartholomew (who's known as the 'green patriarch')--all of that comes from this old man sitting in the middle of Turkey thinking about what it means to say "maker of heaven and earth, of all that is visible and invisible." [Read the statement (<http://www.zenit.org/en/articles/patriarch-of-constantinople-s-address-on-environmental-ethics>).]

[It's saying] I live in a world that is a continuum from the angels to the oysters. All of it is the product of divine activity. That's what the creed says. If that's the case, in a very real sense, every creature comes from the same Father, and that makes them all brothers and sisters. Without identifying the world with God in a pantheistic way, it nevertheless provides a direct and powerful motivation for treating creatures as our fellows. That's one example.

Are we moving beyond the era of creeds?

In my book, I raise the question "Do creeds have a future as well as a past?" I invoke the analogy of a CD. There's nothing more static than a CD: they stack up on a shelf, get dusty. They can go from year to year without ever touching anyone. But anytime you want to, you can put that CD in a player and all of a sudden out comes the Credo from the B minor mass of Bach. It's been there all along.

So it is with creeds and their history. At crucial times, when you can no longer count on your own strength of will, character, conviction, and guts, you simply say "I don't know where I am right now, but I want to be part of the company that says 'I believe in one God.'"

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MORMONS: WHO THEY ARE, WHAT THEY BELIEVE - - Discussion Guide

Is God an Exalted Man?

<http://www.mormonhandbook.com/home/god-is-an-exalted-man.html>

God Is An Exalted Man

Mormon General Authorities teach that God was not always God, but was once a mortal man.



God himself was once as we are now, and is an exalted man... I am going to tell you how God came to be God. We have imagined and supposed that God was God from all eternity. I will refute that idea... He was once a man like us; yea, that God himself, the Father of us all, dwelt on an earth.

Joseph Smith - Mormonism founder
Ensign, April 1971, p.13-14



Remember that God, our heavenly Father, was perhaps once a child, and mortal like we ourselves, and rose step by step in the scale of progress, in the school of advancement; has moved forward and overcome, until He has arrived at the point where He now is.

Orson Hyde - Mormon apostle
Journal of Discourses 1:123



He is our Father-the Father of our spirits, and was once a man in mortal flesh as we are, and is now an exalted Being. How many Gods there are, I do not know. But there never was a time when there were not Gods and worlds, and when men were not passing through the same ordeals that we are now passing through.

Brigham Young - Mormon prophet
Journal of Discourses 7:333



God is a natural man... Where did he get his knowledge from? From his Father, just as we get knowledge from our earthly parents.

Heber C. Kimball - First Presidency Counselor
Journal of Discourses 8:211



But if God the Father was not always God, but came to his present exalted position by degrees of progress as indicated in the teachings of the prophet, how has there been a God from all eternity? The answer is that there has been and there now exists an endless line of Gods, stretching back into the eternities.

B. H. Roberts - Mormon Seventy and LDS church historian
New Witness for God 1:476 [Google - 7MB PDF]



Mormon prophets have continuously taught the sublime truth that God the Eternal Father was once a mortal man who passed through a school of earth life similar to that through which we are now passing. He became God-an exalted being. (p.104)

Yet, if we accept the great law of eternal progression, we must accept the fact that there was a time when Deity was much less powerful than He is today. (p.114)

Thus He grew in experience and continued to grow until He attained the status of Godhood. (p.115)

Milton R. Hunter - Mormon Seventy
The Gospel Throughout The Ages, p.104,114-15



God is an exalted Man... The Prophet taught that our Father had a Father and so on.

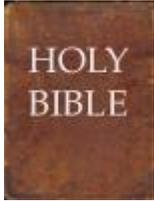
Joseph Fielding Smith - Mormon prophet
Doctrines of Salvation 1:10,12

Eternal Progress

Mormon prophets offer conflicting teachings if God continues to progress in knowledge and power.

God is progressing	God is not progressing
<div></div> <div> <p>God himself is increasing and progressing in knowledge, power, and dominion, and will do so, worlds without end.</p> </div> <div> <hr/> <p>Wilford Woodruff Mormon prophet Journal of Discourses 6:120</p> </div> <div></div> <div> <p>... advancing as our Father in heaven advances, for there is progress for our father and for our Lord Jesus. There is no such thing as standing still in the eternal work of our God. It is endless progress, progressing from one degree of knowledge to another degree.</p> </div> <div> <hr/> <p>George Q. Cannon First Presidency Counselor Millennial Star 61:117</p> </div>	<div></div> <div> <p>It should be realized that God is not progressing in knowledge, truth, virtue, wisdom, or any of the attributes of godliness. He has already gained these things in their fullness.</p> </div> <div> <hr/> <p>Joseph Fielding Smith Mormon prophet cited by Bruce R. McConkie Mormon Doctrine, p.221 (1958)</p> </div>

Christianity



The apostles and prophets of biblical times teach that God has always been God and never a man.

You are the same and Your years will not come to an end...
—Psalm 102:27

For I, the LORD, do not change...
—Malachi 3:6

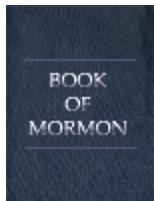
Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow.
—James 1:17

God is not a man, that He should lie...
—Numbers 23:19

The Glory of Israel will not lie or change His mind, for He is not a man that He should change His mind.
—1 Samuel 15:29

Professing to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man...
—Romans 1:22-23

The Book of Mormon echos the Bible:



For I know that God is not a partial God, neither a changeable being; but he is unchangeable from all eternity to all eternity.
— Moroni 8:18

For do we not read that God is the same yesterday, today, and forever, and in him there is no variableness neither shadow of changing?

— Mormon 9:9

For he is the same yesterday, today, and forever...
— 1 Nephi 10:18

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MORMONS: WHO THEY ARE, WHAT THEY BELIEVE - - Discussion Guide

The Heavenly Mother
<http://www.mrm.org/heavenly-mother>

Heavenly Mother

As Gerald Lund once put it, many members simply assume that "the Church teaches many principles which are accepted as doctrines but which the First Presidency has seen no need to declare in an official pronouncement." ("I Have a Question," *Ensign*, Feb. 1982, 38) While there is no reference to a Heavenly Mother within the standard works (canon) of Mormonism, it is a commonly held belief and an integral part of the traditional Mormon worldview.

References

One of the most modern explicit teachings on the matter comes from the *Achieving a Celestial Marriage Manual*:

"By definition, exaltation includes the ability to procreate the family unit throughout eternity. This our Father in heaven has the power to do. His marriage partner is our mother in heaven. We are their spirit children, born to them in the bonds of celestial marriage." (p. 129)

The hymn "O My Father" (*Hymns*, no. 139) written by Eliza R. Snow in Nauvoo in 1843, includes the following:

When I leave this frail existence,
When I lay this mortal by,
Father, Mother, may I meet you
In your royal courts on high?

Then, at length, when I've completed
All you sent me forth to do,
With your mutual approbation
Let me come and dwell with you.

W. W. Phelps wrote the following letter to William Smith on December 25, 1844:

A heap of dust alone remains of thee, 'Tis all thou art and all the proud shall be," while Mormonism, from an Abel, though dead, yet speaketh; from an Elijah though translated in a fiery chariot to heaven, yet, returns in glory with Moses, and blesses Jesus at the transfiguration on the mount! O Mormonism! Thy father is God, thy mother is the Queen of heaven, and so thy whole history, from eternity to eternity, is the laws, ordinances and truth of the "Gods"-embracing the simple plan of salvation, sanctification, death, resurrection, glorification and exaltation of man, from infancy to age, from age to eternity, from simplicity to sublimity: from faith, repentance, baptism, reception of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of the hands, to washing, anointing, presence of angels, the general assembly and church of the first born; to the unspeakable glory of seeing God and the Lamb, and to spirits of just men, made perfect, and to be ordained unto eternal life! (W. W. Phelps, "The Answer," letter to William Smith, December 25, 1844, Nauvoo, Il, *Times and Seasons* 5 (January 1): 758.

Mormon apostle Bruce McConkie wrote,

"This doctrine that there is a Mother in Heaven was affirmed in plainness by the First Presidency of the Church (Joseph F. Smith, John R. Winder, and Anthon H. Lund) when, in speaking of pre-existence and the origin of man, they said that 'man, as a spirit, was begotten and born of heavenly parents, and reared to maturity in the eternal mansions of the Father,' that man is the 'offspring of celestial parentage,' and that 'all men and women are in the similitude of the universal Father and Mother and are literally the sons and daughters of Deity.' (*Man: His Origin and Destiny*, pp.348-355.)" (Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 1966, p. 516)

Then apostle Gordon B. Hinckley reasoned the following in General Conference:

"Logic and reason would certainly suggest that if we have a Father in Heaven, we have a Mother in Heaven. That doctrine rests well with me. However, in light of the instruction we have received from the Lord Himself, I regard it as inappropriate for anyone in the Church to pray to our Mother in Heaven" (Gordon Hinckley, "Daughters of God," *Ensign* (Conference Edition), November 1991, p.100. See also *The Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley*, p.257 [which came out when he was president]).

The Encyclopedia of Mormonism includes the following about the "doctrine" of a "Mother in Heaven":

"LDS doctrine teaches that there is a Mother in Heaven as well as a Father, that Eve's eating of the forbidden fruit furthered God's plan of salvation." (*Encyclopedia of Mormonism* 2:490).

And again:

"Latter-day Saints infer from authoritative sources of scripture and modern prophecy that there is a Heavenly Mother as well as a Heavenly Father... Today the belief in a living Mother in Heaven is implicit in Latter-day Saint thought. Though the scriptures contain only hints, statements from presidents of the church over the years indicate that human beings have a Heavenly Mother as well as a Heavenly Father." (*Encyclopedia of Mormonism* 2:961)

Orson F. Whitney taught,

"We are taught that men and women, the sons and daughters of God, who were spirits in his presence, were sent here to take mortal tabernacles and undergo experiences that would in due time exalt them to the plane occupied by their Father and Mother in heaven." (Brian H. Stuy, ed., *Collected Discourses* 4:131)

Heavenly Mother in the Bible?

Some would argue that a reference to female deity is in the Bible, namely references to the "queen of heaven" by Jeremiah. The problem of course is that such references (Jeremiah 7:18; 44:17-19, 25) are negative. Mormon apologist Kevin Barney responds to this matter with the following (see <http://go.mrm.org/barney-on-biv>):

Your complaint about undermining the authority of reform prophets [like Jeremiah] is where the rubber really hits the road, and I think it's your strongest point. I knew this was going to be tough for rank and file Mormons to accept. We tend to want to read the scriptures as being univocal, without development, and if one prophet was negative on a practice then it's a bad practice and all prophets would agree.

Just recently I had to counsel with a man in another state who used to be in my ward, because his BYU attending son had learned of Adam-God. His son said in effect, Look, this isn't a trifle, it's on the nature of God. It's something as important as can be. And BY as prophet taught this. So it either has to be true and the Church is in apostasy for not teaching it, or the prophets are wrong altogether and they have no authority. We've raised a whole generation of Saints with such linear thinking about prophetic infallibility that we can't handle the nuances, and there really are a lot of them beyond the obvious A-G example.

The truth is that the winners get to write the history, and it was those who rejected Asherah who largely redacted or wrote the OT as we have it today. There is, quite frankly, a lot of political spin in the OT. I recognize that we get really nervous when we start talking about spin in the scriptures. So I don't blame anyone, including you, for not wanting to follow me there.

Fringe Views of Some Academics and Apologists

The degree to which some academic Mormons are willing to kick against basic Mormon tradition can be surprising. Paul Owen, a non-Mormon, writes (see <http://go.mrm.org/owen-on-heavenly-mother>),

Some Mormons understand our "heavenly parents" in terms of the Father and the Holy Spirit for example... I wasn't denying that the doctrine of a Heavenly Mother is officially taught. However it has never been officially defined or interpreted in terms of God the Father having a wife (though that is commonly assumed). Some Mormons understand Heavenly Mother as the Holy Ghost, others as a reference to a feminine aspect within the being of God, and I have even seen it suggested that Jesus is the Mother figure, as the one through whom mankind was created in the image of God ("let us make man in our image" being applied to the Father and the Son)... The LDS Church has never defined the Heavenly Mother language in a prescriptive manner **[note: this is not true; see the first quote given above]**. It is not an official teaching that God has a wife. The view that the "Heavenly Mother" actually refers to the feminine aspect of the being of God was advocated by Erastus Snow, himself an apostle. The language used in the statements of the First Presidency on the Origin of Man and Evolution (which vaguely speak of "the universal Father and Mother") are ambiguous enough to allow for this alternative interpretation...

I know for a fact that Roger Keller, who teaches religion at BYU, does not believe God has a wife. At least that's what he told me a few years ago. Nor does Blake Ostler (a very well known and respected Mormon theologian). It was Richard Sherlock (an LDS philosophy professor at Utah State University) whom I believe I first heard suggest the possibility that Jesus could be our heavenly mother, given his co-participation with the Father in creation ("let us make man in our image . . . So God created man in his own image . . . male and female he created them"). It is interesting for instance, that in 1 Corinthians 11:3, Paul grounds the ordering of the genders in the relationality within the Trinity between the Father and the Son.

There is a strain of piety within Western Christianity that has long conceptualized Jesus as a nurturing heavenly mother figure. This is especially evident in Anselm and Julian of Norwich. So it's not like such theological moves are lacking in precedent. And yes, before someone asks, many Mormon theologians do want to be in conversation with the wider Christian theological tradition, so voices like Anselm do matter in these discussions.

As for views that would relate Heavenly Mother to the Holy Ghost, or a feminine aspect within the divine being, see Bergera, *Line Upon Line*, pp. 98, 106.

I don't deny that the language of Heavenly Parents and the Universal Father and Mother suggests that God has a wife. Likewise, the fact that (they teach) God the Father has a physical body suggests that he was once a man like us. But suggestions and prescribed teachings with official definitions are not exactly the same thing. When a doctrine is not officially defined, it allows LDS theology considerable room for creative engagement with the wider theological tradition. When you participate in forums like the Society for Mormon Philosophy and Theology (as I do most every year), and enter into open conversation with those sorts of people, who are very much insiders (not liberal LDS apostates), it becomes apparent that the boundaries of "official" Mormon doctrine are a lot more fluid and flexible than evangelical apologetic literature would convey."

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MORMONS: WHO THEY ARE, WHAT THEY BELIEVE - - Discussion Guide

Did Adam become the Heavenly Father?

<http://www.mrm.org/adam-god>

"Adam-God" - Brigham Young's Theory or Divine Doctrine?

By Bill McKeever

On April 9, 1852, Brigham Young, the second president of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS), rose to the pulpit of the Salt Lake Tabernacle and announced, "It is my intention to preach several discourses this evening, but how many I do not know." During his speech President Young explained that he was going to speak on the character of the "well-beloved Son of God, upon which subject the Elders of Israel have conflicting views."

At that particular moment it is doubtful that any of the people present realized that their prophet was about to give one of the most controversial sermons, not only of his life, but perhaps in the entire history of his church. Following a long one-paragraph introduction, Young proclaimed that Adam was Michael the Archangel, and that he was also the Ancient of Days. Young went on to conclude that Adam was, in fact, "our Father and our God, and the only God with whom we have to do." In this message, Mormonism's second president explained that Eve was only one of Adam's wives and that Jesus Christ "was not begotten by the Holy Ghost." Instead, Young said, He "was begotten in the flesh by the same character that was in the garden of Eden, and who is our Father in Heaven."

For years Mormon authorities have attempted to downplay the severity of Young's statements. It is not uncommon to hear Latter-day Saints excuse Young's conclusions by saying he was either misunderstood or even misquoted. This thought has been echoed by numerous Latter-day Saints who feel uncomfortable admitting their prophet may have really believed such teachings. However, there is plenty of evidence available to prove neither was the case. Young was speaking under the authority of a Mormon Prophet and was not just making a public statement regarding his personal opinions.

Doctrine or Theory?

LDS Presidents Joseph Fielding Smith and Spencer W. Kimball attributed their predecessor's ideas to being merely a "theory." In his book *Doctrines of Salvation*, Smith discounted Young's message by saying, "in all probability the sermon was erroneously transcribed!" (1:96).

During a Priesthood session of conference in October of 1976, Spencer W. Kimball labeled Brigham's teaching "false doctrine." He stated, "We warn you against the dissemination of doctrines which are not according to the scriptures and which are alleged to have been taught by some General Authorities of past generations, such, for instance is the Adam-God theory. We denounce that theory and hope that everyone will be cautioned against this and other kinds of false doctrine" (*Church News*, 10/9/76). In light of all the evidence to the contrary, to say the Adam-God teaching was only alleged to have been taught causes tremendous credibility problems on the part of Kimball.

It would be difficult for the Mormon to prove Young was only theorizing by the simple fact that Young, in this sermon, clearly claims his teachings to be "doctrine." In his conference address on April 9th, Young closed this topic with the following warning, "Now, let all who may hear these doctrines, pause before they make light of them, or treat them with indifference, for they will prove their salvation or damnation." A fair question to ask would be, "Since Joseph Fielding Smith and Spencer W. Kimball did not believe what Young had to say on this matter, does that mean Smith and Kimball are damned?" If Young was truly a prophet of God, would this mean all Latter-day Saints who reject the Adam-God teaching are also damned?

Misunderstood?

Certainly Brigham was not misunderstood since his first counselor, Heber C. Kimball, declared on June 29, 1856,

"I have learned by experience that there is but one God that pertains to this people, and He is the God that pertains to this earth--the first man. That first man sent his own Son to redeem the world, to redeem his brethren; his life was taken, his blood shed, that our sins might be remitted. That Son called twelve men and ordained them to be Apostles, and when he departed the keys of the kingdom

were deposited with three of those twelve, viz.: Peter, James, and John" (*Journal of Discourses* 4:1).

It is evident that the one sent to redeem the world is none other than Jesus Christ. If we are to accept Kimball's statement that the "one God" who sent him was in fact, "the first man," we have no choice but to conclude it was Adam who sent Jesus to redeem the world.

In his journal dated February 19, 1854, Wilford Woodruff, who would later become Mormonism's fourth president, wrote that Brigham Young "said that our God was Father Adam. He was the Father of the Savior Jesus Christ -- Our God was no more or less than ADAM, Michael the Arkangel (sic)."

History shows that Orson Pratt's understanding of what Brigham was teaching actually caused a severe rift in LDS leadership. Pratt strongly disagreed with Young's doctrine and made it clear he had "no confidence in it" (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Summer 1980, pg. 30).

Mormons must insist Brigham Young was a true prophet if they wish to demonstrate an unbroken chain of succession in their leadership. To do so, however, is utterly inconsistent. For example, in his "Seven Deadly Heresies" speech of 1980, LDS Apostle Bruce McConkie taught "anyone who has received the temple endowment and who yet believes the Adam-God theory does not deserve to be saved." Using this rationale, a Mormon can't even be sure Brigham was a saved individual. Young received his temple endowment, and Young believed Adam was God.

In a letter dated February 19, 1981, McConkie again expounded this thought when he wrote, "...people who teach false doctrine in the fundamental and basic things will lose their souls. The nature and kind of being that God is, is one of these fundamentals" (pg. 7). Again, if the Adam-God doctrine is false, as leaders such as Kimball and McConkie agree, then we must conclude that Brigham's soul is lost.

Just Brigham's Opinion?

Some have argued that Brigham Young was merely touting his own personal opinion and never meant for this teaching to be accepted as doctrine. "Because this sermon is not a part of the "standard works," some say, "it should not be

accepted as doctrinal truth." As pointed out earlier, the problem with such an assumption lies in the fact that Brigham Young said those who make light of this teaching will "prove their salvation or damnation." Apparently Young took this teaching very seriously.

Let it also be noted that just four years before his death, Brigham Young declared it was God Himself who gave him the Adam-God doctrine. Apparently Young's position on the matter was still an issue with some LDS members; otherwise he would not have had to ask, "How much unbelief exists in the minds of the Latter-day Saints in regard to one particular doctrine which is revealed to them, and which God revealed to me -- namely that Adam is our father and God...Our Father Adam is the man who stands at the gate and holds the keys of everlasting life and salvation to all his children who have or ever will come upon the earth" (Sermon delivered on June 8, 1873. Printed in the *Deseret Weekly News*, June 18, 1873.) How can a Latter-day Saint maintain this was just Brigham's opinion when he insisted God gave him the teaching?

Some have excused Young's statements by claiming he was not speaking as a prophet because he did not begin his sermon with "Thus saith the Lord." However, LDS leaders have long said such a testing standard is incorrect. J. Reuben Clark, a former member of the LDS First Presidency, said, "There are those who insist that unless the Prophet of the Lord declares, 'Thus saith the Lord,' the message may not be taken as a revelation. This is a false testing standard" (Church News 7/31/54, p.10).

Apparently Young was confident with his message for on January 2, 1870, he said, "I have never yet preached a sermon and sent it out to the children of men, that they may not call Scripture" (*Journal of Discourses* 13:95). Brigham would repeat this again in October of the same year (*Journal of Discourses* 13:264).

How Could Young Come Up With Such an Idea?

It may surprise some, but Brigham Young's Adam-God connection is in harmony with the teachings of Joseph Smith. It was Joseph Smith who declared that Adam was, in fact, the Ancient of Days. *Doctrine and Covenants* 27:11; 116:1; 138:38 all state that Adam is the Ancient of Days.

Joseph Smith even attempted to get the Bible to concur with this thought when he said, "Daniel in his seventh chapter speaks of the Ancient of Days, he means

the oldest man, our Father Adam..." (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, pg. 157). Smith was referring to Daniel 7:13 which reads, "I saw the night visions, and behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days and they brought him near before him."

In order to properly interpret Daniel we must compare it to a similar account given in Revelation chapter five. Here we find the lamb as it had been slain, Jesus Christ, approaching the one who sits on the throne and takes the seals of judgment. Since John 5:22 states that it is the Father who has committed all judgment unto the Son, a proper understanding of this passage would conclude that it is God the Father, not Adam, who sits on the throne. If Mormons choose to insist that it is Adam sitting on the throne, they are, in fact, equating Adam to God. According to Joseph Smith, Brigham was right!

Conclusion

Brigham Young places the honest Latter-day Saint on the horns of a dilemma. If the Mormon wishes to claim Young as a true prophet, he must also accept his Adam-God teaching since a true prophet must have a correct theology concerning God (Deut. 13:1-3). If Young's teaching is not accepted, then the Mormon must conclude that Brigham Young was a false prophet. The Mormon can't have it both ways.

The Bible tells us in Romans 5:12 that it was through Adam that sin entered into the world. The first Adam represents man's failure to abide by God's law. The second Adam, Jesus Christ, makes it possible for man to pass from that dead, sinful state and be made alive. As Paul so eloquently pointed out, "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (I Cor. 15:22). Our prayer is that the Mormon people see they are being led by false prophets and turn to the True Prophet of the Christian faith, Jesus Christ (Acts 3:22, 23). Jesus Christ is the living prophet we are commanded to listen to and believe. He is "God manifest in the flesh." Our trust should be in Christ, not the inconsistent and unbiblical teachings of the prophets of Mormonism.

Brigham Young's 1852 Adam-God Sermon

This sermon can be found in the *Journal of Discourses* 1:50-51.

My next sermon will be to both Saint and sinner. One thing has remained a mystery in this kingdom up to this day. It is in regard to the character of the well-beloved Son of God, upon which subject the Elders of Israel have conflicting views. Our God and Father in heaven, is a being of tabernacle, or, in other words, He has a body, with parts the same as you and I have; and is capable of showing forth His works to organized beings, as, for instance, in the world in which we live, it is the result of the knowledge and infinite wisdom that dwell in His organized body. His son Jesus Christ has become a personage of tabernacle, and has a body like his father. The Holy Ghost is the Spirit of the Lord, and issues forth from Himself, and may properly be called God's minister to execute His will in immensity; being called to govern by His influence and power; but He is not a person of tabernacle as we are, and as our Father in Heaven and Jesus Christ are. The question has been, and is often, asked, who it was that begat the Son of the Virgin Mary. The infidel world have concluded that if what the Apostles wrote about his father and mother be true, and the present marriage discipline acknowledged by Christendom be correct, then Christians must believe that God is the father of an illegitimate son, in the person of Jesus Christ! The infidel fraternity teach that to their disciples. I will tell you how it is. Our Father in Heaven begat all the spirits that ever were, or ever will be, upon this earth; and they were born spirits in the eternal world. Then the Lord by His power and wisdom organized the mortal tabernacle of man. We were made first spiritual, and afterwards temporal.

Now hear it, O inhabitants of the earth, Jew and Gentile, Saint and sinner! When our father Adam came into the garden of Eden, he came into it with a celestial body, and brought Eve, one of his wives, with him. He helped to make and organize this world. He is MICHAEL, the Archangel, the ANCIENT OF DAYS! about whom holy men have written and spoken--HE is our FATHER and our GOD, and the only God with whom WE have to do. Every man upon the earth, professing Christians or non-professing, must hear it, and will know it sooner or later. They came here, organized the raw material, and arranged in their order the herbs of the field, the trees, the apple, the peach, the plum, the pear, and every other fruit that is desirable and good for man; the seed was brought from another sphere, and planted in this earth. The thistle, and thorn, the brier, and the obnoxious weed did not appear until after the earth was cursed. When Adam and Eve had eaten of the forbidden

fruit, their bodies became mortal from its effects, and therefore their offspring were mortal. When the Virgin Mary conceived the child Jesus, the Father had begotten him in his own likeness. He was not begotten by the Holy Ghost. And who is the Father? He is the first of the human family; and when he took a tabernacle, it was begotten by his Father in heaven, after the same manner as the tabernacles of Cain, Abel, and the rest of the sons and daughters of Adam and Eve; from the fruits of the earth, the first earthly tabernacles were originated by the Father, and so on in succession. I could tell you much more about this; but were I to tell you the whole truth, blasphemy would be nothing to it, in the estimation of the superstitious and over-righteous of mankind. However, I have told you the truth as far as I have gone. I have heard men preach upon the divinity of Christ, and exhaust all the wisdom they possessed. All Scripturalists, and approved theologians who were considered exemplary for piety and education, have undertaken to expound on this subject, in every age of the Christian era; and after they have done all, they are obliged to conclude by exclaiming "great is the mystery of godliness," and tell nothing.

It is true that the earth was organized by three distinct characters, namely, Eloheim, Yahovah, and Michael, these three forming a quorum, as in all heavenly bodies, and in organizing element, perfectly represented in the Deity, as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

Again, they will try to tell how the divinity of Jesus is joined to his humanity, and exhaust all their mental faculties, and wind up with this profound language, as describing the soul of man, "it is an immaterial substance!" What a learned idea! Jesus, our elder brother, was begotten in the flesh by the same character that was in the garden of Eden, and who is our Father in Heaven. Now, let all who may hear these doctrines, pause before they make light of them, or treat them with indifference, for they will prove their salvation or damnation.

I have given you a few leading items upon this subject, but a great deal more remains to be told. Now remember from this time forth, and forever, that Jesus Christ was not begotten by the Holy Ghost. I will repeat a little anecdote. I was in conversation with a certain learned professor upon this subject, when I replied, to this idea--"if the Son was begotten by the Holy Ghost, it would be very dangerous to baptize and confirm females, and give

the Holy Ghost to them, lest he should beget children, to be palmed upon the Elders by the people, bringing the Elders into great difficulties."

Treasure up these things in your hearts. In the Bible, you have read the things I have told you to-night; but you have not known what you did read. I have told you no more than you are conversant with; but what do the people in Christendom, with the Bible in their hands, know about this subject? Comparatively nothing.

The Latter-Day Saints' Millennial Star on Adam-God

Over a year later, the Latter-Day Saints' Millennial Star (no. 48, vol. 15, November 26, 1853) quoted Brigham's Adam-God sermon from the *Journal of Discourses*. It then counseled Mormons to take the Adam-God teaching and the *Journal of Discourses* very seriously:

Our Father Adam.—The extract from the *Journal of Discourses* may startle some of our readers, but we would wish them to recollect that in this last dispensation God will send forth, by His servants, things *new* as well as *old*, until man is perfected in the truth. And we would here take occasion to remark, that it would be well if all our readers would secure a copy of the *Journal of Discourses* as it is issued, and also of every standard work of the Church; and not only secure these works, but attentively read them, and thoroughly study the principles they contain. Those of the Saints who fail to obtain the standard publications of the Church, will not be likely to prove very intelligent Saints, and will be very liable to wake up some day, and find themselves wonderfully behind the times, and consequently will not be able to stand the day of trial, which will come upon all the world. Without the intelligence that comes through the Holy Priesthood, the Saints cannot gain salvation, and this intelligence is given in the various publications of the Church. Who then will endanger his salvation by being behind the times? Not the wise, certainly.

Two weeks later (no. 50, vol. 15, December 10, 1853), the Millennial Star tried to diffuse the alarm with an article called, "Adam, The Father and God of the Human Family":

The above sentiment appeared in *Star* No. 48, a little to the surprise of some of its readers; and while the sentiment may have appeared blasphemous to the ignorant, it has no doubt given rise to some serious reflections with the more candid and comprehensive mind...

Further Reading

- Our Father Adam, by Charles Penrose
- The Adam-God Doctrine, by David John Buerger (1982)
- Brigham Young's Lecture at the Veil
- Adam-God (MormonWiki.org)
- The Truth About "Adam-God", by Floyd C. McElveen
- Bruce McConkie's Letter of Rebuke to Professor Eugene England

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MORMONS: WHO THEY ARE, WHAT THEY BELIEVE - - Discussion Guide

Our Pre-Mortal Life

<https://www.lds.org/manual/doctrines-of-the-gospel-student-manual/chapter-6-our-premortal-life?lang=eng>

Chapter 6: Our Premortal Life

Doctrines of the Gospel Student Manual, (2000), 13-15

Introduction

Some people have difficulty understanding that their existence before this earth life could be forgotten. Because we do not recall the first few years of early childhood does not mean that we didn't exist, that we didn't eat, play, laugh, and interact with family and friends. So it is with our premortal estate. We lived and associated, grew and learned; yet we cannot recall those former activities for reasons that the Lord in His eternal wisdom has not fully revealed to us.

Doctrinal Outline

- A.
Intelligence, or the light of truth, is eternal and has always existed.

See Doctrine and Covenants 93:29.
- B.
We lived as spirit children of God in a premortal existence.
 1.
God is the father of the spirits of all mankind (see Hebrews 12:9; D&C 76:24; Acts 17:29; Romans 8:16).
 2.
Our spirit bodies are in the form of God's physical body (see D&C 77:2; Ether 3:6-16).
 3.
Our instruction and preparation for earth life began in the world of spirits (see D&C 138:56).
 4.
God gave us agency in the premortal life (see Moses 4:3; D&C 29:36).
 5.
Many became noble and great in the premortal world (see Abraham 3:22-25; Jeremiah 1:4-6; Alma 13:3-5).
- C.
God the Father provided the plan of salvation by which His spirit children could eventually become like Him.
 1.
God's plan of salvation was taught to His spirit children (see Abraham 3:24-27).
 2.
Jesus Christ was chosen and foreordained to come to earth to perform the atoning sacrifice (see 1 Peter 1:19-20; Moses 4:2; Revelation 13:8; Abraham 3:27).
 3.
Lucifer, a spirit in authority in the presence of God, sought the glory and honor of God and the elimination of the agency of the children of God (see Moses 4:1-3; D&C 76:25-28; Isaiah 14:12-14).
 4.
Lucifer's rebellion against God caused a war in heaven (see Revelation 12:7; D&C 76:25-29).
 - 5.

One-third of the spirits were cast out of heaven because they chose not to keep their first estate (see Abraham 3:27–28; D&C 29:36–38; 2 Peter 2:4; Revelation 12:8–9).

6.

All who kept their “first estate” (premortal life) were promised that they would “be added upon” (which includes receiving mortal bodies). All who keep their second estate will have “glory added upon their heads for ever and ever” (Abraham 3:26).

Supporting Statements

- A.
Intelligence, or the light of truth, is eternal and has always existed.
 - “The Lord made it known to Moses (See Book of Moses Chap. 3.) and also to Abraham (Abraham Ch. 3) and it is expressed in several revelations, that man was in the beginning with God. In that day, however, man was a spirit unembodied. The beginning was when the councils met and the decision was made to create this earth that the spirits who were intended for this earth, should come here and partake of the mortal conditions and receive bodies of flesh and bones. The doctrine has prevailed that matter was created out of nothing, but the Lord declares that the elements are eternal. Matter always did and, therefore, always will exist, and the spirits of men as well as their bodies were created out of matter. We discover in this revelation that the intelligent part of man was not created, but always existed. There has been some speculation and articles have been written attempting to explain just what these ‘intelligences’ are, or this ‘intelligence’ is, but it is futile for us to speculate upon it. We do know that intelligence was not created or made and cannot be because the Lord has said it. There are some truths it is well to leave until the Lord sees fit to reveal the fulness” (Joseph Fielding Smith, *Church History and Modern Revelation*, 1:401).
- B.
We lived as spirit children of God in a premortal existence.
 - “There is no way to make sense out of life without a knowledge of the doctrine of premortal life.

“The idea that mortal birth is the beginning is preposterous. There is no way to explain life if you believe that.

“The notion that life ends with mortal death is ridiculous. There is no way to face life if you believe that.

“When we understand the doctrine of premortal life, then things fit together and make sense. We then know that little boys and little girls are not monkeys, nor are their parents, nor were theirs, to the very beginning generation.

“We are the children of God, created in his image.

“Our child–parent relationship to God is clear.

“The purpose for the creation of this earth is clear.

“The testing that comes in mortality is clear.

“The need for a redeemer is clear.

“When we do understand that principle of the gospel, we see a Heavenly Father and a Son; we see an atonement and a redemption.

“We understand why ordinances and covenants are necessary.

“We understand the necessity for baptism by immersion for the remission of sins. We understand why we renew that covenant by partaking of the sacrament” (Boyd K. Packer, in Conference Report, Oct. 1983, 22; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1983, 18).

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“All men and women are in the similitude of the universal Father and Mother, and are literally the sons and daughters of Deity.



“‘God created man in His own image.’ This is just as true of the spirit as it is of the body, which is only the clothing of the spirit, its complement; the two together constituting the soul. The spirit of man is in the form of man, and the spirits of all creatures are in the likeness of their bodies. This was plainly taught by the Prophet Joseph Smith (Doctrine and Covenants, 77:2)” (The First Presidency [Joseph F. Smith, John R. Winder, and Anthon H. Lund], in James R. Clark, comp., *Messages of the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 4:203).

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“These spirit beings, the offspring of exalted parents, were men and women, appearing in all respects as mortal persons do, excepting only that their spirit bodies were made of a more pure and refined substance than the elements from which mortal bodies are made. (Ether 3:16; D. & C. 131:7-8.)” (Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 589).

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“The spirit of man consists of an organization of the elements of spiritual matter in the likeness and after the pattern of the fleshly tabernacle. It possesses, in fact, all the organs and parts exactly corresponding to the outward tabernacle” (Parley P. Pratt, *Key to the Science of Theology*, 79).

- - “During the ages in which we dwelt in the pre-mortal state we not only developed our various characteristics and showed our worthiness and ability, or the lack of it, but we were also where such progress could be observed. It is reasonable to believe that there was a Church organization there. The heavenly beings were living in a perfectly arranged society. Every person knew his place. Priesthood, without any question, had been conferred and the leaders were chosen to officiate. Ordinances pertaining to that pre-existence were required and the love of God prevailed. Under such conditions it was natural for our Father to discern and choose those who were most worthy and evaluate the talents of each individual. He knew not only what each of us *could* do, but what each of us *would* do when put to the test and when responsibility was given us. Then, when the time came for our habitation on mortal earth, all things were prepared and the servants of the Lord chosen and ordained to their respective missions” (Joseph Fielding Smith, *The Way to Perfection*, 50-51).

- - “In the pre-existence we dwelt in the presence of God our Father. When the time arrived for us to be advanced in the scale of our existence and pass through this mundane probation, councils were held and the spirit children were instructed in matters pertaining to conditions in mortal life, and the reason for such an existence. In the former life we were spirits. In order that we should advance and eventually gain the goal of perfection, it was made known that we would receive tabernacles of flesh and bones and have to pass through mortality where we would be tried and proved to see if we, by trial, would prepare ourselves for exaltation. We were made to realize, in the presence of our glorious Father, who had a tangible body of flesh and bones which shone like the sun, that we were, as spirits, far inferior in our station to him” (Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, 1:57).

- - “From this revelation [Abraham 3:23], we may infer two things: first, that there were among those spirits [in premortal life] different degrees of intelligence, varying grades of achievement, retarded and advanced spiritual attainment; second, that there were no national distinctions among those spirits such as Americans, Europeans, Asiatics, Australians, etc. Such ‘bounds of habitation’ would have to be ‘determined’ when the spirits entered their earthly existence or second estate. ...

“Now if none of these spirits were permitted to enter mortality until they all were good and great and had become leaders, then the diversity of conditions among the children of men as we see them today would certainly seem to indicate discrimination and injustice. ...

“... Our place in this world would then be determined by our own advancement or condition in the pre-mortal state, just as our place in our future existence will be determined by what we do here in mortality.

“When, therefore, the Creator said to Abraham, and to others of his attainment, ‘You I will make my rulers,’ there could exist no feeling of envy or jealousy among the million other spirits, for those who were ‘good and great’ were but receiving their just reward” (David O. McKay, *Home Memories of President David O. McKay*, 228-30).

- C.

God the Father provided the plan of salvation by which His spirit children could eventually become like Him.

- - “When the great War in Heaven was fought, Lucifer, the son of the morning, came forth with a plan that was rejected. The Father of us all, with love for us, His children, offered a better plan under which we would have freedom to choose the course of our lives. His Firstborn Son, our Elder Brother, was the key to that plan. Man would have his agency, and with that agency would go accountability. Man would walk the ways of the world and sin and stumble. But the Son of God would take upon Himself flesh and offer Himself a sacrifice to atone for the sins of all men. Through unspeakable suffering He would become the great Redeemer, the Savior of all mankind” (Gordon B. Hinckley, in Conference Report, Apr. 2002, 107; or *Ensign*, May 2002, 90).

- - “Christ made the Father’s plan his own by adoption. But what is basically important in this respect is to know that the power to save is vested in the Father, and that he originated, ordained, created, and established his own plan; that he announced it to his children; and that he then asked for a volunteer to be the Redeemer, the Deliverer, the

Messiah, who would put the eternal plan of the Eternal Father into eternal operation” (Bruce R. McConkie, *The Mortal Messiah*, 1:48–49 note 3).

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“What Satan wanted, quite evidently, was the full possession, ownership, of this creation of spirits that is involved in the peopling of this earth; so he tried to get them by gift, and that being denied, he is following along and trying to get us through the commission of sin. If we sin sufficiently we become his subjects.

“As I read the scriptures, Satan’s plan required one of two things: Either the compulsion of the mind, the spirit, the intelligence of man, or else saving men in sin. I question whether the intelligence of man can be compelled. Certainly men cannot be saved in sin, because the laws of salvation and exaltation are founded in righteousness, not in sin” (J. Reuben Clark Jr., in Conference Report, Oct. 1949, 193).

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“There were no neutrals in the war in heaven. All took sides either with Christ or with Satan. Every man had his agency there, and men receive rewards here based upon their actions there, just as they will receive rewards hereafter for deeds done in the body” (Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, 1:65–66).

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“The punishment of Satan and the third of the host of heaven who followed him, was that they were denied the privilege of being born into this world and receiving mortal bodies. They did not keep their first estate and were denied the opportunity of eternal progression. The Lord cast them out into the earth, where they became the tempters of mankind—the devil and his angels” (Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, 1:65).

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MORMONS: WHO THEY ARE, WHAT THEY BELIEVE - - Discussion Guide

Do Latter-day Saints think Jesus and Lucifer were spirit brothers?

<https://www.lds.org/ensign/1986/06/i-have-a-question?lang=eng>

I Have a Question

How can Jesus and Lucifer be spirit brothers when their characters and purposes are so utterly opposed?

Jess L. Christensen, Institute of Religion director at Utah State University, Logan, Utah. On first hearing, the doctrine that Lucifer and our Lord, Jesus Christ, are brothers may seem surprising to some—especially to those unacquainted with latter-day revelations. But both the scriptures and the prophets affirm that Jesus Christ and Lucifer are indeed offspring of our Heavenly Father and, therefore, spirit brothers. Jesus Christ was with the Father from the beginning. Lucifer, too, was an angel “who was in authority in the presence of God,” a “son of the morning.” (Seelsa. 14:12; D&C 76:25–27.) Both Jesus and Lucifer were strong leaders with great knowledge and influence. But as the Firstborn of the Father, Jesus was Lucifer’s older brother. (See Col. 1:15; D&C 93:21.)

How could two such great spirits become so totally opposite? The answer lies in the principle of agency, which has existed from all eternity. (See D&C 93:30–31.) Of Lucifer, the scripture says that because of rebellion “he became Satan, yea, even the devil, the father of all lies.” (Moses 4:4.) Note that he was not created evil, but *became* Satan by his own choice.

When our Father in Heaven presented his plan of salvation, Jesus sustained the plan and his part in it, giving the glory to God, to whom it properly belonged. Lucifer, on the other hand, sought power, honor, and glory only for himself. (See Isa. 14:13–14; Moses 4:1–2.) When his modification of the Father’s plan was rejected, he rebelled against God and was subsequently cast out of heaven with those who had sided with him. (See Rev. 12:7–9; D&C 29:36–37.)

That brothers would make dramatically different choices is not unusual. It has happened time and again, as the scriptures attest: Cain chose to serve Satan; Abel chose to serve God. (See Moses 5:16–18.) Esau “despised his birthright”;

Jacob wanted to honor it. (Gen. 25:29–34.) Joseph’s brothers sought to kill him; he sought to preserve them. (Gen. 37:12–24; Gen. 45:3–11.)

It is ironic that the agency with which Lucifer rebelled is the very gift he tried to take from man. His proposal was that all be forced back into God’s presence. (See Moses 4:1, 3.) But the principle of agency is fundamental to the existence and progression of intelligent beings: as we make wise choices, we grow in light and truth. On the other hand, wrong choices—such as the one Satan made—stop progress and can even deny us blessings that we already have. (See D&C 93:30–36.)

In order for us to progress, therefore, we must have the opportunity to choose good or evil. Interestingly, Satan and his angels—those who opposed agency—have become that opposition. As the prophet Lehi taught, “Men are free according to the flesh; and all things are given them which are expedient unto man. And they are free to choose liberty and eternal life, through the great Mediator of all men, or to choose captivity and death, according to the captivity and power of the devil; for he seeketh that all men might be miserable like unto himself.” (2 Ne. 2:27.)

Although the Father has allowed Satan and his angels to tempt mankind, he has given each of us the ability to rise above temptation. (See 1 Cor. 10:13.) He has also given us the great gift of the Atonement.

When the Lord placed enmity between Eve’s children and the devil, Satan was told that he would bruise the heel of Eve’s seed, but her seed would bruise his head. (See Moses 4:21.) President Joseph Fielding Smith explained that “the ‘God of peace,’ who according to the scriptures is to bruise Satan, is Jesus Christ.” (*Answers to Gospel Questions*, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1957, 1:3.) Satan would bruise the Savior’s heel by leading men to crucify Him. But through his death and resurrection, Christ overcame death for all of us; and through his atonement, he offers each of us a way to escape the eternal ramifications of sin. Thus, Satan’s machinations have been frustrated and eventually he will be judged, bound, and cast into hell forever. (See Rev. 20:1–10; D&C 29:26–29.)

In Hebrew, the word *bruise* means “to crush or grind.” Therefore, the very heel that was bruised will crush Satan and will help us overcome the world and return to our Father. As we use our agency to choose good over evil, the atonement of Christ prepares the way for us to return to our Father in Heaven.

We can only imagine the sorrow of our Heavenly Father as he watched a loved son incite and lead a rebellion and lose his opportunity for exaltation. But we can also imagine the Father’s love and rejoicing as he welcomed back the beloved son who had valiantly and perfectly fought the battles of life and brought about the great Atonement through his suffering and death.

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MORMONS: WHO THEY ARE, WHAT THEY BELIEVE - - Discussion Guide

War in Heaven

http://eom.byu.edu/index.php/War_in_Heaven

War in Heaven

Author: Top, Brent L.

When Latter-day Saints speak of the "war in heaven," they generally mean the conflict in the premortal life that began when Lucifer, in a rebellion against God the Father and his Son Jesus Christ, sought to overthrow them. The result was that Lucifer and his followers were cast out of heaven. The prophet Isaiah (Isa. 14:12-15) and John the Revelator (Rev. 12:4-9) both referred to the war, and Jesus himself spoke of having "beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven" (Luke 10:17-18). Latter-day revelation gives additional insight, which is supplemented by the teachings of latter-day prophets. To "bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man" (Moses 1:39), God the Father instituted the eternal Plan of Salvation, which centered on mankind's agency, anticipated the fall of man, and provided a savior. Although previously known in the heavenly realm, the plan was formally presented to the spirit children of God at a Council in Heaven. "Whom shall I send?" (Abr. 3:27) was the Father's call for someone to be the redeemer. His eldest Son (D&C 93:21; Col. 1:15), known also as Jehovah, one "like unto God" (Abr. 3:24), and chosen from the beginning (Moses 4:2), officially accepted this role and responded, "Here am I, send me" (Abr. 3:27). He also stated, "Father, thy will be done, and the glory be thine forever" (Moses 4:2). With this formal acceptance and selection of the future Messiah, the spirit children of God "shouted for joy" (Job 38:7). It was also a time to signify individual commitment to the Father's plan. Not all accepted, however. The scriptures state that Lucifer, an "angel of God who was in authority in the presence of God" (D&C 76:25), rebelled and offered himself as the proposed redeemer, saying to the Father, "Behold, here am I, send me" (Moses 4:1). His offer was not well-intentioned and was a defiance of the Father and his Only Begotten Son. Lucifer's proposal was couched in his own interests: "I will be thy son, and I will redeem all mankind, that one soul shall not be lost, and surely I will do it; wherefore give me thine honor" (Moses 4:1). His proposal, if accepted, would have destroyed mankind's agency (Moses 4:3). Lucifer possessed character flaws, which finally manifested themselves in jealousy of the Christ and rejection of the Father's plan. Just how he proposed to save every soul is not explained but it apparently allowed either no opportunity for sin or, if sin did occur, no condemnation for sin. As his reward for saving everyone, Lucifer demanded that God surrender his honor and power to Lucifer (Isa. 14:13; D&C 29:36; Moses 4:3).

Although Lucifer made a false offer of salvation without individual responsibility, he gained many followers, and "war in heaven" ensued. Michael, the archangel (who later was Adam), led the "forces" of Jehovah in a battle for the loyalties of the Father's spirit

children. The exact nature of this war is not detailed in the scriptures, but there can be little doubt that it involved the principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ and how mankind was to be saved. The Prophet Joseph Smith explained, "The contention in heaven was- Jesus said there would be certain souls that would not be saved; and the devil said he could save them all, and laid his plans before the grand council, who gave their vote in favor of Jesus Christ. So the devil rose up in rebellion against God, and was cast down, with all who put up their heads for him" (*TPJS*, p. 357).

Lucifer and his followers, who were "a third part of the hosts of heaven" (Rev. 12:4; D&C 29:36), made open warfare against the Father, the Son, the Holy Ghost, and the eternal Plan of Salvation and were cast down to earth (cf. Jude 1:6), eternally deprived of being born into mortality with physical bodies, and never to have salvation (*TPJS*, pp. 181, 297-98). So tragic was the fall of Lucifer that "the heavens wept over him" (D&C 76:26).

Known on earth as Satan or the devil, Lucifer and his followers still continue the war against the work and the people of God, being permitted to do so to give people opportunity to exercise agency, being "enticed by the one or the other" (2 Ne. 2:16-25). They will persist until the day of judgment, when Michael, the archangel, and his armies will ultimately prevail and cast them out forever (D&C 88:111-115).

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BRENT L. TOP

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MORMONS: WHO THEY ARE, WHAT THEY BELIEVE - - Discussion Guide

The Choice that Began Mortality

<https://www.lds.org/liahona/2002/08/the-choice-that-began-mortality?lang=eng>

The Choice That Began Mortality

BY ELDER JESS L. CHRISTENSEN

Area Authority Seventy

The Fall was a glorious necessity to open the doorway toward eternal life.

I am truly amazed at the great love and courage my wonderful companion has shown during the birth of our children. I am in awe that the pain and sickness accompanying their birth was soon forgotten, making way for the joy and happiness of having a baby in our home. I have wondered how much Adam and Eve knew about such things as they made the choice to partake of the forbidden fruit, the choice that began what has been called act 2 in the “grand three-act play” 1 we call the great plan of happiness. God the Father, Jehovah, Adam, Eve, and Lucifer were the players. The Garden of Eden was the scene of this interlude between act 1, the premortal life, and act 2, mortality.

Setting the Stage

Act 1 included a council, at which Lucifer promised the impossible, to “redeem all mankind,” and demanded the Father’s “honor” (see Moses 4:1). Jesus Christ was the Father’s “Beloved and Chosen from the beginning” and promised to enact the Father’s plan (see Moses 4:2). We exercised our agency and chose to follow the Savior. Then there was “war in heaven” (see Rev. 12:7–9), and Lucifer “was cast down, with all who put up their heads for him.” 2

God the Father was the mastermind and primary character in this interlude scene. Through His Son, He created the earth and the Garden of Eden.

Adam was the first man, the premortal Michael (see D&C 27:11), “who helped create the earth—a glorious, superb individual. Eve was his equal—a full, powerfully contributing partner.” 3 Adam and Eve were placed in a garden,

Adam being “formed ... from the dust of the ground” and Eve being created from his side, and they became husband and wife (see Moses 3:7, 21–24). The Father commanded them to multiply and replenish the earth and not eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, but He added, “Nevertheless, thou mayest choose for thyself, for it is given unto thee; but, remember that I forbid it, for in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” (Moses 3:17). Thus the stage was set for the exercise of agency and the possibility of mortality.

Choices and Consequences

Lucifer was also in the beginning. He “sought to destroy the agency of man, ... [and being] the father of all lies” (Moses 4:3–4) entered the garden to deceive our first parents. He first talked with Adam, but Adam did not yield. Lucifer then tried “also to beguile Eve” (Moses 4:6). He questioned her: “Yea, hath God said—Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?” (Moses 4:7). Challenging someone’s recollection of a past event can often create doubt. But Eve stood firm. Lucifer’s first stratagem failed.

“Ye shall not surely die,” protested Lucifer, directly contradicting the word of the Lord (see Moses 4:10; see also D&C 29:41–42). “For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil” (Moses 4:11). Lucifer spoke a partial truth mixed with a falsehood. If Eve were to partake of the fruit, her eyes would indeed be opened and she would begin to know good and evil; yet the notion that eating the fruit could immediately make Eve as the gods was a clever deception. The purpose of life can be fulfilled only when we have time to prepare to meet God and learn good and evil by our own experience (see Alma 12:22–26; D&C 29:39).

At Lucifer’s suggestion, Eve began to notice that the forbidden fruit was good for food, or delicious, and pleasant to the eyes. Lucifer “knows well how to catch the eye and arouse the desire of his customers.”⁴ Eve then chose to partake of the forbidden fruit. She subsequently encouraged Adam to partake (see Moses 4:12). Adam concluded that God’s command to remain with his wife (see Moses 4:18) was more important than His command to abstain from the fruit. Thus in the face of this enticement, “Adam fell that men might be” (2 Ne. 2:25).

Adam and Eve's choices, like ours, were not without consequences. Lucifer's power to "bruise [the] heel" of Jesus Christ, the seed of the woman, would be fleeting, for the Savior would have power to "bruise [his] head" (see Moses 4:21).⁵ Just as light banishes darkness, the Savior will overcome Lucifer, and by His power we may also overcome. For Eve, the Lord would "greatly multiply [her] sorrow and [her] conception. In sorrow [meaning 'labor' or 'pain,' she would] bring forth children" (Moses 4:22). "By divine design," she would be a mother and would be "primarily responsible for the nurture of their children."⁶ For Adam, the ground would be "cursed ... for [his] sake." It would bring forth "thorns also, and thistles," and "by the sweat of [his] face [he would] eat bread" (see Moses 4:23–25). "By divine design, fathers ... are responsible to provide the necessities of life and protection for their families. ... Fathers and mothers are obligated to help one another as equal partners."⁷ Adam and Eve were then banished from this most beautiful of gardens, and mortality, or act 2, began. However, they were taught concerning the plan of God and given commandments. They did not leave without protection and promises, for God provided them with "coats of skins" (see Moses 4:27) to cover their nakedness. These coverings represent the protection—both spiritual and physical—that we can enjoy as we follow our Father's teachings.

When Adam and Eve were cast out of the garden and found themselves outside of God's presence, they were anxious to return. They used their agency to call upon the name of the Lord, to worship the Lord their God by offering sacrifices, and to bless His name (see Moses 5:4–5, 12).

The Fall and the Atonement

Three of the most essential events in the history of mankind are the Creation, the Fall, and the Atonement. "The enabling essence of the plan [of salvation] is the atonement of Jesus Christ ...," said Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. "We should try to comprehend the meaning of the Atonement. Before we can comprehend it, though, we must understand the fall of Adam."⁸ As Latter-day Saints, we believe that Adam and Eve's choice to partake of the forbidden fruit was ultimately a good thing—an essential act for our growth.

President Joseph Fielding Smith (1876–1972) taught: “When Adam and Eve were placed in the Garden of Eden, they did not have to die. They could have been there to this day. They could have continued on for countless ages. There was no death then. But it would have been a terrific calamity if they had refrained from taking the fruit of that tree, for they would have stayed in the Garden of Eden and we would not be here; nobody would be here except Adam and Eve. So Adam and Eve partook.” 9

Many questions have been asked: How much did Adam and Eve really understand about the consequences of eating the forbidden fruit? Why was the message of Satan so tempting to Eve but not to Adam? Was there no other way? These are perplexing questions because we know so little about Adam and Eve’s thoughts and feelings in the garden. Therefore, we should not worry about what the scriptures and living prophets have chosen not to explain. The important thing is to know that the Lord’s will was accomplished. Adam and Eve kept the first commandment to multiply and replenish the earth. Their bodies were changed, and mortality, parenthood, and eventual death came upon them. Eternal family relationships became possible. The Fall was “a glorious necessity to open the doorway toward eternal life,” said Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. 10 As a result, we have been blessed with the opportunity to come to this earth.

Other blessings have come to us through the Fall. Elder Nelson has said: “It activated two closely coupled additional gifts from God, nearly as precious as life itself—agency and accountability. We became ‘free to choose liberty and eternal life ... or to choose captivity and death’ (2 Ne. 2:27). Freedom of choice cannot be exercised without accountability for choices made [see D&C 101:78; D&C 134:1].” 11

We have been placed here by a Heavenly Father who loves and trusts us. He wants us to use our agency to grow and progress in this laboratory we call earth.

The Fall and Joy

As my wife and I have watched our children grow and develop, we have been thrilled with so many of their choices. We have been amazed at the love and

courage of our daughters and daughters-in-law as they have given birth to precious little spirits who have come from the presence of our Heavenly Father. With each birth I have been reminded that without the Fall, we would not experience birth, pain, sorrow, sickness, health, joy, love, and death—in other words, we could never find eternal happiness. And without the great atoning sacrifice of our Savior, we would never be able to overcome death or have the privilege of repenting for the remission of our sins. Jesus Christ makes it possible for us to return to the Father and find exaltation with our families. He is our Savior, our friend, our Spiritual Father through the Atonement, our Redeemer from the Fall, our very life and light, and the living Son of our living Father in Heaven.

An understanding of the choice that began mortality is crucial to understanding the Father's glorious plan. We who have chosen to follow the Savior in act 1 will be greatly blessed if we desire to do what is right and wisely use the agency we have been given in act 2.

[illustration] Illustration by Gary L. Kapp

[illustration] *The Greatest of All*, by Del Parson

Elder Jess L. Christensen was released in October 2001 as an Area Authority Seventy serving in the Utah North Area.

Notes

1.
See Boyd K. Packer, *The Play and the Plan*, Church Educational System Fireside for College-Age Young Adults, 7 May 1995, 2.
2.
Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, selected by Joseph Fielding Smith (1976), 357.
3.
Richard G. Scott, "The Joy of Living the Great Plan of Happiness," *Ensign*, November 1996, 74.
4.
James E. Talmage, "A Greeting to the Missionaries," *Improvement Era*, December 1913, 173.
5.
See James E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ*, 3rd edition (1916), 43.
6.
"The Family: A Proclamation to the World," *Liahona*, October 1998, 24.
7.
Liahona, October 1998, 24.
8.
"Constancy amid Change," *Ensign*, November 1993, 33.
9.
In Conference Report, April 1967, 122.

10.

“The Great Plan of Happiness,” *Ensign*, November 1993, 73.

11.

Ensign, November 1993, 34.

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MORMONS: WHO THEY ARE, WHAT THEY BELIEVE - - Discussion Guide

Jesus Christ, Our Savior

http://beta.mormon.org/lessons/01-jesus-christ-our-savior.html?gclid=CPi7p5uuxb8CFtJn7AodMUUAgg&cid=99113312&cs_kwcid=AL!3737!3!46796094255!p!g!!lds%20church&cf_id=UgUNzQAAAZKKPjWd:20140714180109:s

Jesus Christ, Our Savior and Redeemer

Jesus Christ is the Son of God and the Savior of the world. His life and teachings are the way to peace and happiness.



Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world and the Son of God. He is our Redeemer. But what do we mean when we say He is the Savior of the world? The Redeemer? Each of these titles point to the truth that Jesus Christ is the only way by which we can return to live with our Heavenly Father. Jesus suffered and was crucified for the sins of the world, giving each of God's children the gift of repentance and forgiveness. Only by His mercy and grace can anyone be saved. His subsequent resurrection prepared the way for every person to overcome physical death as well. These events are called the Atonement. In short, Jesus Christ saves us from sin and death. For that, he is very literally our Savior and Redeemer.

To make His Atonement fully effective in your life, you need to:

- Exercise faith in Him.

- Repent.
- Be baptized.
- Receive the Holy Ghost.
- Choose to follow His teachings for the rest of your life.

But what do we mean when we say He is the Savior of the world? The Redeemer? Each of these titles point to the truth that Jesus Christ is the only way by which we can return to live with our Heavenly Father. Jesus suffered and was crucified for the sins of the world, giving each of God's children the gift of repentance and forgiveness. Only by His mercy and grace can anyone be saved. His subsequent resurrection prepared the way for every person to overcome physical death as well. These events are called the Atonement. In short, Jesus Christ saves us from sin and death. For that, he is very literally our Savior and Redeemer. In the future Jesus Christ will return to reign on earth in peace for a thousand years. Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and He will be our Lord forever.

What Jesus Christ Means to Us

When we accept Jesus Christ's help we can feel peace in this life and return to Heavenly Father after we die.

God is our Heavenly Father, and like any parent He wants us, His children, to be happy. In the scriptures, He teaches "*my work and my glory [is] to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man*" (Moses 1:39). Eternal life means to live in heaven, in His presence, with our families, forever. God has given us commandments, which teach us what is right and wrong and chart a way through life that will offer the greatest happiness. Jesus Christ taught, "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15). But the scriptures also teach that "no unclean thing can dwell with God" (1 Nephi 10:21). As hard as we try to live good lives, we all sin, so how can we live in God's perfect kingdom if we are imperfect?

God sent Jesus Christ to earth to give us a way to overcome our sins and imperfections. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16).

Jesus Christ Suffered for Us

Without the grace and mercy made possible by His Atonement, we could not be saved from sin.

Even before God created the world, He prepared a plan that allows us to learn and grow during this life. Jesus Christ is the center of this plan. Christ's mission was not only to teach us about God the Father and how we should live, but also to make a way for us to be forgiven after we sin. Sin is more than just making a mistake. When we sin we disobey God's commandments or fail to act correctly despite our knowledge of the truth (James 4:17).

Before He was crucified, Jesus prayed to God in the Garden of Gethsemane on our behalf. Christ's suffering for our sins in Gethsemane and on the cross at Calvary is called the Atonement. He suffered for us so that we can be made clean and return to live with our Heavenly Father. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the "good news" of Christ's sacrifice for us, giving us a path back to the Father. "Wherefore, how great the importance to make these things known unto the inhabitants of the earth, that they may know that there is no flesh that can dwell in the presence of God, save it be through the merits and mercy, and grace of the Holy Messiah" (2 Nephi 2:8).

God sent Jesus Christ to earth to give us a way to overcome our imperfections.

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved" (John 3:16-17).



Faith in Jesus Christ

A firm belief that Jesus Christ is our Savior inspires us to follow His teachings.



Faith in Jesus Christ is a firm conviction that He is who He says He is and that He will help us when we seek Him. Faith in Christ means trusting in Him, remembering Him, and following His teachings. It is a conviction that He is the Son of God, "The way, the truth and the life" (John 14:6).

Faith in Jesus Christ leads us to do good works. The Holy Bible teaches, "Faith without works is dead" (James 2:20). This does not mean that we can be saved by good works, for no amount of good works can cleanse our souls of even a trace of sin without the power of Christ's sacrifice. But those who have genuine faith in Christ will want to follow Him and do the kinds of works He did, such as helping the poor and needy, caring for the sick, visiting the lonely, and showing good will and love to all people.

As we follow His example and live according to His words, we will feel our faith growing until it becomes an active force in our lives, helping us repent of our sins and deal with our challenges. Faith in Jesus Christ isn't a simple declaration of belief—it is a source of power we can renew every day by studying His words, praying, and by trying harder to follow His example.

Repentance

Breaking God's commandments causes us to feel sorrow, but Jesus Christ made a way for us to be forgiven.

Having faith in Jesus Christ makes us want to live good lives. When we sin and seek to repent, we recognize and feel deep and sincere sorrow for what we've done wrong. God understood when He created the earth that we wouldn't be perfect, so He provided a way for us to overcome our sins. The ability to repent is truly one of our greatest blessings.

To repent we need to recognize and feel sorry for what we've done wrong, do whatever is possible to repair the damage it may have caused, and to leave our sinful behavior behind. Repentance can be difficult and requires a lot of honesty, but the joy and freedom we feel when we turn away from our sins are well worth the effort. Because Christ suffered for our sins, we can be forgiven when we repent. That's why the Atonement is so important to all of us.

We believe Christ's Atonement gives us the ability to repent and become clean from sin. To say we have to repent for our sins may sound like a punishment, but the real punishment is the guilt, sorrow, and disappointment we feel when we sin. Repentance is the opposite of punishment, then, because it allows us to become clean in God's eyes and remove the feelings of guilt that follow our bad choices.

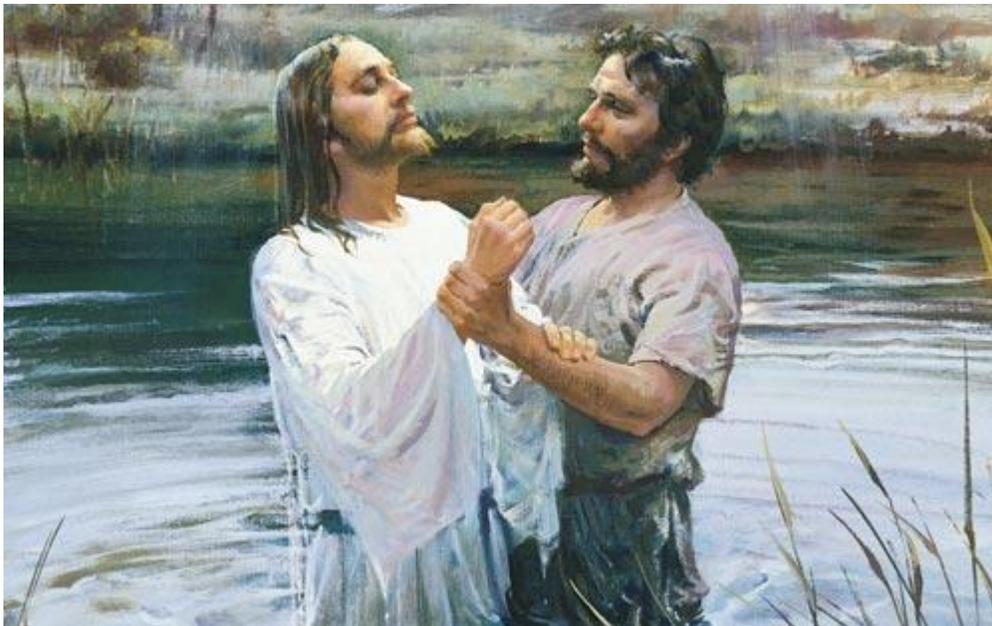
Baptism—Following Jesus Christ's Example

We join Jesus Christ's Church by being baptized.

Baptism is a promise or covenant we make to follow Jesus Christ throughout our lives. When we develop faith in Him and repent of our sins, a person who has God's authority to baptize immerses us in water and raises us back up. This ordinance, or ceremony, suggests burial and rebirth, symbolizing the end of our old life and the beginning of a new life as a follower of Jesus Christ.

When we are baptized, we take Christ's name upon us. As Christians, we seek to follow Him in all aspects of our lives. Jesus was baptized when He was on earth. He has asked us to follow His example and to be baptized (see 2 Nephi 31:12). He has promised that if we follow His example and keep the promises we make when we're baptized, we will have His Spirit to guide us through this life. Because Heavenly Father is a fair and loving God, everyone will have the opportunity to accept Jesus Christ through baptism, if not in this life then in the next.

After Jesus was baptized, a voice from heaven said, "*Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased*" (Mark 1:11). We believe that God is also well pleased when each of us chooses to follow His Son and be baptized. He sees everything we do, knows us by name, and wants us to become clean so we can return to His presence.



The Gift of the Holy Ghost

God comforts, guides and strengthens us through the Holy Ghost.

When Jesus was on the earth, He told a man named Nicodemus, "*Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God*" (John 3:5). After we are "born of water," or baptized, we can be "born [...] of the Spirit" by receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost. A person with God's authority puts his hands on our heads and gives us the gift of the Holy Ghost (Acts 8:17). This ceremony is known as confirmation. The Holy Ghost is a Spirit. He is the third member of the Godhead, along with Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ. When we receive the gift of the Holy Ghost and walk humbly before God He can always be with us. We call it a gift because the Holy Ghost is given to us from God to guide us as we face difficult decisions, comfort us when we are sad, influence our minds and feelings, and help us recognize when something is true. This kind of divine help reminds us that God loves each one of us and wants to help us through the difficulties of our lives.

Continuous Christian Living

Having faith in Jesus Christ means following Him throughout our lives.

A relationship with Jesus Christ is like any other—it can start to fade if we fall out of touch. It takes effort to exercise enough faith in Christ to repent, be baptized, and receive the Holy Ghost, but we have to strive to follow Christ to receive all the blessings God wants to give us.

The key is to think of the gospel of Jesus Christ as a pattern for living, rather than steps on a checklist. We can continue to develop our faith in Christ every day by reading His words in the scriptures and praying to our Heavenly Father. When we sin, we can repent every time with a humble heart because Jesus Christ's Atonement is never-ending. We can remember the promises and blessings of baptism by taking the sacrament every Sunday at church. We can continue to rely on the comfort and guidance of the Holy Ghost as he leads us back to God.

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MORMONS: WHO THEY ARE, WHAT THEY BELIEVE - - Discussion Guide

The Unpardonable Sin

<https://www.lds.org/ensign/1971/05/the-king-follett-sermon?lang=eng>

The King Follett Sermon

BY JOSEPH SMITH, JR. (1805–1844)

First President, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

This is the conclusion of the King Follett Sermon, delivered by the Prophet Joseph Smith at the April 7, 1844, conference of the Church in Nauvoo, Illinois. The first part of this classic was reprinted in the April *Ensign* (page 12). Readers should be reminded that the account of the talk was reconstructed from longhand notes taken by four brethren. It is also important to know that the Prophet's enemies were within just a few months of bringing about his death. This reprint was taken from the *Documentary History of the Church*, volume 6, pages 302–17.

The King Follett Sermon

The Immortal Intelligence

I have another subject to dwell upon, which is calculated to exalt man; but it is impossible for me to say much on this subject. I shall therefore just touch upon it, for time will not permit me to say all. It is associated with the subject of the resurrection of the dead—namely, the soul—the mind of man—the immortal spirit. Where did it come from? All learned men and doctors of divinity say that God created it in the beginning; but it is not so: the very idea lessens man in my estimation. I do not believe the doctrine; I know better. Hear it, all ye ends of the world; for God has told me so; and if you don't believe me, it will not make

the truth without effect. I will make a man appear a fool before I get through; if he does not believe it. I am going to tell of things more noble.

We say that God Himself is a self-existing being. Who told you so? It is correct enough; but how did it get into your heads? Who told you that man did not exist in like manner upon the same principles? Man does exist upon the same principles. God made a tabernacle and put a spirit into it, and it became a living soul. (Refers to the Bible.) How does it read in the Hebrew? It does not say in the Hebrew that God created the spirit of man. It says, "God made man out of the earth and put into him Adam's spirit, and so became a living body."

The mind or the intelligence which man possesses is co-equal [co-eternal] with God himself. I know that my testimony is true; hence, when I talk to these mourners, what have they lost? Their relatives and friends are only separated from their bodies for a short season: their spirits which existed with God have left the tabernacle of clay only for a little moment, as it were; and they now exist in a place where they converse together the same as we do on the earth.

I am dwelling on the immortality of the spirit of man. Is it logical to say that the intelligence of spirits is immortal, and yet that it has a beginning? The intelligence of spirits had no beginning, neither will it have an end. That is good logic. That which has a beginning may have an end. There never was a time when there were not spirits; for they are co-equal [co-eternal] with our Father in heaven.

I want to reason more on the spirit of man; for I am dwelling on the body and spirit of man—on the subject of the dead. I take my ring from my finger and liken it unto the mind of man—the immortal part, because it had no beginning. Suppose you cut it in two; then it has a beginning and an end; but join it again, and it continues one eternal round. So with the spirit of man. As the Lord liveth, if it had a beginning, it will have an end. All the fools and learned and wise men from the beginning of creation, who say that the spirit of man had a beginning, prove that it must have an end; and if that doctrine is true, then the doctrine of annihilation would be true. But if I am right, I might with boldness proclaim from the housetops that God never had the power to create the spirit of man at all. God himself could not create himself.

Intelligence is eternal and exists upon a self-existent principle. It is a spirit from age to age and there is no creation about it. All the minds and spirits that God ever sent into the world are susceptible of enlargement.

The first principles of man are self-existent with God. God himself, finding he was in the midst of spirits and glory, because he was more intelligent, saw proper to institute laws whereby the rest could have a privilege to advance like himself. The relationship we have with God places us in a situation to advance in knowledge. He has power to institute laws to instruct the weaker intelligences, that they may be exalted with Himself, so that they might have one glory upon another, and all that knowledge, power, glory, and intelligence, which is requisite in order to save them in the world of spirits.

This is good doctrine. It tastes good. I can taste the principles of eternal life, and so can you. They are given to me by the revelations of Jesus Christ; and I know that when I tell you these words of eternal life as they are given to me, you taste them, and I know that you believe them. You say honey is sweet, and so do I. I can also taste the spirit of eternal life. I know that it is good; and when I tell you of these things which were given me by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, you are bound to receive them as sweet, and rejoice more and more.

The Relation of Man to God

I want to talk more of the relation of man to God. I will open your eyes in relation to the dead. All things whatsoever God in his infinite wisdom has seen fit and proper to reveal to us, while we are dwelling in mortality, in regard to our mortal bodies, are revealed to us in the abstract, and independent of affinity of this mortal tabernacle, but are revealed to our spirits precisely as though we had no bodies at all; and those revelations which will save our spirits will save our bodies. God reveals them to us in view of no eternal dissolution of the body, or tabernacle. Hence the responsibility, the awful responsibility, that rests upon us in relation to our dead; for all the spirits who have not obeyed the Gospel in the flesh must either obey it in the spirit or be damned. Solemn thought!—dreadful thought! Is there nothing to be done?—no preparation—no salvation for our fathers and friends who have died without having had the opportunity to obey the decrees of the Son of Man? Would to God that I had

forty days and nights in which to tell you all! I would let you know that I am not a “fallen prophet.”

Our Greatest Responsibility

What promises are made in relation to the subject of the salvation of the dead? and what kind of characters are those who can be saved, although their bodies are mouldering and decaying in the grave? When His commandments teach us, it is in view of eternity; for we are looked upon by God as though we were in eternity; God dwells in eternity, and does not view things as we do.

The greatest responsibility in this world that God has laid upon us is to seek after our dead. The apostle says, “They without us cannot be made perfect”; for it is necessary that the sealing power should be in our hands to seal our children and our dead for the fulness of the dispensation of times—a dispensation to meet the promises made by Jesus Christ before the foundation of the world for the salvation of man.

Now, I will speak of them. I will meet Paul half way. I say to you, Paul, you cannot be perfect without us. It is necessary that those who are going before and those who come after us should have salvation in common with us; and thus hath God made it obligatory upon man. Hence, God said, “I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.”

The Unpardonable Sin

I have a declaration to make as to the provisions which God hath made to suit the conditions of man—made from before the foundation of the world. What has Jesus said? All sins, and all blasphemies, and every transgression, except one, that man can be guilty of, may be forgiven; and there is a salvation for all men, either in this world or the world to come, who have not committed the unpardonable sin, there being a provision either in this world or the world of spirits. Hence God hath made a provision that every spirit in the eternal world can be ferreted out and saved unless he has committed that unpardonable sin which cannot be remitted to him either in this world or the world of spirits. God

has wrought out a salvation for all men, unless they have committed a certain sin; and every man who has a friend in the eternal world can save him, unless he has committed the unpardonable sin. And so you can see how far you can be a savior.

A man cannot commit the unpardonable sin after the dissolution of the body, and there is a way possible for escape. Knowledge saves a man; and in the world of spirits no man can be exalted but by knowledge. So long as a man will not give heed to the commandments, he must abide without salvation. If a man has knowledge, he can be saved; although, if he has been guilty of great sins, he will be punished for them. But when he consents to obey the gospel, whether here or in the world of spirits, he is saved.

A man is his own tormentor and his own condemner. Hence the saying, They shall go into the lake that burns with fire and brimstone. The torment of disappointment in the mind is as exquisite as a lake burning with fire and brimstone. I say, so is the torment of man.

I know the scriptures and understand them. I said, no man can commit the unpardonable sin after the dissolution of the body, nor in this life, until he receives the Holy Ghost; but they must do it in this world. Hence the salvation of Jesus Christ was wrought out for all men, in order to triumph over the devil; for if it did not catch him in one place, it would in another; for he stood up as a Savior. All will suffer until they obey Christ himself.

The contention in heaven was—Jesus said there would be certain souls that would not be saved; and the devil said he would save them all, and laid his plans before the grand council, who gave their vote in favor of Jesus Christ. So the devil rose up in rebellion against God, and was cast down, with all who put up their heads for him. (Book of Moses—Pearl of Great Price, Ch. 4:1–4; Book of Abraham, Ch. 3:23–28.) [Moses 4:1–4; Abr. 3:23–28]

The Forgiveness of Sins

All sins shall be forgiven, except the sin against the Holy Ghost; for Jesus will save all except the sons of perdition. What must a man do to commit the unpardonable sin? He must receive the Holy Ghost, have the heavens opened unto him, and know God, and then sin against him. After a man has sinned

against the Holy Ghost, there is no repentance for him. He has got to say that the sun does not shine while he sees it; he has got to deny Jesus Christ when the heavens have been opened unto him, and to deny the plan of salvation with his eyes open to the truth of it; and from that time he begins to be an enemy. This is the case with many apostates of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

When a man begins to be an enemy to this work, he hunts me, he seeks to kill me, and never ceases to thirst for my blood. He gets the spirit of the devil—the same spirit that sins against the Holy Ghost. You cannot save such persons; you cannot bring them to repentance; they make open war, like the devil, and awful is the consequence.

I advise all of you to be careful what you do, or you may by-and-by find out that you have been deceived. Stay yourselves; do not give way; don't make any hasty moves, you may be saved. If a spirit of bitterness is in you, don't be in haste. You may say, that man is a sinner. Well, if he repents, he shall be forgiven. Be cautious: await. When you find a spirit that wants bloodshed,—murder, the same is not of God, but is of the devil. Out of the abundance of the heart of man the mouth speaketh.

The best men bring forth the best works. The man who tells you words of life is the man who can save you. I warn you against all evil characters who sin against the Holy Ghost; for there is no redemption for them in this world nor in the world to come.

I could go back and trace every object of interest concerning the relationship of man to God, if I had time. I can enter into the mysteries; I can enter largely into the eternal worlds; for Jesus said, "In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you." (John 14:2.) Paul says, "There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead." (1 Cor. 15:41.) What have we to console us in relation to the dead? We have reason to have the greatest hope and consolation for our dead of any people on the earth; for we have seen them walk worthily in our midst, and seen them sink asleep in the arms of Jesus; and

those who have died in the faith are now in the celestial kingdom of God. And hence is the glory of the sun.

You mourners have occasion to rejoice, speaking of the death of Elder King Follett; for your husband and father is gone to wait until the resurrection of the dead—until the perfection of the remainder; for at the resurrection your friend will rise in perfect felicity and go to celestial glory, while many must wait myriads of years before they can receive the like blessings; and your expectations and hopes are far above what man can conceive; for why has God revealed it to us?

I am authorized to say, by the authority of the Holy Ghost, that you have no occasion to fear; for he [Brother Follett] is gone to the home of the just. Don't mourn, don't weep. I know it by the testimony of the Holy Ghost that is within me; and you may wait for your friends to come forth to meet you in the morn of the celestial world.

Rejoice, O Israel! Your friends who have been murdered for the truth's sake in the persecutions shall triumph gloriously in the celestial world, while their murderers shall welter for ages in torment, even until they shall have paid the uttermost farthing. I say this for the benefit of strangers.

I have a father, brothers, children, and friends who have gone to a world of spirits. They are only absent for a moment. They are in the spirit, and we shall soon meet again. The time will soon arrive when the trumpet shall sound. When we depart, we shall hail our mothers, fathers, friends, and all whom we love, who have fallen asleep in Jesus. There will be no fear of mobs, persecutions, or malicious lawsuits and arrests; but it will be an eternity of felicity.

A question may be asked—"Will mothers have their children in eternity?" Yes! Yes! Mothers, you shall have your children; for they shall have eternal life, for their debt is paid. There is no damnation awaiting them for they are in the spirit. But as the child dies, so shall it rise from the dead, and be for ever living in the learning of God. It will never grow [in the grave]; it will still be the child, in the same precise form [when it rises] as it appeared before it died out of its mother's arms, but possessing all the intelligence of a God. ...

I will leave this subject here, and make a few remarks on the subject of baptism. The baptism of water, without the baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost attending it, is of no use; they are necessarily and inseparably connected. An individual must be born of water and the spirit in order to get into the kingdom of God. In the German, the text bears me out the same as the revelations which I have given and taught for the past fourteen years on that subject. I have the testimony to put in their teeth. My testimony has been true all the time. You will find it in the declaration of John the Baptist. (Reads from the German.) John says, "I baptize you with water, but when Jesus comes, who has the power (or keys) He shall administer the baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost." Great God! Where is now all the sectarian world? And if this testimony is true, they are all damned as clearly as anathema can do it. I know the text is true. I call upon all you Germans who know that it is true to say, Eye. (Loud shouts of "Aye.")

Alexander Campbell, how are you going to save people with water alone? For John said his baptism was good for nothing without the baptism of Jesus Christ. "Therefore, *not* leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith towards God, of the doctrine of baptism, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. And this will we do, if God permit." (Heb. 6:1-3.)

There is one God, one Father, one Jesus, one hope of our calling, one baptism. All these three baptisms only make one. Many talk of baptism not being essential to salvation; but this kind of teaching would lay the foundation of their damnation. I have the truth, and am at the defiance of the world to contradict me, if they can.

I have now preached a little Latin, a little Hebrew, Greek, and German; and I have fulfilled all. I am not so big a fool as many have taken me to be. The Germans know that I read the German correctly.

The Second Death

Hear it, all ye ends of the earth —all ye priests, all ye sinners, and all men. Repent! Repent! Obey the gospel. Turn to God; for your religion won't save you, and you will be damned. I do not say how long. There have been remarks made

concerning all men being redeemed from hell; but I say that those who sin against the Holy Ghost cannot be forgiven in this world or in the world to come; they shall die the second death. Those who commit the unpardonable sin are doomed to *Gnolom*—to dwell in hell, worlds without end. As they concocted scenes of bloodshed in this world, so they shall rise to that resurrection which is as the lake of fire and brimstone. Some shall rise to the everlasting burnings of God; for God dwells in everlasting burnings and some shall rise to the damnation of their own filthiness, which is as exquisite a torment as the lake of fire and brimstone.

I have intended my remarks for all, both rich and poor, bond and free, great and small. I have no enmity against any man. I love you all; but I hate some of your deeds. I am your best friend, and if persons miss their mark it is their own fault. If I reprove a man, and he hates me, he is a fool; for I love all men, especially these my brethren and sisters.

I rejoice in hearing the testimony of my aged friends. You don't know me; you never knew my heart. No man knows my history. I cannot tell it: I shall never undertake it. I don't blame any one for not believing my history. If I had not experienced what I have, I would not have believed it myself. I never did harm any man since I was born in the world. My voice is always for peace.

I cannot lie down until all my work is finished. I never think any evil, nor do anything to the harm of my fellow-man. When I am called by the trump of the archangel and weighed in the balance, you will all know me then. I add no more. God bless you all. Amen.

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MORMONS: WHO THEY ARE, WHAT THEY BELIEVE - - Discussion Guide

Blood Atonement and Utah's Method of Execution

http://www.sltrib.com/faith/ci_15126927

Gardner's date with firing squad revives talk of Mormon blood atonement

BY PEGGY FLETCHER STACK

THE SALT LAKE TRIBUNE

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After convicted killer Ronnie Lee Gardner announced last month his intention to be executed by firing squad, national and international reporters suggested it was a throwback to the wild, wild West.

Some Utahns, though, had a different explanation for why such an anachronistic execution technique remained an option in the 21st century: blood atonement.

The term refers to an arcane LDS belief that a murderer must shed his own blood -- literally -- to be forgiven by God. Since Mormon pioneers first entered the valley in 1847 until today, most of Utah's formal executions (until recent decades) have been by firing squad, which is a lot bloodier than hanging or lethal injection.

When Rep. Sheryl Allen, R-Bountiful, began proposing elimination of the firing-squad option in the late 1990s, the LDS Church itself did not object. Yet talk of blood atonement percolated "in quiet, backroom discussions," she recalls. "A couple of people in prominent positions said to me, 'We've got to have blood atonement.' "

By 2004, Allen says, all mention of the Mormon concept "just went away" and the measure passed.

The LDS Church disavows any connection to blood atonement, says spokesman Scott Trotter. "[It] is not a doctrine of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. We believe in and teach the infinite and all-encompassing atonement of Jesus Christ, which makes forgiveness of sin and salvation possible for all people."

Now the firing-squad option may be history -- Gardner, whose execution is scheduled for June 18, still could choose it because his original sentencing preceded the Allen-led ban – but the mythic appeal of a bloody death as payment for sin persists in some Mormon quarters.

It has played a role in books about the 1977 execution of Gary Gilmore, in Jon Krakauer's look at Mormonism and violence, in discussions of the 1857 Mountain Meadows Massacre, even in this year's finale of HBO's "Big Love." Just two years ago, defense attorneys for accused murderer Floyd Maestas, who is not LDS, asked prospective jurors if they were familiar with blood atonement and, if so, what it meant to them.

The issue never came up at trial, and Maestas was convicted and sentenced to die by lethal injection. If the LDS Church doesn't preach blood atonement and the firing squad is virtually finished, why, then, does the notion linger in public and private conversations across the state and on the screen?

The answer may lie in history, symbolism and salvation.

Out of the past

As a young Mormon in Salt Lake City, legal scholar Martin R. Gardner heard adults attribute their support of capital punishment to this idea of blood atonement. As an LDS missionary in England in the late 1960s, he had a pamphlet, penned by the future Mormon prophet Joseph Fielding Smith, that described and defended the teaching. "It was always around in the popular consciousness," Gardner says in a phone interview from the University of Nebraska Law School, where he teaches criminal law.

In a 1979 article in *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Gardner traced the teaching to Brigham Young, who believed even Christ's atoning sacrifice for humanity could not cover some sins, including murder, apostasy and egregious sexual misbehavior.

"There are transgressors," Young said in an 1856 sermon, "who, if they knew themselves, and the only condition upon which they can obtain forgiveness, would beg of their brethren to shed their blood, that the smoke thereof might ascend to God as an offering to appease the wrath that is kindled against them."

Those sentiments were replayed often by the Mormon prophet and his two counselors in the governing First Presidency, Jedediah M. Grant and Heber C. Kimball, during the 1850s, "a period of intense Mormon revivalism bordering on fanaticism," Gardner wrote in *Dialogue* .

The three also were key players in creating Utah's first capital-punishment law in 1851, which offered killers the choice of being shot, hanged or beheaded (another blood-shedding option).

Perhaps the most famous execution was that of LDS Bishop John D. Lee, shot by firing squad in 1877 for his involvement in the 1857 slaughter of 120 men, women and children known as the Mountain Meadows Massacre. Lee, who clearly believed in blood atonement, according to historian Ronald W. Walker, sat on his coffin and said to the sharp shooters, "Center my heart, boys. Don't mangle my body."

In 1888, the Utah Territorial Legislature eliminated beheading but adopted similar language that remained state law until 1980, when lethal injection replaced hanging.

The firing squad remained.

Modern times

» In one of Utah's most notorious murder cases, Mormon Mark Hofmann forged dozens of LDS documents and, fearing discovery, killed two people with homemade pipe bombs in 1985.

Before Hofmann confessed, his father suggested that if guilty, his son would have to pay with his blood. Hofmann escaped the death penalty by pleading guilty to lesser charges and remains in prison.

Several years later, convicted child-killer Arthur Gary Bishop, who had been an Eagle Scout and Mormon missionary, worried about the state of his soul and whether salvation required his blood be spilled. Bishop consulted Gordon B. Hinckley, then a counselor in the LDS First Presidency and later the church president, who assured him that the method of execution made no difference to his place in the hereafter.

Hinckley said that blood atonement ended with the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, according to sociologist L. Kay Gillespie, who described the exchange in *The Unforgiven*, a history of Utah's executions.

Still, Bishop said in a letter written before his June 10 death by lethal injection that his refusal to fight his execution was a "necessary requirement because of my past heinous crimes."

In 1994, attorneys for condemned child-killer James Edward Wood in Pocatello, Idaho, argued that his defense was undermined by a visit from local LDS leaders who talked to him about shedding his own blood. Wood, a Mormon, was sentenced to death after pleading guilty to abducting, murdering and then later sexually molesting and dismembering 11-year-old Jaralee Underwood.

In response to the defense's allegations, the LDS First Presidency filed a document in an Idaho court denying the doctrine as it has been popularized. The church's affidavit included a copy of a 1978 letter from LDS apostle Bruce R. McConkie to University of Utah law student Thomas McAfee, outlining the church's position.

The Utah-based church supported capital punishment, the apostle wrote, but denied that blood atonement had anything to do with it.

Early church leaders' statements about blood atonement "pertain to a theoretical principle that has been neither revealed to nor practiced by us," wrote McConkie, who

died in 1985. "I have never in over 60 years of regular church attendance heard a single sermon on the subject or even a discussion in any church class."

Today, the LDS Church is neutral on the death penalty.

In the Mormon psyche The symbolism of blood atonement mirrors the Christian story of Jesus' death on the cross as a ransom for all humanity.

The 19th-century Mormon pioneers added an emphasis on self-sacrifice for sin as a way to appease an angry God, says Levi Peterson, a Mormon novelist and retired Weber State University professor of English. It may have particularly appealed to the settlers, who were coping with a bloody and death-filled era.

Mormon doctrine was "full of promised blessings for the obedient, blessings which were not forthcoming as the Saints were driven from pillar to post," says Peterson, who now lives in Issaquah, Wash. "An obverse logic took over: The Saints were obviously remiss in their duties; they deserved to suffer; the quickest way back to divine favor was to inflict more suffering on themselves."

Their approach, he says, would be similar to that of Roman Catholics during the Middle Ages in the aftermath of the plague, which decimated Europe. Religious orders in which members would flog themselves as penance "arose to deal with the psychological effect of the terrible scourge."

The idea of self-punishing was central to the "guilt I inherited or felt in the people around me," says Peterson, who was reared in a small Mormon community in northern Arizona. "We believed in a severe God who didn't forgive easily. You had to pay with some kind of pain."

Blood atonement also figured in Peterson's novel *The Backslider*, when one character's throat is cut to atone for his homosexual behavior and the protagonist considers killing himself for his continued sexual sins.

In 2010, these ideas may seem foreign to most members of the nearly 14 million-member LDS Church as it has moved far from its rural Utah roots, says Gardner, the Nebraska law professor and a member of his LDS stake's high council. "I just don't think people are aware of [blood atonement] anymore."

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MORMONS: WHO THEY ARE, WHAT THEY BELIEVE - - Discussion Guide

What Happens in Temples?

<https://www.lds.org/church/temples/why-we-build-temples/what-happens-in-temples?lang=eng>

What Happens in Temples



In the temple we are taught, we make covenants, and we are promised blessings. We receive ordinances that enable us to live in the presence of God.

Endowment

One ordinance we receive in the temple is the endowment. The word *endowment* means “gift” or “bestowal.” As part of this ordinance, we are taught about the purpose of life, the mission and Atonement of Jesus Christ, and Heavenly Father’s plan for His children. We gain a glimpse of what it will be like to live in His presence as we feel the peaceful atmosphere of the temple.

Sealing

Another temple ordinance is the sealing ordinance, in which husbands and wives are sealed to each other and children are sealed to their parents in eternal families. This means that if we are faithful to our covenants, our family relationships will continue for eternity. People sometimes also refer to this ordinance as “temple marriage” or “eternal marriage.”

Ordinances for the Deceased

In addition to receiving these ordinances for ourselves, we can receive them for our deceased ancestors. In this way, people who died without receiving essential ordinances such as baptism and confirmation, the endowment, and sealing have the opportunity to accept these ordinances.

Entering the Temple

Open House and Dedication

After a temple is built or renovated, several weeks are set aside in which the public is invited to a temple open house. During the open house, visitors watch a short video about the purpose of temples and then are invited to walk through the temple. Guides are available throughout the tour to explain the purpose of each room.



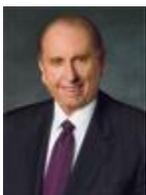
When the open house period is over, the temple is closed to the public, and several meetings are held to dedicate the temple to the Lord. Only faithful Church members ages 8 and older are allowed to attend the dedication meetings. In these meetings, prayers are offered, instructional addresses are given, and hymns are sung in celebration of the new temple.

Regular Temple Operation



After being dedicated, temples are open for use by Church members Monday through Saturday. In order to enter the temple, Church members must (1) be at least 12 years of age, (2) be a member for at least one year, and (3) have a current temple recommend. To obtain a recommend, a Church member has a special interview with his or her bishop or branch president and stake or district president before going to the temple. These Church leaders will ask questions to determine if the member has a testimony of the Church, keeps the commandments, supports Church leaders, obeys the Word of Wisdom, pays tithing, and is honest.

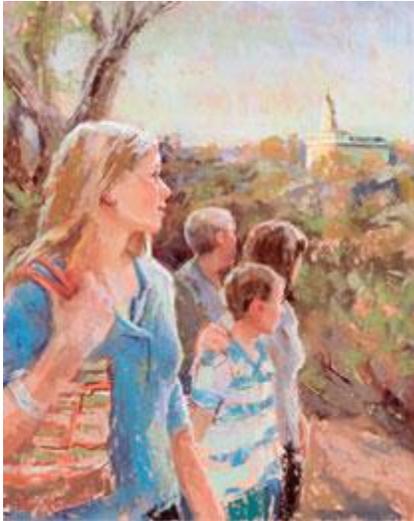
Blessings of the Temple



“I think there is no place in the world where I feel closer to the Lord than in one of His holy temples.”

—President Thomas S. Monson

In addition to the closeness we feel to the Lord when we are in the temple, we can continue to receive blessings even after we have returned to our everyday lives. Attending the temple gives us a clearer perspective and a sense of purpose and peace. President Thomas S. Monson described temple blessings as follows:



“As we go to the holy house, as we remember the covenants we make therein, we will be able to bear every trial and overcome each temptation. The temple provides purpose for our lives. It brings peace to our souls—not the peace provided by men but the peace promised by the Son of God when He said, ‘Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.’”

President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, described additional blessings of attending the temple:

“When members of the Church are troubled or when crucial decisions weigh heavily upon their minds, it is a common thing for them to go to the temple. It is a good place to take our cares. In the temple we can receive spiritual perspective. There, during the time of the temple service, we are ‘out of the world.’

“Sometimes our minds are so beset with problems, and there are so many things clamoring for attention at once that we just cannot think clearly and see clearly. At the temple the dust of distraction seems to settle out, the fog and the haze seem to lift, and we can ‘see’ things that we were not able to see before and find a way through our troubles that we had not previously known.

“The Lord will bless us as we attend to the sacred ordinance work of the temples. Blessings there will not be limited to our temple service. We will be blessed in all of our affairs” (“The Holy Temple,” *Ensign*, Feb. 1995).

Inside the Temple

“At the temple the dust of distraction seems to settle out, the fog and the haze seem to lift, and we can ‘see’ things that we were not able to see before and find a way through our troubles that we had not previously known.”

—President Boyd K. Packer

Structure

The temple is a peaceful, sacred place, set apart from the cares and turmoil of the world. All areas of the temple are beautifully and carefully maintained to preserve a spirit of reverence. The temple has many rooms to accomplish the ordinances performed there.



Baptismal Font

In the Bible, Jesus taught about baptism (see, for example, John 3:5). Because many people do not have the opportunity to be baptized in this life, the fonts in temples are used by the living to be baptized in behalf of those who have died. The baptismal font rests on the backs of 12 oxen, following a tradition dating back to the Temple of Solomon that is described in the Old Testament. The oxen represent the 12 tribes of ancient Israel.



Ordinance Rooms

In ordinance rooms an overview is given of God's plan for His children. Latter-day Saints learn of their premortal and mortal lives, the creation of the world and the Fall of man, the central role of Jesus Christ as the Redeemer of all God's children, and the blessings they can receive in the next life.



Celestial Room

The celestial room symbolizes the exalted and peaceful state that all may achieve through living the gospel of Jesus Christ. This room represents the contentment, inner harmony, and peace available to eternal families in the presence of Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ.



Sealing Room

In a sealing room, a bride and bridegroom are married not only for this life but also for eternity.

Manner of Dress

Those who attend the temple go to a dressing room to change from their street clothes into white clothing. This change of clothing serves as a reminder that visitors are temporarily leaving the world behind and entering a holy place. White clothing symbolizes purity, and the fact that all are dressed alike in the temple creates a sense of unity and equality.

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MORMONS: WHO THEY ARE, WHAT THEY BELIEVE - - Discussion Guide

The Three Kingdoms of Glory

<https://www.lds.org/topics/kingdoms-of-glory?lang=eng>

Kingdoms of Glory

Through the Atonement of Jesus Christ, all people will be resurrected. After we are resurrected, we will stand before the Lord to be judged according to our desires and actions. Each of us will accordingly receive an eternal dwelling place in a specific kingdom of glory. The Lord taught this principle when He said, “In my Father's house are many mansions” (John 14:2).

Additional Information

There are three kingdoms of glory: the celestial kingdom, the terrestrial kingdom, and the telestial kingdom. The glory we inherit will depend on the depth of our conversion, expressed by our obedience to the Lord's commandments. It will depend on the manner in which we have “received the testimony of Jesus” (D&C 76:51; see also D&C 76:74, 79, 101).

Celestial Kingdom

The celestial kingdom is the highest of the three kingdoms of glory. Those in this kingdom will dwell forever in the presence of God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ. This should be your goal: to inherit celestial glory and to help others receive that great blessing as well. Such a goal is not achieved in one attempt; it is the result of a lifetime of righteousness and constancy of purpose.

The celestial kingdom is the place prepared for those who have “received the testimony of Jesus” and been “made perfect through Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, who wrought out this perfect atonement through the shedding of his own blood” (D&C 76:51, 69). To inherit this gift, we must receive the ordinances of salvation, keep the commandments, and repent of our sins. For a

detailed explanation of those who will inherit celestial glory, see Doctrine and Covenants 76:50–70; 76:92–96.

In January 1836 the Prophet Joseph Smith received a revelation that expanded his understanding of the requirements to inherit celestial glory. The heavens were opened to him, and he saw the celestial kingdom. He marveled when he saw his older brother Alvin there, even though Alvin had died before receiving the ordinance of baptism. (See D&C 137:1–6.) Then the voice of the Lord came to the Prophet Joseph:

“All who have died without a knowledge of this gospel, who would have received it if they had been permitted to tarry, shall be heirs of the celestial kingdom of God; ”Also all that shall die henceforth without a knowledge of it, who would have received it with all their hearts, shall be heirs of that kingdom;

“For I, the Lord, will judge all men according to their works, according to the desire of their hearts” (D&C 137:7–9).

Commenting on this revelation, the Prophet Joseph said, “I also beheld that all children who die before they arrive at the years of accountability are saved in the celestial kingdom of heaven” (D&C 137:10).

From another revelation to the Prophet Joseph, we learn that there are three degrees within the celestial kingdom. To be exalted in the highest degree and continue eternally in family relationships, we must enter into “the new and everlasting covenant of marriage” and be true to that covenant. In other words, temple marriage is a requirement for obtaining the highest degree of celestial glory. (See D&C 131:1–4.) All who are worthy to enter into the new and everlasting covenant of marriage will have that opportunity, whether in this life or the next.

Terrestrial Kingdom

Those who inherit terrestrial glory will “receive of the presence of the Son, but not of the fulness of the Father. Wherefore, they are bodies terrestrial, and not bodies celestial, and differ in glory as the moon differs from the sun” (D&C 76:77–78). Generally speaking, individuals in the terrestrial kingdom will be

honorable people “who were blinded by the craftiness of men” (D&C 76:75). This group will include members of the Church who were “not valiant in the testimony of Jesus” (D&C 76:79). It will also include those who rejected the opportunity to receive the gospel in mortality but who later received it in the postmortal spirit world (see D&C 76:73–74). To learn more about those who will inherit terrestrial glory, see Doctrine and Covenants 76:71–80, 91, 97.

Telestial Kingdom

Telestial glory will be reserved for individuals who “received not the gospel of Christ, neither the testimony of Jesus” (D&C 76:82). These individuals will receive their glory after being redeemed from spirit prison, which is sometimes called hell (see D&C 76:84, D&C 76:106). A detailed explanation of those who will inherit telestial glory is found in Doctrine and Covenants 76:81–90, 98–106, 109–112.

Perdition

Some people will not be worthy to dwell in any kingdom of glory. They will be called “the sons of perdition” and will have to “abide a kingdom which is not a kingdom of glory” (D&C 76:32; 88:24). This will be the state of “those who know [God's] power, and have been made partakers thereof, and suffered themselves through the power of the devil to be overcome, and to deny the truth and defy [God's] power” (D&C 76:31; see also D&C 76:30, 32–49).

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MORMONS: WHO THEY ARE, WHAT THEY BELIEVE - - Discussion Guide

Why do Latter-day Saints Abstain from Alcohol, Coffee, and Tea?

<https://www.lds.org/scriptures/dc-testament/dc/89.1-21?lang=eng#0>.

The Doctrine and Covenants

Section 89

Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet, at Kirtland, Ohio, February 27, 1833. As a consequence of the early brethren using tobacco in their meetings, the Prophet was led to ponder upon the matter; consequently, he inquired of the Lord concerning it. This revelation, known as the Word of Wisdom, was the result.

1–9, The use of wine, strong drinks, tobacco, and hot drinks is proscribed; 10–17, Herbs, fruits, flesh, and grain are ordained for the use of man and of animals; 18–21, Obedience to gospel law, including the Word of Wisdom, brings temporal and spiritual blessings.

1 A WORD OF WISDOM, for the benefit of the council of high priests, assembled in Kirtland, and the church, and also the saints in Zion—

2 To be sent greeting; not by commandment or constraint, but by revelation and the word of wisdom, showing forth the order and will of God in the temporal salvation of all saints in the last days—

3 Given for a principle with promise, adapted to the capacity of the weak and the weakest of all saints, who are or can be called saints.

4 Behold, verily, thus saith the Lord unto you: In consequence of evils and designs which do and will exist in the hearts of conspiring men in the last days, I have warned you, and forewarn you, by giving unto you this word of wisdom by revelation—

5 That inasmuch as any man drinketh wine or strong drink among you, behold it is not good, neither meet in the sight of your Father, only in assembling yourselves together to offer up your sacraments before him.

6 And, behold, this should be wine, yea, pure wine of the grape of the vine, of your own make.

7 And, again, strong drinks are not for the belly, but for the washing of your bodies.

8 And again, tobacco is not for the body, neither for the belly, and is not good for man, but is an herb for bruises and all sick cattle, to be used with judgment and skill.

9 And again, hot drinks are not for the body or belly.

10 And again, verily I say unto you, all wholesome herbs God hath ordained for the constitution, nature, and use of man—

11 Every herb in the season thereof, and every fruit in the season thereof; all these to be used with prudence and thanksgiving.

12 Yea, flesh also of beasts and of the fowls of the air, I, the Lord, have ordained for the use of man with thanksgiving; nevertheless they are to be used sparingly;

13 And it is pleasing unto me that they should not be used, only in times of winter, or of cold, or famine.

14 All grain is ordained for the use of man and of beasts, to be the staff of life, not only for man but for the beasts of the field, and the fowls of heaven, and all wild animals that run or creep on the earth;

15 And these hath God made for the use of man only in times of famine and excess of hunger.

16 All grain is good for the food of man; as also the fruit of the vine; that which yieldeth fruit, whether in the ground or above the ground—

17 Nevertheless, wheat for man, and corn for the ox, and oats for the horse, and rye for the fowls and for swine, and for all beasts of the field, and barley for all useful animals, and for mild drinks, as also other grain.

18 And all saints who remember to keep and do these sayings, walking in obedience to the commandments, shall receive health in their navel and marrow to their bones;

19 And shall find wisdom and great treasures of knowledge, even hidden treasures;

20 And shall run and not be weary, and shall walk and not faint.

21 And I, the Lord, give unto them a promise, that the destroying angel shall pass by them, as the children of Israel, and not slay them. Amen.

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MORMONS: WHO THEY ARE, WHAT THEY BELIEVE - - Discussion Guide

Why do Latter-day Saints Abstain from Alcohol, Coffee, and Tea?

Word of Wisdom

<https://www.lds.org/topics/word-of-wisdom?lang=eng&query=coffee>

Word of Wisdom



The Word of Wisdom is for our physical and spiritual benefit.

What is the Word of Wisdom?

The Word of Wisdom is a law of health revealed by the Lord for the physical and spiritual benefit of His children. On February 27, 1833, as recorded in section 89 of the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord revealed which foods are good for us to eat and which substances are not good for the human body. He also promised health, protection, knowledge, and wisdom to those who obey the Word of Wisdom.

In the Word of Wisdom, the Lord revealed that the following substances are harmful:

Alcoholic drinks (see D&C 89:5–7).

Tobacco (see D&C 89:8).

Tea and coffee (see D&C 89:9; latter-day prophets have taught that the term “hot drinks,” as written in this verse, refers to tea and coffee).

When people purposefully take anything harmful into their bodies, they are not living in harmony with the Word of Wisdom. Illegal drugs can especially destroy those who use them. The abuse of prescription drugs is also destructive spiritually and physically.

The Lord also declared in the Word of Wisdom that the following foods are good:

Vegetables and fruits, which should be used “with prudence and thanksgiving” (see D&C 89:10–11).

The flesh “of beasts and of the fowls of the air,” which is “to be used sparingly” (see D&C 89:12–13).

Grains such as wheat, rice, and oats, which are “the staff of life” (see D&C 89:14–17).

To those who keep the Word of Wisdom, the Lord promised:

“All saints who remember to keep and do these sayings, walking in obedience to the commandments, shall receive health in their navel and marrow to their bones;

“And shall find wisdom and great treasures of knowledge, even hidden treasures;

“And shall run and not be weary, and shall walk and not faint.

“And I, the Lord, give unto them a promise, that the destroying angel shall pass by them, as the children of Israel, and not slay them” (D&C 89:18–21).

The best course is to completely avoid the substances that the Lord prohibits in the Word of Wisdom. Those who have engaged in addictive behaviors can stop and become free from addiction. Through personal effort, strength from the Lord, help from family members and friends, and guidance from Church leaders, anyone can overcome addiction.

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MORMONS: WHO THEY ARE, WHAT THEY BELIEVE - - Discussion Guide

A Temple Recommend: Being Worthy to Enter the Temple

<https://www.lds.org/ensign/2010/08/being-worthy-to-enter-the-temple?lang=eng>

Being Worthy to Enter the Temple

Temples are literally houses of the Lord. In the temple we make sacred covenants, or promises, with God that are necessary for us to be with Him in the highest degree of heavenly glory (see D&C 131:1-4). These temple covenants lead to the great blessings available through Jesus Christ.

We are not expected to be perfect to enter the temple. Rather, the purpose of the things we learn and the covenants we make in the temple is to help perfect us. We must, however, be worthy to enter.

A temple recommend signifies that we have been found worthy through an interview with a member of our bishopric or our branch president and also an interview with a member of our stake presidency or mission presidency. Temple recommend interviews are opportunities for us to examine our worthiness. In each of the interviews, our priesthood leaders will ask us about our personal conduct and faith. Our priesthood leaders keep these interviews private and confidential.

If our priesthood leaders find that we are worthy to enter the temple, we will receive a temple recommend. We sign our recommend to confirm our worthiness to enter the temple. Our priesthood leaders also sign our recommend as additional witnesses of our worthiness. This recommend allows us to enter the temple for the next two years, provided we remain worthy.

The following are some of the topics your priesthood leaders will ask you about:

1.

Your testimony of Heavenly Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost.

2.

Whether you sustain the President of the Church.

3.

Whether you live the law of chastity, pay tithing, are honest with others, and keep the Word of Wisdom.

4.

Whether you strive to attend church, keep the covenants you have made, and keep your life in harmony with the commandments of the gospel.

See *Gospel Principles* (2009), 222–23; and *True to the Faith* (2004), “Temples,” 170–72.

The Lord has set the standards of worthiness to enter the temple, as expressed by the Psalmist:

“Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in his holy place?

“He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart” (Psalm 24:3–4).

The First Presidency has established the questions asked in the temple recommend interview. The questions are the same for everyone.

After you turn 12, you can attend the temple to do baptisms for the dead. (Young men need to hold the priesthood.) To get a recommend, schedule an interview with your bishop or branch president.

Youth

Your Temple Recommend

Recommends for youth are called limited–use recommends, and there are two kinds: group and individual. Your name can be added to a group recommend if you visit the temple with your ward or branch. This recommend is valid for only one visit. If you live near a temple and can regularly participate in baptisms for

the dead, you can ask your bishop or branch president for an individual recommend, which is good for one year, provided you remain worthy.

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My Temple Recommend Expired

<https://www.lds.org/ensign/2010/06/my-temple-recommend-had-expired?lang=eng>

My Temple Recommend Had Expired

BY JULIE WRIGHT

I could only sit by and watch as the young women I was supposed to be leading entered the temple without me.

I left the building quickly and took long strides to put some distance between the stone walls and myself. I didn't break into sobs until I had rounded the corner where no one could see me. I sat down and let myself wallow in self-pity for a moment. All I could do was wait for our youth group to finish performing baptisms for the dead.

How could I have been so foolish?

It had been a long time since my last visit to the temple because I lived a good distance away. I had wanted to go for months, and chaperoning the young women on this trip had given me a reason to *make* the time.

I had entered the temple lobby feeling fine. Although the past year had been difficult, I felt that all the trials and stress had refined me into a better person. I felt prepared—like I was genuinely striving to do the things Heavenly Father wanted me to do. I went to the temple fasting, anticipating an outpouring of the Lord's Spirit there in His house.

At the recommend desk, an older gentleman in white smiled as he took my recommend, and then he frowned. "It's expired," he said and handed it back.

“It’s expired?” I echoed incredulously. I looked toward the tiny entrance to the baptistry. It was filled with young men and young women as well as the leaders, one of the bishop’s counselors, and my husband. I desperately wanted to move forward. But how could I with an expired recommend? My mind raced. Certainly the situation was due to an error, I thought. Perhaps during my interview the stake president had handed me the old recommend instead of the new one when he was done signing it. There was *no way* it could be expired. It hadn’t been that long.

Or had it? I stretched my memory to find the last time I had *taken* the time to go to the temple. It had been long enough that I couldn’t remember. I finally faced the truth. I hadn’t checked the date on my recommend. It had expired, and now I couldn’t enter the house of the Lord.

At that moment I felt a kinship to those 10 virgins awaiting the bridegroom (see Matthew 25:1–13). They all had invitations to attend the wedding celebration, but there were five who were not truly prepared. But the bridegroom didn’t come right away. Eventually, when the 10 virgins heard the bridegroom was coming they all stood to trim their lamps. Five of the 10 virgins had thought ahead and brought extra oil to replenish their lamps. Five had not. Their oil burned out. They started the evening out right and were partway there. But, as my grandma used to tell me, when you’re drowning it doesn’t matter that you swam most of the way across the ocean. In the end, being partway isn’t good enough.

When the bridegroom arrived late and the five foolish virgins *weren’t* prepared, they asked to borrow oil from the five wise virgins. But the answer was no. When I was younger I used to think the five wise virgins were selfish. Why couldn’t they hand over a bit of oil? I’ve since realized that some things can’t be shared, just as none of my friends could have shared their temple recommends with me so that I could enter the temple.

I imagine those five foolish women standing on the wrong side of the door feeling sorrow and embarrassment. We have no indication they were evil people. They had been worthy to receive invitations to the wedding celebration, but they were not fully prepared.

How foolish.

I certainly felt foolish. I wasn't an evil or bad person. I just wasn't as prepared as I thought. As a result, my husband had to go on without me. It felt symbolic, that moment of being left behind, that moment of being turned away when I yearned to go inside.

Unlike the five foolish virgins, I had a second chance. Because I was spiritually prepared to enter the temple, I could be interviewed, renew the recommend, and come back another time. And I would treasure the lesson I had learned about always being sure my lamp was properly trimmed and about having extra oil.

Live Worthy of a Temple Recommend



Photograph of Gordon B. Hinckley by Drake Busath

“Live worthy to hold a temple recommend. There is nothing more precious than a temple recommend. ... Whether you can go there frequently or not, qualify for a temple recommend and keep a recommend in your pocket. It will be a reminder to you of what is expected of you as a Latter-day Saint.”

President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008), “Inspirational Thoughts,” *Ensign*, Apr. 2002, 4.

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The Sealing Ordinance

<https://www.lds.org/ensign/2011/09/the-sealing-ordinance-links-families-eternally?lang=eng>

The Sealing Ordinance Links Families Eternally

While on earth, we can make sacred covenants (promises) with God in the holy temple through priesthood authority. Among these covenants is the opportunity for husbands and wives to be sealed (married for eternity) and their children to be sealed to them. This means that if we keep our covenants with the Lord and each other, death cannot permanently separate us. This sealing ordinance is an essential part of our Heavenly Father's plan for us to live with Him eternally. (See D&C 128:9-10; 132:19.)

Once we have made temple covenants for ourselves, we can gather our family history and perform temple ordinances for our deceased ancestors. This makes temple covenants available to them (see D&C 138:29-37).

The priesthood power to seal families was prophesied anciently (see Malachi 4:5-6) and in modern times (see D&C 2). Both prophecies revealed that the prophet Elijah "shall plant in the hearts of the children the promises made to the fathers, and the hearts of the children shall turn to their fathers" (D&C 2:2).

Elijah's promised return was fulfilled on April 3, 1836, in the newly dedicated Kirtland Temple in Ohio, USA, when Elijah among others appeared and gave his priesthood keys to the Prophet Joseph Smith (see D&C 110:13-15).

Currently, there are 134 temples in operation throughout the world, where worthy Latter-day Saints can make covenants with God and be sealed as families for eternity. They can return to serve as proxies for their deceased

ancestors, thus fulfilling the prophecy that the hearts of the children will be turned to the fathers.

We must receive certain covenants and ordinances in order to return to live with our Heavenly Father:

1. We are baptized and confirmed (see Matthew 3:16-17; John 3:5; 2 Nephi 31:5-18).
2. Men receive the Aaronic Priesthood and later the Melchizedek Priesthood (see D&C 128:11).
3. In the temple we make additional covenants associated with the endowment.
4. Husbands and wives are sealed (married) in the temple for time and all eternity.
5. Children born to a sealed couple are born "in the covenant." Children who are not born in the covenant may be sealed to their parents.
6. We then prepare the names of our ancestors for temple work and perform necessary ordinances for them in the temple (see 1 Corinthians 15:29; D&C 128:15-16, 24).

For more information, see *Gospel Principles* (2009), 207-11; *True to the Faith* (2004), 44, 61-64, 97-101, 170-74; and "Being Worthy to Enter the Temple," *Liahona*, Aug. 2010, 12-13; *Ensign*, Aug. 2010, 8-9.

"And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven" (Matthew 16:19).

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Preparing for the Temple Endowment

<https://www.lds.org/new-era/1987/02/preparing-for-the-temple-endowment?lang=eng>

Preparing for the Temple Endowment

BY KATHLEEN LUBECK

Whether you've seen the outside or the inside of a temple, in person or in pictures, or been to temples close to you or thousands of miles away, they all have one thing in common—that's where Church members go to perform ordinances so they can one day return to our Heavenly Father's presence, if they live worthily. That's where Church members perform the same ordinances for those who've died, too. Temple ordinances are at the center of the gospel.

“When you're in the temple being baptized for the dead, it's like you're in a spiritual fortress and you're protected,” says Shaun Tueller, 17. “You feel all the good things inside the temple, and you don't worry about anything outside.”

“At the Atlanta temple open house, we went into the celestial room, and they asked us to meditate and think about the temple. Everybody was amazed by the beauty and calm, even the nonmembers. Sometimes when I'm rushed, I close my eyes and remember when I was back in that room, and how I got rid of all the worries in my mind,” says Christy Arrowood, 16.

You know the feeling, if you've been to visit a temple. You can feel it as you walk on the temple grounds. It's a feeling of peace, of closeness to the Savior. If you're walking by the temple at night, there's a solemn beauty that radiates as the lights gently touch the temple walls. Something deep inside you tells you it's a sacred place.

We need the ordinances of the gospel to return to our Heavenly Father. We're put on earth to serve out a probation, then to return to our Heavenly Father in exaltation. The only way to do that is through the ordinances of the temple.

Although going to the temple might seem like a long way into the future, preparing to go to the temple should be part of your everyday life. Interviews with several former temple presidents and matrons produced some helpful counsel to consider as you prepare for the temple.

Your first goal, of course, should be to keep the commandments so that you will always be worthy to enter the temple. That's something you should be working on right now.

Your second goal should be to be baptized for the dead when you have the opportunity. Your third goal should be to receive your endowment and do work for the dead. And your fourth goal should be eternal marriage.

If you've been baptized for the dead, you've probably felt the joy that comes when you've helped open the doors for someone to accept the gospel. It's a sweet, pure feeling of helping in Heavenly Father's work.

You can be baptized for the dead right now if you're worthy, are at least 12 years old, and live close enough to a temple to attend. Baptisms for the dead are done in groups as arranged by the bishop or branch president. When it's time for you to receive your endowment, you'll probably be going on a mission or preparing for your marriage, or you may simply have a strong desire to receive your endowment. Just as with all major decisions of your life, you may wish to talk to your parents before your temple interview. Your bishop could also offer counsel.

"Spiritual maturity is a consideration for when a person receives the endowment, and whether that person is capable of understanding and living the covenants he or she makes," explained one former temple president. "There is no specific age limit. If a person is not going on a mission or getting married in the temple, he or she must be ready to make eternal commitments. That person should also want to strengthen himself or herself by righteous living."

When you receive your endowment, you'll be taught an overview of the Lord's eternal plan for each of us. Elder James E. Talmage tells about the temple endowment in his book *The House of the Lord*. He says that the temple endowment teaches about the creation of the earth, Adam and Eve leaving the Garden of Eden, the plan of redemption, the apostasy, and the restoration of the gospel. Members receiving their endowments make commitments to the Lord, too, called covenants.

A covenant is a binding and solemn promise between God and a person or group of chosen people. Elder Bruce R. McConkie tells us that, in addition to baptism and the sacrament, tithing, keeping the Sabbath holy, and the Word of Wisdom are examples of covenants. The Lord has promised us specific blessings in return for observing these laws. Elder McConkie also says that "the more faithful and devoted a person is, the more of the covenants of the Lord he is enabled to receive" (*Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed., Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966, p. 167).

Elder Talmage tells us the covenants we make in the temple include the "promise to observe the law of strict virtue and chastity, to be charitable, benevolent, tolerant and pure; to devote both talent and material means to the spread of truth and the uplifting of the race; to maintain devotion to the cause of truth; and to seek in every way to contribute to the great preparation that the earth may be made ready to receive her King—the Lord Jesus Christ. With the taking of each covenant and the assuming of each obligation a promised blessing is pronounced, contingent upon the faithful observance of the conditions" (*The House of the Lord*, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1978, p. 84).

The ordinances and procedures given in the temple are so sacred that they are not discussed outside of the temple. The Lord wants only those who are worthy to be introduced to those sacred blessings. You can prepare for those blessings by striving to live a righteous life and by obeying the commandments. As one former temple president said, "When I'm asked by a nonmember why he or she can't enter the temple, I tell people the temple is not closed to them. It's open to anyone who is willing to prepare and be worthy to enter, and we encourage all people to do so."

How can you prepare for receiving your endowment? If your parents have been to the temple, one good place to start is by asking them to explain what the temple means to them.

Those who come from a family where no one attends the temple can be a great example to their families if they have a positive attitude toward the temple. A former temple matron describes hearing a young woman speak in sacrament meeting about the temple. “Her parents are divorced, and there has been a lot of sadness in their family. But this bright spirit stood at the pulpit telling how she wants to go to the temple and how to prepare for it. Her father was there to hear it, and he hadn’t been to church for years. She’s drawing their family together and has been a wonderful example to them.”

In response to specific questions about preparing for the temple, former temple presidents made the following suggestions. For those teenagers whose parents are not Church members, there are still many ways to learn about the temple. “The temple ceremonies are priesthood ordinances, and the responsibility of preparation belongs to the bishop, and then the stake president. And, of course, parents, home teachers, quorum and auxiliary leaders have an ongoing responsibility to teach about the temple.”

Preparing to go to the temple is a process, not a one-time event. “There’s no such thing as a crash course for going to the temple. A person needs to have a testimony. If he has a testimony of God’s eternal plan he won’t be satisfied with anything but having the temple be a part of his life.”

Once a person has prepared for the temple experience and received his or her endowment, there’s still more.

“Temple ordinances are only some of the things the Lord requires for the greatest blessing, that of exaltation. But there are a lot of other things in the gospel that the Lord expects of us. The temple is a beautiful part of it, but living the gospel and pleasing the Lord are essential, too.”

One of the best ways to prepare for temple experiences is through activity in the Church. “Take advantage of Church programs and the opportunity to respond to leadership callings.”

It's important to go to the temple for the right reasons, too.

"If young people come to the temple for the wrong reasons, like family or peer pressure, they usually don't have a desire to come back. If they go with the right spirit, they'll be hungering and thirsting and wanting to find out all they can about what's taught in the temple."

One suggestion is to prepare for the temple by seriously studying the scriptures. "Find out for yourself who Jesus Christ really is. You can know him, and as you make the temple covenants with God, you are putting your hand in his, and receiving blessings from his hand all the time."

Another way to prepare for the temple is to read about it. "Church books and magazine articles can be a great help in preparing you to receive your endowment. You might want to read Elder Boyd K. Packer's book *The Holy Temple*, or Elder James E. Talmage's *The House of the Lord*."

Prayer is important, too. "Pray for clarity of mind on temple matters."

What are some of the blessings in this life that come to someone who attends the temple regularly? "You can't help but leave the temple feeling uplifted. You learn charity and love and compassion. You leave the cares of the day outside the doors of the temple, and when you go out, your feet are led to the paths you've been searching for to help you with some problem you might have.

"After you make covenants, you're not pulled to and fro by the world so easily. It's a strength to your life and helps you to keep righteous goals."

"As you come to the sacredness of the temple, you take yourself out of the world. You can forget yourself in the work you're doing."

"You get a perspective of your life that puts it in order for you. And the experience in the temple is supportive of the LDS way of life. It gives you a backup, a reassurance that what you're doing is righteous."

It can bring families together in this life, too. "The endowment brings all generations together, no matter what songs your parents or grandparents sang or how they wore their hair. You have that great common bond of the temple."

After you've received your endowment, you should return to the temple often to vicariously do the same for someone who has died, so that person will have the opportunity for those same blessings.

And when you do get married in the temple, you'll understand even more the importance of eternal covenants you make with the Lord.

“And this shall be our covenant—that we will walk in all the ordinances of the Lord” (D&C 136:4).

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Aaronic Priesthood

<https://www.lds.org/topics/aaronic-priesthood?lang=eng>

Aaronic Priesthood

In the Church today, worthy male members may receive the Aaronic Priesthood beginning at age 12. These young men, typically ages 12–17, receive many opportunities to participate in sacred priesthood ordinances and give service. As they worthily fulfill their duties, they act in the name of the Lord to help others receive the blessings of the gospel.

Additional Information

As the Prophet Joseph Smith translated the Book of Mormon, he found mention of baptism for the remission of sins. On May 15, 1829, he and his scribe Oliver Cowdery went into the woods to inquire of the Lord concerning baptism. As they prayed, “a messenger from heaven descended in a cloud of light.” This messenger was John the Baptist, the prophet who had baptized Jesus Christ centuries earlier. John the Baptist, now a resurrected being, laid his hands on Joseph and on Oliver and conferred upon each of them the Aaronic Priesthood, which had been taken from the earth during the Great Apostasy. With this authority, Joseph and Oliver were able to baptize one another. (See Joseph Smith—History 1:68–72.)

The offices of the Aaronic Priesthood are bishop, priest, teacher, and deacon. With the authorization of the presiding priesthood leader (usually the bishop or branch president), deacons pass the sacrament. They help the bishop or branch president watch over Church members by giving service and assisting with temporal matters such as gathering fast offerings. Teachers may perform all the duties of deacons, and they also receive other opportunities to serve. They prepare the sacramental bread and water and serve as home teachers. Priests

may perform all the duties of deacons and teachers. With the authorization of the presiding priesthood leader, they may also bless the sacrament, baptize, and ordain others to the offices of priest, teacher, and deacon.

The Aaronic Priesthood is “an appendage to the greater, or the Melchizedek Priesthood” (D&C 107:14). It is often called the preparatory priesthood. As a priesthood holder serves in the Aaronic Priesthood, he prepares to receive the Melchizedek Priesthood, to receive the blessings of the temple, to serve a full-time mission, to be a loving husband and father, and to continue in lifelong service to the Lord.

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Melchizedek Priesthood

<https://www.lds.org/topics/melchizedek-priesthood?lang=eng&query=melchizedek+priesthood>

Melchizedek Priesthood

Through the authority of the **Melchizedek Priesthood**, Church leaders guide the Church and direct the preaching of the gospel throughout the world. In the ordinances of the **Melchizedek Priesthood**, “the power of godliness is manifest” (D&C 84:20). This greater priesthood was given to Adam and has been on the earth whenever the Lord has revealed His gospel. It was taken from the earth during the Great Apostasy, but it was restored in 1829, when the Apostles Peter, James, and John conferred it upon Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery.

Additional Information

“There are, in the church, two priesthoods, namely, the Melchizedek and Aaronic” (D&C 107:1). The **Melchizedek Priesthood**, which is “after the Order of the Son of God” (D&C 107:3), is the greater of these. It “holds the right of presidency, and has power and authority over all the offices in the church” (D&C 107:8). It also holds “the keys of all the spiritual blessings of the church” (D&C 107:18). It is named after a great high priest who lived during the time of the prophet Abraham (see D&C 107:2–4; see also Alma 13:14–19).

The offices of the **Melchizedek Priesthood** are Apostle, Seventy, patriarch, high priest, and elder. The President of the High Priesthood is the President of the Church (see D&C 107:64–66).

Men in the Church must be worthy **Melchizedek Priesthood** holders in order to receive the temple endowment and be sealed to their families for eternity. They have the authority to administer to the sick and give special blessings to family members and others. With the authorization of presiding priesthood leaders,

they can bestow the gift of the Holy Ghost and ordain other worthy men to offices in the Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthoods.

When a man receives the **Melchizedek Priesthood**, he enters into the oath and covenant of the priesthood. He covenants to be faithful, magnify his calling, “give diligent heed to the words of eternal life,” and “live by every word that proceedeth forth from the mouth of God.” Those who keep this covenant will be sanctified by the Spirit and receive “all that [the] Father hath.” (See D&C 84:33–44.)

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What is a Ward/Stake/Branch?

<http://www.mormon.org/faq/ward-stake-branch>

What is a ward/stake/branch?



Our local congregations are called wards (or branches for smaller congregations). They are organized geographically and members attend a ward or branch near their home. Because in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints all the teaching materials are consistent throughout the wards and branches, a person will be studying the same lessons no matter where in the world they attend church. The spiritual leader of each ward is called the bishop (or the branch president for branches). He is a member of the congregation who has been asked to serve as a volunteer in this position. A group of wards forms a stake, and the leader of a stake is a stake president. “Stake” is not a term found in the New Testament, but is taken from Old Testament tent imagery in which the “tent,” or church, is held up by supporting stakes (see Isaiah 54:2).

A ward or a branch is a community in which members develop friendships and help each other. Members try to follow the teachings of an ancient prophet who taught that when we are baptized, we are “willing to bear one another’s burdens, that they may be light” and “willing to mourn with those that mourn; yea, and comfort those that stand in need of comfort” (Book of Mormon, Mosiah 18:8-9). Through service, members lift one another’s burdens and express their love.

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MORMONS: WHO THEY ARE, WHAT THEY BELIEVE - - Discussion Guide

Baptisms for the Dead

<https://www.lds.org/topics/baptisms-for-the-dead?lang=eng>

Baptisms for the Dead

Jesus Christ taught that baptism is essential to the salvation of all who have lived on earth (see John 3:5). Many people, however, have died without being baptized. Others were baptized without proper authority. Because God is merciful, He has prepared a way for all people to receive the blessings of baptism. By performing proxy baptisms in behalf of those who have died, Church members offer these blessings to deceased ancestors. Individuals can then choose to accept or reject what has been done in their behalf.

Additional Information

Jesus Christ said, “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God” (John 3:5). Even Jesus Christ Himself was baptized (see Matthew 3:13–17).

Many people have lived on the earth who never heard of the gospel of Jesus Christ and who were not baptized. Others lived without fully understanding the importance of the ordinance of baptism. Still others were baptized, but without proper authority.

Because He is a loving God, the Lord does not damn those people who, through no fault of their own, never had the opportunity for baptism. He has therefore authorized baptisms to be performed by proxy for them. A living person, often a descendant who has become a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, is baptized in behalf of a deceased person. This work is done by Church members in temples throughout the world.

Some people have misunderstood that when baptisms for the dead are performed, deceased persons are baptized into the Church against their will. This is not the case. Each individual has agency, or the right to choose. The validity of a baptism for the dead depends on the deceased person accepting it and choosing to accept and follow the Savior while residing in the spirit world. The names of deceased persons are not added to the membership records of the Church.

The New Testament indicates that baptisms for the dead were done during the time of the Apostle Paul (see 1 Corinthians 15:29). This ordinance was restored with the establishment of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

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MORMONS: WHO THEY ARE, WHAT THEY BELIEVE - - Discussion Guide

A Closer Look at Proxy Baptism

<http://www.utlm.org/onlinebooks/mclaims9.htm#baptism>

TEMPLES AND TEMPLE ORDINANCES

"We believe that through the atonement of Christ all mankind may be saved by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel."

3rd Article of Faith by Joseph Smith

TEMPLES

Some of the "ordinances" required for LDS individual or personal salvation can only be performed in temples. Mormons believe that temples and temple ordinances were among the great truths that Joseph Smith restored to the church and they take great pride in being a "temple building people."

LDS Apostle Bruce McConkie explained that a temple is "... a House of the Lord... where he and his Spirit may dwell... From the days of Adam to the present, whenever the Lord has had a people on the earth, temples and temple ordinances have been a crowning feature of their worship. 'My people are *always* commanded to build temples,' the Lord says, 'for the glory, honor, and endowment' of all the saints (*D. & C.* 124:39-40) ...But in the days of poverty, or when the number of true believers has been too small, the Lord has used mountains, groves, and wilderness locations for temple purposes" (*M.D.* p. 780). LDS Apostle Franklin D. Richards added, "The temples, the houses of our God, when acceptably dedicated, become to us the gates of heaven" (*J. of D.*, Vol. 25, p. 231).

LDS Apostle Bruce McConkie also declared, "Members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (known informally by the nickname Mormons) believe the Bible. Indeed, so literally and completely do their beliefs and practices conform to the teachings of the Bible that it is not uncommon to hear informed persons say: 'If all men believed the Bible, all would be Mormons.' Bible doctrine is Mormon doctrine and Mormon doctrine is Bible doctrine. They are one and the same" (*What the Mormons Think of Christ*, p. 3).

Therefore, temples and temple ordinances from "Adam to the present" should be found in the Bible if LDS beliefs and practice conform "literally and completely" to it. But until God revealed the design and use of the tabernacle to Moses in Ex. 25-40, neither tabernacles nor temples were even mentioned! Instructions to Moses for the tabernacle would have been unnecessary if temples were already in use. If "whenever the Lord had

a people on the earth, temples and temple ordinances" were part of their worship, no one from Adam to Moses belonged to the Lord!

The first time the word "temple" is used in the Bible is in I Sam. 1:9, where it refers to the portable tabernacle Israel received through Moses. The first permanent *temple* was built by King Solomon about 1,000 years before Christ (I Kings 6:17).

Apostle McConkie said a temple is a "House of the Lord... where he and his Spirit may dwell." But, Solomon questioned, "Who is able to build Him an house, seeing the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain Him? Who am I, then, that I should build Him an house, save only to *burn sacrifices* before Him (II Chron. 2:6)? At the temple dedication, Solomon prayed, "But will God in very deed dwell with men on the earth? Behold, heaven and the heaven of heaven cannot contain Thee; how much less this house which I have built" (II Chron. 6:12)! He also prayed, "...hear Thou in heaven *Thy dwelling place*..." (I Kings 8:30).

When King Hezekiah later restored the temple, "...the priests and Levites arose and blessed the people; and their voice was heard, and their prayer came up to *His holy dwelling place*, even unto *heaven* (II Chron. 30:27). Just before Stephen was killed, he said, "But Solomon built Him (God) an house. Nevertheless, the Most High *dwelleth not in temples made with hands*, as saith the prophet, Heaven is My throne, and earth is My footstool. What house will ye build me? Saith the Lord. Or what is the place of My rest? Hath not My hand made all these things" (Acts 7:47-50)?

Paul also declared, "God, who made the world and all things in it, seeing that is Lord of heaven and earth, *dwelleth not in temples made with hands*" (Acts 17:24). The book of Hebrews explains, "Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an High Priest who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty *in the heavens*, a minister of the sanctuary, and of the *true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man*... But Christ being come an High Priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect *tabernacle, not made with hands*, that is to say, not of this building, neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us...For *Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands*, which are the figures of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear *in the presence of God* for us" (Heb. 8:1-2; 9:11-12; 24).

Since God does not dwell in temples made with men's hands, temples cannot be the "gate" to His kingdom as LDS leaders have taught. Here on earth, God dwells in a "temple" built by the Lord Himself known as the Church or the Body of Christ (I Cor. 3:16-17; Eph. 2:21-22). He also indwells the physical bodies of believers in Christ which are called temples of God (I Cor. 6:19-20; II Cor. 6:16).

Regardless of what the Bible says, Mormons continue to build elaborate and expensive temples all over the world where they can perform saving ordinances for both the living and the dead.

For most Mormons, their first visit to the temple takes place when they go on a mission or when they get married for eternity or have their marriage "solemnized." But, in order to enter the temple, they must have a "temple recommend" which is signed by both the ward bishop and the stake president. In order to get that recommend they are personally questioned on the following issues: 1) moral cleanness; 2) sustaining the General Authorities of the LDS Church and whether they have sympathized with any apostates or their teachings; 3) paying a full tithe; 4) keeping the Word of Wisdom; 5) wearing the regulation undergarments (if they have previously been to the temple); 6) striving to attend services regularly and obeying the rules, laws and commandments of the gospel; 7) reporting if ever denied a recommend; 8) reporting if ever divorced. If all of these things are in order, they are given a temple recommend that serves as a ticket to enter the temple.

Those who are going to the temple to do proxy work for their dead relatives must first do the genealogical work necessary to identify those for whom the work will be done.

Genealogical Work

President Joseph Fielding Smith says, "Then it is his duty to seek his record as far back as he can go and do the same thing for each unit. He should begin with his father and mother and their children, and his grandfather and his children, great-grandfather and his children, and have the work done in like manner, linking each generation with the one that goes before. That is the responsibility resting upon every man who is the head of a household in this church" (*D. of S.*, Vol. II, pp. 206-207).

Joseph Smith also declared, "The greatest responsibility in this world that God has laid upon us is to seek after our dead" (*T. of P.J.S.*, p. 356). He also said, "Those Saints who neglect it in behalf of their deceased relatives, do it at the peril of their own salvation" (*Ibid.*, p. 193).

Thus, the LDS Church operates the most sophisticated "family history" genealogical library in the world. Microfilms of these genealogical records are kept in large tunnels drilled in a granite mountain southeast of Salt Lake City in Little Cottonwood Canyon. President Joseph Fielding Smith said of this work for the dead, "We cannot do it all at once, but will have the 1,000 years of the millennium to do it in. In that time the work must be done in behalf of the dead of the previous 6,000 years, for all who need it" (*D. of S.*, Vol. II, p. 166).

Smith continued, "Those who will be living here then will be in daily communication with those who have passed through the resurrection, and they will come with this information, this knowledge that we do not have and will give it to those in mortality saying, 'now go into the temples and do this work; when you get this done, we will bring you other names' (*Ibid.*, p. 167).

Thus, devout Mormons search for their genealogical records, and then do temple work for their dead relatives. They believe they will complete that work during the

millennium. Because of the possibility of duplicating work for the dead, LDS were told "one year must elapse after the death of an individual before any temple ordinance may be performed" (*Deseret News*, "Church News," January 7, 1967, p. 14). Zealous Mormons are performing millions of proxy ordinances or "endowments" for dead relatives every year. But the Bible warns, "Neither give heed to fables, and endless genealogies, and contentions, and striving about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain" (I Tim. 1:4; Titus 3:9).

TEMPLE ENDOWMENTS

LDS Apostle Bruce McConkie says temples are "holy sanctuaries wherein sacred ordinances, rites, and ceremonies are performed which pertain to salvation and exaltation in the Kingdom of God... (*M.D.*, pp. 779).

Marriage and Sealing

President Joseph Fielding Smith said, "Now the duty of a man in his own family is to see that he and his wife are sealed at the altar. If married out in the world before they joined the church, or if they have been in the church and have been unable to go to the temple, it is that man's duty to go to the temple, have his wife sealed to him and have their children sealed, so that the family group, that unit to which he belongs, is made intact so that it will continue throughout eternity. That is the first duty that man owes to himself, to his wife and to his children. He receives this blessing by virtue of the priesthood" (*D. of S.*, Vol. II, p. 206).

Concerning celestial marriage in the temple, Apostle John Widtsoe wrote, "Several approaches to eternal marriage may be made: Two living persons may be sealed to each other for time and eternity. A living man may be sealed for eternity to a dead woman; or a living woman to a dead man. Two dead persons may be sealed to each other. It is also possible, though the church does not now permit it, to seal two living people for eternity only, with no association on earth... Further, under divine command to the Prophet Joseph Smith, it was possible for one man to be sealed to more than one woman for time and for eternity. Thus, came plural marriage among the Latter-day Saints" (*E. & R.*, p. 340). While polygamy in this life is not being practiced by most Mormons today, many LDS men are sealed to more than one wife for all eternity in the manner just described.

Failure to marry in an LDS temple will "damn" a person so that his eternal progression will be stopped short of godhood. The best that he can hope for then is to be an angel (see *D. & C.* 132:16-20; see also the pamphlet *About Mormonism* by Apostle Stephen L. Richards, p. 12).

When he arrives at the temple, the "temple recommend" is checked to see if it is in proper order. He then goes to the washing and anointing room where the endowment ceremony begins. Ladies go to a separate but similar room. All clothing is removed and

put in a private locker. They then put on a "shield" which looks something like a white sheet folded in half with a hole in the middle for the head to fit through. This hangs loosely over the front and back, leaving the sides exposed. A temple worker of the same sex then puts his or her right hand under running water and washes the applicant's body. Each part of the body is touched as it is mentioned in the ceremony being recited, including the head, ears, eyes, nose, lips, neck, shoulders, back, breast, vitals and bowels, arms and hands, loins, legs and feet. The washing is "confirmed" with a brief ceremony, and the person goes to another booth where the same body parts are anointed with oil. That is followed by a ceremony confirming the anointing.

They then put on the "authorized pattern" undergarment with another ceremony. This is the garment devout Mormon men and women wear nearly all of the time - day and night, summer and winter. They are told it will be a shield and protection against the power of the destroyer until their work on earth is completed. Many Mormons have testified of physical and spiritual protection by wearing the garment. Non-Mormons (Gentiles) sometimes refer to this garment as "Mormon armor" or "bullet-proof underwear" because of the dramatic stories Mormons tell about its protective power. The original undergarment was full length with a large collar, but dress styles have changed and the garment has been greatly abbreviated. However, President Joseph F. Smith said:

The Lord has given unto us garments of the Holy Priesthood, and you know what that means. And yet there are those of us who mutilate them, in order that we may follow the foolish, vain and (permit me to say) indecent practices of the world. In order that such people may imitate the fashions, they will not hesitate to mutilate that which should be held by them the most sacred of all things in the world, next to their own virtue, next to their own purity of life. They should hold these things that God has given unto them sacred, *unchanged and unaltered* from the very pattern in which God gave them. Let us have the moral courage to stand against the opinions of fashion, and especially where fashion compels us to break a covenant and so commit a grievous sin (*Improvement Era*, 9:813, August, 1906).

Apparently, LDS leaders did not have the "moral courage to stand against the opinions of fashion," because the undergarment has been altered considerably! But, even the shortest will not fit under a bikini swim suit, so many Mormons now take them off while swimming, competing in sports and so on. In years past, devout Mormons insisted that their garments be in contact with their bodies at all times. Even while bathing or changing the garment, they stood or sat on it so that they would be in contact with its protective power.

After putting on the undergarment for the first time in the temple, each temple patron is given a "new name." He then goes back to his locker and removes the "shield," and he puts on the white temple clothes he rented or purchased. For a man these include shirt, pants, belt, socks, tie, and moccasins. Later he will put on a green "fig leaf" apron and white robe and cap. After the woman has put on her undergarment, she takes off

her shield and puts on a white slip, dress, hose, and moccasins. Later she also puts on a green "fig leaf" apron and a white robe and veil.

When they are dressed, they join several others in the Creation Room which has beautiful pictures depicting the creation of the world. There they listen to Elohim, Jehovah, and Michael discuss the creation of the world. They then follow "Adam and Eve" into the "Garden of Eden" room. In LDS temples built after the 1960's, participants go to an assembly room where scenes of creation are projected on a large screen. This is followed by scenes of the Garden of Eden, then Telestial scenes and finally Terrestrial scenes. With each different scene, participants see actors acting out LDS theology and they participate as a leader directs them. They also learn four special hand grips necessary for entrance into the celestial kingdom.

There are three vows in the endowment ceremony which were very similar until 1990. The first said, "I (Jacob, or whatever new name was just given) covenant and promise that I will never reveal the first token of the Aaronic Priesthood, together with its accompanying name, sign and penalty. Rather than do so I would suffer my life to be taken."

As this vow was taken, the thumb of the right hand was placed below the left ear and drawn quickly across the throat, indicating the type of death implied in the oath. With the other two vows, the motion was made across the breast and across the bowels respectively. But, in 1990, the word "penalty" along with the last sentence of the three oaths were deleted. The symbolic motions made with the hands were also discontinued.

Until 1990, while participants viewed "Telestial" scenes representing the lowest heaven, they learned that preachers were employed by Lucifer and were in the ministry for the money! This has also now been deleted. While viewing "Terrestrial" scenes they take vows of chastity and consecration. Then, everyone goes to stand before the veil which will give them entrance into the "Celestial Room" representing the highest heaven. Until 1990, in order to gain entrance, participants had to give the "five points of fellowship" to someone behind the veil. The five points were: 1) inside of right foot by the side of right foot, 2) knee to knee, 3) breast to breast, 4) hand to back, and 5) mouth to ear. The five points of fellowship are no longer used. But, only when the new name is whispered through the veil and the proper handshake (sure sign of the nail) is given, can they pass through the veil into the Celestial Room. After these endowments the couple can be married or sealed for all eternity in one of several "sealing rooms" in the temple.

Devout Mormons do not talk about the temple rites because they covenant not to do so as they go through the temple rites. Until 1990, they swore an oath on penalty of death not to talk about it! The LDS Church does not publish the ceremony because it is too sacred to be seen by Gentiles (non-Mormons). But, several former Mormons who memorized it have written it while others have tape recorded it. The Temple ceremony has undergone many changes since it was introduced, but Robert L. Millet, dean of

Religious Education at BYU declared in the July 1996 *Ensign* p. 51, "The gospel based covenants we make and ordinances we receive are likewise eternal and unchanging."

Even though LDS claim that Mormonism is a restoration of New Testament doctrines and practice, there is no record in the Bible or elsewhere showing that Jesus or His disciples ever participated in temple rites like the LDS. The Bible records only one wedding where Jesus was present and that was in Cana of Galilee (John 2:1-11) where there was no temple!

Temple ceremonies were never part of Christ's gospel, but they are a part of the LDS gospel, so those who teach and practice them fall under the condemnation of Gal. 1:8-9. Furthermore, LDS claim the *B. of M.* is the "fulness of the gospel" (*D. & C.* 20:9, 27:5), but it says nothing about temple rites. In fact, the *B. of M.* says, "The Lord worketh not in secret combinations" (Ether 8:19). But, LDS temple rites are secret from all but devout Mormons. Jesus said, "in secret have I said nothing" (John 18:20). Jesus never participated in or performed temple rites like the LDS have. Thus, if LDS are actually following the Lord's example as they claim, there should be no secret temple rites. Such rites even exclude non-LDS parents from attending the wedding of a son or daughter who has joined the LDS Church. Yet, the LDS Church claims that it has a wonderful family program!

POLYGAMY

Although most Mormons do not practice polygamy today, an estimated 30,000 or more "fundamentalist Mormons" are involved in it (*Ladies Home Journal*, June, 1967; and *Utah Holiday Magazine*, May, 1986). Several obituaries in Salt Lake newspapers during the 1990's have reported numerous wives and children when a man died. Many devout Mormons admit they believe in polygamy but are not practicing it because of the Woodruff Manifesto now known as Official Declaration-1 at the end of the *D. & C.* But, many of those same LDS men are sealed for all eternity to two or more wives in LDS temple rites in the manner described earlier by Apostle John Widtsoe. That is one reason that polygamy is discussed under the heading of "Temples and Temple Ordinances." A popular Mormon writer, John J. Stewart, says, "The Church has never, and certainly will never renounce this doctrine. The revelation on plural marriage is still an integral part of LDS scripture, and always will be" (*Brigham Young and His Wives*, p. 14). He was referring to the current edition of the *D. & C.*, Section 132.

LDS Apostle John Widtsoe explains the reason for polygamy stating, "In the spirit world are countless numbers of spirits waiting for their descent into mortality, to secure earth bodies as a means of further progress. These unborn spirits desired the best possible parentage. Those assuming plural marriage almost invariably were the finest types in the community" (*E. & R.*, p. 393).

President Heber Kimball also declared, "I have noticed that a man who has but one wife, and is inclined to that doctrine, soon begins to wither and dry up, while a man who goes into plurality looks fresh, young and sprightly" (*J. of D.*, Vol. V, p. 22).

President Brigham Young also said, "The only men who become Gods, even the Sons of God, are those who enter polygamy" (*J. of D.*, Vol. XI, p. 269). Later Young also said, "I have never yet preached a sermon and sent it out to the children of men, that they may not call it scripture" (*J. of D.*, Vol. XIII, p. 95). Thus, polygamy was such an important doctrine that the first seven LDS Presidents or Prophets practiced it (*Brigham Young and His Wives*, p. 22). President Joseph F. Smith said, "No man can be saved and exalted in the kingdom of God without the woman, and no woman can reach the perfection and exaltation in the kingdom of God alone" (*G.D.*, p. 341).

Brigham Young also said, "As no man can be perfect without the woman, so no woman can be perfect without the man to lead her, I tell you the truth as it is in the bosom of eternity; and I say so to every man upon the face of the earth: if he wishes to be saved he cannot be saved without a woman by his side" (*Times and Seasons*, 6:955, April 6, 1845).

However, President Heber C. Kimball seems to contradict President Young by saying, "Supposing that I have a wife or a dozen of them, and she should say 'you cannot be exalted with me,' and suppose they all should say so, what of that? They never will affect my salvation one particle. Whose salvation will they affect? Their own" (*J. of D.*, Vol. IV, p. 209). He elaborates further, saying:

In the spirit world there is an increase of males and females, there are millions of them, and if I am faithful all the time, and continue right along with brother Brigham [Young], we will go to brother Joseph [Smith] and say, 'Here we are brother Joseph; we are here ourselves are we not, with none of the property we possessed in our probationary state, not even the rings on our fingers?' He will say to us, 'Come along, my boys, we will give you a good suit of clothes. Where are your wives?' 'They are back yonder; they would not follow us.' 'Never mind' says Joseph, 'here are thousands, have all you want.' (*Ibid.*, p. 209).

But, Jesus declared, "For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven" (Matt. 22:30). Even Mormonism teaches that angels are unmarried in *D. & C.* 132:16-17. So if men are not married and cannot get married in heaven, but are like the angels, how can there be marriage in the resurrected life? Christians will then be "married" to Christ according to Rom. 7:4 and Rev. 19:7-8, but that marriage union is very different from what LDS teach.

Joseph Smith declared, "Except a man and his wife enter into an everlasting covenant and be married for eternity, while in this probation, by the power and authority of the Holy Priesthood, they will cease to increase when they die; that is they will not have any children after the resurrection" (*D.H.C.*, Vol. V, p. 391). This is called the "new and everlasting covenant" (*D. & C.* 132:4). Since Mormon leaders claim that God, Adam, the patriarchs, David, Solomon, Moses, and even Christ lived this covenant, one wonders what is "new" about it? (*The Seer*, pp. 158-159, 172; *J. of D.*, Vol. I, p. 50; *G.T.A.*, pp. 118-119.) Furthermore, many LDS have had their "eternal marriages"

annulled or canceled, so they weren't eternal either! And, even the words "new" and "everlasting" contradict each other!

The Bible not only contradicts eternal marriage, but also plural marriage. Many men in the Old Testament had more than one wife, but God never commanded plural marriage. God always spoke of man's "wife," not wives (Gen. 2:18, 22-23; Matt. 19:5-6; Eph. 5:31; I Cor. 7:2; Deut. 17:17; I Tim. 3:2, 12).

BAPTISM FOR THE DEAD

The reason Mormons do genealogical studies is so they can do proxy baptism, sealings, ordinations, endowments and marriages in the temple for the their dead relatives to help exalt or save them. LDS use I Cor. 15:29 to try to show that their concept of proxy baptism is Biblical. It says, "Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? Why are they then baptized for the dead?" Paul's main subject in I Cor. 15 was not baptism for the dead but "resurrection of the body." He was not giving a commandment to baptize by proxy in verse 29, but he was arguing for a belief in the resurrection of the body. History indicates that there were sects which practiced baptism for the dead. Paul may be referring to them when he said, "Else what shall *they* do which are baptized for the dead?" But notice the change in pronouns in the next verse: "and why stand *we* in jeopardy every hour?" Notice "they" are baptizing for the dead and "we" are standing in jeopardy. Paul does not include himself nor any Christian with those who were baptizing for the dead! Paul simply questions, "Why are they doing it if there is no resurrection? Their act indicates they believe in a resurrection, just like when jeopardizing our lives for the gospel shows that we believe in the resurrection." LDS often misquote I Cor. 15:29 saying: "Else what shall *we* do who are baptized for the dead if the dead rise not at all? Why are *we* then baptized for the dead?" But, that is not what the text says!

The LDS doctrine of baptism for the dead actually comes from *D. & C.* 124:29- 39; 127:5-7; 128:1-3, 17-18. President Joseph Fielding Smith said:

If a man cannot enter the kingdom of God without baptism, then the dead must be baptized. But how can they be baptized in water for the remission of their sins? It is easy to understand how they in person could believe in Christ and even obtain the spirit of repentance; but water is an element of this world, and how could spirits be baptized in it, or receive the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost? The only way it can be done is vicariously, someone who is living acting as a substitute for the dead (*D. of S.*, Vol. II, p. 141).

Concerning this subject, President Wilford Woodruff said:

I look upon this portion of our ministry as a mission of as much importance as preaching to the living; the dead will hear the voice of the servants of God in the spirit-world, and they cannot come forth in the morning of the

resurrection, unless certain ordinances are performed for and in their behalf in temples built to the name of God. It takes just as much to save a dead man as a living man. For the last eighteen hundred years, the people that have lived and passed away never heard the voice of an inspired man, never heard a gospel sermon until they entered the spirit-world. Somebody has got to redeem them, by performing such ordinances for them in the flesh as they cannot attend to themselves in the spirit, and in order that this work may be done, we must have temples in which to do it; and what I wish to say to you, my brethren and sisters, is that the God of heaven requires us to rise up and build them, that the work of redemption may be hastened.... I will here say, before closing that two weeks before I left St. George (Utah), the spirits of the dead gathered around me, wanting to know why we did not redeem them. Said they, 'you have had the use of the endowment house for a number of years, and yet nothing has ever been done for us. We laid the foundation of the government you now enjoy, and we never apostatized from it, but we remained true to it and were faithful to God.' These were the signers of the Declaration of Independence and they waited on me for two days and two nights.... I straightway went into the baptismal font and called upon brother McCallister to baptize me for the signers of the Declaration of Independence, and fifty other eminent men, making one hundred in all, including John Wesley, Columbus, and others; I then baptized him for every President of the United States, except three; and when their cause is just, somebody will do the work for them (*J. of D.*, Vol. XIX, pp. 228-229).

However, Psalm 49:7 declares, "None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him." Furthermore, I Pet. 1:18 says we are "not redeemed with corruptible things." Are man-made temples corruptible? Is water corruptible? Are men who stand proxy for the dead corruptible? If these things are corruptible, no one can be redeemed by them. Men are redeemed only by the precious blood of Jesus Christ (I Peter 1:18-19).

Mormonism says baptism is essential to salvation and spirits cannot be baptized in water, so proxy work is required to save them. But, the *B. of M.* teaches that the three transfigured Nephite disciples who never died baptized mortals (*B. of M.* III Nephi 28:18). Would it be any more difficult for a mortal to baptize a spirit than it was for the Spirit of the Lord to baptize Adam (*P. of G.P.* Moses 6:64-65)? And why could not the Spirit of the Lord baptize spirits if He could baptize a mortal? Furthermore, President Joseph Fielding Smith said, "They who go into the spirit world, who hold the priesthood of God, teach the dead the everlasting gospel in that spirit world; and when the dead are willing to repent and receive those teachings, and the work is done for them here vicariously, they shall have the privilege of coming out of the prison house to find their place in the kingdom of God" (*D. of S.*, Vol. II, p. 135). Was the LDS "priesthood authority" for baptism, ordination, marriage and so on *lost* when they died? According to Smith, the only thing the LDS preachers do in the spirit world is preach, while LDS mortals on earth preach, baptize, ordain, marry, and so on. Is this "*eternal progression*?" Why is LDS proxy baptism for the dead so important anyway since the *B.*

of M. says, "For behold that all little children are alive in Christ, and also all they that are without the law. For the power of redemption cometh on all them that have no law; wherefore, he that is not condemned, or he that is under no condemnation, cannot repent; and unto such, baptism availeth nothing but is mockery before God, denying the mercies of Christ, and the power of His Holy Spirit, and putting trust in dead works" (Moroni 8:22-23). For further information on this text see our section entitled Baptism in the chapter on "Salvation."

Joseph Fielding Smith said that the "faith alone doctrine denies justice of God" (*D. of S.*, Vol. II, p. 140). And Talmage calls justification by faith a "pernicious doctrine" and a "sectarian dogma" (*A. of F.*, pp. 107, 480). LDS believe that they can do proxy work for the dead which the *dead can accept by faith* in the spirit world after death (*D. of S.*, Vol. II, p. 135). But, when Christ offers eternal life by grace through faith to believers here on earth (Eph. 2:8-9), the LDS reject it, saying that it is too easy and they must work for their own salvation. The Bible warns that the "god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God should shine unto them (II Cor. 4:4).

Talmage said that we can become "vicarious saviors" of the dead (*A. of F.*, p. 152). But, if that is true, Jesus Christ is not the only mediator between God and men as I Tim. 2:5 declares. Furthermore, Heb. 9:27 says, "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." And, II Cor. 6:2 declares, "Behold now is the accepted time: Behold now is the day of salvation." The Bible nowhere teaches that mankind has another chance for salvation after death.

LDS use I Peter 3:19-20 to support their doctrine of salvation for the dead. It says Christ "preached unto the spirits in prison," but it does not say that He preached the *gospel* to them as LDS claim. Nor does the text say any spirits were saved as a result of that preaching or that anyone was baptized in their behalf. Such an interpretation ignores the context which indicates that Christ's preaching was a proclamation of *judgment*. Mormons also use I Peter 4:6 to teach salvation for the dead. It says, "For this cause *was* the gospel preached also to them that are dead." Notice the tense of the verbs: it says the gospel *was* preached to men when they were alive, but they are now dead. But, LDS use this text to teach that the gospel will be preached to the dead who died without the law. The *B. of M.* says that is a "mockery" and "dead works" (Moroni 8:22-23). On the other hand, those who did have the law and rejected it, should not have proxy work done for them according to President Joseph Fielding Smith. He said, "The work for the dead is not intended for those who had every opportunity to receive it, who had it taught to them, and who then refused to receive it, or had not interest enough to attend to these ordinances when they were living (*D. of S.*, Vol. II, p. 184).

If baptism is *not needed* by those without the law as the *B. of M.* says, and proxy temple work "is *not intended* for those who had every opportunity to receive" the LDS gospel but refused it as Joseph Fielding Smith said, then for whom are LDS doing proxy work? Mormon missionaries who "compass sea and land to make one proselyte" (Matt.

23:15) are also wasting their time if they go to people "without the law," since the *B. of M.* says those people are already "alive in Christ," (Moroni 8:22).

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MORMONS: WHO THEY ARE, WHAT THEY BELIEVE - - Discussion Guide

The Mason/Mormon Connection:

Masonic Parallels

<http://www.ldsendowment.org/masonry.html>



MORMONS AND MASONRY

A relationship between Mormonism and Masonry goes back to the beginning of the Restoration: several of the first Latter-day Saints were also Masons, including Hyrum Smith, Newel K. Whitney, Heber C. Kimball, and Brigham Young. At the end of 1841, LDS Masons in Nauvoo organized what would become the first of four Masonic lodges in Mormon communities. Joseph Smith applied for admission as soon as the first lodge was formed and was raised to the degree of Master Mason in March 1842. Less than two months later, Joseph administered the endowment for the first time in the upper room of his red brick store--the same room where he had been initiated into Masonry. During the period that the Saints were building the Nauvoo Temple, they also built a Masonic temple, and over 1300 Latter-day Saints became Master Masons before fleeing Nauvoo.

The growth of the Mormons' lodges was irregularly rapid: by way of comparison, consider that in 1840, there were only about two thousand Masons in the entire United States. Concerns about such irregularities led Masonic authorities to renounce ties with the Mormons' lodges in 1844-1845. Bad feeling between Mormons and Masons lingered for over a century. A Masonic lodge founded in Utah refused to admit Latter-day Saints until 1984; for its part, the LDS Church has enjoined its members against belonging to "secret societies" since the beginning of the 20th century.

WHY DID MASONRY APPEAL TO JOSEPH SMITH?

Masonry probably appealed to Joseph Smith for several reasons. Like millions of other 19th-century Americans who joined fraternal organizations (including the Odd Fellows, the Knights of Pythias, the Knights of Labor, and the Knights of Columbus), Joseph may have seen political and commercial advantages in belonging to the Masonic network. At a time when he feared for his life, he may have hoped that Masonry would offer protection: his last words at Carthage

Jail--"Oh Lord my God!"--were probably an attempt to give the Masonic sign of distress. Furthermore, Masonic ritual was useful for cultivating a climate of secrecy and loyalty in which Joseph could institute plural marriage.

But Masonry's attraction for Joseph was devotional as well as practical. Joseph had a life-long passion for learning, and Masonry offered him a whole new world of knowledge: esoteric teachings purportedly connected to biblical figures as well as to ancient Greek and Egyptian mysteries. Given Joseph's patent interest in lost scripture and ancient teaching, it is not surprising that he should want to know what Masonry might have to say about these. Also, the Masonic idea of advancing by degrees likely resonated with Joseph's vision of progressing "from grace to grace" (D&C 93:13) or receiving "knowledge upon knowledge" (D&C 42:61).

It's not hard, actually, to see why Masonry would appeal to Joseph; it's harder to determine why, and whether, Joseph shifted from an anti-Masonic stance earlier in his life. Historians and biographers have noted parallels between early 19th-century anti-Masonic rhetoric and passages from Joseph Smith's revelations denouncing secret combinations. If Joseph began as an anti-Mason (and certainly anti-Masonic sentiment would be consistent with the evangelical tone of his early religious activities), how to explain his openness to Masonry during the Nauvoo period? Perhaps the answer is that Masonry encompasses intellectual realms beyond traditional Christianity--and thus came to attract Joseph's sympathetic attention at a time when his own worldview was expanding to include untraditional ideas (in Joseph's case, ideas such as plural marriage, uncreated intelligences, men becoming Gods, and a God who is an exalted man).

Finally, Masonry exposed Joseph to a new ritual style, one he clearly found congenial and would emulate in the endowment.

THE RITES OF MASONRY

Masonic rituals purport to date back to the time of Solomon's temple, if not to the time of Adam; however, historical scholarship dates the rituals to the early 1700s. The rituals promote a philosophical and moral outlook which can be described as Deist. They affirm the existence of God and the immortality of the soul and promote a morality that is generally biblical (virtues such as charity, temperance, purity, honesty, and brotherly love), while remaining silent on matters of atonement or salvation. This Deist outlook represents a rational piety congenial to the spirit of the Enlightenment; it also functions as a kind of religious common denominator, allowing the creation of fraternal unity across denominational lines.

Masonic rites confer a series of "degrees" upon initiates. The three basic degrees (each of which has its own initiation ceremony) are Entered Apprentice, Fellow Craft, and Master Mason. These three degrees are known as the Blue Lodge. Additional degrees are available--but optional--for those who would like to pursue a deeper understanding

of Masonic principles. These additional degrees are organized into two different series, known as the York Rite and the Scottish Rite. One of the degrees in the York Rite, the Royal Arch degree, is of particular interest to those studying Masonic parallels to the endowment. This is because, unlike the Blue Lodge degrees, the ceremony for the Royal Arch involves priestly robes and passage through a veil into a holy of holies. (It should be noted, however, that Joseph Smith never received the Royal Arch degree.)

The Blue Lodge rites use symbolism drawn from stonemasonry: participants don aprons modeled after those used by stoneworkers, and tools such as the compass, the square, the gauge, the plumb, and the level are used to convey symbolic moral messages. The Blue Lodge rites also use symbolism related to the building of Solomon's temple. During the Fellow Craft degree, for example, initiates are taken into a room said to represent one of the chambers in Solomon's temple. The Master Mason's degree revolves around a ritual drama in which Hiram Abiff, grand architect of Solomon's temple, is murdered by ruffians because he refuses to reveal certain secrets until the temple is completed.

Because of Hiram Abiff's death, a keyword, called the "Master's word" was lost; Master Masons receive a substitute word in its place. The lost word is restored during the Royal Arch degree, which reenacts events said to have occurred during the rebuilding of the Jerusalem temple following the Babylonian captivity. During the Royal Arch ceremony, the candidate plays the part of a Master Mason who, while helping to rebuild the temple, discovers an altar hidden behind a veil; on that altar is a golden plate containing the sacred name of God, which is also the lost Master's word.

MASONIC ELEMENTS IN THE ENDOWMENT

While there are clear parallels between Masonry and the endowment, these should not be exaggerated. Even if one believes that Joseph Smith created the endowment (as opposed to restoring an ancient rite through revelation), it is inaccurate to say that he "copied" or "plagiarized" Masonic ceremonies. Certainly the endowment has a Masonic-like style, and selected features of the endowment are identical to features of Masonic ritual. But the endowment is a distinctive creation: a Masonic-style ceremony structured around a different narrative and reflecting a very different theology.

Identical Features

Features identical to Masonry and the endowment are relatively few and became even fewer as a result of revisions to the endowment in the 1920s and in 1990. The features that are (or have been) identical are:

- The five points of fellowship.
- The penalties invoked in the non-disclosure oaths.
- Two grips (or tokens).
- The symbols of the compass and the square.

- Miscellaneous phrases, such as "Has it a name?" or "three distinct knocks."

In addition, one of the signs disclosed during the endowment is similar, though not identical, to the Masonic sign of distress.

Similarities in Ritual Style

Masonry and the endowment share many similarities of ritual *style*, though the ceremonies' *content* is very different. The stylistic similarities are:

- Using a set script; the rhythm of the language is often similar as well.
- Imparting signs, grips, and passwords to initiates. (The Masonic signs and passwords are quite complicated compared to those used in the endowment.)
- Making oaths, with the use of a Bible, and offering prayer while kneeling at an altar. (Oaths are much longer in Masonry than in the endowment.)
- Vowing not to reveal ceremonial secrets.
- Using dialogues or catechisms to test initiates or to solicit passwords. (These dialogues are substantially more intricate in Masonry than in the endowment.)
- The appearance of trios: in the endowment, Elohim, Jehovah, and Michael, or Peter, James, and John; in Masonry, the Worshipful Master, Senior Warden, and Junior Warden (who lead the ceremonies), or Jubela, Jubelo, and Jubelum (the three ruffians who assault Hiram Abiff).
- Repeating orders and reports two or three times, verbatim.
- Knocking three times at an entrance.
- Reciting three syllables in a sacred language: Adamic in the endowment, Hebrew in Masonry.
- Giving the initiate a new name. (The Masonic new name is not that of a scriptural personage, as in the endowment; rather, it is the name of a virtue.)
- Acting out a ritual drama in which the initiate represents a biblical figure: Adam or Eve in the endowment, Hiram Abiff in Masonry.
- Passing from one room to another. In both Masonic and early Mormon temples, different rooms were decorated around different themes.
- Donning an apron. In Masonry, the apron is of white leather and represents the apron worn by a stonemason; in the endowment, the apron represents the fig-leaf aprons worn by Adam and Eve.
- Altering how ceremonial clothing is worn to signify advancement by degrees. In Masonry, the apron is folded down in a different way for each degree; in the endowment, the robes of the priesthood are shifted from shoulder to shoulder.
- Using symbols, such as the compass and the square, to convey moral messages.
- Delivering a lecture to review the ceremony and expound on its meaning.
- In the Royal Arch degree, wearing priestly robes of an Old Testament pattern and passing through a veil.

Another Mormon/Masonic parallel related to ritual style is the use of Masonic symbols in 19th-century Mormon architecture and art. These include the all-seeing eye, the inverted five-pointed star (known as the eastern star), and the beehive.

Key Differences Between the Rites

While the ceremonial styles are very similar, the content and structure of the endowment differ significantly from those of Masonic rituals.

1. The endowment is more firmly grounded in scriptural narrative than Masonry is. While Masonry refers to the building of Solomon's temple, as described in the Bible, the ritual drama that forms the heart of the Master Mason degree (the murder of Hiram Abiff) is legendary, not biblical. The same is true of the ritual drama for the Royal Arch degree. Biblical passages are read in the course of Masonic rituals, including selections from Ruth, Judges, Psalms, and Ecclesiastes; but no biblical events are directly reenacted, as in the endowment.
2. Various portions of a Masonic ritual are performed in order to regulate the space in which the rite occurs: to formally open and close the rite; to ensure that all present are Masons; to see that a tyler, or guard, is posted outside; etc. Indeed, portions of Masonic ritual occur without the initiate being present. By contrast, the endowment involves no ceremonies to regulate sacred space (since the temple has already been dedicated for that purpose); this means that the endowment moves much more quickly into initiation and ritual drama. Also, the endowment involves no ceremonies performed outside the initiate's presence.
3. In Masonry, the drama of Hiram Abiff is a straightforward narrative of events purported to have occurred in the past: these events may have allegorical meaning, but the drama makes sense within itself as historical reenactment. By contrast, the ritual drama of the endowment becomes blatantly anachronistic once initiates enter the World Room, where (prior to the 1990 revision) a Protestant minister preaches to Adam and Eve. The endowment is thus freer than Masonry in how it plays with symbols--one might even say that the endowment is more "postmodern."
4. The rites of Masonry are supposed to be restricted to men (though auxiliary orders have emerged for Masons' wives and daughters). By contrast, the endowment was administered, almost from its beginning, to women as well as to men, in keeping with Joseph Smith's new doctrine that celestial marriage was required to attain the highest degree of exaltation. Furthermore, where the rites of Masonry created fraternal bonds between mortals, the endowment aimed to create such bonds between mortals and God, who, according to Joseph's Nauvoo teaching, is himself an exalted man.
5. Masonic initiates identify, as the name indicates, with masons--those who built the temple. Only in the Royal Arch degree (an additional, optional rite) do

participants identify with temple priests, wearing Old Testament-style robes and passing through a temple veil into a holy of holies. The endowment, by contrast, is from first to last an initiation into priesthood. Where the symbolism of stonemasonry looms large in the Blue Lodge rites, only vestiges of such symbolism appear in the endowment: the marks of the compass and the square. The central metaphor of the endowment is not *building* the temple, but rather *officiating* in the temple as priests and priestesses, kings and queens, to God.

6. Despite Masonry's emphasis on fraternity, the endowment is a less elitist, more community-focused rite. Where the Blue Lodge rites are administered only to individuals, the endowment was administered, from its very beginning, to groups. **1** And the endowment requires far less memorization on the part of initiates than Masonry does, making the endowment more accessible. Also relevant to accessibility, consider that the endowment is a single ceremony (disregarding the second anointing), while full initiation into Blue Lodge Masonry requires three separate ceremonies (and additional ceremonies for the Royal Arch degree).
7. Finally, Masonry has no concept of work for the dead. In Mormonism, it has been the practice since the 1870s for living persons to receive the endowment on behalf of deceased persons.

In sum, the endowment is better understood as a response to Masonry than as a mere imitation of it. With the endowment, Joseph Smith gave the Saints a Masonic-style ritual, rich in biblical symbolism and structured around a narrative of creation, fall, and progression to God's presence. Compared to Masonry, Joseph's ritual was more scriptural, more accessible, more community-focused, more egalitarian, and more ambitious--a ritual to bring the Saints into fellowship with the Gods.

UNDERSTANDING THE RELATIONSHIP TO MASONRY

Parallels between Masonry and the endowment can be problematic for contemporary Latter-day Saints. This is because contemporary Saints may perceive the parallels as challenging the claim that the endowment originated in revelation to Joseph Smith, while lending credence to accusations that Joseph simply borrowed his "revelations" from his environment.

However, for early Saints who were themselves Masons, this dilemma did not exist. Reportedly on the basis of teachings by Joseph Smith himself, early Saints understood the endowment as an ancient rite of which Masonry had preserved a corrupted or fragmentary form. In other words, early Saints understood the relationship between Masonry and the endowment as analogous to that between "sectarian" Christianity and the restored church. As Joseph had been God's instrument to restore true Christianity, so also he had restored true Masonry. **2** There is a significant difference, however: while membership in the restored church was exclusive (one could not be Mormon and

Methodist simultaneously, for instance), the first generation of endowed Latter-day Saints did not agree that receiving the endowment precluded their continuing to participate in Masonry.

Unlike that first generation, contemporary Saints no longer understand the endowment in relation to Masonry. Masonic symbols or gestures used in LDS temples (the all-seeing eye, the inverted five-point star, the five points of fellowship) have largely lost significance. It is therefore not surprising to see such elements disappear, as when the five points of fellowship were omitted from the endowment in 1990. Interestingly, Mormons and Masons moved almost simultaneously to drop one common feature of their respective rites: three years before the LDS Church omitted Masonic-style penalties from the endowment, Masonic authorities in England omitted penalties from their rituals as well.

NOTES

1. Mormon Masons in Nauvoo administered the Blue Lodge rites to groups as well, which is one of the reasons they came into conflict with Masonic authorities.
2. Along these lines, it is possible that LDS Masons would have understood the name of the second token of the Melchizedek priesthood, revealed at the temple veil, as the restoration of the Master's word that was lost following the murder of Hiram Abiff.

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MORMONS: WHO THEY ARE, WHAT THEY BELIEVE - - Discussion Guide

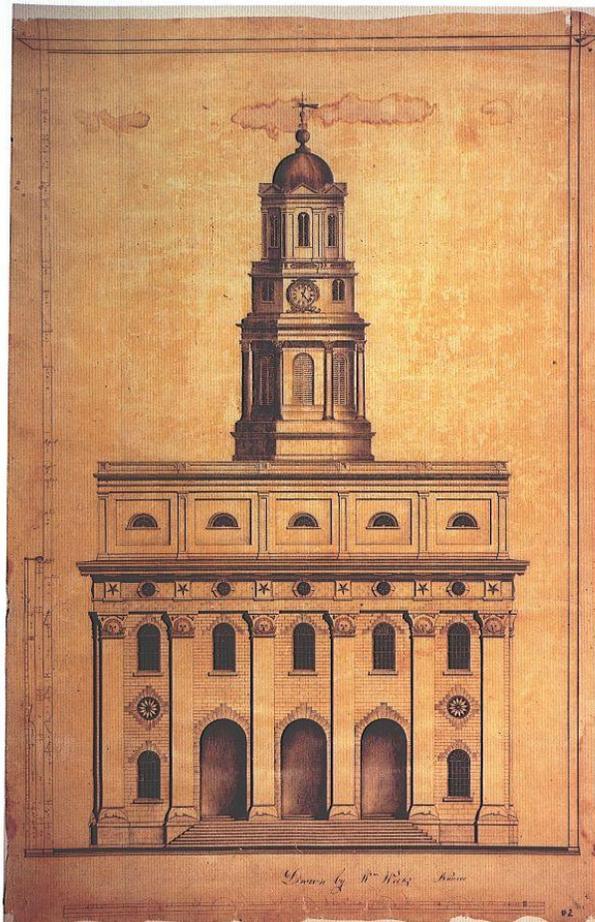
The Mason/Mormon Connection:
Masonic Symbols and the LDS Temple

<http://www.utlm.org/onlineresources/masonicsymbolsandtheldstemple.htm>

Masonic Symbols and the LDS Temple

By Sandra Tanner

In the Spring of 2002 the LDS Church completed its reconstruction of the Nauvoo Temple in Illinois. It was originally built in the 1840's but was destroyed after the Mormons abandoned the town. Due to the publicity and photos regarding this new temple many people have asked about the symbols on the building.



The west facade of the Nauvoo Temple at Nauvoo, Illinois, as drafted by William Weeks, the architect. This Temple was commenced under direction of Joseph Smith and completed by Brigham Young. By 1848, abandoned by the western migration of the Church, it had been reduced to a pile by mob incendiary and a tornado.

The Salt Lake Temple, p.44

To understand the symbols one must first know something of Joseph Smith's involvement with Freemasonry. Joseph's brother, Hyrum, had been a Mason since the 1820's. Many other members of the LDS church, like Brigham Young, were Masons before they joined Mormonism. LDS historian Reed Durham observed:

"By 1840, John Cook Bennett, a former active leader in Masonry had arrived in Commerce [Nauvoo] and rapidly exerted his persuasive leadership in all facets of the Church, including Mormon Masonry. ... Joseph and Sidney [Rigdon] were inducted into formal Masonry...on the same day..." ("Is There No Help for the Widow's Son?" by Dr. Reed C. Durham, Jr., as printed in *Joseph Smith and Masonry: No Help for the Widow's Son*, Martin Pub. Co., Nauvoo, Ill., 1980, p. 17.)

Reed Durham further commented:

"I have attempted thus far to demonstrate that Masonic influences upon Joseph in the early Church history, preceding his formal membership in Masonry, were significant....In fact, I believe that there are few significant developments in the Church, that occurred after March 15, 1842, which did not have some Masonic interdependence." (*Joseph Smith and Masonry: No Help for the Widow's Son*, p.17)

The *History of the Church* records Smith's entrance into the Masonic lodge in 1842:

"Tuesday, 15.—I officiated as grand chaplain at the installation of the Nauvoo Lodge of Free Masons, at the Grove near the Temple. Grand Master Jonas, of Columbus, being present, a large number of people assembled on the occasion. The day was exceedingly fine; all things were done in order, and universal satisfaction was manifested. In the evening I received the first degree in Free Masonry in the Nauvoo Lodge, assembled in my general business office." (*History of the Church*, by Joseph Smith, Deseret Book, 1978, Vol.4, Ch.32, p.550-1)

The next day Smith recorded:

"Wednesday, March 16.—I was with the Masonic Lodge and rose to the sublime degree." (*History of the Church*, Vol.4, Ch.32, p.552)

The Mormon involvement in Freemasonry reached its heights during the early 1840's in Nauvoo. In the *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* we read:

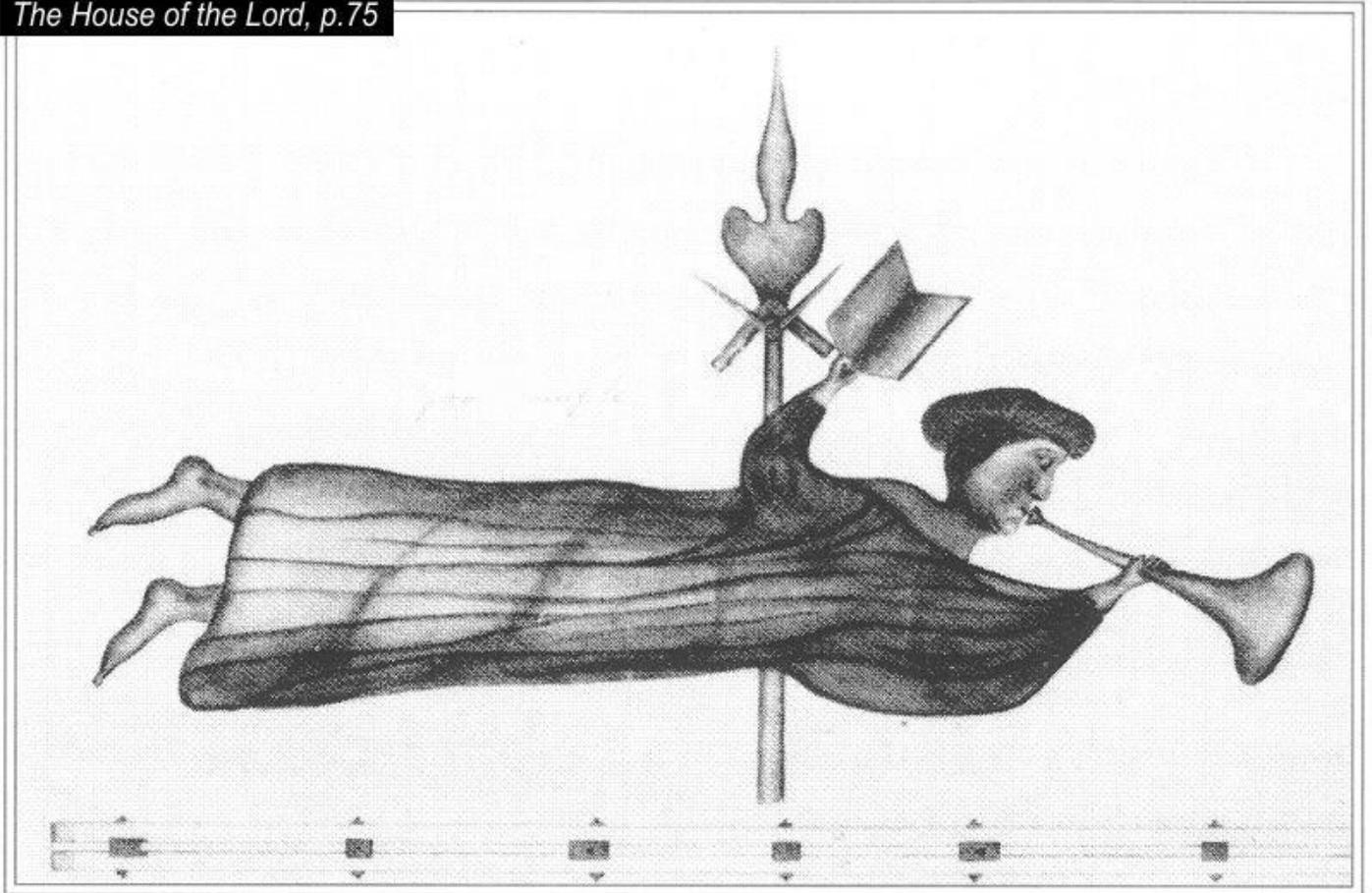
"The introduction of Freemasonry in NAUVOO had both political and religious implications....Eventually nearly 1,500 LDS men became associated with Illinois Freemasonry, including many members of the Church's governing priesthood bodies—this at a time when the total number of non-LDS Masons in Illinois lodges barely reached 150." (*Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, vol.2, p.527)

The *Salt Lake Tribune* (May 4, 2002, p.C3) printed a picture of the original Nauvoo temple weather vane, which shows the Masonic symbol of the compass and square above the angel. Reporter Peggy Stack wrote:

"Every detail of the historic Nauvoo Temple was reconstructed [in the new Nauvoo temple] meticulously with one exception: the flying angel weather vane that graced the top of the 19th century Mormon edifice.

"In its place is the gold-leafed Angel Moroni, first used on the Salt Lake Temple,...

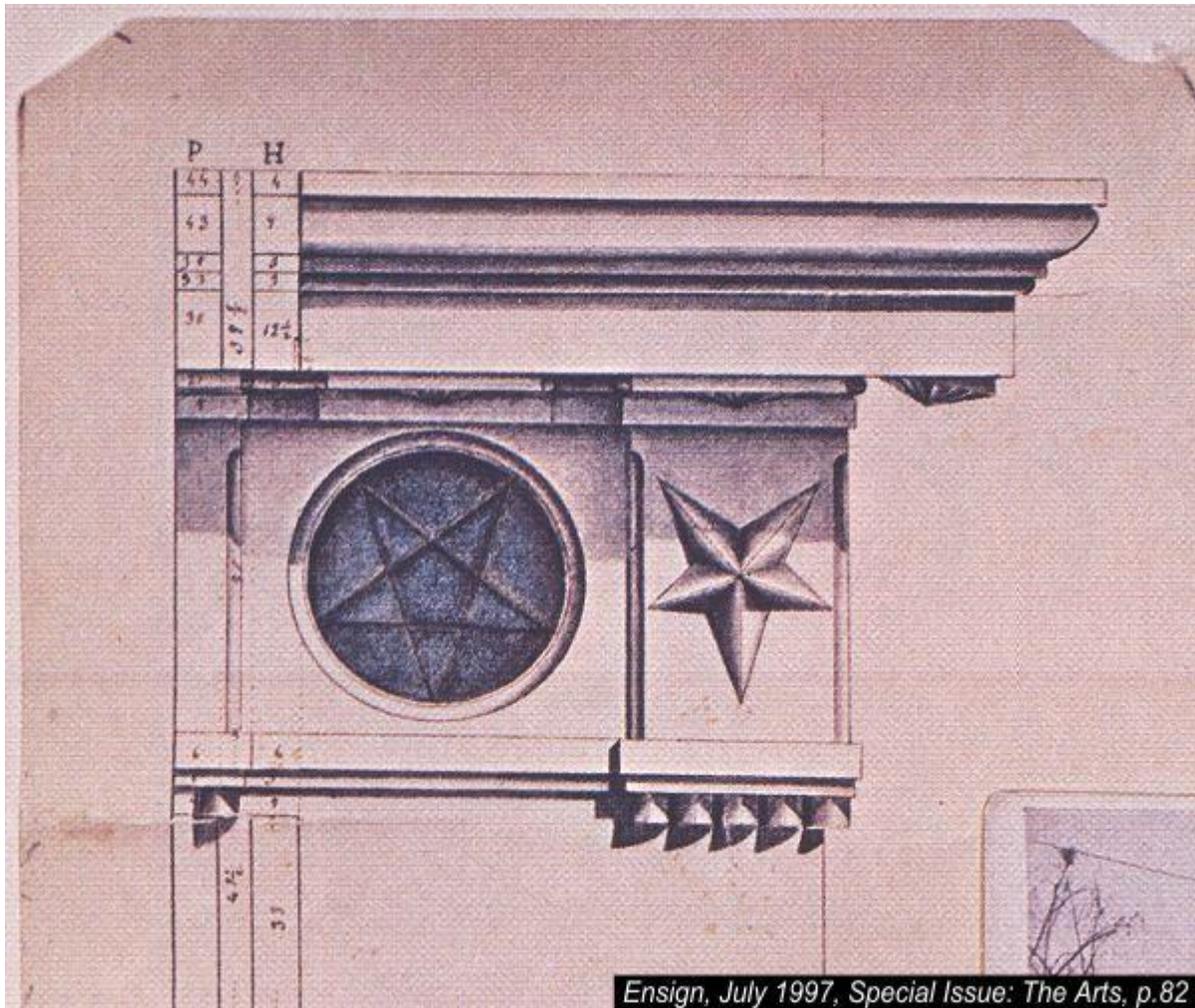
"Some speculate that the horizontal angel, with its compass and square, may be too closely associated with Masonic rituals for modern Mormons." (*Salt Lake Tribune*, May 4, 2002, p.C3)



[Original architect's drawing of the Nauvoo Temple weather vane.
Notice the compass and square above the angel.]

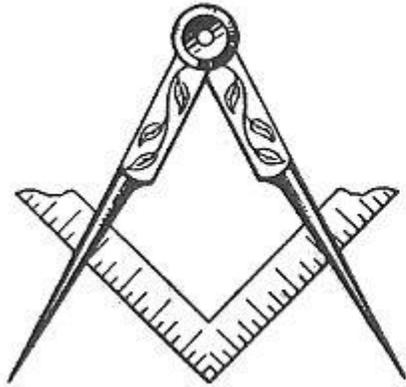
Reed Durham observed:

"There is absolutely no question in my mind that the Mormon ceremony which came to be known as the Endowment, introduced by Joseph Smith to Mormon Masons initially, just a little over one month after he became a Mason, had an immediate inspiration from Masonry...."



[Architect's drawing of the stars for the Nauvoo Temple.]

"It is also obvious that the Nauvoo Temple architecture was in part, at least Masonically influenced. Indeed, it appears that there was an intentional attempt to utilize Masonic symbols and motifs. The sun stones, and the moon and star stones, were examples. An additional example was the angel used on the weather vane on the top of the Temple. [Above the angel] is a beautiful compass and square, in the typical Masonic fashion." (*Joseph Smith and Masonry: No Help for the Widow's Son*, p.18)



One of these symbols, with which you are familiar, is the interlaced Square and Compasses—the “symbol of Freemasonry.” This has been recognized and accepted as *the* Masonic emblem from the beginning of the 18th Century at least. The United States Patent Office took note of this in 1873. It told a flour manufacturer, and the world: “This device, so commonly worn and employed by Masons, has an established mystic significance, universally recognized as existing, whether comprehended by all or not, is not material to this issue. In view of the magnitude of the Masonic organization, it is impossible to divest its symbols, or at least this particular symbol—perhaps the best known of all—of its ordinary significance, wherever displayed.” The manufacturer was denied the use of the Square and Compasses as a trade-mark.

[The compass and square as used in Masonry.]

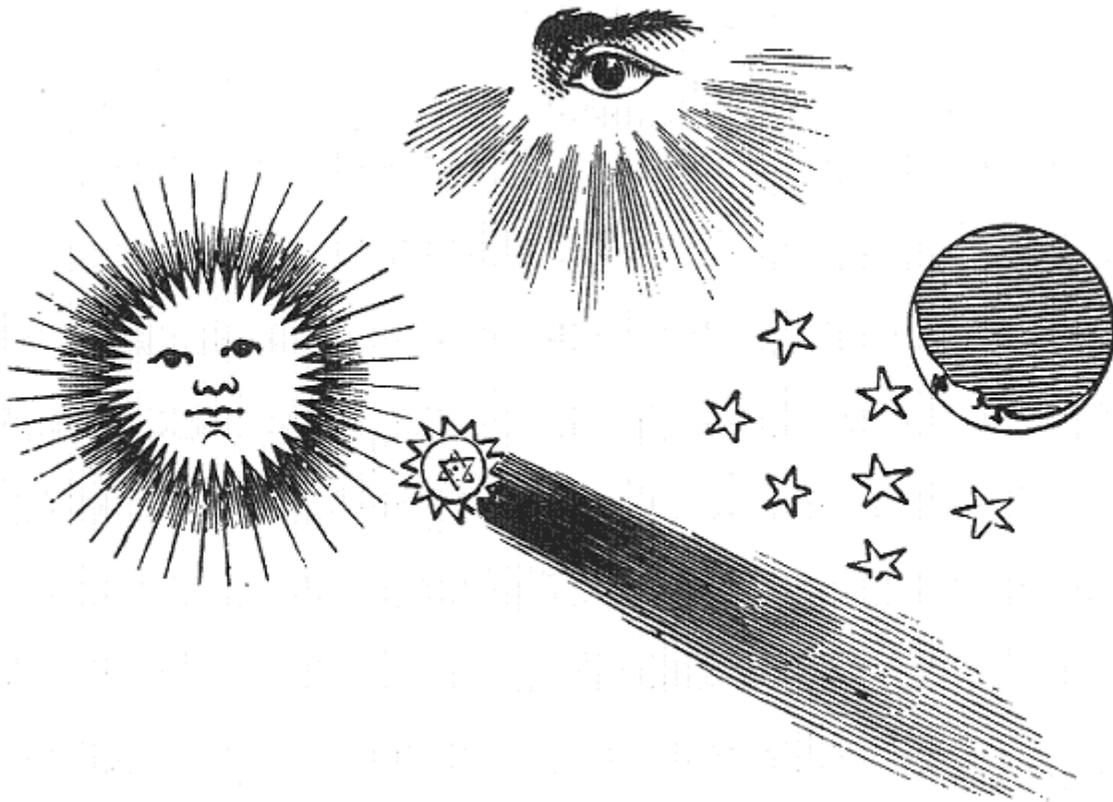
Additional details of the Nauvoo temple symbols and pictures of the building are in the *Deseret News 2001-2002 Church Almanac* (see pp.120-141). On page 135 of the *Almanac* is a photograph of one of the original sunstones that were placed at the top of the columns around the outside of the temple. A photo of a sunstone is also in Fawn Brodie's book, *No Man Knows My History*, p.298(b).



No Man Knows My History, p.298(b)

[One of the original sunstones from the Nauvoo Temple.]

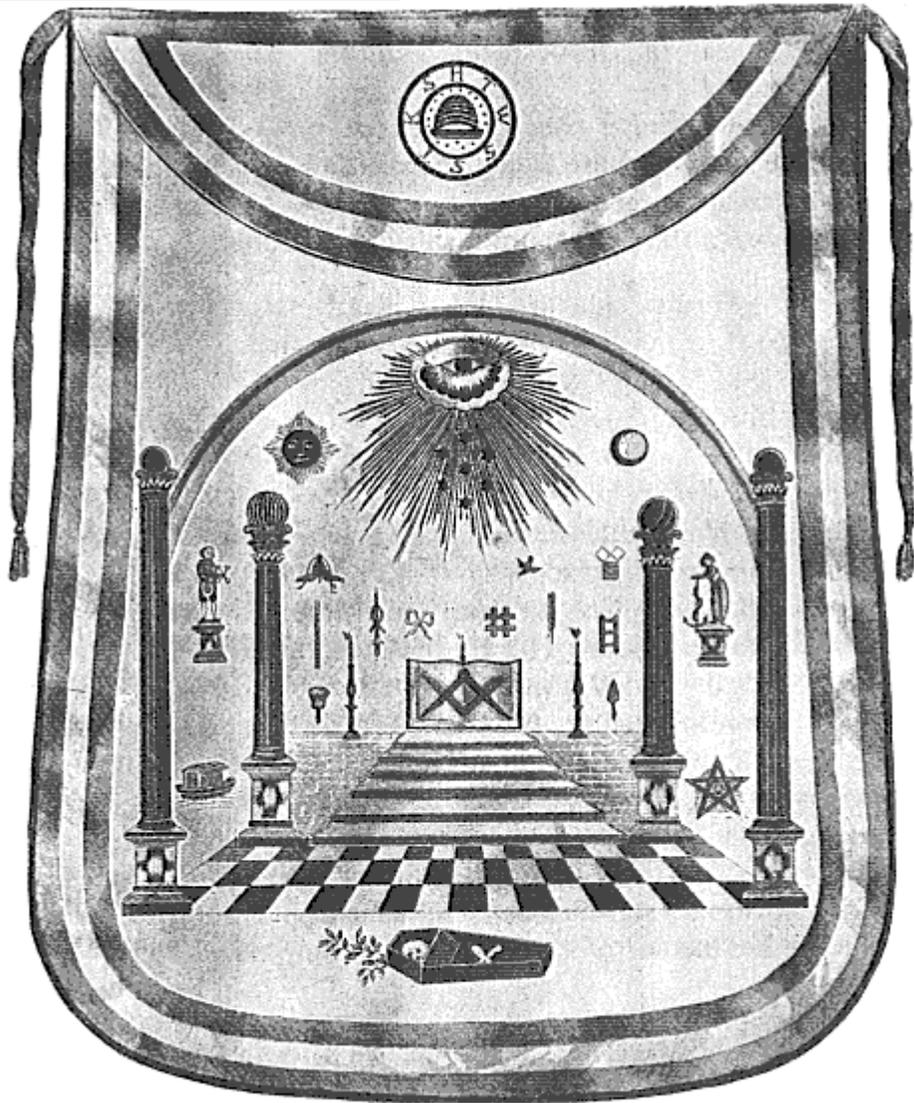
The Nauvoo sunstone, with its human face, is similar to the Masonic depictions of the sun. Below is an illustration from the Masonic book, *The Craft and Its Symbols*, p.75:



***The Craft and Its Symbols*, p.75**

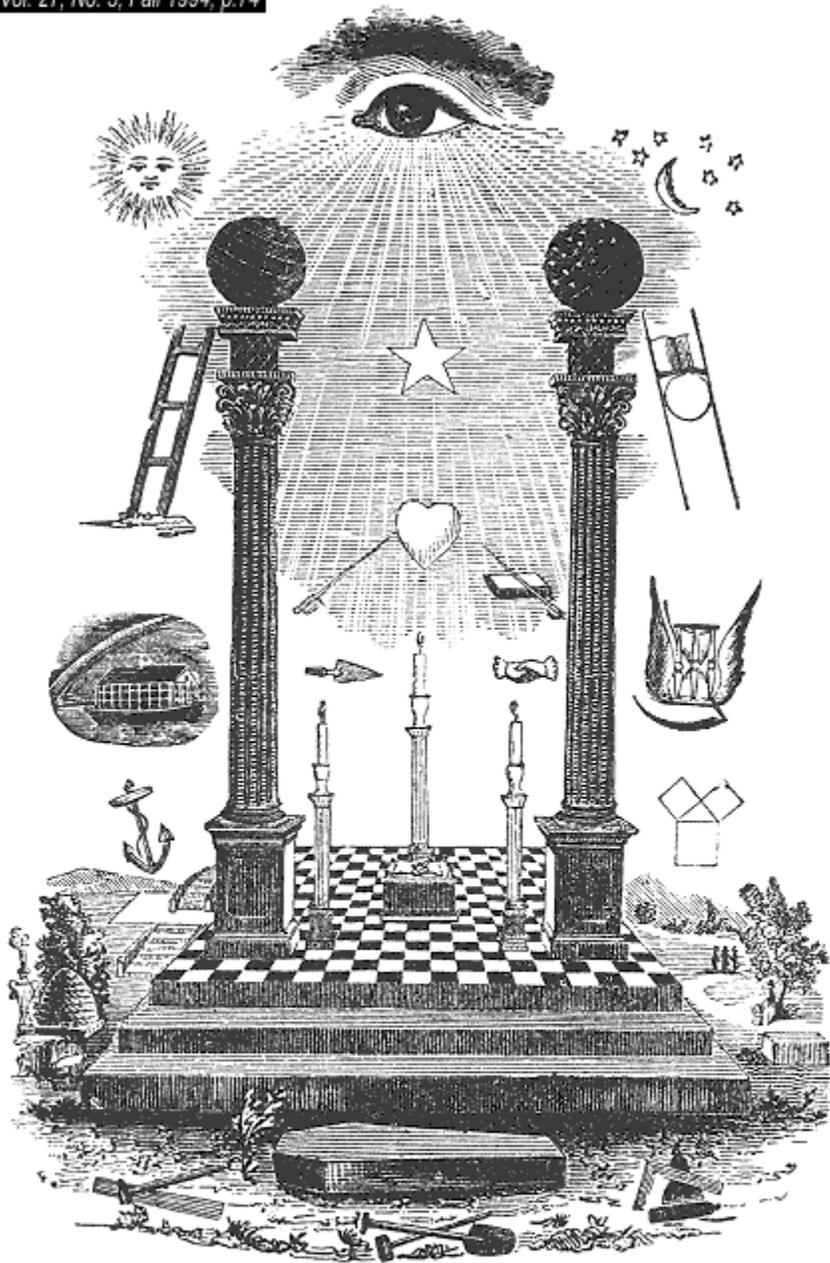
Masonic symbols have been pictured and discussed in a number of books. Albert Pike, in his book, *Morals and Dogma of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry*, discusses the various Masonic symbols and their meaning.

In the book *The Craft and Its Symbols: Opening the Door to Masonic Symbolism*, by Allen E. Roberts, p.11, is a drawing of the Masonic apron presented to President George Washington by Lafayette. The symbols on the apron, which were later used by the Mormons, include a beehive, all-seeing eye, compass and square, and the sun, moon and stars.



THE APRON PRESENTED TO WASHINGTON BY LAFAYETTE

The Masonic Monitor, in 1820, had an illustration of the symbols of Freemasonry. This drawing is very similar to Washington's apron.



MASTERS CARPET

Illustration 6. The "Masters Carpet," published by Masonic writer and lecturer, Jeremy Cross, in *The Masonic Monitor* in 1820, includes most of the Masonic symbols subsequently adopted by Mormonism, including the square, compass, level, beehive, all-seeing eye, sun, moon, and stars. (Cross, 1.)

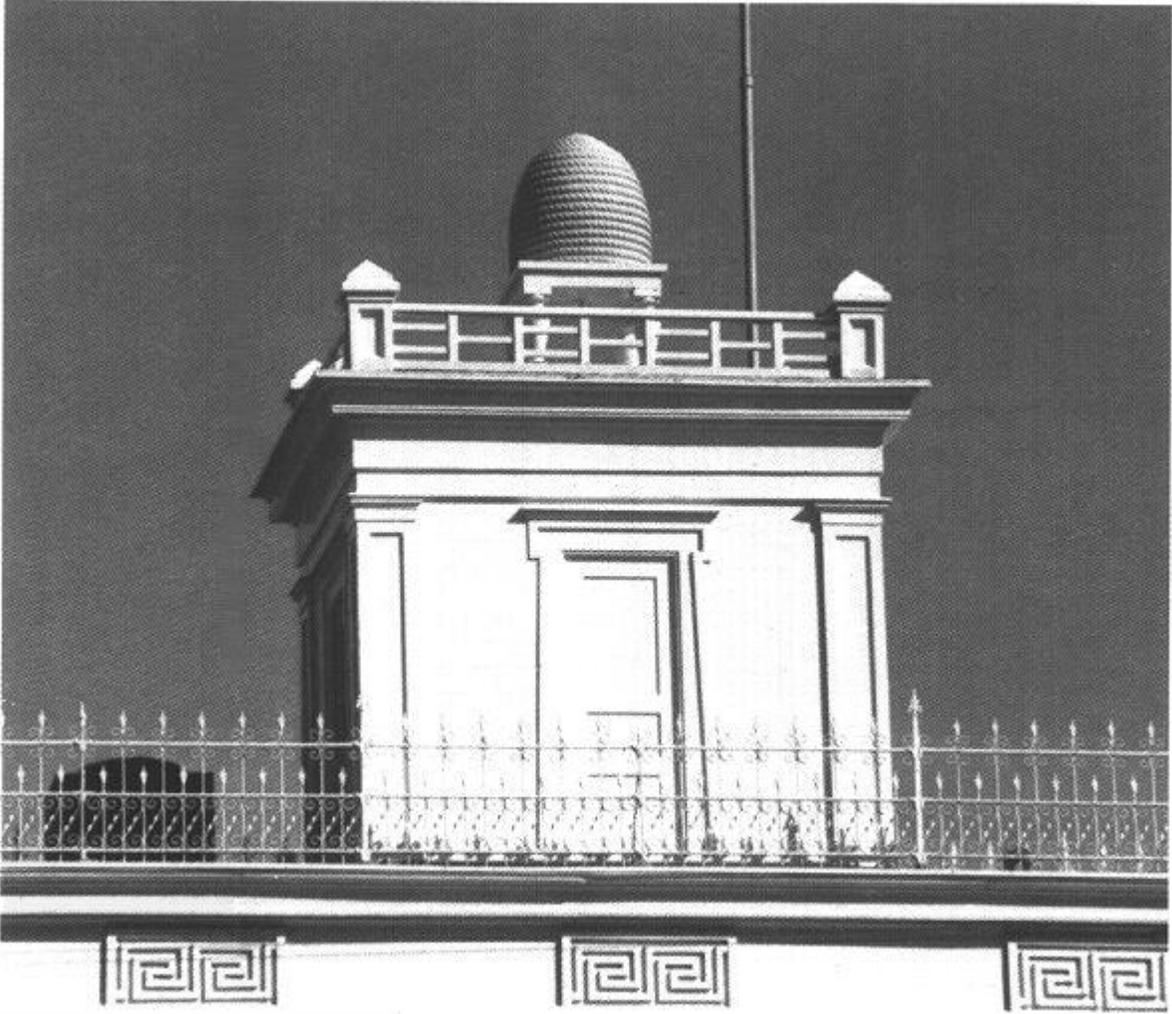
Many Masonic symbols (the sun, moon, stars, all-seeing eye, beehive, hand grip, and the beehive) were also placed on the Salt Lake Temple.





[Symbols on the front of the Salt Lake Temple.]

One of the more familiar symbols of Mormonism is the beehive. Examples of pioneer use of the hive can be seen on Brigham Young's home (known as the Beehive House) in Salt Lake City.



The Salt Lake Temple, p.172

[Top of Beehive House]

The beehive is also displayed on the doorknobs of the Salt Lake temple.



Eternal Marriage
Student Manual,
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[One of the brass doorknobs in the Salt Lake Temple displaying the beehive.]

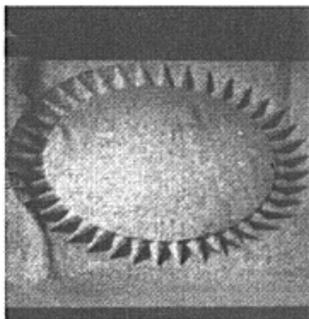
However, most people are not aware that the beehive was a symbol of Masonry years before Joseph Smith started his church. Masonic historian Allen E. Roberts explains:

"The Bee Hive, Masonically, is an emblem of Industry....When and why the hive of the bee entered Freemasonry as a symbol no one knows....In the book, *The Early Masonic Catechisms*, the bee in Masonry is mentioned as early as 1724..." (*The Craft and Its Symbols*, by Allen E. Roberts, Macoy Pub., 1974, p.73)

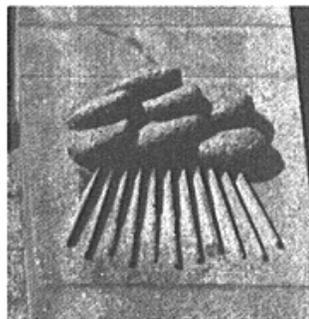
While many people are aware of the symbols used on the Salt Lake temple, they were also used on other LDS buildings in Utah (see "Where Are All The All-Seeing Eyes?", *Sunstone Magazine*, vol.10, no.5, May 1985).



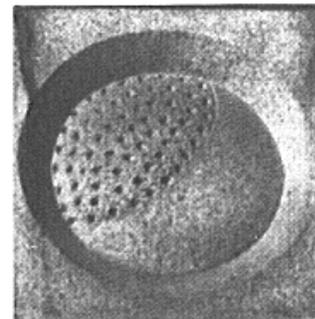
Manti Tabernacle plaque, 1879
Sunstone, Vol. 10, No. 5, May 1985, p.40



Sunstone, Salt Lake Temple, 1853-93



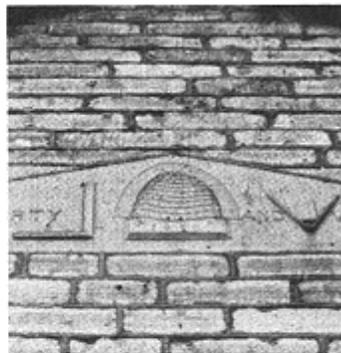
Cloud stones with ray of light, Salt Lake Temple, 1853-93



Moonstone in one of its phases, Salt Lake Temple, 1853-93



Clasped hands and rays of light, Salt Lake Temple, 1853-93



Square, compass, beehive on Spring City Endowment House, 1876

Sunstone, Vol. 10, No. 5, May 1985, p.41

LDS researcher Michael Homer discussed the Mormon use of Masonic symbols:

"Even after the turn of the century and the abandonment of polygamy, the same comparison [to Masonry] was made. The First Presidency stated in a message on October 15, 1911, that "[b]ecause of their Masonic characters, the ceremonies of the temple are sacred and not for the public."

"Mormon use of Masonic symbols has also been publicly acknowledged. Mormons were hardly discreet in their depictions of symbols long associated with Freemasonry...including the square, the compass, the sun, moon, and stars, the beehive, the all-seeing eye, ritualistic hand grips, two interlaced triangles forming a six-pointed star...and a

number of other Masonic symbols on endowment houses, temples, cooperatives, grave markers, tabernacles, church meetinghouses, newspaper mastheads, hotels, residences, money, logos, and seals." ("Similarity of Priesthood in Masonry": The Relationship between Freemasonry and Mormonism, by Michael W. Homer, *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, vol.27, no.3, Fall 1994, p.73)



Brigham Young revised and institutionalized Joseph Smith's temple ceremonies beginning in late 1845 in Nauvoo. Note the Masonic square and compass pin on his shirt.

The Mysteries of Godliness, p.131(c)

[Even after the Mormons came to Utah, Brigham Young continued to wear his Masonic pin displaying the compass and square.]

In addition to these symbols, the LDS Church continues to use the up-side-down, five pointed star. The newly completed Nauvoo Temple has numerous windows using it. For pictures see (off-site links):

- http://www.nauvootemple.com/g/20011027_2s.jpg
- http://www.nauvootemple.com/g/20001014_8s.jpg
- http://www.nauvootemple.com/g/20010630_4s.jpg
- <http://www.mrm.org/multimedia/images/nauvoo-pentagrams-sunstones.jpg>

The inverted star was also used on the Salt Lake temple above the front doors,



above the upper arched windows on the north and south sides, on the Eagle Gate monument (over State Street and South Temple in Salt Lake City),

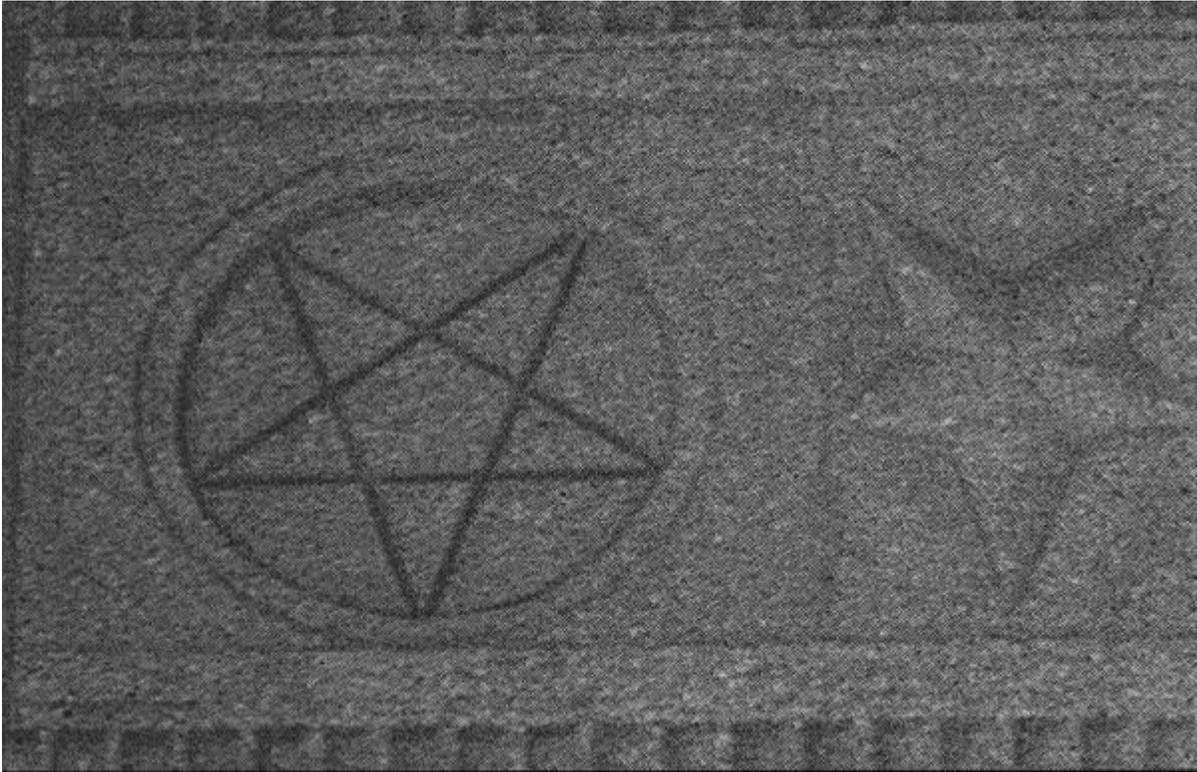


EAGLE GATE.

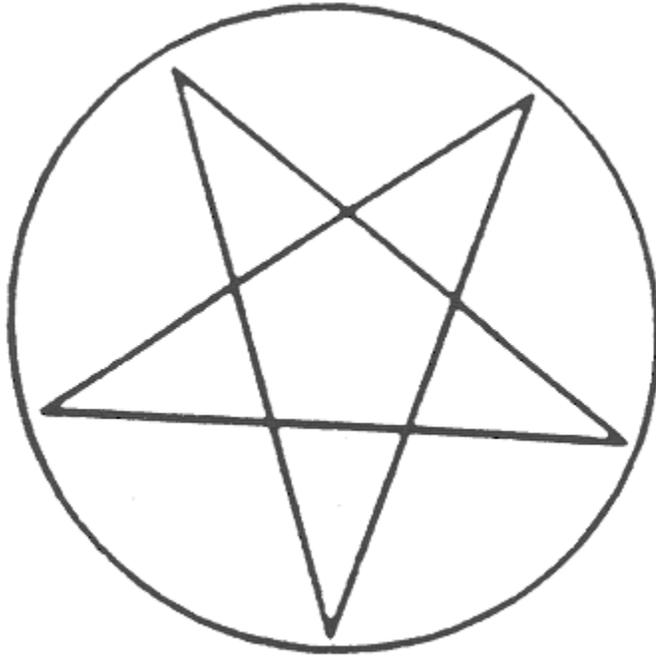
on the planter boxes in front of the statue of Christ in the Salt Lake Visitors Center,



and on the front entrance, upper left-hand corner, of the LDS Historical Museum (west of temple square).



While the upside-down star is used in Masonry, it is also used by Satanists.



Satanic inverted pentagram

Raising Hell, p.214(i)

Also, on the LDS temple undergarment (worn daily by LDS faithful) are embroidered the compass and square. This would look like small zigzag stitching to form a "V" on the left breast and a "L" on the right breast of the garment. There is also a small stitched line at the bellybutton and the right knee. These are on both the men's and the women's underwear. The garment is to be worn daily to remind the Mormon of the covenants made in the temple.

Since the LDS Church rejects the use of the cross as a religious symbol, one is left to wonder why they would adopt symbols used by the Masons and Satanists?

When trying to explain the similarities between Mormonism and Masonry, one LDS author wrote:

"Masons who visit the Temple Block in Salt Lake City are impressed by what they call the Masonic emblems displayed on the outside of the Mormon Temple.

"Yes, the 'Masonic emblems' are displayed on the walls of the Temple—the sun, moon and stars, 'Holiness to the Lord,' the two right hands clasped in fellowship, the All-seeing eye, Alpha and Omega, and the beehive. Masonic writers tell us that the Mormon Temple ritual and their own are slightly similar in some respects.

"Without any apologies we frankly admit that there may be some truth in these statements." (*Mormonism and Masonry*, Introduction, by E. Cecil McGavin, Bookcraft, 1956)

Later in the same book, Mr. McGavin stated:

"In the diary of Benjamin F. Johnson, an intimate friend and associate of Joseph Smith, it is recorded that 'Joseph told me that Freemasonry was the apostate endowment, as sectarian religion was the apostate religion.' Elder Heber C. Kimball, who had been a Mason for many years, related that after Joseph Smith became a Mason, he explained to his brethren that Masonry had been taken from the priesthood." (*Mormonism and Masonry*, p.199)

The problem with Mr. McGavin's position is that neither the Masonic or Mormon rituals can be shown to date to King Solomon's temple. In fact, most historians place the beginning of Freemasonry in the 1700's. LDS author Michael Homer wrote:

"Prior to 1860 most Masonic writers accepted the legends of Freemasonry with claimed that it originated in antiquity. Although these claims were challenged by most anti-Masonic writers in the United States,...most Masonic writers refused to discount these claims until 'a school of English investigators' began to evaluate lodge minutes, ancient rituals, and municipal records. Eventually this movement...debunked the notion that the rituals practiced in Speculative Freemasonry originated before the sixteenth century. Gould and others argued that the best evidence indicated that Operative Freemasonry originated with trade guilds in the Middle Ages and that the development of Speculative Freemasonry, with ceremonies and rituals similar to those practiced today, began in the seventeenth century....the rituals of Freemasonry have never been static, but have evolved both in time and place. For example, only post-1760 rituals included separate obligations for degrees in conjunction with signs, penalties, tokens, and words, the form found in most subsequent rituals and the same format followed in the Mormon temple endowment." ("Similarity of Priesthood in Masonry," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, vol.27, no.3, Fall 1994, pp.103-104)

Since Freemasonry dates to the 1700's and Joseph Smith was a Mason before he introduced the LDS temple rituals and built the Nauvoo temple, one is forced to conclude that the similarities between the two groups are due to Smith borrowing elements from Masonry.

For more information see our page: [Captain Morgan and the Masonic Influence in Mormonism.](#)

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MORMONS: WHO THEY ARE, WHAT THEY BELIEVE - - Discussion Guide

The Sacred Temple Garments

<https://www.lds.org/ensign/1997/08/the-temple-garment-an-outward-expression-of-an-inward-commitment?lang=eng>

The Temple Garment: “An Outward Expression of an Inward Commitment”

BY ELDER CARLOS E. ASAY

Emeritus Member of the First Quorum of the Seventy

Through sacred covenants with the Lord, we receive promises of blessings and protection. He has given us a tangible reminder of our covenants.

A few years ago, in a seminar for new temple presidents and matrons, Elder James E. Faust, then of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, told about his being called to serve as a General Authority. He was asked only one question by President Harold B. Lee: “Do you wear the garments properly?” to which he answered in the affirmative. He then asked if President Lee wasn’t going to ask him about his worthiness. President Lee replied that he didn’t need to, for he had learned from experience that how one wears the garment is the expression of how the individual feels about the Church and everything that relates to it. It is a measure of one’s worthiness and devotion to the gospel.

There are some who would welcome a detailed dress code answering every conceivable question about the wearing of the temple garment. They would have priesthood leaders legislate lengths, specify conditions of when and how it should and should not be worn, and impose penalties upon those who missed the mark by a fraction of an inch. Such individuals would have Church members

strain at a thread and omit the weightier matters of the gospel of Jesus Christ (see Matt. 23:23–26).

Most Latter-day Saints, however, rejoice over the moral agency extended them by a loving Father in Heaven. They prize highly the trust placed in them by the Lord and Church leaders—a trust implied in this statement made by the Prophet Joseph Smith: “I teach them correct principles, and they govern themselves.”¹

Samuel the Lamanite declared:

“And now remember, remember, my brethren, that whosoever perisheth, perisheth unto himself; and whosoever doeth iniquity, doeth it unto himself; for behold, ye are free; ye are permitted to act for yourselves; for behold, God hath given unto you a knowledge and he hath made you free.

“He hath given unto you that ye might know good from evil, and he hath given unto you that ye might choose life or death; and ye can do good and be restored unto that which is good, or have that which is good restored unto you; or ye can do evil, and have that which is evil restored unto you” (Hel. 14:30–31). I believe there is a critical body of knowledge relating to the temple garment. When that knowledge is obtained, Latter-day Saints filled with faith wear the garment and wear it properly, not because someone is policing their actions but because they understand the virtues of the sacred clothing and want to “do good and be restored unto that which is good.” On the other hand, when one does not understand the sacred nature of the temple garment, the tendency is to treat it casually and regard it as just another piece of cloth.

The critical body of knowledge associated with the garment of the holy priesthood may be categorized under three headings: Armor of God, Historical Background, and Teachings of Modern Prophets. I shall present some information pertaining to each of these headings, hoping that the thoughts shared will provoke a greater appreciation of the garment and stir a greater resolve in the minds of Saints to wear it willfully and properly.

Armor of God

We are at war! Our enemy is not an invading army from a bordering nation or a navy of some overseas power. Bullets are not whizzing above our heads, nor are bombs exploding in and around our homes. Nevertheless, we are engaged in a life-and-death struggle with forces capable of thrashing us inside out and sending us down into the depths of spiritual defeat if we are not vigilant.

I refer, of course, to the “wrestle” against principalities, powers, rulers of darkness, and spiritual wickedness in high places spoken of by the Apostle Paul (see Eph. 6:12). I refer to the onslaught of immorality, crime, substance abuse, and other insidious influences threatening our society. Such threatening influences, along with other imminent dangers, constitute “the wiles of the devil” (Eph. 6:11) against which we must stand in these “perilous times” (2 Tim. 3:1).

Paul counseled: “Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand” (Eph. 6:13). With his prophetic powers, Paul could foresee the wicked conditions that would exist on the earth in our modern day. Therefore, he urged all Saints to have their “loins girt about with truth” (Eph. 6:14), to put on “the breastplate of righteousness” (Eph. 6:14), to have their feet shod “with the preparation of the gospel of peace” (Eph. 6:15), to grasp “the shield of faith” (Eph. 6:16), to place on their heads “the helmet of salvation” (Eph. 6:17), to take “the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God” (Eph. 6:17), and to pray always (see Eph. 6:18) so that they might be preserved. He knew that armor made of truth, righteousness, faith, spirit, and prayer would protect people from the “fiery darts” (Eph. 6:16) crafted and thrown by Satan and his henchmen.

There is, however, another piece of armor worthy of our consideration. It is the special underclothing known as the temple garment, or garment of the holy priesthood, worn by members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints who have received their temple endowment. This garment, worn day and night, serves three important purposes: it is a reminder of the sacred covenants made with the Lord in His holy house, a protective covering for the body, and a symbol of the modesty of dress and living that should characterize the lives of all the humble followers of Christ.

It is written that “the white garment symbolizes purity and helps assure modesty, respect for the attributes of God, and, to the degree it is honored, *a token of what Paul regarded as taking upon one the whole armor of God* (Eph. 6:13; cf. D&C 27:15). ... Garments bear several simple marks of orientation toward the gospel principles of obedience, truth, life, and discipleship in Christ.” 2

Much, much more could be said about the war for the souls of men and the whole armor of God. The war on the earth began in the days of Adam, continued down through the years with Moses and the children of Israel, and still rages in a dispensation known as the fulness of times—a dispensation ushered in by the revelations received through the Prophet Joseph Smith. Hence, the issue of protective coverings enabling us to withstand the fiery darts of Satan will continue to be of great significance.

We must put on the armor of God spoken of by the Apostle Paul and reiterated in a modern revelation (see D&C 27:15–18). We must also “put on the armor of righteousness” (2 Ne. 1:23) symbolized by the temple garment. Otherwise, we may lose the war and perish.

The heavy armor worn by soldiers of a former day, including helmets, shields, and breastplates, determined the outcome of some battles. However, the real battles of life in our modern day will be won by those who are clad in a spiritual armor—an armor consisting of faith in God, faith in self, faith in one’s cause, and faith in one’s leaders. The piece of armor called the temple garment not only provides the comfort and warmth of a cloth covering, it also strengthens the wearer to resist temptation, fend off evil influences, and stand firmly for the right.

Historical Background

It should be understood that “the things of the Lord” (2 Ne. 4:16) have included sacred clothing from the very beginning of this world. The scriptures contain many references to the wearing of special garments by the ancients. Prior to their expulsion from the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve were clad in sacred clothing. We read: “Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them” (Gen. 3:21).

They received this clothing in a context of instruction on the Atonement, sacrifice, repentance, and forgiveness (see Moses 5:5–8). The temple garment given to Latter-day Saints is provided in a similar context. It is given to remind wearers of the continuing need for repentance, the need to honor binding covenants made in the house of the Lord, and the need to cherish and share virtue in our daily living so that promised blessings may be claimed.

Moses was commanded to place holy garments and priestly vestments upon Aaron and others, thus preparing them to officiate in the tabernacle. Said the Lord to Moses, “And take thou unto thee Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel ... and thou shalt make holy garments for Aaron thy brother for glory and for beauty ... that he may minister unto me in the priest’s office” (Ex. 28:1–3).

References to Aaron’s clothing and the vestments of the priesthood worn by selected leaders in Old Testament times are accompanied by expressions such as “precious garments,” “glorious garments,” “garments of honor,” “coats of glory,” and “garments of salvation.”³ These expressions may apply more particularly to the raiment worn by those who officiated in tabernacle or temple rites; nevertheless, these descriptive words also apply to the sacred clothing worn on a daily basis by those “who call themselves by [God’s] name and are essaying to [become] saints” (D&C 125:2). The honor, glory, and precious nature of sacred garments, whether worn only in the temple or in everyday life under street clothes, transcends the material of which they are made. Their full worth and beauty is appreciated and regarded as precious or glorious when viewed through the “eye of faith” (Alma 5:15).

“The garment is inadequate without the thing that it signifies. ... It won’t protect you unless you’re true and faithful to your covenant, and only to the degree to which you don’t dishonor your garment has it any significance at all. Only on that condition that you don’t dishonor it, that you’re pure, that you are true and faithful to your covenant—does the garment have any benefit,” wrote Hugh Nibley, an emeritus professor of ancient scripture at Brigham Young University.⁴

Yes, garments have been worn by prophets and other righteous Saints throughout the ages, whenever the ordinances of the priesthood and the temple have been available to the children of men. When the Church was restored to the earth in our day, the sacred priesthood ordinances associated with the holy temple were revealed anew to the Prophet Joseph Smith. The revelations he received included instructions about the garment.

Many references are found in the scriptures relating to garments and clothing. Enoch declared: "I beheld the heavens open, and I was clothed with glory" (Moses 7:3). Jacob spoke of a day of judgment when "we shall have a perfect knowledge of all our guilt, and our uncleanness, and our nakedness; and the righteous shall have a perfect knowledge of their enjoyment, and their righteousness, being clothed with purity, yea, even with the robe of righteousness" (2 Ne. 9:14). Isaiah rejoiced, saying, "God ... hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness" (Isa. 61:10). Alma referred to "all the holy prophets, whose garments are cleansed and are spotless, pure and white" (Alma 5:24). These and other prophetic statements suggest not only a cleanliness and purity within one's soul, but also a spotless covering over one's soul, signifying a life of goodness and devotion to God.

Teachings of Modern Prophets

I fear that too many Church members take for granted the promise of protection and blessings associated with the temple garment. Some wear it improperly, and others remove it to suit whims of circumstance. In such cases, the instructions of modern prophets, seers, and revelators are ignored and spiritual protection placed in jeopardy.

In a letter from the First Presidency dated 3 July 1974, Church members were reminded of the sacred nature of the garment: "The sacredness of the garment should be ever present and uppermost in the wearer's mind; ... the blessings which flow from the observance of our covenants are sufficiently great to recompense for any mere inconvenience. To break our covenants is to forfeit the protection and blessings promised for obedience to them." 5

And in a letter to priesthood leaders dated 10 October 1988, the First Presidency made the following important statements regarding how the

garment should be worn: “Church members who have been clothed with the garment in the temple have made a covenant to wear it throughout their lives. This has been interpreted to mean that it is worn as underclothing both day and night. This sacred covenant is between the member and the Lord. Members should seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit to answer for themselves any personal questions about the wearing of the garment. ... The promise of protection and blessings is conditioned upon worthiness and faithfulness in keeping the covenant.

“The fundamental principle ought to be to wear the garment and not to find occasions to remove it. Thus, members should not remove either all or part of the garment to work in the yard or to lounge around the home in swimwear or immodest clothing. Nor should they remove it to participate in recreational activities that can reasonably be done with the garment worn properly beneath regular clothing. When the garment must be removed, such as for swimming, it should be restored as soon as possible.

“The principles of modesty and keeping the body appropriately covered are implicit in the covenant and should govern the nature of all clothing worn. Endowed members of the Church wear the garment as a reminder of the sacred covenants they have made with the Lord and also as a protection against temptation and evil. *How it is worn is an outward expression of an inward commitment to follow the Savior.*” 6

President Joseph F. Smith had strong feelings about the proper wearing of the garment. Said he: “The Lord has given unto us garments of the holy priesthood, and you know what that means. And yet there are those of us who mutilate them, in order that we may follow the foolish, vain and (permit me to say) indecent practices of the world. In order that such persons may imitate the fashions, they will not hesitate to mutilate that which should be held by them the most sacred of all things in the world, next to their own virtue, next to their own purity of life. They should hold these things that God has given unto them sacred, unchanged and unaltered from the very pattern in which God gave them. Let us have the moral courage to stand against the opinions of fashion, and especially where fashion compels us to break a covenant and so commit a grievous sin.” 7

In his book, *The Holy Temple*, Elder Boyd K. Packer of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained succinctly why it is so important to wear the garment properly.

“The garment represents sacred covenants. It fosters modesty and becomes a shield and protection to the wearer.

“The wearing of such a garment does not prevent members from dressing in the fashionable clothing generally worn in nations of the world. Only clothing that is immodest or extreme in style would be incompatible with wearing the garment.” 8

What more needs to be said about the garment and the way it is to be worn and treated? The principles are stated clearly, and it is left to the wearers and their consciences to live accordingly. People of faith need not be commanded in all things for they do not endeavor to excuse themselves in the least point or over the absence of a Mosaic code of conduct. But rather, they govern their dress and behavior as God and his prophets have decreed, allowing the justice, mercy, and long-suffering of God to have full sway in their hearts (see Alma 42:29-31).

A Reminder We Carry

I like to think of the garment as the Lord’s way of letting us take part of the temple with us when we leave. It is true that we carry from the Lord’s house inspired teachings and sacred covenants written in our minds and hearts. However, the one tangible remembrance we carry with us back into the world is the garment. And though we cannot always be in the temple, a part of it can always be with us to bless our lives.

Don’t forget that the word *garment* is used symbolically in the scriptures and gives expanded meaning to other words such as *white, clean, pure, righteous, modesty, covering, ceremonial, holy, priesthood, beautiful, perfection, salvation, undefiled, worthy, white raiment, shield, protection, spotless, blameless, armor, covenants, promises, blessings, respect, eternal life*, and so forth. All of these words occupy special places in the vocabularies of people sincerely essaying to become Saints.

Of one choice group of believers, it is written, “Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy.

“He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels” (Rev. 3:4–5).

How wonderful it would be if all Church members walked with God in white and were numbered with the Saints in Sardis!

Remember always that our very salvation depends, symbolically, upon the condition of our garments. The prophet Alma told the members of the Church in his day that they could not be saved unless their garments were symbolically washed, cleansed, and made white through the blood of Jesus Christ. He taught:

“No man [can] be saved except his garments are washed white; yea, his garments must be purified until they are cleansed from all stain, through the blood of him of whom it has been spoken by our fathers, who should come to redeem his people from their sins. ...

“Have ye walked, keeping yourselves blameless before God? Could ye say, if ye were called to die at this time, within yourselves, that ye have been sufficiently humble? That your garments have been cleansed and made white through the blood of Christ, who will come to redeem his people from their sins?” (Alma 5:21, 27).

It is my prayer that our garments will be cleansed through the blood of Christ and that we will reaffirm in our minds and hearts the declaration “Zion must increase in beauty, and in holiness, ... and put on her beautiful garments” (D&C 82:14).

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MORMONS: WHO THEY ARE, WHAT THEY BELIEVE - - Discussion Guide

Passing Through the Temple Veil

<http://www.ldsendowment.org/veil.html>

THE MARKS ON THE VEIL

PETER: Brethren and sisters, I will now explain the marks on the veil. 

These four marks are the marks of the holy priesthood, and corresponding marks are found in your individual garment.

This one on the right is the mark of the square. It is placed in the garment over the right breast, suggesting to the mind exactness and honor in keeping the covenants entered into this day.

This one on the left is the mark of the compass. It is placed in the garment over the left breast, suggesting to the mind an undeviating course leading to eternal life; a constant reminder that desires, appetites, and passions are to be kept within the bounds the Lord has set; and that all truth may be circumscribed into one great whole.

This is the navel mark. It is placed in the garment over the navel, suggesting to the mind the need of constant nourishment to body and spirit.

This is the knee mark. It is placed in the right leg of the garment so as to be over the kneecap, suggesting that every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that Jesus is the Christ.

These other three marks are for convenience in working at the veil. Through this one, the person representing the Lord puts forth his right hand to test our knowledge of the tokens of the holy priesthood. Through the one on our right, he asks us certain questions; through the one on the left, we give our answers.

THE DIALOGUE AT THE VEIL

[Peter stands before the veil, in view of the temple initiates. A person representing the Lord stands concealed behind the veil.]

PETER: As all of you will have to pass through the veil, we will show you how this is to be done.

Presentation at the Veil

[Peter stands before a part in the veil, off to the side of the marks whose meaning he has just explained.]

PETER: The person is brought to this point, and the worker gives three distinct taps with the mallet . . .

[Peter does so. The person representing the Lord puts his hand through the part in the veil, opening it slightly.]

. . . whereupon the Lord parts the veil, and asks:

LORD: What is wanted?

PETER: Adam, having been true and faithful in all things, desires further light and knowledge by conversing with the Lord through the veil.

LORD: Present him at the veil, and his request shall be granted.

[Peter stands in front of the marks on the veil. The person representing the Lord puts his hand through the mark which Peter has indicated for this purpose.]

First Token of the Aaronic Priesthood

PETER: The person is then brought to this point, whereupon the Lord puts forth his right hand, gives the first token of the Aaronic priesthood, and asks:

LORD: What is that?

PETER: The first token of the Aaronic priesthood.

LORD: Has it a name?

PETER: It has.

LORD: Will you give it to me?

PETER: I will, through the veil.

The person then gives, through the veil, the name of this token, which is the new name received in the temple today.

Second Token of the Aaronic Priesthood

PETER: The Lord then gives the second token of the Aaronic priesthood and asks:

LORD: What is that?

PETER: The second token of the Aaronic priesthood.

LORD: Has it a name?

PETER: It has.

LORD: Will you give it to me?

PETER: I will, through the veil.

The person then gives the name of this token, which is _____.

First Token of the Melchizedek Priesthood

PETER: The Lord then gives the first token of the Melchizedek priesthood, or Sign of the Nail, and asks:

LORD: What is that?

PETER: The first token of the Melchizedek priesthood, or Sign of the Nail.

LORD: Has it a name?

PETER: It has.

LORD: Will you give it to me?

PETER: I will, through the veil.

The person then gives the name of this token, which is _____.

Second Token of the Melchizedek Priesthood

PETER: The Lord then gives the second token of the Melchizedek priesthood, the patriarchal grip, or Sure Sign of the Nail, and asks:

LORD: What is that?

PETER: The second token of the Melchizedek priesthood, the patriarchal grip, or Sure Sign of the Nail.

LORD: Has it a name?

PETER: It has.

LORD: Will you give it to me?

PETER: I cannot. I have not yet received it. For this purpose I have come to converse with the Lord through the veil.

LORD: You shall receive it, upon the five points of fellowship, through the veil.

PETER: The five points of fellowship are: inside of right foot by the side of right foot, knee to knee, breast to breast, hand to back, and mouth to ear. 🙏

The Lord then gives the name of this token and asks:

LORD: What is that?

PETER: The second token of the Melchizedek priesthood, the patriarchal grip, or Sure Sign of the Nail.

LORD: Has it a name?

PETER: It has.

LORD: Will you give it to me?

PETER: I will, upon the five points of fellowship, through the veil.

The person then repeats back to the Lord the name of this token as he received it, whereupon the Lord says:

LORD: That is correct.

[The person representing the Lord withdraws his hand from view.]

Admission through the Veil

[Peter stands again before the part in the veil.]

PETER: The person is again brought to this point, and the worker gives three distinct taps with the mallet.

[Peter does so.]

The Lord parts the veil and asks:

LORD: What is wanted?

PETER: Adam, having conversed with the Lord through the veil, desires now to enter his presence.

The Lord puts forth his right hand, takes the person by the right hand, and says:

LORD: Let him enter.

PETER: He is admitted into the presence of the Lord.

[The person representing the Lord pulls Peter partway through the veil to demonstrate.]

We will now report.

[Peter, James, and John pass behind the veil.]

THE MESSENGERS' FOURTH REPORT

[Elohim, Jehovah, and their messengers are heard speaking behind the veil.]

PETER: Jehovah, we have been down to the man Adam and his posterity in the terrestrial world, and have given unto them the law of consecration, and have caused them to receive it by covenant. We have given unto them the second token of the Melchizedek priesthood, the patriarchal grip, or Sure Sign of the Nail, with its accompanying sign, and have taught them the order of prayer. They are now ready to converse with the Lord through the veil. This is our report.

JEHOVAH: It is well, Peter, James, and John.

Elohim--Peter, James, and John have been down to the man Adam and his posterity in the terrestrial world and have done all that they were commanded to do.

ELOHIM: It is well.

Jehovah, instruct Peter, James, and John to introduce the man Adam and his posterity at the veil, where we will give unto them the name of the second token of the Melchizedek priesthood, the patriarchal grip, or Sure Sign of the Nail, preparatory to their entering into our presence.

JEHOVAH: It shall be done, Elohim.

Peter, James, and John, you will introduce Adam and his posterity at the veil, where we will give unto them the name of the second token of the Melchizedek priesthood, the patriarchal grip, or Sure Sign of the Nail, preparatory to their entering into our presence.

PETER: It shall be done, Jehovah. Come, James and John, we will introduce them at the veil.

[Peter, James, and John return from behind the veil.]

Brethren and sisters, we are instructed to introduce you at the veil, where you will receive the name of the second token of the Melchizedek priesthood, the patriarchal grip, or Sure Sign of the Nail, preparatory to your entering into the presence of the Lord.

THE LECTURE AT THE VEIL 5

PETER: A lecture will now be given which summarizes the instructions, ordinances, and covenants, and also the tokens, with their keywords, signs, and penalties, pertaining to the endowment, which you have thus far received.

You should try to remember and keep in mind all that you have heard and seen, and may yet hear and see, in this house. The purpose of this lecture is to assist you to remember that which has been taught you this day. You must keep in mind that you are under a solemn obligation never to speak outside of the temple of the Lord of the things you see and hear in this sacred place. 4

Introduction

LECTURER: Brethren and sisters, the ordinances of the endowment as here administered, long withheld from the children of men, pertain to the dispensation of the fullness of time and have been revealed to prepare the people for exaltation in the celestial kingdom, where God and Christ dwell.

The deep meaning of the eternal truths constituting the endowment has been set forth in brief instructions and by symbolic representation. If you give prayerful and earnest thought to the holy endowment, you will obtain the understanding and spirit of the work done in the temples of the Lord. The privilege of laboring here for the dead permits us to enter the temple frequently, and to refresh our memories, and to enlarge our understanding of the endowment.

The Initiatory

You were first washed and anointed, a garment was placed upon you, and a new name was given you. This name you should always remember; but you must never reveal it to any person, except at the veil.

The Creation

You then entered [the Creation Room]. [There] 5 you heard the voices of persons representing a council of the Gods--Elohim, Jehovah, and Michael. Elohim said: "See, yonder is matter unorganized. Go ye

down and organize it into a world, like unto the other worlds that we have heretofore formed." As the creation of the earth progressed, you heard the commands and the reports of the persons representing the Gods.

If we are faithful, we shall enter the celestial kingdom and there hear and know the Gods of heaven. They are perfect; we are imperfect. They are exalted; we may attain exaltation.

Our spirits at one time lived with the Gods; but each of us was given the privilege of coming upon this earth to take upon himself a body, so that the spirit might have a house in which to dwell.

Michael, one of the council of the Gods, became the man Adam, to whom was given the woman Eve. However, as Adam he did not remember his life and labors in the council. It is so with us all. We came into the world with no memory of our previous existence.

The Garden

We then followed Adam and Eve into the garden, where Elohim provided that they might eat freely of all kinds of fruit of the garden, except the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. He forbade them to partake of this fruit, saying that in the day they did so, they should surely die.

When Adam and Eve were left alone in the garden, Satan appeared and tempted them. Eve yielded to the temptation, partook of the fruit, and offered it to Adam. Adam had resisted the temptation of Satan, but when Eve offered him the forbidden fruit, he partook of it that they might continue together and perpetuate the human race.

Adam and Eve now understood that it was Lucifer who had tempted them. They became self-conscious. Discovering their nakedness and hearing the voice of the Lord, they made aprons of fig leaves and hid themselves. They had learned that everything has its opposite, such as good and evil, light and darkness, pleasure and pain.

The Lord again entered the garden. Adam and Eve confessed their disobedience. The Lord cursed Satan and cast him out of the garden of Eden, and the Lord commanded: "Let cherubim, and a flaming sword be placed to guard the way of the tree of life, lest Adam put forth his hand, and partake of the fruit thereof, and live forever in his sins."

Before their departure, however, instructions were given them. Addressing Eve, the Lord said: "Because thou hast hearkened to the voice of Satan and hast partaken of the forbidden fruit and given unto Adam, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception. In sorrow shalt thou bring forth children; nevertheless, thou mayest be preserved in childbearing. Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee in righteousness."

To Adam, the Lord said: "Because thou hast hearkened to the voice of thy wife and hast partaken of the forbidden fruit, the earth shall be cursed for thy sake. Instead of producing fruits and flowers spontaneously, it shall bring forth thorns, thistles, briars, and noxious weeds to afflict and torment man; and by the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat thy bread all the days of thy life, for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."

Having been commanded, Jehovah provided Adam and Eve with coats of skins for a covering. The garment which was placed upon you after you had been washed and anointed represents the coat of skins, or covering, of Adam and Eve. They were also promised that further light and knowledge would be given them.

The Law of Obedience and Sacrifice

The law of obedience was then taught Adam and Eve and accepted by them. Eve covenanted with Adam that thenceforth she would obey the law of her husband and abide by his counsel in righteousness; and Adam covenanted with the Lord that he would obey the Lord and keep his commandments. You, likewise, covenanted to comply with the law of obedience.

The law of sacrifice accompanying the law of obedience, as contained in the Old and New Testaments of the Bible, was next presented to Adam, and you were all placed under covenant to observe it.

The law of obedience and sacrifice includes the promise of the Savior, the Only Begotten of the Father, who is full of grace and truth and who by his sacrifice has become the Redeemer of mankind. All things should be done in the name of the Son. An angel of the Lord explained this to Adam, who was given the privilege of showing his obedience by offering sacrifices to the Lord in similitude of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Later, the people of Israel lived under this law, which continued in force until the death of Jesus Christ.

The first token of the Aaronic priesthood, with its accompanying name, sign, and penalty, was given you; and you were told that the name of this token is your new name, or the new name of the dead, if officiating for the dead. The sacred nature of the tokens of the priesthood was carefully explained at this time. You were placed under solemn covenant never to reveal these tokens, with their accompanying names, signs, and penalties, even at the peril of your life. You were told that the execution of the penalties indicate different ways in which life may be taken.

The Telestial World

Then Adam and Eve were driven out of the garden into the telestial kingdom, or the lone and dreary world, the world in which we are now living. There Adam offered a prayer saying, "Oh God, hear the words of my mouth," repeating it three times.

Satan entered and, claiming to be the god of this world, asked Adam what he desired. Adam replied that he was waiting for messengers from his Father. Satan declared that a preacher would soon arrive. A man representing a sectarian minister entered and preached doctrine, which Adam did not accept.

Peter, James, and John were sent down by the Lord to learn, without disclosing their identity, if the man Adam had been faithful to his covenants. They found that he had been faithful and so reported.

They were sent down again, this time in their true character as apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ, to visit and to instruct Adam and his posterity in the telestial world. Before so teaching the people, they cast Satan out.

The Law of the Gospel

The law of the gospel, as contained in the Book of Mormon and the Bible, was then given Adam and his posterity. You were placed under covenant to obey the law of the gospel, and to avoid all lightmindedness, loud laughter, evil speaking of the Lord's anointed, and taking the name of the Lord in vain.

The robe of the holy priesthood was placed upon your left shoulder, according to the order of the Aaronic priesthood.

The second token of the Aaronic priesthood was given you, with its name, sign, and penalty, and you were informed that the name of this token is _____.

The robe of the holy priesthood was then changed to the right shoulder, as was done anciently when officiating in the ordinances of the Melchizedek priesthood. With the robe on the right shoulder, you have authority also, if called to the bishopric, to act in the Aaronic priesthood.

The Terrestrial World-- The Law of Chastity

You were then introduced, with the robe of the holy priesthood on the right shoulder, into the terrestrial kingdom. The law of chastity was there explained to you in plainness, and you were placed under covenant to obey this law.

The first token of the Melchizedek priesthood, or Sign of the Nail, with its accompanying name, sign, and penalty, was next given you. You were told that the name of the first token of the Melchizedek priesthood is _____.

The Law of Consecration

The book of Doctrine and Covenants, in connection with the Book of Mormon and the Bible, was presented to you; and the law of consecration, as contained in the book of Doctrine and Covenants, was explained to you; and you received this law by covenant.

The second token of the Melchizedek priesthood, the patriarchal grip, or Sure Sign of the Nail, or the Nail in the Sure Place, was given you, together with its sign. The name of this token will be given you at the veil.

This token has reference to the crucifixion of the Savior. When he was placed upon the cross, the crucifiers drove nails through the palms of his hands; then, fearing that the weight of his body would cause the nails to tear through the flesh of his hands, they drove nails through his wrists. Hence in the palm is the Sign of the Nail, and in the wrist is the Sure Sign of the Nail, or the Nail in the Sure Place. 6

The Veil

You have now progressed so far in the endowment that you are ready to receive the name of the second token of the Melchizedek priesthood and to pass through the veil into the celestial kingdom.

The sisters in this company who are to be married and sealed for time and eternity should be taken through the veil by their intended husband. 7 Others will be taken through the veil by the regular temple workers.

Conclusion

Brethren and sisters, you will have received this day the sacred ordinances of the endowment. The eternal plan of salvation for man, as he journeys from his pre-existent state to his future high place in the celestial kingdom, has been presented to you. You have covenanted to obey all the laws of the gospel, including the laws of obedience, sacrifice, chastity, and consecration, which make possible an exaltation with the Gods; and you have received the first and second tokens of the Aaronic priesthood and the first and second tokens of the Melchizedek priesthood, with the names, signs, and penalties of these tokens, except the name of the second token of the Melchizedek priesthood, which will be given you at the veil.

All this is done for the glory, honor, and endowment of the children of Zion.

Brethren and sisters, strive to comprehend the glorious things presented to you this day. No other people on earth have ever had this privilege, except as they have received the keys of the priesthood given in the endowment.

These are what are termed the mysteries of godliness--that which will enable you to understand the expression of the Savior, made just prior to his betrayal: "This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou has sent." 8

May God bless you all. Amen.

THE INITIATES PASS THROUGH THE VEIL

Presentation at the Veil

[Initiates are presented individually at the veil. The veil worker taps three times with the mallet.]

LORD: What is wanted?

WORKER: Adam, 9 having been true and faithful in all things, desires further light and knowledge by conversing with the Lord through the veil [for and in behalf of _____, who is dead].

LORD: Present him at the veil, and his request shall be granted.

First Token of the Aaronic Priesthood

LORD: What is that?

INITIATE: The first token of the Aaronic priesthood.

LORD: Has it a name?

INITIATE: It has.

LORD: Will you give it to me?

INITIATE: I will, through the veil.

[The initiate gives the token's name.]

Second Token of the Aaronic Priesthood

LORD: What is that?

INITIATE: The second token of the Aaronic priesthood.

LORD: Has it a name?

INITIATE: It has.

LORD: Will you give it to me?

INITIATE: I will, through the veil.

[The initiate gives the token's name.]

First Token of the Melchizedek Priesthood

LORD: What is that?

INITIATE: The first token of the Melchizedek priesthood, or Sign of the Nail.

LORD: Has it a name?

INITIATE: It has.

LORD: Will you give it to me?

INITIATE: I will, through the veil.

[The initiate gives the token's name.]

Second Token of the Melchizedek Priesthood

LORD: What is that?

INITIATE: The second token of the Melchizedek priesthood, the patriarchal grip, or Sure Sign of the Nail.

LORD: Has it a name?

INITIATE: It has.

LORD: Will you give it to me?

INITIATE: I cannot. I have not yet received it. For this purpose I have come to converse with the Lord through the veil.

LORD: You shall receive it, upon the five points of fellowship, through the veil.

[Still holding the patriarchal grip, the initiate and the person representing the Lord embrace upon the five points of fellowship through the veil. The initiate's left arm passes through the mark of the compass, and the left arm of the person representing the Lord passes through the mark of the square. The person representing the Lord speaks into the initiate's ear the name of the token.] 

LORD: What is that?

INITIATE: The second token of the Melchizedek priesthood, the patriarchal grip, or Sure Sign of the Nail.

LORD: Has it a name?

INITIATE: It has.

LORD: Will you give it to me?

INITIATE: I will, upon the five points of fellowship, through the veil.

[The initiate speaks back the name of the token.]

LORD: That is correct.

Admission through the Veil

[The initiate returns to the part in the veil; the worker taps three times with the mallet.]

LORD: What is wanted?

WORKER: Adam, having conversed with the Lord through the veil, desires now to enter his presence.

LORD: Let him enter.

[The initiate is brought through the veil into the Celestial Room.]

NOTES

1. The following explanation of the symbolism of the marks on the veil (and on the garment) was added to the ceremony during the 1930s. This interpretation of the marks was developed by David O. McKay.
2. The five points of fellowship were omitted in the 1990 revision. Instead, the initiate and the person representing the Lord place their left hands on each other's right shoulders, through flaps sewn into the marks of the compass and the square.

The five points of fellowship are one of the most obviously Masonic elements of the endowment. It is significant, though, that where the rites of Freemasonry were traditionally administered only to men, the LDS endowment was administered, almost from its very beginning, to women as well as to men. In the nineteenth century, that must have seemed a boldly egalitarian move.

3. Before 1990, an effort was made to streamline the ceremony by presenting the lecture at the veil only when first-time temple-goers were in attendance. In the 1990 revision, the lecture was omitted altogether.

The first codified lecture at the veil was written by Brigham Young in 1877, for use in the St. George Temple. This version of the lecture included an explanation of Young's idiosyncratic Adam-God doctrine, which held that Adam was a mortal incarnation of the same exalted being who had fathered the spirits of mankind in the premortal world.

4. This statement is no longer included in the endowment. Even before 1990, there was no point in the ceremony at which initiates were placed under such a sweeping obligation of silence as this statement assumes.

5. The exposé from which this text of the lecture is derived was a tape recording of a filmed endowment. That exposé had the words "this room" and "here," since a filmed endowment occurs in a single room. I have enclosed in brackets the words that presumably would have been spoken during a live endowment, in which initiates moved from room to room.
6. When the lecture was omitted from the 1990 revision, this paragraph, explaining the symbolism of the Sure Sign of the Nail, was incorporated into Peter's initial presentation of the token.
7. Before a temple marriage, the groom must take the bride through the veil so that he can learn her new name. The bride, however, does not learn the groom's new name.
8. The scriptural citation is John 17:3.
9. All male initiates are referred to as "Adam," all female initiates as "Eve."
10. The "name" of the final token is not what one would normally think of as a name. Rather, it is a blessing that initiates invoke upon themselves and their posterity. It perhaps refers to the blessings of the resurrection and exaltation; but as with much else in the ceremony, initiates are left to draw their own conclusions about the name's meaning.

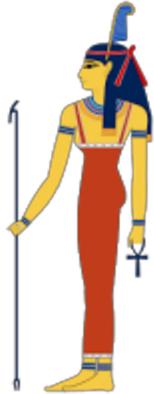
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MORMONS: WHO THEY ARE, WHAT THEY BELIEVE - - Discussion Guide

The Sentinel Angels

<http://mormonmysticism.blogspot.com/2008/03/angels-who-stand-as-sentinels.html>

Angels Who Stand As Sentinels



President Brigham Young taught us that the temple is where we learn about eternity, and where we prepare to pass certain angels that are standing guard. What we don't always get is that they are guarding against us, not for us. When The Father had a flaming sword (& Cherubim) placed in the Garden of Eden it was to stop Adam from returning unchecked. Symbolically it was teaching that all of mankind (ha-adam) can only pass when we are ready (sanctified). We often think of angels guarding us, but in this process they are guarding the way back, so we don't attempt to enter glories what are not yet ready to inherit.

"Your endowment is to receive all those ordinances in the House of the Lord, which are necessary for you after you have departed this life, to enable you to walk back to the presence of the Father, passing the angels who stand as sentinels, being enabled to give them the key words, the signs and tokens, pertaining to the Holy Priesthood, and gain your eternal exaltation in spite of earth and hell." (Brigham Young, J. D. 2:31.)

The Zohar is preoccupied with idea of gates we enter when we are ready, and at each gate is an armed guard. Egyptian initiation imagery is also loaded with example of stations (like rungs of a ladder) that the deceased must pass through to gain his full inheritance. Truth and fidelity are the initiates defenses against these destroying angels.

In Egyptian imagery, those who have not had fidelity to their covenants ("key words, the signs and tokens, pertaining to the Holy Priesthood") in the mortal world, are slashed, cut, or otherwise destroyed if they try to pass. Perhaps this is the origin of the Tyler of Masonry?

Prof. Hugh Nibley discussed the Book of Breathings, and the Book of the Dead.

Here is an excerpt:

"it is permitted to wonder whether khrw-paw (faces-of-fire) with its Hebrew plural ending -im might be the source of the mysterious word Cherubim of the Bible. Or is the root the Egyptian Cherep, "to have control over," as in the long Book of Breathings: "Thrice welcome! say the Cherebneset-priests," i.e., "those who are in

charge of the throne," they being the guardians of the gate (T 32, I, 22, O.M.R.O., 31:56)? Apophis is confronted by the Keepers of the Pylons standing with swords in their hands before a gate from which flames shoot forth, and is repelled by both sword and flame (Bremner-Rhind, 30:11-15). No one else can enter the place as yet either, excepting Re, since to enter it is to breathe the air of eternal life (Gr. Tb., 48-49), and man is not yet ready to live forever in his sins. The Jewish doctors, at least, made such a discrimination, telling us that when Adam was driven out of the place of delights, "the Watchers were placed there so that none could enter unless they had been first purified by the hand of the Cherubim" (B. Gorion, Sagen d. Juden, I, 118). From the earliest times, then, fire and the sword or the flaming sword prevent the serpent from returning to the garden. The serpent must remain in outer darkness (L. Kakosy, ZA, 97:104-105), being himself the mystery of non-being, the negation of all that is (E. Hornung, Ein.u. Viel., pp. 171-72). The Pistis Sophia gives the same explanation for the flaming sword: The time will come, it says, when the sword will be removed for Adam and he may reach forth his hand and partake of the fruit of the tree of life. But the serpent may never do so; in the end the flaming sword was for his benefit." [Prof. Hugh Nibley, Message of the Joseph Smith Papyri, Part IV, The Garden Story]

Ancient temple initiations contained feathers of truth (Ma'at), swords of judgement, and angels guarding the way. Today we have an abbreviated version of what was Adam's ascension, which is our inheritance (endowment). Traces of a longer version, a deeper teaching, and fuller laws, give us hints of the path back. This is why the endowment can only truly be understood by revelation. The profane waste their time trying to understand it, only by revelation can we "get it."

"Therefore, in the ordinances thereof, the power of godliness is manifest." [D&C 84:20]

"If thou shalt ask, thou shalt receive revelation upon revelation, knowledge upon knowledge, that thou mayest know the mysteries and peaceable things—that which bringeth joy, that which bringeth life eternal." [D&C 42:60]

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MORMONS: WHO THEY ARE, WHAT THEY BELIEVE - - Discussion Guide

Passing the Sentinel Angels

<http://www.ldsmag.com/1-ac-1/article/10771>

Passing the Angels Who Stand As Sentinels

By Jeffrey M. Bradshaw

[Editor: This is the sixth article in a series of excerpts from Jeffrey M. Bradshaw's new book, entitled "Temple Themes in the Oath and Covenant of the Priesthood." Links to the full series are found at the end of this article. Color and black-and-white editions of the book are available on Amazon.com and at selected LDS Bookstores (including EbornBooks, BYU Bookstore, and the FAIR LDS Bookstore). An iBooks version is can be purchased from the Apple iBookstore, and a pdf version is available at www.templethemes.net]

"Passing the Angels Who Stand As Sentinels" (Part 1)



J. Kirk Richards, 1977-: Cherubim and the Flaming Sword, 2000[1]

Giving his own summary of temple ordinances, the Prophet Joseph Smith wrote that they concerned:[2]

... washings, anointings, endowments, and the communication of keys pertaining to the Aaronic Priesthood, and so on to the highest order of the Melchizedek Priesthood, setting forth the order pertaining to the Ancient of Days, and all those plans and principles by which anyone is enabled to secure the fulness of those blessings which have been prepared for the Church of the Firstborn, and come up and abide in the presence of the Elohim in the eternal worlds.

Specific aspects of instruction in the endowment “pertaining to the Holy Priesthood” were described by Brigham Young in his description of the endowment:[3]

Let me give you a definition in brief. Your endowment is to receive all those ordinances in the House of the Lord, which are necessary for you, after you have departed this life, to enable you to walk back to the presence of the Father, passing the angels who stand as sentinels, being able to give them the key words, the signs and tokens, pertaining to the Holy Priesthood, and gain your eternal exaltation in spite of earth and hell.

Although this statement is frequently quoted in official Church publications,[4] the reference to “key words, the signs and tokens” is not explained. The sacred nature of these things prohibits any discussion of specific symbolism. However, it may be helpful for the modern reader to understand the general meaning of these terms in related contexts, which would have been much more familiar to those in Joseph Smith’s time than they are in our day.[5]

Before continuing, we observe that what matters in such tests for knowledge is not merely the requirement to remember the details of the instructions one has received, but, in addition, the expectation that one be sincerely engaged in the process of mastering the life lessons associated with them. Elder Dallin H. Oaks reminds us that, in the day of final judgment, it will not be enough to merely have gone through the outward motions of keeping the commandments and receiving the ordinances—the essential question will be what we have ourselves *become* during our period of probation.[6]

Hugh Nibley further elaborates, explaining that, for the same reason, the saving ordinances, as necessary as they are, in and of themselves “are mere forms. They do not exalt us; they merely prepare us to be ready in case we ever become eligible.”[7] In the end, our eligibility for entrance into the presence of God rests not only on the presumption that we have received the saving ordinances, but also on the results of the process of sanctification, being predicated on the righteous exercise of agency coupled with the atoning power of Jesus Christ.[8]

Key Words

“Key words” have been associated with temples since very ancient times. Throughout the ancient Near East, including Jerusalem, “different temple gates had names indicating the blessing received when entering: ‘the gate of grace,’ ‘the gate of salvation,’ ‘the gate of life’ and so on,”[9] as well as signifying “the fitness, through due preparation, which entrants should have in order to pass through [each one of] the gates.”[10]

Nibley further explained: “The importance of knowing the names of things and giving those names when challenged is more than the mere idea of the password; it is... nothing less than... ‘the law which makes of the name a veritable attribute of the thing named.’”[11] In other words, to pass through each gate, one was expected not only *to know* something, but also to *be* something.

This same principle is at work in the sacrament prayer, where the Saints learn that they must not only “always remember” and be “*willing* to take upon [themselves] the name of Jesus Christ,”[12] but, in addition, must ultimately become ready to *do so* in actuality if they are to receive every blessing to which they are entitled.[13]

Each one who enters the celestial kingdom will receive a “white stone, whereon is a new name written, which no man knoweth save he that receiveth it. The new name is the key word.”[14] The “white stone mentioned in Revelation 2:17 will become a Urim and Thummim to each individual who receives one, whereby things pertaining to a higher order of kingdoms will be made known,”[15] just as the earth will become to its inhabitants “a Urim and Thummim... whereby all things pertaining to an inferior kingdom, or all kingdoms of a lower order, will be manifest.”[16]

Thus, by the same means that reveals to the saints what they are to become in “life eternal” through knowledge of God and Jesus Christ,[17] they will also recover a knowledge of who they were before the world was.



J.
James Tissot, 1836-1902: Reconstruction of Jerusalem and the Temple of Herod Seen from the East, ca. 1886-1894[18]

In ancient times, the name of the Lord was invoked in as part of covenant-making. Indeed, Truman G. Madsen proposes that the idea that the “proper use of the name YHWH constitutes a covenant between Israel and her God” may be the reason behind the third of the Ten Commandments.[19] Thus, the commandment that one must not

take the name of the Lord in vain is concerned with more than common profanity. More profoundly, it applies to those who do not keep the covenants by which they have bound themselves to God, thereby making a mockery of the One whose name was invoked at their making.[20]

In Jerusalem, the final “gate of the Lord, into which the righteous shall enter,”^[21]very likely referred to “the innermost temple gate,”^[22] where those “seeking the face of the God of Jacob”^[23] would find the fulfillment of their temple pilgrimage.

This final gate was associated with the name of God Himself. The dedicatory prayer for Solomon’s temple stressed that it was not meant to be a residence for God, since He “lived in his ‘dwelling place in heaven’ but that the ‘name of God’ dwelt in the Temple.”^[24]

The shout of the people at Christ’s triumphal entry becomes more understandable when translated as “Blessed is he who comes *with* [rather than *in*] the Name of the Lord.”^[25] Consistent with this translation, such a cry could be taken as an acknowledgement of the Jesus’ role as the Messiah, the great High Priest, one who had the Divine Name sealed on His forehead^[26] and could bring those who were prepared into the presence of God. Each “disciple” would then “be as his master,” and each “servant as his lord.”^[27]



Exodus 28:36, 38: “A Plate of Pure Gold... upon Aaron’s Forehead”^[28]

On the “plate of pure gold” that was to be worn upon the forehead of the high priest were engraved the words “Holiness to the Lord”—thus equating each worthy and authorized high priest with the temple itself. Paul taught this same principle to the Corinthian saints:^[29]

Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?

... the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.



J. James Tissot, 1836-1902: The Ark of the Covenant, ca. 1896-1902^[30]

Signs and Tokens

The use of “signs” and “tokens” as symbols, connected with covenants made in temples and used as aids in sacred teaching, also goes back to the earliest times.[31] For example, the raised hand is a long-recognized sign of oath-taking,[32] and the Ark of the Covenant in the Tabernacle contained various tangible “tokens of the covenant”[33] relating to the priesthood, including the golden pot that had manna, Aaron’s rod that budded, and the tablets of the law.

As a related example, Elder Joseph Fielding Smith, then an apostle, wrote about the tangible symbols of sacred realities that are incorporated in our weekly worship. He said that in partaking of the emblems of the sacrament that are distributed to the congregation by priesthood officiators “there is the token that we subscribe fully to the obligations”[34] of the sacrament prayer.

By way of analogy to a possible function of the items within Ark of the Covenant—items that related to the higher priesthood—consider the Greek Eleusinian Mysteries,[35] which endured over a period of nearly two thousand years. These rites were said to consist of *legomena*(= things recited), *deiknymena*(= things shown), and *dromena*(= things performed).

A sacred casket contained the tokens of the god, which were used to teach initiates about the meaning of the rites. At the culmination of the process, the initiate was examined about his knowledge of these tokens. “Having passed the tests of the tokens and their passwords, the initiate would have been admitted to the presence of the god.”[36]



E. S. Drower, 1879-1972: The Kushta, 1956[37]

Tokens could also be expressed in the form of handclasps.[38] For example, Nibley notes that according to the Manichaean religion, “the right hand was used for bidding farewell to our heavenly parents upon leaving our primeval home and [was] the greeting with which we shall be received when we return to it.”[39] Likewise, the Mandaeans still continue a ritual practice in which the *kushta*, a ceremonial handclasp, is given three times, each one of which, according to Elizabeth Drower, “seems to mark the completion... of a stage in a ceremony.”[40] At the moment of glorious resurrection, Mandaean scripture records that a final *kushta* will also take place, albeit in a different form:[41]

Sitil [Seth], the son of Adam... was brought to the Watch house [where] Silmais, the treasurer, holds the nails of glory in the hand, and carries the key of the *kushta* of both arms.[42] They opened the gate of the treasure house for him, lifted the great veil of safety upward before him, introduced him, and showed him that Vine [i.e., the Tree of Life],[43] its inner glory... Sitil, son of Adam, spoke: “On this [same] way, the Path and Ascent which I have climbed, truthful, believing, faithful and perfect men should also ascend and come, when they leave their bodies [i.e., at death].”

In the context of this discussion, what the terms “sign” and “token” have in common is the fact that they are “earthly symbols of realities that prevail throughout the universe.”[44] They point to meanings beyond themselves—meanings that can be revealed in our “minding true things by what their mock’ries be.”[45]

Moreover, citing Book of Mormon examples, Calabro concludes that in some cases the “gesture [can stand] for the covenant in that it signals membership in the covenant group.”[46] Beyond these basic similarities, the meanings of the terms “sign” and “token” in temple contexts differ somewhat, as explained with reference to ancient practices by Hugh Nibley:[47]

As you approach the camp surrounding the temple, you signify your intent with a reassuring sign, a *signum*, visible from a distance, calling attention to yourself as Adam does in his prayer and demonstrating your peaceful intent.[48] Upon reaching the gate, you present your token, a tangible object (compare... digit, *dactyl*, or a solid handclasp).[49] All these serve as a *tesserahospitalis* [i.e., a symbol of mutual hospitality], admitting one to a closed group or a party, or a club, guild meeting, etc. It is presented to the doorkeeper, a herald trained in such matters: “The Holy One of Israel is the Keeper of the Gate, and he employs no servant there!” Most important, “he cannot be deceived.”[50] The token recognized, you pronounce your name to the doorkeeper in a low voice, a whisper, for it is a special name agreed on between you and your host and should not be picked up and used by anyone else.[51]

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MORMONS: WHO THEY ARE, WHAT THEY BELIEVE - - Discussion Guide

A Spiritual and Intellectual Journey From Mormonism to Deism
<http://www.deism.com/mormontodeism.htm>

A Spiritual and Intellectual Journey From Mormonism to Deism

by Richard Williamson

I find it strange that so much of our human intellect and emotion is wasted dwelling on the myths upon which all religions are founded. The conclusion that all religions are manmade was one of the greatest discoveries of my life. All religions are specifically designed by their originators to be self serving and designed to maintain social and political control of the adherents. In some cases the design is so grand as to attempt gaining and maintaining world power, as was the case with the great Universal Church-Catholicism. Today we are vividly witnessing the threatened rise of Islam in its bid to take over the world, with its Jihadist agenda and blatant willingness to kill, maim and destroy the infidel; the infidel being anyone who is not a worshiper of Allah and his prophet Muhammad. Theocratic attempts to rule the world via a hybrid governmental system of mixing religious and political power has always proven to be a failure, a failure that brings death, persecution and fosters a deadly and deepening ignorance of the masses under the control of these prophets and holy men who claim to "speak for God". It goes without exception that these "prophets of God" always erupt on the scene as self anointed saviors. They all have some new and better book and claim, "God gave me a dream and now the world must listen to me". Many have claimed that an angel visited them, or God himself showed them that they are to be the new messiah, and if people do not listen to this new brand of religious piracy they will perish in hell for all time and all eternity.

It goes without exception that the threat of eternal death, burning in hell, losing your 70 virgins, or having your family taken away from you in the next life for disobedience to "the one true church" in this life, is always the closing sales pitch of these arrogant and deranged "prophets and holy men" who claim to personally speak for God. This God is of course the one true God, and he loves you, but if you fail to follow the rules as set down by these earthly anointed holy men, you will feel God's wrath when you die. Should one belong to Islam, or be a victim of its Jihad you may well feel the wrath of Allah while still alive. This living threat of violent reprisal, in today's

world, is mostly limited to Islam, yet countless lives are damaged by the religiocentric arrogance of most religious groups once a person breaks ranks or questions the veracity of their particular sect.

The theme seems to be, that God only really loves you if you believe and behave the way our group says you must, for after all, we speak for God.

Why do religious groups claim such authority? Usually it is because their "authority" comes from a book; for the Christians, they have the Bible, for the Jew the Torah, Islam has the Koran, and Mormonism claims Joseph Smith brought yet another "one and only true book" written by God himself-via mans' assistance, The Book of Mormon.

Mormons also claim revelation from God via Joseph Smith in two other exclusively Mormon books, The Book of Abraham and The Doctrine and Covenants-formerly The Book of Commandments. Both books were written by Joseph Smith and are claimed by Mormons to be direct revelations from God to Joseph Smith. The book of Abraham is claimed to be a translation from Egyptian hieroglyphics by Joseph Smith. The book of Abraham has been fully examined by many top academic Egyptologists. The conclusion of these scientists is that Smith's "revelatory" translation of the Book of Breathing is nonsense. The actual papyrus from which Smith "translated" his book of Abraham is nothing more than a Egyptian funeral text-or Book of Breathing that was commonly used in Egypt at the time of its creation. There are literally thousands of these funeral texts in the possession of museums, private and academic collections the world over. The papyrus Smith had was not a story about Abraham in Egypt; Smith again fabricated a fantastic story of religious fiction and claimed he received a revelation from God. The fact that no one on earth could decipher Egyptian hieroglyphics at the time Smith claimed he could is a well known fact. The Rosetta Stone was not discovered until some 30 years later. This codex was the key to breaking the language of the Egyptian hieroglyphics. The book of Abraham has been thoroughly discredited by every reputable Egyptologist that has investigated this "revelation" of Joseph Smith.

The Abrahamic religions consist of Judaism, Islam and Christianity. All these groups claim to have an original exclusive deal with God as far back as Abraham. Mormons claim their religion actually goes back to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, thus trumping Islam, Judaism and Christianity. I ask where is the evidence for that totally fallacious claim? The only evidence forthcoming from the Mormons is: "Oh, it was revealed by God to Joseph Smith the prophet"! There is no evidence for this exclusive claim of Mormonism...."you must have faith and trust that the leaders are telling you the truth"!

All organized religions breed violence and intolerance. Rare is the occasion when nothing more than lip service is paid to inter-faith religious tolerance.

It mystifies me when after thousands of years of recorded history we humans fail to see the light of truth. We have become so very insular in our thinking, to the point of true cognitive dissonance, cognitive dissonance that keeps us from embracing the truth when the evidence is presented to us in clear and valid arguments. I speak of the insurmountable evidence, the scientifically established facts that prove all religions are manmade mythological systems. Yet the faithful just bury their heads in the sand and refuse to look at the evidence and continue to live in ignorance fueled by the denial of reality. It is a cognitive choice to refuse to look at the evidence; I was once like this myself. It can be a frightening concept to think that all my religious indoctrination is false, for what would become of me then. It is claimed that Jesus stated the answer to this fear, "Ye shall know the truth and the truth will set you free".

During the dark ages, brought about in large part by the intellectually stifling Catholic Church, we saw persecution, torture and killing of anyone who dared challenge the teachings of the Papacy. We see the brutality of Islam today, the riots in cities and the bombing of innocent people because someone put a cartoon in a newspaper that the Jihadist claims, via some form of revelation, that these things are offensive to Allah and his prophet Muhammad and punishment must be meted out. The Jews claim in the Old Testament that God commanded the holy Israelite armies to destroy innocent life, burn villages and towns, kill animals and leave nothing but a razed stubble field. For what reason? Because God said that they are the chosen people and everything else must die. Further we have the historical and archaeological testimony of the "holy wars", Christians and Muslims fighting for their supremacy as God's chosen people. Really it was about land, power and world domination. I am convinced God had nothing to do with it.

The Mormons also have a dark legacy that is well hidden from the vast majority of the Mormon faithful. Mountain Meadows Massacre occurred on September 11, 1857. It is the most blatant of many barbarous acts in Mormon history. The Fancher-Baker wagon train party were in route to California from Arkansas, when they met the evil face of the Brigham Young sect of Mormons in Southern Utah. Under a false flag of truce the Mormons lured the settlers out of their circled wagon position, disarmed them and then systematically killed 120 men, women and children. The wagons, draft animals, cattle and personal possessions of the Fancher-Baker party were stolen and divided up among the killers. This barbarous act was the largest act of domestic terrorism until 3,000 people died in the September 11, 2001 Islamic terrorist attacks in New York City.

Honest historians have concluded that the Mountain Meadows Massacre occurred primarily as retribution for the murder of Parley Pratt, a Mormon apostle. Pratt was gunned down by an irate man who was the husband of a woman that Pratt had seduced and convinced to join his group of "celestial wives". She became one of

Pratt's polygamist wives while still married to another man. This couple was from Arkansas as was the Fancher-Baker party. The Fancher-Baker party became a scapegoat for the Mormon wrath. Being from Arkansas, they were labeled as being responsible for Pratt's death and rumors were circulating among the Utah Mormons that some male members of the Fancher-Baker party had taken part in killing Joseph Smith at Carthage, Illinois in 1844. None of the men in the Fancher-Baker party were in Carthage, Illinois when Smith was shot. The man who killed Parley Pratt was not a member of the Fancher-Baker party. The Mormons wanted revenge, and the exclusive Mormon doctrine of Blood Atonement provided the justification for killing these 120 people from the Fancher-Baker wagon train.

Blood Atonement is a bizarre doctrine of Mormonism, that they today deny (lie about) was ever taught by the Mormon Church, yet the original Mormon writings prove otherwise. Blood Atonement was taught openly by Brigham Young and other Mormon ecclesiastic leaders in Utah. It is a doctrine that simply states there are certain sins that a person can commit that are not covered by the blood atonement of Jesus Christ. Yet according to true Christian doctrine all sins are covered by the sacrifice of God's Son on the cross at Calvary. The Mormon blood atonement doctrine states this is not true, and the only way to have certain sins remitted is by having one's own blood shed, because even Jesus cannot save you from certain sins. Thus this doctrine of blood atonement laid the ground work for the killing of the 120 innocent people of the Fancher-Baker party.

Further: The original Utah era Mormon temple endowment ceremony put the members under an Oath of Vengeance to seek the destruction of enemies of the church who were responsible for the death of Smith and his brother Hyrum. This oath was not taken out of the endowment ceremony until the 1930's. There was also a three part symbolic act in the temple endowment ceremony where the patrons simulate having their throats cut across and their tongues pulled out by the root, having their hearts cut out of their chests, and lastly having their intestines cut out-disemboweled for revealing the secret teachings taught in "The House of the Lord". These three self sacrificing acts were removed from the temple endowment ceremony in 1990. I truly fail to see where any of these teachings of hatred and violent action have any place in a church that claims they believe in Jesus Christ.

This is a major reason why Mormonism will never be accepted by the Christian communities of the world as a Christian Church, because Mormonism at its core denies the complete atonement of Jesus Christ according to New Testament theology. There are a host of other exclusively Mormon doctrines which also disqualify Mormonism from being accepted as a Christian Church and rightfully so. Mormonism is not a Christian religion. I did not understand, until I had done a fair amount of research into Christian origins and New Testament theology, as to why Mormonism is not a Christian faith. This is in spite of the fact that Mormons claim to

worship Jesus Christ. The Mormon Jesus is not the Jesus of New Testament theology or original Christian theology. The Mormon Jesus is the product of Joseph Smith's imagination.

After decades of historical research into what and why the Mountain Meadows Massacre happened, it is also a strong conclusion that Brigham Young was attempting to send a clear message to the "Mericans" that his rule was absolute and that he should be feared in his little Mormon kingdom of the west. The term "Mericans" is a derogatory term that Brigham Young used to describe the leaders of America's government, and any outsiders who supported the United States of America. Brigham Young was anti-American, for he was God's chosen and anointed prophet and Brigham's law superseded the laws of the Constitutional Republic of the United States. Joseph Smith also believed he was above the law of America, that Joseph Smith's laws were the laws of God, and he would bow to no one. These 1857 killings in Utah were committed on the orders of the leaders of "The One True Church of Jesus Christ-as restored by the prophet Joseph Smith". Apparently Jesus likes the idea of killing innocent people who do not believe in "The one true church of Mormonism".

The 2001 attacks in New York City and Washington DC were also perpetrated by a religious group claiming supremacy in the eyes of God, "the One True religion of Islam with its God Allah and his prophet Muhammad". How strange it is that these "revealed" religious attacks occurred on the same date-September 11th.

This aggressive Mormon animosity and religiocentrism really began much earlier in the 1830's in Missouri under Joseph Smith. Mormons love to cling to the idea that they were and still are today persecuted because of their beliefs. In part this is true, because claiming persecution helps fuel their need to feel superior as they are now God's chosen church and the persecution badge justifies this self delusion, and it makes them kin to the Jews who were also persecuted. Mostly the Mormons were persecuted only after they made war like actions and threats to their neighbors in Missouri because the Mormons made it clear they were the true Zion people (not the Jews) and that God had promised to deliver the promised land of Missouri to them. This new Zion-Missouri was the rightful inheritance of the new Zionist people-the Mormons. That Missouri was the place of the Garden of Eden, according to Joseph Smith, and that Jesus was coming back to Adam ondi Ahman (a small place near Independence, Missouri) to build the New Jerusalem and at that time a magnificent temple would descend from heaven. This Adam ondi Ahman, getting its name from Joseph Smith, is in Mormon lore the place where the chosen and anointed Mormon faithful will someday walk back to and there they will gather in solemn assemblies to

meet personally with Adam and Jesus and all the other holy men of Israelite/Christian history in a big council of God's elect.

The lionization of Joseph Smith is only recognized within the Mormon Church. History is very clear that Joseph Smith died in a gun fight after having shot three men. Two he killed and a third he wounded, with a Pepper Box 6 barreled pistol that was smuggled into his jail cell. Smith did not die a willing martyr for Jesus Christ, as did many of the early followers of Christ. Smith was a convicted con man, a participant in conspiracy to commit murder, a soothsayer, a worker of black magic, a pedophile, and was married to at least 30 wives, many of whom were married to other men at the time "Old Joe Smith" convinced them to marry him or God would destroy him. Had Smith lived to go to trial, for he had been subpoenaed by the President of the United States to appear before the Supreme Court in Washington D.C. on the charge of treason, Smith's reign as king of this world and his Mormonism would have ended abruptly. Yes, Smith had himself ordained king of the world by his secret council of 50. What is so odd is that Smith personally chose the members of his council of 50, so for sure they had the power to anoint Smith king of the world. Strangely Smith died in the afore mentioned gun fight in the jail in Carthage, Illinois a short time after being "anointed king of the world".

Smith was being held on charges of treason and violation of the first amendment constitutional rights of his neighbors. Smith ordered the burning and destruction of a printing press. The press and the printing shop were both destroyed because the truth had been printed about Smith and other elite members of Smith's Mormon kingdom. They did not like the light of day illuminating their various crimes and sexual indiscretions, after all these were God's chosen and anointed leaders in these the last days before the return of Jesus Christ. The Mormon Church to this day frowns heavily on any of its members being critical of the "Brethren". In fact honest and critical evaluation of Mormon history by its members is highly discouraged. Mormons are today counseled to read only church authorized sources of information. There is an infamous secret vault in Salt Lake City, under the watchful eye of the first presidency of the Mormon Church. This vault is closed to all but a very select few. This is the place where sensitive documents are kept, documents that would re-write the real history of Joseph Smith and his Mormon kingdom. This information is kept out of the public eye, for much of it is damaging and would clearly show Mormonism to be a huge fraud. These facts are known in part, because in the past select researchers have been given access to this vault. Much of the legitimate documentary evidence available in literature and research papers on Mormon origins come from these now secured sources. It is an interesting aside that the Seventh Day Adventists also have a secretive vault for the same purpose as the Mormons, to preserve the false prophecies of Ellen G.

White who made similar non-prophecies as Joseph Smith which flopped in their veracity. It seems that cults the world over have secret vaults to keep prying eyes out. The Vatican is another good example.

Recently a Mormon friendly version of "the Joseph Smith papers" has been released by the Mormon Church. It is not complete. The books contain sanitized and re-worked history to promote the idea that Joseph Smith was all the things that the modern Mormon Church leaders teach its members that he was.

I think propaganda that is created and controlled by the same organization should arouse suspicion in our minds. It should at least make one stop and look both ways before stepping out into oncoming traffic.

There is a vast amount of literature and resource material available to thoroughly discredit Joseph Smith and the entire content of the Mormon theology. Mormonism promotes the weakest and weirdest doctrines of all the pseudo-christian sects that came out of the American revival period in the early 19th century. The entire Mormon temple ceremonies are nothing but hodge-podge Masonic rituals mixed with Joseph Smith's imagination and some Old Testament flavorings thrown in for good measure. Mormons claim these temple rituals go all the way back in antiquity to Adam and Eve. This is another absurd claim that is easily proven false because there is no record whatever in all of Judaism that even remotely represents Mormonism's interpretation of ancient Israelite temple worship. Mormons claim that all this was lost because of corrupt priests and evil leaders, and that God revealed it back to Joseph Smith so he could restore these precious lost rituals so all of mankind could learn the mysteries of godliness by going to the Mormon temple. Well someone better notify the Jewish scholars and Rabbis that the Mormons now have all the "lost temple rituals" that the Jews did not even know they had lost.

The Book of Mormon is claimed by Mormons to be the keystone of their religion. They made a big mistake with that statement. The evidence against all things claimed in "Old Joe Smith's gold bible" is enormous. One does not even have to look at the claims of the Book of Mormon as it relates to America-the place where these magical events allegedly took place- in order to fully discredit the claimed religious history of the Book of Mormon. Current biblical archaeology alone disproves Smith's 19th century understanding of world history and especially Smith's knowledge of biblical history. When we get past that evidence, we are left with the basic tenets and claims of the Book of Mormon as relating to America, where this religious history is supposed to have occurred. The Book of Mormon is so riddled with anachronisms and faulty history as to make it a fully discredited work of fiction. The archaeological, geographic, literary and genetic evidence prove the Book of Mormon to be nothing more than a blatant fraud

perpetrated by Joseph Smith and at least 3 other accomplices; Oliver Cowdry, Hyrum Smith and Sidney Rigdon. Much of the content of the Book of Mormon was plagiarized from the King James Version of the Bible and at least two other books of religious fiction; View of the Hebrews by Pastor Ethan Smith (no relation to Joseph Smith) and A Manuscript Lost by Rev. Solomon Spaulding. The Book of Mormon was written mostly while Joseph Smith had his head stuck inside his hat while he gazed upon a "magic rock-Seer Stone" which is also the same method Smith used to find hidden treasure in the earth!

The Book of Mormon has been analyzed by advanced computerized programs; the conclusion is that plagiarism is without a doubt present. Most recently a group of researchers at Stanford University put the Book of Mormon through an exhaustive examination utilizing the computer program SPSS, a very sophisticated statistical analysis tool. The lead professor in this venture was an active Mormon man who seemingly could no longer live in the world of cognitive dissonance required by Mormonism in order to "keep your faith". The outcomes of this Stanford University research will be presented at The Ex Mormon Foundation Conference in Salt Lake City, Utah on October 10, 2009 at 10:45am, by Professor Craig Criddle, PhD, Stanford University. I will be in attendance to hear firsthand the results of this extensive study.

Today we know that the Old Testament is not a continuous history of the Israelites. In fact, the unification of Israel did not begin to occur until the time of King Josiah in the 7th century BCE (600 BC). Moses never was in Egypt, and 600,000 armed male Israelites never marched out of Egypt. This is absurd. 600,000 men along with women, wives, and children would by conservative estimates equate to approximately 2 million people. 2 million people with flocks and herds wandering in the wilderness for 40 years and they left not one shred of physical evidence that they were there. What about the bed time story of Joshua and the city of Jericho. Did the walls come tumbling down and the sun stand still because the earth stopped rotating? No, these things did not happen; again the archaeological evidence and the laws of physics speak the truth about these biblical myths. It is clear that today people have begun to challenge many of these age old religious myths and we are finding answers.

The answers are not always pleasant. It is painful when you first conclude as a child that Santa Claus does not live at the North Pole in a hidden village. It is painful when we find out for the first time that most if not all of the "religious truths" we have been taught as children are myths. These realizations hurt. Often our pride is injured as well, when we figure out that we have been misled. Our ego will often refuse to accept the fact that we believe in myths that we thought were religious doctrines necessary for our

salvation. Coming to the conclusion that I had been blinded and fooled was not easy for me, for I was convinced beyond any shadow of a doubt that the Mormon religion was the one true religion of God.

It is rare to find a person of supreme character, a person like Socrates, one who pursued the evidence and followed wherever it lead, and most importantly accepted the new found truths. Along this journey of truth the honest traveler will adjust his or her conclusions and perceptions as they meet the world of reality, often for the first time. This is how we as a human race have progressed from being largely ignorant of the natural world to having a much clearer knowledge of creation. We could still be stuck in the dark ages under the rule of Catholicism had brave men and women not begun to challenge the ignorance and arrogance of the Papacy. After all the earth never was the center of the universe, or even the center of our Milky Way galaxy.

The greatest thing about my journey out of Mormonism is the new truths I have learned along the way. I have become one who is hungry for knowledge of new things. It feels good and right to jettison the old myths that are not productive in the least, in helping me in my quest for enlightenment. Until one finds the courage to take the journey to learn the truth on their own, to challenge and investigate with an open mind, setting aside their fear of the truth, they are confined to live a life of self imposed limits.

Many cling to religion because it gives them a sense of comfort, some because it fuels their need to feel better than other people-superior to the rest of common humanity. Far too many Mormons that I know, and that I have known, take great pride in their self-righteousness.

I was an active Mormon until age 46. I had been a High Priest for 10 years, held numerous positions in the ecclesiastical leadership and been deeply involved as an ordinance worker in the Mormon temple. I was not a neophyte member, but rather a true believer who kept seeking for more knowledge about what I thought to be the true religion of God. There were some major doctrinal and historical teachings that just did not make sense, and after a long investigative journey I could no longer live in the world of cognitive dissonance. I could no longer "just have faith" that I was not being lied to, when in fact I had been lied to for 46 years. Most of the lies were lies of ignorance. My teachers and church leaders were only repeating what they had been told. **This I have easily forgiven.** The vast majority of the Mormon people are sincere, yet allow themselves to be kept in the dark. The real evil remains hidden in the fact that the "Brethren", the top 15 men of the Mormon Church know they are not speaking the truth about the history of Joseph Smith nor will they promote the true un-polished history of Mormon origins. Mormonism is a multibillion dollar corporation; these top 15

men are never going to let the truth be told about their house of cards, for it would tumble to the ground over night. What is happening is a small consistent defection. In fact it is not really that small. The best sources estimate that approximately 100,000 active Mormons each year are resigning with official letters of resignation so that the Mormon Church by law must remove their names from its rolls. Recently the *Salt Lake Tribune* newspaper did an article on the staggering rate of inactivity in Utah among the Mormon people. It is estimated that state wide approximately 30 % of the Utah Mormons have any regular contact with the Mormon Church (70% have little or no contact). This trend is also being seen in almost all areas of the world where the Mormon Church is proselytizing. The vast majority of converts to this religion fall away or go completely inactive in less than 3 years, most in less than 1 year. The Internet and a general rise in education have a lot to do with this. People can click a mouse and learn all about Mormonism.

The Mormon Church has figured this out and has recently begun to set up websites that promote its propaganda. I think it will fail, because the facts exposing Mormonism are so very divergent from the Mormon propaganda and apologetics websites that most intelligent people will see right through the deception. In fact this is how most Mormons are learning about the historical deception that they have been victims of.

Personally most of my research was done through reading texts, research papers, examining original Mormon source documents and through personal conversations with a few key ex-Mormons who had been in higher leadership positions in the Mormon Church and had been down the road I was on. Two of these men were formerly employed by the Mormon Church as Directors of Seminaries and Institutes of Religious Studies. It was not until after I had resigned from the Mormon Church that I discovered the plethora of information available on the Internet about Mormon history and Mormon origins. I also discovered many good resources and support networks for ex-Mormons. I was glad to see that I was not alone and to learn that 100's of thousands of people have left Mormonism for the same reasons I did. Mormonism is nothing more than bizarre doctrines, half truths and outright lies.

I strive to be a man of integrity. As questions came up about my Mormon beliefs I had to make peace with them. I could no longer allow myself to live like I had an intellectual lobotomy. I have always been a spiritual person, a seeker. I think that this made me an odd Mormon from the start. Always wanting to know more, know the why's of things, questioning if what I read or had been taught by the church was accurate. I was not questioning the veracity of these things, I was questioning my own understanding, and did I

understand clearly and accurately what I had learned. I was eager for knowledge, I thank God for this quality.

I have always been an admirer of the founding fathers. The two I would most like to have met were George Washington and Thomas Jefferson. They are without doubt two of the greatest souls to inhabit planet earth. I had always been taught that Washington and Jefferson were Christian men. In a sense they were Christian men, but not Christians. When I learned they were Deists, I balked. So I began to research the faiths of the founding fathers of America. Sure enough many of these men were Deists and critical of the biblical myths and the piracy of the organized religious groups. John Adams, another favorite of mine, was a Unitarian. I think if we had a Unitarian Universalist Church in my small town I would attend services there. The UU congregations are open, inclusive and do not preach mythology or biblical damnation for not following the party line.

Spirituality is in my opinion a key element to our humanness. I also think it is because of this innate desire to feel oneness with creation and the Great Creator that religious myth has become a counterfeit parasite on humanity. I invite all to do the research and see if this theory is not true.

Deism is a natural religion. There is no need for myth or manmade religious falsity to justify our love for God, The Supreme Intelligence, Nature's God.

Where I live in northern Nevada I have a view off my deck that I, my friends and family call The Cathedral. We look directly east at the nearly 12,000 foot elevation of the Ruby and Humbolt mountain ranges, literally about 6 miles away as the crow flies. Each time that I look with intent at these marvels of geologic creation and watch as the seasons change the mountain scenes, as the sun rises and sets, or when the moon rises on snow fields illuminating the dark winter world, I feel deeply that there is a Supreme Creator.

I take issue with those who would embrace the idea that all the geologic and botanical beauty, the natural law and creative-self replicating life forces on our planet happened without purpose. When we look deeper into space we see more evidence of design, intelligent design. I think it a crime that Intelligent Design models are frequently associated with Creationism-**the biblical myth claiming 6 days of creative work and one day off!** Intelligent Design theories are not the same as Creationism. Creationism is based on biblical mythology and is not a scientifically viable thesis.

The wonders and mysteries of the natural world are being laid open daily by advances in scientific discovery- actually I do not think we discover anything. I think that we only uncover, and call it discovery, those things that have always been there, waiting for mankind to find them out and apply these new found wonders to our lives. I wonder how much more we would

know about our planet and the universe if for almost 1,200 years Catholicism would not have greatly obstructed the intellectual advancement of mankind. How much further would we be today in reduced loss of life and the horrors of war if there were not Muslims, Christians and Jews fighting over which god is right and which group has the right to live? This has been going on for almost 1,700 years. It is without a doubt time for human beings to wake up and overcome the control of all organized religion and to begin to see that all mankind is equal in their right to live without the propagation of religious myths that cloud their judgment. To feel free to live a life intent on happiness and prosperity, "We hold these truths to be self evident".

The tenants of Deism make such a world possible. The same tenants that were written into the Declaration of Independence by Thomas Jefferson are the same tenants upon which Deism is based. The American Republic established by the founders of America is the best and most secure form of government ever devised, with its strong separation of church and state-for good reason. Let all mankind live a life based on reason and conscience that is rooted in universal morality and we will prosper. Let a strong system of laws be established to assure good social order and assure individual accountability for any infringements upon the rights or property of others, and mankind will live in a state of harmony never before known in history, which was the goal of America's founders.

My wife and I made this journey out of Mormonism together. We have been blessed with a wonderful marriage of 25 years. We have had many trials and purifying life experiences that we would not trade. It has been our journey in life thus far that has made us who we are. We have a family motto that serves to remind us of our responsibilities as citizens and fellow travelers on our planet, it is as follows: "I will not be involved in anything that is illegal, immoral or unethical and I will do the right thing because it is the right thing to do". This is the basic tenant of Deism; it is sweet, simple and covers all the bases of how to properly conduct one's life. The adherents of organized religion are misled into thinking that moral and ethical truths come from their brand of religion, and without religion there would be utter chaos in the world. Obviously religion has not stopped the world wide chaos we are experiencing. In fact, it is my considered conclusion that religion is the cause of much of the moral and social degeneration we are experiencing. As mankind has begun to figure out the lies of religion, we have become rudderless, and in many cases angry. This has caused a backlash that is evident in the rebellious and immoral nature of our current social climate.

Many people are no longer willing to follow the lies and manipulative tactics of the organized religious bodies. Instead of finding out the truth in full and making wise self preserving decisions that will enhance their lives, far too many have decided to throw the baby out with the bath water; "Oh what the

hell, it does not matter anyway"! Was Karl Marx correct, that religion is only an opiate of the people? I would say that this is mostly true. Religion is specifically designed to control people, and it has stooped to the lowest levels of dishonesty to make sure it maintains its control and power. What is the answer? Self government based on sound moral and ethical principles, this is the clarion call of Deism. This is the basis on which the Republic of the United States of America was founded. The only thing that can assure a peaceful and moral society is personal and national integrity.

I see the evidence for God every day of my life. The evidence of the Supreme Creator is all around us. Let us strive to make good in the world and serve each other with the talents we are blessed to possess and that we have developed with our efforts and God given abilities.

Truly, God gave us Reason, Not Religion.

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MORMONS: WHO THEY ARE, WHAT THEY BELIEVE - - Discussion Guide

Stumbling Blocks to Mormons:

Joseph Smith's First Vision:

New Light on Mormon Origins From the Palmyra Revival

http://www.mormonismi.net/pdf/1stvision_dialogue69.pdf

New Light on Mormon Origins From the Palmyra Revival

Reverend Wesley P. Walters

Since the year 1838, when Joseph Smith, Jr., set down the official account of his first vision, the story has continued to grow in importance in the eyes of Mormon leaders until it has come to be looked upon as the very foundation of their church and the greatest event in the world's history since the resurrection of the Son of God.¹

The first vision story states that Joseph Smith, in the year 1820 when he was but a lad of fourteen, was greatly stirred up by a religious revival that broke out in the vicinity of Palmyra, New York. Uncertain as to which church he should join as a result of this excitement, Joseph retired to a nearby grove where in answer to his prayer, "two glorious personages," identified as the Father and the Son, appeared to him, informing him that all the religious denominations were wrong. He was told to await further enlightenment, which came three years later in a second vision on September 21, 1823, when an angelic visitor to his bedroom informed him of the existence of the golden plates of the Book of Mormon.²

This account of Joseph's first vision has recently been given more careful study because of a number of difficulties that have been uncovered: the earliest Mormon and anti-Mormon writers know nothing of such a vision; the text of the present printed version has been altered at several points; the early leaders in Utah repeatedly speak only of angels and not of the Father and Son visiting Smith at age fourteen.³ These and other conflicts have forced Latter-day Saint scholars to write in defense of their Prophet's first vision story. In all their writing they have assumed that Joseph Smith's account must be correct wherever it is at variance with the statements of other Mormon or anti-Mormon writings.

However, the point at which one might most conclusively test the accuracy of Smith's story has never been adequately explored. A vision, by its inward, personal nature, does not lend itself to historical investigation. A revival is a different matter--especially one such as Joseph Smith describes--in which "great multitudes" were said to have joined the various churches involved.⁴ Such a revival does not pass from the scene without leaving some traces in the records and publications of the period. In this study we show by the contemporary records that the revival which Smith claimed occurred in 1820 did not really take place until the fall of 1824. We also show that in 1820 there was no revival in any of the churches in Palmyra and its vicinity. In short, our investigation shows that the statement of Joseph Smith, Jr., can not be true when he claims that he was stirred by an 1820 revival to make his inquiry in the grove near his home.

In 1834-35, nearly four years before Joseph began to write his "official" first vision story, the Mormon Church published an account of the origin of their movement written by Joseph Smith's right-hand man, Oliver Cowdery. Cowdery claimed to have received his information from the Prophet himself, making it virtually Joseph Smith's own narrative, and Joseph, in a separate column, added some details about his birth and early life.⁵ Like Smith, in his later account, Cowdery begins the story with a description of the revival that happened in the Palmyra area. However, this early account makes no reference to any vision occurring in 1820 and places the revival in 1823.⁶ According to this version, Joseph was stirred at age seventeen by a revival that broke out under the preaching of a Mr. Lane, a presiding elder of the Methodist church. Retiring to his bedroom, he prayed for forgiveness and enlightenment on which church was right. In response, an angel appeared and informed him about the golden plates and assured him of his forgiveness.

Except for Joseph's moving the revival date back three years and adding the first vision story, both Smith's later account and this earlier Cowdery-Smith account record the same features as connected with the revival. In both accounts the revival began under Methodist preaching, the earlier adding the name of Reverend Lane as the key figure in the Methodist awakening. Both state that soon Methodists, Baptists, and Presbyterians were sharing unitedly in the effort; both claim that rivalry developed over who should have the converts; both mention that large additions were made to the denominations involved; both note that Smith's mother, sister, and two brothers were led to join the Presbyterian church; in both accounts Joseph refrained from joining any church because he was confused as to which group was right; and finally, in both accounts he sought direct guidance from the Lord about this matter and was answered by a heavenly visitation.

Mormon writers have for some time seen that both the earlier and later "official" accounts had the same revival in view.⁷ This is quite clear not only from the many identical features in both accounts, but also from the fact that some of these features could not have taken place twice. For example, Smith's family could not have joined the Presbyterian Church in 1820 as a result of a revival in the area, and then joined the same church again in 1823 as a result of another revival. Again, Joseph Smith, Jr., could not have been confused about which group was right in 1820, been enlightened that all were wrong, and then have been confused on the same point again in 1823. It is also extremely unlikely that churches which had had a bitter outcome to their united efforts at a revival would have joined forces again just three years later only to end in more bitter contention. In addition, to consider two different revivals would place Joseph in the contradictory position of having, with great certainty (J. S. 2:24-25), seen both the Father and the Son in 1820, and then three years later finding this so ineffectual that he was not even certain "if a Supreme being did exist."⁸

Recognizing that both accounts are describing the same revival, Mormon writers have already credited Cowdery with an error in dating, but have been quite willing to accept the other details given in this earlier account and work them into an 1820 framework. We find Latter-day Saint writers like historians B. H. Roberts and Hyrum L. Andrus, and Apostle John A. Widtsoe speaking of Reverend Lane as participating in an 1820 revival.⁹ An account by William Smith, Joseph's brother, adds the information that it was Reverend Lane who suggested the text from James ("If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God"), to which Joseph refers, as a means of determining which group to join. William also introduces the name of Reverend Stockton, the Presbyterian pastor, as presiding at the meetings.¹⁰ This information, since William does not give it a specific date, is also placed back in the year 1820 and is used to fill out Joseph Smith's official account.¹¹

However, this very account of William Smith, to which Latter-day Saint writers so willingly refer for details, indicates that the revival did not occur in 1820. William states that after the joint revival meeting had closed, Reverend Stockton insisted that the converts ought to join the Presbyterian church since it was their meeting. However, William states, "as father did not like Rev. Stockton very well, our folks hesitated." William had already mentioned the reason for his father's dislike of the

Presbyterian minister. Mr. Stockton had preached the funeral sermon of William's brother, Alvin, and had strongly intimated that he had gone to hell because he had never been a member of any church. Since the tombstone on Alvin's grave gives the date of his death as November 19, 1823, it is clear that the revival must have followed that date.¹² William earlier gave the date of the revival as "1822 and 1823 " and on another occasion he stated that Joseph Smith was "about eighteen years old at this time," which would place it in 1824.¹³ In order to maintain the integrity of Joseph Smith's first vision story, however, Mormon writers have not only charged the Cowdery narrative with error, but have also dismissed the setting given by William Smith and arbitrarily transported both Lane and Stockton back to an 1820 date.

The records, however, of both the Presbyterian and Methodist churches to which Mr. Stockton and Mr. Lane respectively belonged, make it clear that neither of these men was assigned to the Palmyra area until 1824. Benjamin B. Stockton, from March 4, 1818, until June 30, 1882, was serving as pastor of the church at Skaneateles, New York.¹⁴ While he did visit Palmyra for a speech to the Youth missionary society in October 1822, the Palmyra newspaper still describes him as "Rev. Stockton of Skaneateles."¹⁵ The earliest contemporary reference to his ministering in the Palmyra area is in connection with a wedding November 26, 1823, just a week after Alvin Smith's death. Following this date there are several references to his performing some service there, but he was not installed as pastor of the Presbyterian church until February 18, 1824.¹⁶ It is in this latter year, 1824, that Reverend James Hotchkin, in cataloguing the revivals that occurred in the churches of Geneva Presbytery, writes, under the heading of the Palmyra church that a "copious shower of grace passed over this region in 1824, under the labors of Mr. Stockton, and a large number were gathered into the church, some of whom are now pillars in Christ's house."¹⁷

In the summer of 1819 Mr. Lane, whom Mormon writers have correctly identified as George Lane, 18 was assigned to serve the Susquehanna District in central Pennsylvania, over 150 miles from Palmyra. He served this area for five years and not until July of 1824 did he receive an appointment to serve as Presiding Elder of the Ontario District in which Palmyra is located.¹⁹ This post he held only until January of 1825, when ill health in his family forced him to leave the ministry for a while.²⁰ Except for Elder Lane's brief presence at the 1819 meeting that appointed him to serve in Pennsylvania, there seems to be no evidence whatever that he even came near the Palmyra area during the 1819-20 period.²¹ Since the assigned fields of labor, for both Lane and Stockton, were so far from Palmyra, any revival in which both of these men shared must fall in the latter half of the year 1824, and not in the year 1820.

An even more surprising confirmation that this revival occurred in 1824 and not in 1820 recently came to light when we stumbled upon Reverend George Lane's own account of the Palmyra revival. It was written not at some years distance from the event--as the Mormon accounts all were--but while the revival was still in progress, and was printed a few months later.²² Lane's account gives us not only the year, 1824, but even the month and day. With the aid of this account, supplemented by numerous additional references which we shortly thereafter uncovered, we are able to give nearly a month-by-month progress report on the spread of the revival through the community and surrounding area, and it was indeed an outstanding revival.

According to George Lane's report, the Lord's gracious work in Palmyra and vicinity "commenced in the spring, and progressed moderately until the time of the quarterly meeting, which was held on the 25th and 26th of September," 1824. A note in the local Palmyra newspaper showed the progress of the work shortly before Lane came upon the scene at the September conference.

A reformation is going on in this town to a great extent. The love of God has been shed abroad in the hearts of many, and the outpouring of the Spirit seems to have taken a strong hold. About twenty-five have recently obtained a hope in the Lord, and joined the Methodist Church, and many more are desirous of becoming members.²³

As yet the revival had not touched the Baptist church, for at the annual meeting of the Ontario Baptist Association held September 22, the church reported only two baptisms.²⁴ The local Presbyterian church, likewise, remained untouched, for the report at the meeting of Presbytery held September 8 stated "there has been no remarkable revival of religion within our bounds."²⁵

About the time of the Methodist Quarterly Conference, September 25 and 26, the revival, Lane tells us, "appeared to break out afresh." About this time the revival fires must have spread through the Presbyterian church, for the Synod which met October 5 acknowledged "with gratitude to the great head of the church four instances of special revival," among which was that "in the church at Palmyra of the Presbytery of Geneva."²⁶

November found fresh encouragement given to the movement through the death of a nineteen-year-old girl who had been converted just five weeks before, following the September Quarterly Conference. She died in great happiness and, as Lane stated, "it greatly strengthened believers, especially young converts."

By December the revival had spread into the area beyond the bounds of the town. When George Lane returned to the circuit for the Quarterly Conference at Ontario on December 11 and 12, he stated: "Here I found that the work, which had for some time been going on in Palmyra, had broken out from the village like a mighty flame, and was spreading in every direction." By December 20 reports had reached Avon, some 30 miles distant, that "about 200... are sharers in this great and precious work."²⁷ When Reverend Lane left the area December 22 he noted that "there had, in the village and its vicinity, upwards of one hundred and fifty joined the society, besides a number that had joined other churches, and many that had joined no church." The Baptists were among the "other churches" who shared in the harvest. Many people needed only an invitation in order to respond. On Christmas Day a Baptist preacher wrote to a friend that, "as I came on my journey this way, I tarried a few days, and baptized eight."²⁸

By the end of January the effects of the revival upon the town had become apparent. The whole religious tone of the village was altered by its impact. In glowing terms the committee on the "State of Religion within the bounds of Geneva Presbytery" was able to report:

In the congregation of Palmyra, the Lord has appeared in his glory to build up Zion. More than a hundred have been hopefully brought into the kingdom of the Redeemer.... The fruits of holiness in this revival even now are conspicuous. The exertions for the promotion of divine knowledge are greater than formerly. Sabbath Schools, Bible classes, Missionary & Tract Societies are receiving unusual attention, & their salutary influence is apparent.²⁹

Meanwhile the revival fires continued to spread in the neighboring towns. By February, revivals were reported to have broken out in the towns of Williamson and Ontario to the north, in Manchester, Sulphur Springs, and Vienna to the southeast, in Lyons to the east, and in Macedon to the west. Even towns at a greater distance from Palmyra began to experience revival fires, with Mendon to the west and Geneva to the southeast sharing in a divine outpouring.³⁰ By March, although the work was subsiding in the village of Palmyra, it continued to spread in the adjacent towns. Gorham, considerably south of Vienna, was soon reported as receiving "a shower of Divine mercy," and shortly thereafter the area of Clyde, farther east beyond Lyons, was touched and not less than 150 harvested in by the first part of May. By this time "no recent cases of conviction" were being reported from Palmyra itself, but the work was "advancing" in the Sulphur Springs area and still continuing at Geneva.³¹ No wonder Joseph could say that the revival occurred not only in the place where he lived, but "became general among all the sects in that region of country" and that "the whole district of country seemed affected by it."

As the "multitudes" of converts began to fill the churches, men began to take stock of their numbers. By January the Methodists estimated that on their Ontario Circuit two hundred had joined their society.³² A Baptist pastor in Bristol, New York, reported to a friend under the date of March

9, 1825, that in Palmyra "Multitudes have abandoned their false hopes, and false schemes.... About three hundred have united with the Baptist, Presbyterian, and Methodist churches; and to each in about equal numbers."³³ The Palmyra newspaper for March 2, 1825, reprinted a report from the Religious Advocate of Rochester.

More than two hundred souls have become hopeful subjects of divine grace in Palmyra, Macedon, Manchester, Phelps, Lyons, and Ontario since the late revival commenced. This is a powerful work; it is among old and young, but mostly among young people.... The cry is yet from various parts, "come over and help us." There are large and attentive congregations in every part, who hear as for their lives.

Since the Religious Advocate was a Presbyterian-related periodical, the figures probably reflect only the Presbyterian gains. A note in the same issue of the Palmyra paper adds this balancing information: "It may be added, that in Palmyra and Macedon, including Methodist, Presbyterian and Baptist Churches, more than 400 have already testified that the Lord is good. The work is still progressing. In the neighboring towns, the number is great and fast increasing."³⁴

By September 1825 the results of the revival for Palmyra had become a matter of record. The Presbyterian church reported 99 admitted on examination and the Baptists had received 94 by baptism, while the Methodist circuit showed an increase of 208.³⁵ Cowdery's claim of "large additions" and Joseph's statement that "great multitudes united themselves to the different religious parties" were certainly not overstatements.

When we turn to the year 1820, however, the "great multitudes" are conspicuously missing. The Presbyterian church in Palmyra certainly experienced no awakening that year. Reverend James Hotchkin's history records revivals for that church as occurring in the years 1817, 1824, 1829, etc., but there is nothing for the year 1820.³⁶ The records of Presbytery and Synod give the same picture. Early in February 1820 Presbytery reported revivals at Geneva (summer 1819), and Junius and Cayuga ("lately"), all a considerable distance from Palmyra, with "prospects of a revival" at Canandaigua and Phelps (now Oaks Corners), fifteen and twenty miles distant.³⁷ While the "effects" of these revivals were reported in September 1820 as continuing, the remainder of that year and the next showed "no distinct mention of a revival," "no special revival in any of our congregations," "no general revivals of religion during the year."³⁸ Since these reports always rejoice at any sign of a revival in the churches, it is inconceivable that a great awakening had occurred in their Palmyra congregation and gone completely unnoticed.³⁹

The Baptist church records also show clearly that they had no revival in 1820, for the Palmyra congregation gained only 6 by baptism, while the neighboring Baptist churches of Lyons, Canandaigua, and Farmington showed net losses of 4, 5, and 9, respectively. An examination of the figures for the years preceding and following 1820 yields the same picture of no revival so far as the Baptist church of the area is concerned.⁴⁰

The Methodist figures, though referring to the entire circuit, give the same results, for they show net losses of 23 for 1819, 6 for 1820 and 40 for 1821.⁴¹ This hardly fits Joseph Smith's description of "great multitudes" being added to the churches of the area. In fact, the Mormon Prophet could hardly have picked a poorer year in which to place his revival so far as the Methodists were concerned. For some time prior to 1820 a sharp controversy had existed in the denomination, which in the Genesee Conference had resulted in a decline and a "loss of spirituality" throughout the entire conference.⁴² In addition, the Presiding Elder of the Ontario District reported July 1, 1824, that: "Four years since, Unitarianism or Arianism, seemed to threaten the entire overthrow of the work of God in some Circuits on this District, and on some others, divisions and wild and ranting fanatics, caused the spirits of the faithful in a degree to sink." Referring to the years just prior to 1823, he added that "for two or three years we saw no great awakenings."⁴³ In the light of such

depressing circumstances it is impossible that Palmyra could have experienced a glorious revival and the Presiding Elder of the area have failed to take note of it at all.

Another significant lack of information concerning an 1820 revival lies in the area of the religious press. The denominational magazines of that day were full of reports of revivals, some even devoting separate sections to them. These publications carried more than a dozen glowing reports of the revival that occurred at Palmyra in the winter of 1816-17.⁴⁴ Likewise, the 1824-25 revival is covered in a number of reports.⁴⁵ These magazines, however, while busily engaged in reporting revivals during the 1819 to 1821 period, contain not a single mention of any revival taking place in the Palmyra area during this time. It is unbelievable that every one of the denominations which Joseph Smith depicts as affected by an 1820 revival could have completely overlooked the event.⁴⁶ Even the Palmyra newspaper, while reporting revivals at several places in the state, has no mention whatever of any revival in Palmyra or vicinity either in 1819 or 1820.⁴⁷ The only reasonable explanation for this massive silence is that no revival occurred in the Palmyra area in 1820.

II

In the light of this new historical evidence, what lines of approach are open to the student of Mormon history as he considers Joseph Smith's first vision story? Some may still try to imagine that a great revival occurred in Palmyra and vicinity in spite of the evidence against it. We are convinced, however, that they will meet with no more success than Willard Bean in his attempt to substantiate Smith's story. Bean, a Mormon and one-time sparring partner of Jack Dempsey, has put together an account that Mormon writers are still appealing to.⁴⁸ According to Mr. Bean, a revival did break out in "the spring of 1820," sparked under the ministry of Reverend Jesse Townsend, whom he describes as "a young Yale graduate, but recently set apart for the ministry." "The revival started the latter part of April" and by the first of May was well under way. Bean adds an account from "the Religious Advocate of Rochester" to show how extensive the awakening was. All this sounds very authentic until one begins to examine the story more closely. Jesse Townsend was not a "young Yale graduate" in 1820, since he was fifty-four years old and thirty years had expired since his graduation from Yale. He was not "recently set apart for the ministry" for he had been ordained in 1792.⁴⁹ Instead of sparking a revival in Palmyra in "the spring of 1820," he was in reality on his way west, arriving near Hillsboro, Illinois, May 25, 1820.⁵⁰ Furthermore, the Religious Advocate did not begin publication at Rochester until about 1825, and the account which Mr. Bean quotes from that journal is the same one which appeared in the Palmyra newspaper in March of 1825 in reference to the 1824-25 revival.⁵¹ We do not believe that this avenue of approach will yield any fruitful results.⁵²

A second approach maintains that the revival was at some distance from the area where the Smiths lived, that it caused considerable stir in their immediate neighborhood, but ended "on a negative note." It consequently left no visible traces either in the local or denominational papers of 1820 or in terms of substantial membership gains for the churches of the Palmyra and Manchester area.

In developing this approach, Joseph's words, "region of country," "whole district of country" are understood as though they referred to some kind of statewide revival, without notice of the fact that he is talking about a revival that commenced with the Methodists "in the place where we lived" and then "became general among all the sects in that region of country." Consequently Latter-day Saint writers frequently cite any revival in New York state as supporting Joseph's story and as illustrating the revival's "widespread nature," whether it was a revival spreading "eastward" from Albany, some 200 miles from Joseph; or at Ulysses, 75 miles away; or a list of Presbyterian revivals, regardless of the distance from Palmyra.⁵³ Doubtless, in this manner a list of thirty or more towns of western New York experiencing revivals in 1820 could be compiled in support of Joseph's account, but such

an appeal is not sufficient, for this statewide condition prevailed nearly every year during the early nineteenth century.⁵⁴ What it is important to notice is where these revivals were occurring, for the communities experiencing them changed from year to year. The point of the Prophet's story is not that there were revivals occurring throughout the state that year--for this was true every year. His point was that "an unusual excitement" was going on right there "in the place where we lived." Multitudes of his neighbors became "converts" and "united" with the various churches of his community, and it was this situation that led him to ask "which I should join."

Some Mormon writers, however, realize that the revival must be centered some place near enough to affect young Joseph, and the trend at the moment is to name Vienna as the place to which "the Prophet undoubtedly had reference."⁵⁵ It is questionable whether Vienna had any serious awakening in 1819 or 1820, but through a series of assumptions a large-scale revival is reconstructed there. First, it is assumed that, because the Methodists' Genesee Annual Conference met at Vienna that July 1-8, 1819, all such conferences "were characterized by revival meetings and this conference was no exception."⁵⁶ While camp meetings at times were held in conjunction with these annual business conferences, the conference minutes reveal no such arrangements being made for the 1819 session.⁵⁷ Next, when Reverend Abner Chase speaks of the spiritual decline which existed at the time of the 1819 Conference being "followed by a glorious revival," it is assumed that he meant that this revival broke out at Vienna immediately following the Conference. When Mr. Chase mentioned this revival, he added that he planned to speak of it "more particularly" further on in his narrative. After carrying his recollections through the years 1820 and 1821, however, his book ends abruptly before coming to the revival period, which from his earlier writings is known to be the 1824-25 period.⁵⁸ Finally, a passing reference to Joseph's "catching a spark of Methodism in the camp meeting away down in the woods on the Vienna road" is assumed to show that he actually attended revival meetings at Vienna, some fifteen miles from his home. The most natural reference of this quotation, however, is to the Methodist campgrounds a mile from Palmyra, in the wooded area adjoining the Methodist chapel on the Vienna road.⁵⁹

Although the evidence cited fails to establish a revival at Vienna,⁶⁰ the chief fault of writers lies in their failure to match the description given in Joseph's official account. Even granting a Methodist revival at Vienna,⁶¹ it not only failed to become general among all the sects in that region of country, but apparently even failed to affect the other churches on the circuit, for the circuit reported a substantial loss of members that year. Even if one counts the 38 gained by the Phelps Presbyterian Church in 1820 and the 23 added to the Phelps (Vienna) Baptist congregation in 1821, this hardly matches the "great multitudes" of Joseph's story and leaves nothing happening "in the place where we lived."

Finally, therefore, this approach must manipulate Joseph's words so as to account for the fact that his immediate neighborhood shows no evidence of an 1820 revival. Accordingly it is noted that Joseph Smith speaks not of a "revival," but of an "unusual excitement" in the place where he lived. This, however, overlooks the fact that in the nineteenth century the terms were synonymous.⁶² It further ignores the parallel Cowdery-Smith account which specifically calls it a "reformation," the same term used in the Palmyra paper in reference to the 1824 revival. Joseph himself in 1843 employed the same term, "reformation," in relating his first vision story to a news correspondent.⁶³ In addition, the Cowdery-Smith account makes it abundantly clear that this reformation activity took place "in Palmyra and vicinity,"⁶⁴ while the interview, in an equally clear statement, quotes Smith as saying that the reformation was "in the neighborhood where we lived."

It is further suggested by those who approach the problem by this method that when Joseph spoke of great multitudes "uniting with the different religious parties," he did not necessarily mean that they joined the various churches, but rather that they split up into little cliques which merely took sides in a general controversy.⁶⁵ To put such a construction on the word "parties" is to fail to

notice that the Prophet uses this very term to refer to the various denominations. In the "war of words" among Presbyterians, Baptists, and Methodists, Joseph speaks of the denominations as "endeavoring to establish their own tenets and disprove all others" and this leads him to ask, "Who of all these parties are right?" Even members of his own family had been "proselyted" to the Presbyterian faith, while "converts" flocked to the different parties. That these converts actually joined the churches of Palmyra and vicinity is made clear when the Cowdery-Smith account states that "large additions were made to the Methodist, Presbyterian and Baptist churches." To suggest that these multitudes merely aligned themselves with various feuding groups and that consequently the revival was "abortive" and ended "on a negative note" is to completely miss one of the main points of Joseph's narrative. The entire thrust of his story is that right there where he lived multitudes were joining the various churches, but with so much conflict in their tenets he was at a loss which one to join himself. The year 1820, however, was not the period when any great multitudes were joining the churches of Palmyra and vicinity. It is not until the revival of 1824-25 that we find a situation that matches the conditions described in this official first vision story.

A third, and perhaps simpler, approach is to assume that Joseph's first vision story is essentially correct, but that his memory failed him as to the date of its occurrence. If we pursue this line of thought, several major revisions will have to be made in Joseph Smith's story. Since Joseph presents his vision as occurring in the spring,⁶⁶ the date of the vision would accordingly have to be moved to the spring of 1825, following the revival. This would then also necessitate changing the date of his second vision from September 21, 1823, to not earlier than September of 1825. In turn, this would require another change in his story, for he mentions visiting the hill where the plates were buried in each of the three years that elapsed between 1823 and 1827.⁶⁷ The revised dating would allow for just one visit--in the year 1826. With this much readjustment, Smith's memory for events becomes somewhat suspect. Furthermore, such a realignment of dates calls for an entire recasting of the context of his story. Instead of being the naive boy of fourteen, as he presented himself, he would in 1825 have been a young man of nineteen, who in less than two years would find himself eloping with a young woman from Pennsylvania.

Furthermore, this reconstruction would only aggravate the problem of harmonizing Smith's final and "official" account with another first vision account written earlier by the Mormon leader himself. This narrative, which has been dubbed a "strange account," had remained locked in the archives of the Latter-day Saints Church until brought to light by Paul R. Cheesman in 1965.⁶⁸ Unlike the official account, which presents Smith as wondering at age fourteen which church was right, the "strange account" presents him as having "from age twelve to fifteen" studied the Scriptures and already concluded that all were wrong. Instead of seeing two glorious personages at age fourteen, he sees at age sixteen only the Lord Jesus Christ, who confirmed his conclusions that all had "turned aside from the gospel." Finally, in the "strange account" he admits that at the first he "sought the Plates to obtain riches," while in the official version he receives only a warning to beware of such a temptation. This "strange account" substitutes Joseph's Bible reading in place of the revival as the predisposing factor for his heavenly inquiry. Cheesman regards this earlier account as a first draft of the first vision story which Joseph laid aside and never completed. If we feel that Smith's memory was hazy in his official account, a comparison with the "strange account" would lead to the further conclusion that his memory was extremely confused. The matter is far deeper than a mere lapse of memory as to dating, for it enters into the very fabric of the story itself.

III

A final, more realistic, approach is that Joseph began with a substantially different story than the one he put forth later in his career. He altered and expanded the story in several steps as occasion required, arriving at the official version he published in 1842. A sketchy outline of the development, based on all the available accounts known to us, is, we believe, somewhat as follows.

The earliest form of the story which the Smiths circulated was that Joseph, Jr., had discovered the plates through the aid of the seer-stone which he used to locate buried treasures. The united testimony of the inhabitants of Palmyra who knew the Smiths is that Joseph and his father were engaged for some length of time in these money-digging activities.⁶⁹ Just a year after the Book of Mormon appeared in print, the editor of the Palmyra Reflector⁷⁰ noted that Joseph Smith, Sr., followed the "popular belief that these treasures were held in charge by some evil spirit." "At a time when the money digging ardor was somewhat abated, the elder Smith declared that his son Joe had seen the spirit (which he then described as a little old man with a long beard), "who told him he would furnish him with a book containing a record of the ancient inhabitants of this country." At first, the story "had no regular plan or features," and several variations have been preserved by those who knew the Smiths.⁷¹ In October 1827, when Martin Harris first heard that Joseph Smith had unearthed golden plates, he visited the Smith home and interviewed each of the members independently. All, including Joseph Smith, Jr., himself, gave the same story: "He found them by looking in the stone found in the well of Mason Chase."⁷² Harris' narrative makes it clear that Joseph had already determined to produce a book, but needed someone to back it financially. Since Harris was deeply moved by religious ideas, Smith added that an angel had told him to quit the money-digging business, and that he had been shown Martin as the man who would help him with the new project. Harris replied, "If the Lord will show me that it is his work, you can have all the money you want." A "still small voice" told Harris to become financially involved and he ultimately became one of the witnesses for the new publication.

From this point on the story takes on a religious tone, with an angel taking the place of the "spirit" as custodian of the plates. The Reflector, however, is careful to point out that, "It is well known that Joe Smith never pretended to have any communion with angels, until a long period after the pretended finding of his book." ⁷³

Once Joseph had recast his story in a religious framework, he had to explain how it was that one with a questionable reputation, who had never even joined a church, should be favored with such a special visitation from heaven. W. W. Phelps, who lived for a while at the neighboring town of Canandaigua and later joined the Mormons, pointed out that the cry was soon raised that if God were going to reveal anything it would be to some great person in the church.⁷⁴ Smith's answer was to admit his sinfulness, and to have the plates no longer found in his search for treasure as at the beginning, but divinely revealed to him as a result of his search for forgiveness and truth. His earliest known attempt at this is found in the so-called "strange account," which was probably composed shortly after the organization of the church.

In developing this new approach Joseph followed a familiar pattern of that day. Alexander Campbell complained of a prevalent "enthusiasm" that had one man "regenerated when asleep, by a vision of the night. That man heard a voice in the woods, saying, 'Thy sins be forgiven thee.' A third saw his Savior descend to the tops of the trees at noon day."⁷⁵ In this same vein Joseph depicted himself burdened with guilt and receiving a personal visit from the Son of God, who assured him of his pardon and confirmed his conclusion that all the churches were in error.⁷⁶

This claim to personal intercourse with the Lord did not stop here, however, for others soon joined Smith in their claims to have seen the Lord face-to-face.⁷⁷ By February 1831 it was reported that the Mormons claimed not only that "Smith . . . had seen God frequently and personally," but

"commissions and papers were exhibited, said to be signed by Christ himself."⁷⁸ Yet for all the heavenly encounters enjoyed at this period, no idea is yet introduced that the Father and the Son are two separate flesh and bone Gods. Even as late as 1835, when it is taught that there are two personages who constitute the Godhead, the Father is presented as being "a personage of spirit," while only the Son is "a personage of tabernacle."⁷⁹ The "strange account," therefore, is a step forward in developing Smith's official story, but still has some way to go in its alteration and development.

One alteration that occurs by 1834 is a change in the motivating factor which produced Joseph's sense of sin and guilt. In the "strange account" it is his searching of the Scriptures that produces both the certain knowledge that all the churches are wrong and his deep feeling of sinfulness. For some reason this entire approach is set aside, perhaps as being rather out of character for the unlearned boy Joseph was presented as being. In its place a better motivation is found in the revival that swept Palmyra about 1823, as Joseph recalled. Consequently, in 1834, when the first printed article on the origin of the Mormon Church appeared, it spoke of a search for forgiveness that was motivated by the revival and answered by the angel's visit to Smith's bedroom, and it left no room for any earlier heavenly vision.

Late in 1835 he again made alterations in his story. On November 9, 1835 in telling his history to a visitor who called himself Joshua, the Jewish Minister he related how in a silent grove two personages had appeared to him, adding that one of them had testified "that Jesus Christ is the son of God." Apparently Joseph at this point intended his two personages to be nothing more than angels, for he adds that he "saw many angels in this vision" and continues, "When I was about 17 years I had another vision of angels."⁸⁰ Furthermore, five days later he told Erastus Holmes that "the first visitation of angels" occurred when he was about fourteen years old. ⁸¹ This would account for the confusion that later developed, even among the church leaders, who often spoke of Smith's first vision as an angel visitation. In telling his story to Joshua, Joseph made no attempts to fit it into the framework of the account his paper had published earlier that year, for apart from two Bible references he mentions nothing about a revival or any other motivation that led him to the grove to seek heavenly guidance. This account was also left unpublished when his history was put into print in Utah, and remained largely unheard of until it was recently brought to light from the archives of the Mormon Church by James B. Allen of Brigham Young University.

Three years later, in 1838, when he begins his official history, the Mormon leader tackles the problem of working a first vision story into the setting of the story that had already been released in his own paper. Now far from Palmyra where anyone might be likely to remember the dates, Joseph moves the date of the revival back to 1820 to accommodate his first vision narrative. While he is writing in 1838, he is facing division in his own ranks and strong opposition from the established churches. We are not surprised, therefore, to find the strong note of seeking forgiveness shoved into the background in favor of a condemnation of all the churches by his heavenly visitors. At this point in his career it is not so important that he be sorry for his sins as it is that he be endorsed in his claims. By this time, also, his theology has changed so that he is now advocating a plurality of physical gods. It is not surprising, therefore, to find that the two personages have apparently become, for Smith, two separate Gods, the Father and the Son.⁸²

It maybe asked why the discrepancy in the revival date was not noticed earlier. The answer lies in the complex course the story has taken. When the revival date was initially published, some ten years after the event, it was off by only one year, which is excusable and would be noticed by few. After nearly twenty years, when Joseph finally published the date as 1820, he was in Illinois, far-removed from the Palmyra area. In addition, the shift from an angel to Christ, then to angels, and finally to two personages introduced such haziness that even the Mormon leaders appeared confused as to the nature of the story itself. Furthermore, when the story of Mormon origins was linked with Rev . 14:6

("I saw another angel fly . . . having the everlasting gospel"), the focus was placed upon the earliest form of the story, the angel visitation, as best matching this prophecy. With this approach the revival tends to fall into the background as a thing of relative unimportance. 83

Finally, it has only been in the last decade that an attempt has been made to harmonize the various accounts. This was our aim when we turned to a consideration of the existing records for help in unscrambling the accounts. This study has been the result of that search. While some will disagree with our reconstruction, all students of Mormon history will be forced to reconsider the reliability of Joseph's first vision story. We believe that the firmness of the revival date as the winter of 1824-25, the features of Smith's story as fitting only that date, and the absence of any revival in the Palmyra area in 1820 are established beyond any reasonable doubt, and will force upon Mormon writers a drastic reevaluation of the foundation of their church.

1. "The appearing of the Father and the Son to Joseph Smith is the foundation of this church." David O. McKay, *Gospel Ideals* (1953), p. 85; "The greatest event that has ever occurred in the world since the resurrection of the Son of God . . . was the coming of the Father and of the Son to that boy Joseph Smith." Joseph F. Smith, *Gospel Doctrine* (1919), p. 627; "This glorious vision of God the Father and his Son Jesus Christ . . . is the greatest event that has transpired in this world since the resurrection of our Lord." Ezra Taft Benson, *Deseret News*, Dec. 23, 1967, "Church News," p. 12; "This vision was the most important event that had taken place in all world history from the day of Christ's ministry to the glorious hour when it occurred." Bruce McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine* (1966), p. 285; "Thus the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and the story of Joseph Smith must stand or fall on the authenticity of the First Vision and the appearance of the Angel Moroni." Paul R. Cheesman, "An Analysis of the Accounts Relating Joseph Smith's Early Visions," (hereafter referred to as "Joseph Smith's Early Visions"), thesis, Brigham Young University, May 1965, p. 75. Cf. similar statements in Joseph F. Smith, *Essentials in Church History* (1953), p. 46f; LeGrand Richards, *A Marvelous Work and a Wonder* (1950), p. 15; David O. McKay, *Deseret News*, Sept. 7, 1968, "Church News," p. 4.
2. *Times and Seasons*, III (Mar. 15, Apr. 1, 15, 1842), 726-28, 748f, 753f. Reprinted: *Millennial Star*, III (beginning June 1842), 21ff; also in XIV supplement, and in *The Pearl of Great Price* (Liverpool, 1851; hereafter referred to as POP), p. 36ff. Reprinted with textual alterations both in Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, I (ed., B. H. Roberts), 1ff, and in present editions of PGP, where it is entitled "Joseph Smith 2" (hereafter J.S. 2) and divided into verses. Cf. Joseph Smith's shorter published accounts of his first vision in *Times and Seasons*, III (Mar. 1, 1842), 706f, and in I. Rupp, *An Original History of Religious Denominations* (1844), p. 40-4f.
3. On silence see: Fawn Brodie, *No Man Knows My History* (1946), p. 23f; James B. Allen, "The Significance of Joseph Smith's 'First Vision' in Mormon Thought," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, I (Autumn 1966), no. 3, 30ff. On alterations see: Jerald and Sandra Tanner, *Changes in the Pearl of Great Price* (1965), p. 36ff; LaMar Petersen, *Problems in Mormon Text* (1957), p. 3f; and cf. the original manuscript at the opening of Book A-1 of "Documentary History of the Church" (hereafter DHC), microfilm copy in LDS Library, Salt Lake City, and in *Concordia Theological Seminary*, St. Louis. Cheesman's transcription ("Joseph Smith's Early Visions,") has numerous inaccuracies, making it unsuitable for checking the original text. On leaders' statements see: Jerald and Sandra Tanner, *Mormonism -- Shadow or Reality* (1964), p. 118ff; P. Cheesman, "Joseph Smith's Early Visions," p. 31ff, and cf. the Tanners' critique of this in their *Joseph Smith's Strange Account of the First Vision* (1965), p. 8ff.
4. J.S. 2:5.
5. *Messenger and Advocate*, I (Oct., Nov., Dec. 1834, Feb. 1835) 13, 27f, 40ff, 78f. This "full history of the rise of the Church of Latter-day Saints" is a series of letters from Cowdery to W. W. Phelps, the preface to which states: "That our narrative may be correct, and particularly the introduction, it is proper to inform our patrons, that our brother J. Smith, jr. has offered to assist us . . . With his labor and with authentic documents now in our possession, we hope to render this a pleasing and agreeable narrative" (p. 13). Mormon writers have, therefore, rightly concluded: "Joseph Smith's association with Cowdery in the production of these Letters make [sic] them, as to the facts involved, practically the personal narrative of Joseph Smith" (B. H. Roberts, *Comprehensive History*, 1930, I, 78fn); "It should be remembered that these letters which these statements [re: the location of Cumorah] are made were written at the Prophet's request and under his personal supervision." (Joseph F. Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, 1956, III, 236); cf. similar statements in: Francis Kirkham, *A New Paper* 99 - p.100 Dr. Bushman does contribute a most useful observation when he notes that Mr. Turner's testimony must have referred to the period prior to 1822. For one thing, it will establish that the Smiths' money-digging activities, of which Mr. Turner speaks in the same context, date considerably prior to his working for Josiah Stool and certainly cannot be attributed to anti-Mormon sentiment following 1827. It also shows that as late as 1822 Joseph was still associated with the Methodist Church, since this is the image Mr. Turner, "who knew the Smiths personally," carries away with him. Since the Methodists did not acquire their property in Palmyra a "on the Vienna road" until July 7, 1821 (*Deeds of Ontario Co.*, Bk G, 345) we may even be able to fix the lower limits of this camp meeting experience. This may have provided the one core of truth around which he later wove his various vision stories. Furthermore, any telling of his story over the extended period in which he "continued" to affirm his vision, and any subsequent "great persecution which continued to increase . . . at the hands of all classes of men" must date after Turner has left Palmyra. In his position in the office of the local newspaper he could not have missed an item of this magnitude and interest. Unless we also attribute this to the over-activity of a 14-year-old's mind, or to "reshaping" done later to meet changing circumstances, any period of persecution must be moved to a time following 1822. p.100 Even in his failures Dr. Bushman has helped to clarify the picture. We can see how extremely difficult it is to make Joseph's story fit an 1820 setting. It involves a reshaping that ignores the natural sense of his words, dismisses much of the evidence, minimizes distances between towns and injects conjectures in place of facts. Instead of a period of intense religious activity, one finds only less than two dozen joining the Manchester Baptist Church in the spring of 1819; a July 1-8, 1819 Methodist annual business meeting 15 miles away with conjectural week-end preaching; two dozen becoming Presbyterians 18 miles away in the winter and spring of 1820; and a possible Methodist camp

- meeting at Vienna in the latter half of 1820 or the first part of 1821 (the 654 figure was reported in the July 1821 Conference, the church year running from summer conference to summer conference). Beyond this on the most look a considerable distance before anything religiously significant can be located. One need not present such a strained interpretation with the revival of 1824. All the factors are there, and there in just the magnitude in which both Smith and the Cowdery-Smith account describe them. I tried myself for a considerable length of time to establish an 1820 revival, but it was the stubbornness of the facts themselves that led me ultimately to abandon this position. Witness for Christ in America, I (1960), 54, 75, 77; and P. Cheesman, "Joseph Smith's Early Vision s," pp. 44, 64.
6. Messenger and Advocate, I (hereafter MA), 78.
 7. B. H. Roberts, Comprehensive History, I, 52f; John A. Widtsoe, Joseph Smith, Seeker After Truth (1952), pp. 16, 22fn; Hyrum L. Andrus, Joseph Smith, the Man and the Seer (1965), p. 64f.
 8. MA, I, 78. It is interesting that Cowdery originally placed the revival event in Joseph's fifteenth year (p. 42) and then expressly corrected this to the seventeenth year (1823) in the next installment (p. 78). If at this time Joseph had had in mind an 1820 revival, the change to 1823 would certainly never have been made.
 9. See references in note 7. Mr. Widtsoe even adds (22fn), "Reverend Lane himself confirms the dates of the revival. It was 1820, not 1823." A letter (Dec. 7, 1966) from Mr. Lauritz Petersen, Research Supervisor, L.D.S. Library, states that this "could not be verified." He adds, "I asked Mr. Widtsoe not to insert it in the book, but he did any way."
 10. Deseret Evening News XXVII, (Jan. 20, 1894) 11. From an interview of William Smith by E. C. Briggs as reported by J. W. Petersen to Zion's Ensign (Independence, Mo.). No copies of the Ensign printing seem to have survived. Because this statement was made in William's old age and presents some chronological conflicts with other statements (see below, note 13) made by him, recently a few L.D.S. writers have in private dismissed William as entirely unreliable. The Church, however, still publicly appeals to this interview (Deseret News, Mar. 16, 1968, "Church News," 11, 13) and no evidence has yet appeared that William ever contradicted his assertion that both Lane and Stockton shared in the revival.
 11. B. H. Roberts, Comprehensive History, I, 52f; Preston Nibley, Joseph Smith the Prophet (1944), p. 23f; H. Andrus, Joseph Smith, p. 65. Cf. also the script for the opening section of a recent filmstrip, "The First Vision," Part I of The Restoration of the Church of Jesus Christ in these latter days.
 12. Inez Davis, The Story of the Church (1959), 39fn, and Hyrum L. Andrus, "The Historical Joseph," Dialogue, I (Winter 1966) no. 4, 123fn, both report the headstone date as Nov. 19, 1823. A notation above the line in the manuscript of Joseph's history gave the date as Nov. 19 [14], 1823 (see Book A-1, DHC, I; Cheesman reads 14 and fails to note that the date is written above the crossed out words, "who is now dead"), but J. S. 2:4 now reads Nov. 19, 1824. The latter date is clearly an error, for beginning Sept. 25, 1824, several issues of the Wayne Sentinel carried an announcement by Joseph Smith, Sr., that he had disinterred Alvin's body. The error may have crept in from the history written by Joseph Smith, Jr.'s mother since she gives the 1824 date (see Lucy Smith, Biographical Sketches of Joseph Smith [1853], pp. 40, 87ff).
 13. William Smith, William Smith on Mormonism (1883), p. 6; The Saints' Herald, XXXI (Oct. 4, 1884), 643.
 14. For installation date see: Evangelical Recorder, I (Mar. 7, 1819), 111, or Religious Intelligencer, II (May 2, 1818), 800. On the terminal date see: James H. Hotchkinn, History of the Purchase and Settlement of Western New York and . . . of the Presbyterian Church (1848), p. 341 (and 207-10 for some of Stockton's activities during 1820).
 15. Palmyra Herald, II (Nov. 6, 1822), 3. Stockton remained a member of Cayuga Presbytery through 1823 (see: Geneva Synod, "Records," I, 211, 238, 258, 374) until he transferred to Geneva Presbytery Feb. 3, 1824 (see Geneva Presbytery, "Records," Vol. C, 252). The Presbytery and Synod records are in the Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia, Pa.
 16. For references see: Wayne Sentinel, I, 3 of following issues--Dec. 3, 31, 1823; Jan. 7, 14, 21, 28, 1824. For installation see issues of Feb. 18, 1824, 3, and Feb. 25, 1824, 2; also Geneva Presbytery, "Records," C, 253f, 274, and J. Hotchkinn, History of . . . the Presbyterian Church, p. 377.
 17. History of . . . the Presbyterian Church, p. 378.
 18. J. Widtsoe, Joseph Smith . . . , p. 16; I. Davis, The Story of the Church, p. 32fn.
 19. For sketches of Lane's life see: Minutes of the Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church (1860) VIII, 40f; William Sprague, Annals of the American Methodist Pulpit (1861), VII, 810f; Hendrick B. Wright, Historical Sketches of Plymouth (1873), pp. 309, 346ff; Oscar Jewell Harvey, The Harvey Book (1899), pp. 128-34; George Peck, The Life and Times of Rev George Peck, D.D. (1874), pp. 96f, 104, 108f; George Peck, Early Methodism (1860), pp. 492-95, and scattered references 166f, 235-38, 309, 346, 428, 431, 441f, 447-49, 509, and for some of his activities in Pennsylvania in 1819-20 see 313-15, 337. For official confirmation of Lane's assigned field of labor see: Minutes of the Annual Conferences (1773-1828) I, 337, 352, 373, 392, 418, 446. Lane's portrait appears in The Methodist Magazine, April, 1826, and later in H. Wright, Historical Sketches of Plymouth, facing p. 346.
 20. Minutes of the Annual Conferences, VIII, 41; The Methodist Magazine (April 1825) VIII, 161.
 21. Mr. Lane went with Rev. George Peck to the 1819 session of the Genesee Annual Conference (G. Peck, Life and Times, p. 104). This eight-day annual business meeting met July 1-8 at Vienna (now Phelps), a village some fifteen miles from the Smith home. The "Journal" of the conference does not indicate whether preaching services were held or who preached, but they certainly touched oh no revival either at Palmyra or at Vienna, for the Ontario Circuit (on which Palmyra was located) showed a net loss of 6, and the Lyons Circuit (on which Vienna was located) a net loss of 299 for the period between the 1819 and 1820 conferences (see Minutes of the Annual Conferences, I, 345f, 330--figures for 1820 compared with 1819). It can be established that Lane was also present at the 1820 conference beginning July 20 in Canada. There is no evidence, however, that he passed through Palmyra either traveling to or from this conference. He can be definitely located in central Pennsylvania at the end of June (G. Peck, Early Methodism, p. 337), and a July date is too late to give any support to a "spring of eighteen hundred and twenty" story. Cf. "Journal of the Genesee Conference" (1810-1828, 2 vols in 1) I, 76-84 for 1819 session; 85, 101f for Lane at 1820 session. The original "Journal" was most likely lost in the 1933 fire that destroyed a number of Genesee Conference records at Rochester. Citations (hereafter JGC) are to the duplicate copy made for the Wyoming Conference and stored in a dormitory basement of Wyoming Seminary, Kingston, Pa.
 22. The Methodist Magazine (April 1825) V III, 158ff.
 23. Wayne Sentinel (Sept. 15, 1824) I, 3.
 24. Minutes of the Ontario Baptist Association (Convened at Gorham, September 22 and 23, 1824), p. 4. The Minutes are in the American Baptist Historical Society, Rochester, N. Y.
 25. Geneva Presbytery, "Records" (Sept. 8, 1824), D, 16.
 26. Geneva Synod, "Records" (Oct. 5, 1824), I, 404 f.
 27. American Baptist Magazine (Feb. 1825), V, 61f.
 28. Latter-day Luminary (Feb. 1825), VI, 61.
 29. Geneva Presbytery, "Records" (Feb. 2, 1825), D, 27 f.

30. Gospel Luminary (Feb. 1825) I, 42; (Mar. 1825), I, 65f; American Baptist Magazine (Apr. 1825), V, 125; The Methodist Magazine (Apr. 1825), VIII, 161.
31. American Baptist Magazine (Apr. 1825), V, 125; Boston Recorder (May 6, 1825), X, 74; Western Recorder (May 10, 1825), II, 74.
32. The Methodist Magazine (Apr. 1825), VIII, 161.
33. American Baptist Magazine (Apr. 1825), V, 124f; also in Boston Recorder (Apr. 29, 1825), X, 70; New-York Observer (May 7, 1825), III, 74; Religious Intelligencer (May 7, 1825), IX, 778.
34. Wayne Sentinel (Mar. 2, 1825), II, 3, 4.
35. Geneva Presbytery, "Records" (Sept. 21, 1825), D, 40, and Geneva Synod, "Records" (Oct. 6, 1825), I, 431; Minutes of the Ontario Baptist Association (Sept. 28, 1825), p. 5; Minutes of the Annual Conferences, I, 471 compared with previous year, 447.
36. J. Hotchkiss, History of . . . the Presbyterian Church, p. 378.
37. Geneva Presbytery, "Records" (Feb. 2, 1820), C, 37. At this meeting the Phelps congregation was reported as having received only 10 on examination and 6 by letter (p. 38). By the end of 1820 the total had reached 38 (Oaks Corners Session Records for 1820), and by some time in 1821 the number for the two-year period totaled 62 members (J. Hotchkiss, History of the . . . Presbyterian Church, p. 380). Canandaigua had to wait until a later date before their "prospects" materialized (Hotchkiss, p. 400). No Presbyterian church within any reasonable distance of Joseph's home can be found adding the great multitudes Joseph attributed to them in 1820. The Farmington area to the south and west was predominantly Quaker and not, therefore, fruitful soil for Presbyterianism (Hotchkiss, p. 378f), and an attempt to start a Presbyterian work in Manchester in 1823 had to be abandoned the following year (New-York Religious Chronicle [Oct. 2, 1824], II, 126). The fact that the names of Joseph's mother and her associates among the Palmyra Presbyterian Church is further evidence that Smith's revival story had in view the local Palmyra church, and not some other Presbyterian congregation in another town (see Western Presbyterian Church of Palmyra, "Session Records," II, 11f; Vol. I, which would have shown the exact date the Smiths joined, has been missing since at least 1932).
38. Geneva Presbytery, "Records" (Sept. 5, 1820), C, 64; Geneva Synod, "Records" (Oct. 4, 1820), I, 221 (also printed in Evangelical Recorder, Nov. 18, 1820, II, 151); Geneva Presbytery, "Records" (Feb. 8, 1821), C, 86; Geneva Synod, "Records" (Oct. 4, 1821), I, 253.
39. Since the 1820 meetings of Presbytery were held at Phelps (Feb. 2) and Canandaigua (Sept. 5), that Presbytery should have been ignorant of a great awakening at Palmyra is completely beyond possibility.
40. The records of the Palmyra Baptist Church are preserved in the American Baptist Historical Society, Rochester. They are regarded as the records of the Macedon Baptist Church since part of the original congregation moved into the village of Palmyra about 1835 and the parent body moved to Macedon. The records show a total of 11 members received between September 18, 1819, and September 23, 1820, 6 of these being by baptism (pages unnumbered, see p. headed "Added" for years 1817-1820). The printed Minutes of the Ontario Baptist Association for the year 1820 are lost, but from the Minutes for 1819 and 1821 the net gain or loss can be computed. These Minutes show reception by baptism for 1819: Palm yr a 5, Lyons 3, Canandaigua 0, Farmington 22; for 1821: Palmyra 1, Lyons 8, Canandaigua 0, Farmington 0 (See Minutes, Sept. 22, 1819, p. 2ff; Sept. 26, 1821, p. 2ff). The only bright note in this drab picture seems to be in the Church of Farmington, located in the village of Manchester, during the spring of 1819. By the end of May, 14 had been received on profession of faith (see the pastor's letter in Western New York Baptist Magazine [Aug. 1819], II, 342; and cf. their Record Book for 1819 at the American Baptist Historical Society), and by September 8 more were added totaling the 22 reported above. This could hardly be called "great multitudes" and it was followed by a net loss of 9 in 1820. In fact, the total number received by baptism from Sept. 1804 to May 1828 was only 94, as many as the Palmyra church added in just a few months during the 1824-25 revival (cf. Minutes of the Ontario Baptist Association [1871], p. 14). Even if we couple the 22 of Farmington with the 38 gained in 1820 by the Phelps Presbyterian 13 miles to the east, and assume that the Methodists had some success following their 1819 conference at Vienna, this still falls short of the revival Joseph describes, and his narrative would have to be changed to read, "it commenced with the Baptists."
41. Minutes of the Annual Conferences, I, show white and Negro membership for the Ontario Circuit as follows: 1818--700, 3; 1819--674, 3; 1820--670, 1; 1821--621, 1 (see pp. 312, 330, 346, 366). The work at Palmyra was still only a "class meeting" on the circuit in 1820. It wasn't until the summer of 1821 that it was organized into a church and still another year before they were able to begin construction of a meeting house (see Ontario County, "Miscellaneous Records," Book C, 385f; Palmyra Herald June 19, 1822], II, 2).
42. Abner Chase, Recollections of the Past (1846), p. 125f. Chase says that the period of "declension" was followed by a glorious revival of the work of God among both preachers and people, which I design more particularly to notice hereafter." He carried his recollections only through the year 1821, however, and never did speak more particularly of the revival period, which is most certainly the 1824-25 revival dealt with in an earlier report (see following note). Mr. Chase served as Presiding Elder of the Ontario District from July 1820 until he was replaced by George Lane in July of 1824.
43. The Methodist Magazine (Nov. 1824), V, 435f. He states that "Through for two or three years he saw no great awakenings . . . last year [1823] the Catherine Circuit was peculiarly favored" and "the present year we have had some glorious revivals."
44. Reports of the 1816 revival can be found in: The Christian Herald and Seaman's Magazine (Sept. 28, 1816; May 10, June 7, 1817), II, 16; III, 103f, 164; Religious Remembrancer (Oct. 5, Nov. 2, 1816; May 17, 1817), 4th Series, pp. 24, 39, 151f; Religious Intelligencer (Apr. 19, June 7, Nov. 1, 1817), I, 750 (miscellaneous 760); II, 23, 363-65; American Baptist Magazine (July 1817), I, 153; Boston Recorder (Sept. 17, 1816; May 13, Oct. 21, 1817), I, 151; II, 88, 180. See also Joshua Bradley, Accou nts of Religious Revivals . . . from 1815 to 1818 (1819), p. 223.
45. In addition to references cited above, the 1824 revival is reported in: New-York Religious Chronicle (Nov. 20, 1824; Apr. 9, 1825), II, 154; III, 58; Western New York Baptist Magazine (Feb. 1825), IV, 284; Western Recorder (Nov. 9, 1824; Mar. 29, 1825), I, 90; II, 50; Boston Recorder (May 20, 1825), X, 82; The Christian Herald (Portsmouth, Mar. 1825), VIII, 7 (this last publication is the organ of the Christian-Connection church and should not be confused with The Christian Herald of Presbytery affiliation).
46. We examined all the issues of the following without finding a single reference to a Palmyra revival: Baptist: American Baptist Magazine (Jan. 1819-Nov. 1821), Latter-day Luminary (Feb. 1818-Nov. 1821), Western New York Baptist Magazine (Feb. 1819-Nov. 1821); Presbyterian: Religious Remembrancer (Jan. 1818-Aug. 18, 1821). The Christian Herald and Seaman's Magazine (Jan. 2, 1819-Jan. 6, 1821), Evangelical Recorder (June 5, 1819-Sept. 8, 1821); Methodist: The Methodist Magazine (Jan. 1818-Dec. 1821); Congregational: Religious Intelligencer (Jan. 1819-May 1821); Christian-Connection: The Christian Herald (May 1818-May 25, 1821); Other: Boston Recorder (Jan. 1818-Dec. 1821); Palmyra Register (Jan. 13, 1819-Dec. 27, 1820).
47. The Palmyra Register, III, has revivals reported in the state under the dates of June 7, Aug. 16, Sept. 13, Oct. 4, 1820 (pp. 1, 1, 3, 4, respectively). Even the Methodist camp meeting being held in the vicinity of the village has nothing more significant reported about it than that a man had gotten drunk at the grog shops while there and died the next morning (issues of June 28 and July 5, 1820, p. 2).
48. Willard Bean, A. B. C. History of Palmyra and the Beginning of "Mormonism" (1938), p. 21f. Utilized in P. Nibley, Joseph Smith the Prophet, 21ff; P. Cheesman, "Joseph Smith's Early Visions," p. 12; Pearson H. Corbett, History of Smith, Patriarch (1963), p. 18f. On Mr. Bean, including his practical prowess, see Morris Bishop, "In the Footsteps of Mormon" in New York State Historical Association Proceedings (1941), XXXIX, printed as New York History (1941), XXII, 161-63; also cf. Thomas Cook, Palmyra and Vicinity (1930), pp. 220, 256.

49. For Townsend's life see: Franklin B. Dexter, *Biographical Sketches of the Graduates of Yale College . . . July, 1778-June, 1792* (1907), IV, 695f. Cf. also *Religious Intelligencer* (Apr. 12, 1817), I, 730, and his obituary in the *New-York Observer* (Sept. 1, 1838), XV I, 140.
50. *Palmyra Register* (Sept. 20, Dec. 20, 1820), III, 2f; IV, 3; *Palmyra Herald* (Dec. 25, 1822), II, 2; and on the date of his arrival near Hillsboro, (Palmyra) *Western Farmer* (Mar. 21, 1821), I, 1. For examples of traveling time to Illinois about 1820 see: A. T. Norton, *History of the Presbyterian Church in . . . Illinois* (1879), I, 14f, 52f, 78, 133, 147f.
51. *The Religious Advocate* began publication in 1822 at Saratoga Springs, N. Y., moving to Rochester about October 1824. See Gaylord P. Albaugh, "American Presbyterian Periodicals and Newspapers, 1752-1830 with Library Locations," *Journal of Presbyterian History* (Mar. 1964), XL II, 62, and cf. advertisements for this periodical as "now established at Rochester," dated Oct. 1, 1824, in *Supplement to the Ontario Repository* (Nov. 10, Dec. 1, 1824) p. 2 (On file at the Ontario County Historical Society, Canandaigua, N. Y.).
52. Joseph Smith's mother creates two revivals by quoting her son's 1820 account and giving her own account of an excitement following Alvi's death (1824). She even includes Joseph's statement about the family joining the Presbyterian Church following the 1820 revival (L. Smith, *Biographical Sketches*, p. 74), but her own account of the 1824 revival contradicts this. According to her narrative, while contemplating church membership following the 1824 revival, Joseph informed them that it would do "no injury to join them," but he cited "Deacon Jessup" as an example of the wickedness of heart they would find among them (p. 90f). That this story has reference to their intention of joining the Presbyterian church is obvious from the fact that "Deacon Jessup" was an officer in that church and was frequently referred to as "Deacon Henry Jessup" and "Deacon Jessup." See (Palmyra) *Western Farmer* (Dec. 12, 1821) I, 4; T. Cook, op. cit., pp. 16, 18; *Western Presbyterian Church of Palmyra, "Session Records" II*, passim, where his name appears as an elder; and "History of the Rise and Growth of Western Presbyterian Church," a news clipping in the files of the Presbyterian Historical Society.
53. Hyrum L. Andrus, *God, Man and the Universe* (1968), I, 93f. When appeal was twice made to the L.D.S. Library for help in establishing an 1820 revival at Palmyra, letters (Dec. 7 and 15, 1966) made reference to: Rev. R. Smith, *Recollections of Nettleton and the Great Revival of 1820* (1848); *A Narrative of the Revival of Religion within the bounds of the Presbytery of Albany in the year 1820* (1821) (both dealing with the revivals in the Albany area and moving "eastward" -- R. Smith, p. 104); *History of Wayne County, New York* (1877), p. 150 (which states only that "revival occurred" and gives no date); *Whitey R. Cross, The Burned-over District* (1950) (a learned study of revivalism in western New York, but throwing no light on an 1820 revival at Palmyra); and *William G. McLoughlin, Modern Revivalism* (1959) (a work on revivals beginning with Charles Finney, who didn't begin preaching until 1821--p. 11--and did not come to the Palmyra area until 1831).
54. Cf. the list of Presbyterian revivals for various years in J. Hotchkiss, *History of the Presbyterian Church*, 134ff. In a similar manner, by considering only the total national picture A. G. Meacham (*A Compendious History of . . . the Methodist Church* [1835], p. 415ff) can write as though every year was a year of great revival for the Methodist Church. A careful reading of both these works, however, shows that the areas affected changed from time to time.
55. H. Andrus, *God, Man and the Universe*, I, 39. Some might shift the setting to Victor, 15 miles southwest of Joseph's home, since it is credited with 100 Methodist converts in "a revival in the winter of 1820-21, conducted by Reverends Philo Woodworth, Daniel Anderson, and Thomas Carlton" (*History of Ontario County, N. Y.* [1876], p. 203). The date, however, should read 1830-31-- first since this was the only year all three ministers were assigned to the "Victor and Mendon" circuit, and the membership reported as 277 in 1830 increased to 600 by the summer of 1831 (*Minutes of the Annual Conferences*, II, 72, 73, 111). Secondly, P. Woodworth was not received into the Genesee Conference on trial until 1826, while Anderson and Carlton were not admitted until 1829 (*Minutes*, I, 501; II, 30). Finally, Mr. Carlton was only twelve in 1820 and did not even become a member of the Methodist Church until 1825 (*Mattew Simpson, Cyclopedia of Methodism* [1878], p. 167). Except for a Daniel Anderson received in 1825 by the Illinois Conference, these are the only early Methodist ministers bearing these names (see "Alphabetical List of Preachers' Names" in the back of *Nathan Bangs, A History of the Methodist Episcopal Church* [1853], IV, 2, 3, 8-10, 42).
56. Andrus, I, 39.
57. J. McClintock and J. Strong, *Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Cyclopedia*, VI, 171; cf. JGC, I, 76-84.
58. H. Andrus, *God, Man and the Universe*, I, 39, quotes Chase's words from F. W. Conable's book (*History of the Genesee Annual Conference* [1885], p. 159) where the full context is not given and consequently he misunderstands Chase as though he were saying that the revival followed the 1819 conference. For the full statement Chase's own work should be consulted (see notes 42 and 43).
59. The "spark of Methodism" quote is from O. Turner, *History of the Pioneer Settlement of Phelps and Gorham's Purchase* [1851], p. 214. On the location of the Palmyra Chapel and campgrounds see: *History of Wayne County*, p. 148f; T. Cook, p. 252; *The Methodist Magazine* (Aug. 1826), IX, 313.
60. H. Andrus (*God, Man and the Universe*, I, 41) finds evidence that the Methodist Church "was giving considerable attention to Ontario County where the Smith family lived" in the newly-formed Ontario District, created at the 1819 conference. The only new thing about the district, however, was the name, for it had been formed by dividing the Genesee District in half. This undoubtedly grew mainly out of a desire to reduce traveling distances involved, as had been the case in forming the Genesee Conference itself (JGC, I, 9), and even at this reduced size the district extended considerably beyond the limits of Ontario County, embracing at least two other counties. The remark of Bishop George about the ability of the Genesee Conference preachers to get people converted likewise proves nothing about a revival near Palmyra since the Genesee Conference took in all of western New York, part of Canada, and the whole of central Pennsylvania.
61. There is a possibility that a revival took place on the Lyons Circuit between the summers of 1820 and 1821, for the membership figures show an increase of 280 over those of the previous conference year. However, since the amount gained nearly matches the number lost the previous year, it may merely indicate that the previous year's figures were incorrectly printed. The rise is also a 1876 reminiscence which speaks of a revival at Vienna some time following the 1819 conference (*History of Ontario County, New York* [1876], p. 170), but this reminiscence is mistaken in placing Bishop George at the 1819 conference and in placing the 1826 conference at Vienna (cf. JGC, I, 76, 84; II, 20, 23) and therefore should be used with caution. Since the Presiding Elder specifically said "we saw no great awakenings" during those years, it seems better to reserve any revival period at Vienna for the 1824-25 period as does C. L. Vannorman's study (*Phelps Methodism* [1931], p. 12f).
62. William B. Sprague, *Lectures on Revivals of Religion*, 1959 (reprint). Cf. especially the Appendix where letters from the early nineteenth century are reproduced. For example: Of the Kentucky revival of 1800-1801 "This excitement began in Logan county . . ." (p. 32); New York, 1822 "The history of the great excitement in the time of Davenport . . ." (p. 109); of an 1831 revival under a Mr. Tomb "A great excitement was produced in almost every part of the town, which has resulted in the addition of a large number in our churches" (p. 82). Cf. also how Brigham Young interchanges the words "revival," "reformation" and "excitement" (*Journal of Discourses*, XII, 67) and how H. Andrus substitutes "revival" for "excitement" when retelling Joseph's story (*Joseph Smith, the Man and the Seer*, p. 67).
63. *New York Spectator* (Sept. 23, 1843), XL VI, 4.
64. MA, I, 42. Although the Smiths lived just across the county line in Manchester township, they really were a part of the Palmyra vicinity, living only two miles from the center of that village, while they were over five miles from the village of Manchester. A contemporary understanding of the limits of the "vicinity" can be seen from a correspondent who reported that the 1824 revival was progressing "with power in the vicinity of Palmyra" and continues "several hundred have already become hopeful converts within six or seven miles of that village" (*Western Recorder* [Mar. 29, 1825], II, 50).

65. When Rev. Abner C. Chase speaks of a "state of agitation" within the Methodist Church being followed by a glorious revival, Mr. Andrus (God, Man and the Universe, I, 42) selects only Mr. Chase's remarks about the agitation and uses them to support Smith's story that the revival was followed by a state of agitation. Furthermore, when Rev. Chase speaks of the conflict that took place at the General Conference, Mr. Andrus erroneously states that Mr. Chase is "writing of the conference at Vienna." Apparently, Mr. Andrus is unaware that a General Conference (the nationwide meeting) and an Annual Conference (like that at Vienna) are two entirely different affairs. While the Annual Conference compromised on the "presiding elder question," the General Conference (held at Baltimore in 1820) made many fear for the Church's unity and some seceded (1828-30) to organize the Methodist Protestant Church (see The History of American Methodism, I, 640ff). 66. J. S. 2:14.
67. J. S. 2:53-54
68. P. Cheesman, "Joseph Smith's Early Visions," pp. 126-32; published by Jerald and Sandra Tanner in, Joseph Smith's Strange Account of the First Vision (1965) and excerpted in Dialogue, I, (Autumn 1966) no. 3, 39f. The manuscript itself is unbound in the front of the "Kirtland Letter Book," which Mr. Andrus speaks of as "History of Joseph Smith, Jr., by himself" in "Joseph Smith's Letter Book at Kirtland, November 27, 1832 to August 4, 1835" (God, Man and the Universe, I, 36fn). The book this writer saw, however, has copies of letters by Smith and others that go back to 1829. The suggestion of one Mormon that this account is not authentic because it is not in the Prophet's own handwriting would make the official history unauthentic as well, since this also is not in his own handwriting.
69. See the ten student's collection in E. D. Howe, Mormonism Unveiled (1834), 232-66; also, Rev. John Clark, "Gleanings by the Way," Episcopalian Recorder (Sept. 5, 1840), XVIII, 94, or his book Gleanings by the Way (1842), p. 225; O. Turner, op. cit., p. 214; Pomeroy Tucker, Origin, Rise and Progress of Mormonism (1867), p. 19ff; History of Wayne County, p. 150; Statement of Daniel Hendrix, St. Louis Globe-Democrat (Feb. 21, 1897), X XII, 34.
70. Files of the Palmyra Reflector are at Yale (first 16 issues) and the New York Historical Society (remaining issues). Excerpts of main portions in F. Brodie, No Man Knows My History, 407-410.
71. "In the commencement, the imposture . . . had no regular plan or features." (The Reflector [Feb. 14, 1831], II, 101). Note also the testimony of Parley Chase, "In regard to their Gold Bible speculation, they scarcely ever told two stories alike" (in E. Howe, op. cit., p. 248); and the letter of Rev. Jesse Townsend, "questioned on the subject from time to time, his story assumed a more uniform statement" (in P. Tucker, op. cit., p. 289, and cf. 33 for Tucker's statement that the claim of Smith to have "received a revelation of the existence of the records in 1823" was an "after-avertment" and a "secondary invention"). For the testimony of those who heard the story from the Smiths themselves, see the statements of Willard Chase, Henry Harris, and Abigail Harris in Howe, op. cit., 242f, 252f; and the statement of Fayette Lapham in Historical Magazine (May 1870), V II (2nd series), 305ff.
72. Tiffany's Monthly (August? 1859), V, 169, and cf. 163, 167. Joel Tiffany, editor of this spiritualist monthly, in the April 1859 issue (IV, 568), promised to print an interview with Martin Harris, together with some other material on the Mormons. The other material appeared in the May and July issues (V, 46-51, 119-21) and the interview was printed in the same volume pp. 163-70, which presumably was the August issue. For a photomechanical reprint made from the copy in the Berrian Collection of the New York Public Library, see Jerald Tanner, Revealing Statements by the Three Witnesses to the Book of Mormon. The interview is also reprinted in Francis Kirkham, op. cit., II, 376ff, and excerpts are in William Mulder and A. Russell Mortensen, Among the Mormons (1958), pp. 30-32. For other references to Smith finding the plates by means of the seer-stone, see the diary of Hosea Stout edited by Juanita Brooks, On the Mormon Frontier, The Diary of Hosea Stout 1844-1861 (1964), II, 593; and O. Turner, op. cit., p. 216.
73. The Reflector (Feb. 28, 1831), II, 109; Cf. also (Feb. 1, 1831), II, 92, "it appears quite certain that the prophet himself never made a nyserio us preterensions to religion until his late preterended revelation"; (Feb. 14, 1831), II, 101, "It will be borne in mind that no divine interposition had been dreamed of at this period." For accounts of the early religious story see: Rev. John Clark, op. cit., p. 222-28; O. Turner, op. cit., p. 215f; Lucious Fenn letter of Feb. 12, 1830, in Mulder and Mortensen, op. cit., p. 28; two Rochester newspaper reports in F. Kirkham, op. cit., I, 150ff; The Reflector (Feb. 14, 1831), II, 103; and an 1831 letter of Lucy Smith to her brother in The Elders' Journal, IV, 59-62 (also printed in Ben E. Rich, Scrapbook of Mormon Literature, I, 543-45); cf. also John Corrie, A Brief History of the Church of Christ of Latter Day Saints (1839), p. 12.
74. MA (Apr. 1835), I, 97.
75. The Christian Baptist, I, 149, quoted from Jerald and Sandra Tanner, The Case Against Mormonism (1967), I, 108. See 108-10 for other examples.
76. Asa Wild (Wayne Sentinel, Oct. 22, 1823) had a similar encounter with the Lord who told him all the churches were corrupt. Joseph's reference (The Evening and the Morning Star June 1832], I, 1) to it being "manifested" "that he had received a remission of his sins," then sinning, repenting and then "God ministered unto him by an holy angel" may be a reference to the story set forth in the "strange account," but it could also represent a preliminary stage in the development of that account (now printed as Doctrine and Covenants 20:5-6).
77. See diary citations in Max H. Parkin, Conflict at Kirtland (1966), pp. 50, 80, 84f; and newspaper citations in John A. Widtsoe, Evidences and Reconciliations (1960), p. 337; Hugh Nibley, "Censoring the Joseph Smith Story," Improvement Era (Nov. 1961), LXIV, 812; H. Andrus, Joseph Smith, the Man and the Seer, p. 68fn.
78. The Reflector (Feb. 14, 1831), II, 102.
79. Doctrine and Covenants (1835), pp. 52f, 55.
80. DHC, at the back of Book A-1, 120-21. Published in Dialogue, I (Autumn 1966) no. 3, 40-41.
81. Deseret News (May 29, 1852), II, 1; also in Millennial Star (July 2, 1853) XV, 424. "I received the first visitation of an angel, which was when I was about fourteen" has been altered in B. H. Roberts' edition of Smith history to read, "I received my first vision, which . . ." (II, 312). The manuscript reads "visitation of angel" (DHC, back of Book A -1, 129).
82. Although Mormon calls Moroni "my beloved son" (Moroni 8:2) and the reference could be to an appearance of these two, the context of the story favors taking the personages as the Father and the Son. Furthermore, at the same time Joseph was writing his story, Joseph's paper was reporting that Thomas B. Marsh's son at age nine and "a remarkable vision, in which he talked with the Father and many of the ancient prophets face to face, and beheld the Son of God coming in his glory" (Elders' Journal [July 1838], I, 48). It is not likely that the Mormon Prophet will let himself be outdone by a nine-year-old boy.
83. Cf. this recurring theme in Journal of Discourses, XIII, 324; XIV, 365; XVI, 46, 79; and a similar use of Rev. 14:18f and Matthew 13:38ff in VI, 335. See also Orson Spencer's amplification of the theme in his Letters (1874), 79ff

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MORMONS: WHO THEY ARE, WHAT THEY BELIEVE - - Discussion Guide

Stumbling Blocks to Mormons:

Joseph Smith's First Vision:

Joseph Smith's Changing First Vision Accounts

<http://mit.irr.org/joseph-smiths-changing-first-vision-accounts>

Joseph Smith's Changing First Vision Accounts

By:

Joel B. Groat

Joseph Smith, the founding prophet of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, claimed that as a 14-year-old boy he had a vision of God the Father and Jesus Christ. The official account of this first vision found in Mormon Scripture (Pearl of Great Price, Joseph Smith — History, 1:14-20) was not recorded by Joseph Smith until 1838, 18 years after the supposed event. However, for years before this, Joseph, and his close associates did talk about his early visionary experiences. These earlier accounts contain significant variations from the official First Vision account.

- **1827** — Account of Joseph Smith, Sr., and Joseph Smith, Jr., given to Willard Chase, as related in his 1833 affidavit.
- **1827** — Account by Martin Harris given to Rev. John Clark, as published in his book *Gleanings by the Way*, printed in 1842, pp. 222-229.
- **1830** — Interview of Joseph Smith by Peter Bauder, recounted by Bauder in his book *The Kingdom and the Gospel of Jesus Christ*, printed in 1834, pp. 36-38.
- **1832** — Earliest known attempt at an 'official' recounting of the 'First Vision, from History, 1832, *Joseph Smith Letterbook 1*, pp.2,3, in the handwriting of Joseph Smith.
- **1834-35** — Oliver Cowdery, with Joseph Smith's help, published the first history of Mormonism in the LDS periodical *Messenger and Advocate*, Kirtland, Ohio, Dec. 1834, vol.1, no.3
- **1835** — Account given by Joseph Smith to Joshua the Jewish minister, *Joseph Smith Diary*, Nov. 9, 1835.
- **1835** — Account given by Joseph Smith to Erastus Holmes on November 14, 1835, originally published in the *Deseret News* of Saturday May 29, 1852.
- **1838** — This account became the official version, now part of Mormon Scripture in the Pearl of Great Price, Joseph Smith — History, 1:7-20. Though written in 1838, it was not published until 1842 in *Times and Season*, March 15, 1842, vol. 3, no. 10, pp. 727-728, 748-749, 753.

- **1844** — Account in *An Original History of the Religious Denominations at Present Existing in the United States*, edited by Daniel Rupp. Joseph Smith wrote the chapter on Mormonism.
- **1859** — Interview with Martin Harris, *Tiffany's Monthly*, 1859, New York: Published by Joel Tiffany, vol. v.—12, pp. 163-170.
- **Conclusion**

1827 First Vision Account as related to Willard Chase

1827 — Account of Joseph Smith, Sr., and Joseph Smith, Jr., given to Willard Chase, as related in his 1833 affidavit. *Joseph Smith's New York Reputation Reexamined*, Rodger I. Anderson, Signature Books, 1990, p. 121.

The value of this account, while from a non-Mormon source, is the early date and the parallels it contains to the account given by Martin Harris. Both Chase and Harris were among the earliest people to hear the story from Joseph Smith and his family, and both place the discovery of a gold book within the context of money-digging.

Principle elements of the account:

- Several years before obtaining the plates, a spirit appeared to Joseph in a vision telling him of a record on gold plates.
- When Joseph went to get the plates the spirit, transforming from toad to man, struck Joseph twice and gave him instructions to come back again in a year, a command repeated several years in a row.
- Approximate age 17 (1823) when spirit first appears.
- Joseph obtains gold book using the seer stone he found in the well of Willard Chase.
- Gold book found in the context of money-digging
- Age 21 (1827) when Joseph retrieves plates
- No mention of a revival
- Joseph retrieves plates while out with his wife but hides them in the woods
- Joseph approaches Martin Harris, a man with money, to say that God has given Joseph a commandment that Harris is the one God wants to assist [financially] in producing the Book of Mormon.

The Account

“In the month of June, 1827, Joseph Smith, Sen. related to me the following story: ‘That some years ago, a spirit had appeared to Joseph his son, in a vision, and informed him that in a certain place there was a record on plates of gold, and that he was the person that must obtain them, and this he must do in the following manner: On the 22nd of September, he must repair to the place where was deposited this manuscript, dressed in black clothes, and riding a black horse with a switch tail, and demand the book in a certain name, and after obtaining it, he must go directly away, and neither lay it down nor look behind him. They accordingly fitted out Joseph with the suit of black clothes, and borrowed a black horse. He repaired to the place of deposit and demanded the book, which was in a stone box, unsealed, and so near the top of the ground that he could see one end of it, and raising it up, took out the book of gold; but fearing some one might discover where he got it, he laid it down to place back the top stone, as he found it; and turning around, to his surprise there was no book in sight. He again opened the box, and in it saw the book, and attempted to take it out, but was hindered. He saw in the box something like toad, which soon assumed the appearance of a man, and struck him on the side of his head. – Not being discouraged at trifles, he again stooped down and strove to take the book, when the spirit struck him again, and knocked him three or four rods, and hurt him prodigiously. After recovering from his fright, he inquired why he could not obtain the plates; to which the spirit made reply, because you have not obeyed your orders.

“... In the fore part of September, (I believe,) 1827, the Prophet [Joseph Smith] requested me to make him a chest, informing me that he designed to move back to Pennsylvania, and expecting soon to get his gold book, he wanted a chest to lock it up, giving me to understand at the same time, that if I would make the chest he would give me a share in the book. ... “A few weeks after this conversation, he came to my house and related the following story: That on the 22nd of September, he arose early in the morning, and took a one horse wagon, of someone that had stayed over night at their house, without leave or license; and, together with his wife, repaired to the hill which contained the book. He left his wife in the wagon, by the road, and went alone to the hill, a distance of thirty or forty rods from the road; he said he took the book out of the ground and hid it in a tree top, and returned home. ... He then observed that if it had not been for that stone [Joseph's money-digging seer stone], (which he acknowledged belonged to me,) he would not have obtained the book. A few days afterwards, he told one of my neighbors that he had not got any such book, nor never had such an one; but that he had told the story to deceive the d—d fool, (meaning me,) to get him to make a chest. His neighbors having become disgusted with his foolish stories, he determined to go back to Pennsylvania, to avoid what he called persecution. His wits were now put to the task to contrive how he should get money to bear his expenses. He met one day in the streets of Palmyra, a rich man, whose name was Martin Harris, and addressed him thus; ‘I have a commandment from God to ask the first man I meet in the street to give me fifty dollars, to assist me in doing the work of the Lord by translating the Golden Bible.’ Martin being naturally a credulous man, hands Joseph the money.”

1827 First Vision Account given by Martin Harris to the Rev. John D. Clark

1827 — Account of Martin Harris given to the Rev. John A. Clark, as related in his 1842 book *Gleanings by the Way*, W.J. & J.K. Simon, pp. 222ff. [Microfilm copy].

The value of this account also is its early date, being related to Clark while he was a pastor in Palmyra in 1827. It contains many similarities to Harris 1859 testimony, demonstrating that Harris was consistent in what he related about Mormon origins. Like other early accounts, this one ties the discovery of a Golden Bible to Joseph's prior practice of money-digging .

Principle elements of the account:

- No revival
- After an evening of money-digging an angel appeared to Joseph in a vision telling him he has been chosen to be a prophet and bring forth a record on gold plates.
- Before Joseph can get them he must go to Pennsylvania to meet the woman who will be his wife.
- After marrying her Joseph must wait until the birth of his first child. Once the child had completed his second year Joseph could get the chest with the gold book.
- Approximate age 18-19 (1824-25) when angel first appears (Joseph met Emma Hale in 1825, married her Jan. 18, 1827)
- Joseph's first child is born and only 6 months old when he tells his family
- Joseph and his father disobey the angel and look for the chest using Joseph's clairvoyance. They find it but the angel appears, Joseph knocked is to the ground and severely reprimanded.
- A little later another divine communication tells Joseph he can go alone to get the chest, bring it home but not open it until his son is two years old.
- Joseph in the meantime is to begin translating the plates using the spectacles but leave the gold book in the chest
- Joseph would dictate words to Harris, while looking through the stones, but Joseph and Harris had to be separated by a suspended blanket during the dictation process.

The Account

Scans:

[Gleanings by the Way](#), p. 222

[Gleanings by the Way](#), p. 223

[Gleanings by the Way](#), p. 224

[Gleanings by the Way](#), p. 225

[Gleanings by the Way](#), p. 226

[Gleanings by the Way](#), p. 227

[Gleanings by the Way](#), p. 228

[Gleanings by the Way](#), p. 229

[Gleanings by the Way](#), p. 230

[Gleanings by the Way](#), p. 231

[Page 222] "It was early in the autumn of 1827 that Martin Harris called at my house in Palmyra, one morning about sunrise. His whole appearance indicted more than usual excitement, and he had scarcely passed the threshold of my dwelling, before he inquired whether he could see me alone, remarking that

he had a matter to communicate that he wished to be strictly confidential. Previous to this, I had but very slight acquaintance with Mr. Harris. He had occasionally attended divine service in our church. I

[Page 223] had heard him spoken of as a farmer in comfortable circumstances, residing in the country a short distance from the village, and distinguished by certain peculiarities of character. He had been, if I mistake not, at one period, a member of the Methodist Church, and subsequently had identified himself with the Universalists. At this time, however, in his religious views he seemed to be floating upon the sea of uncertainty. He had evidently quite an extensive knowledge of the Scriptures, and possessed a manifest disputatious turn of mind. As I subsequently learned, Mr. Harris had always been a firm believer in dreams, and visions, and supernatural appearances, such as apparitions and ghosts, and therefore was a fit subject for such men as Smith and his colleagues to operate upon. On the occasion just referred to, I invited him to accompany me to my study, where, after having closed the door, he began to draw a package out of his pocket with great and manifest caution. Suddenly, however, he stopped, and wished to know if there was any possibility of our being interrupted or overheard? When answered in the negative, he proceeded to remark, that he reposed great confidence in me as a minister of Jesus Christ, and that what he had now to communicate he wished me to regard as strictly confidential. He said he verily believed that an important epoch had arrived — that a great flood of light was about to burst upon the world, and that the scene of divine manifestation was to be immediately around us. In explanation of what he meant, he then proceeded to remark that a GOLDEN BIBLE had recently been dug from the earth, where it had been deposited for thousands of years, and that this would be found to contain such disclosures as would settle all religious controversies and speedily

[Page 224] bring on the glorious millennium. That this mysterious book, which no human eye of the present generation has yet seen, was in the possession of Joseph Smith, jr., ordinarily known in the neighbourhood under the more familiar designation of Jo Smith; that there had been a revelation made to him by which he had discovered this sacred deposit, and two transparent stones, through which, as a sort of spectacles, he could read the Bible, although the box or ark that contained it, had not yet been opened; and that by looking through those mysterious stones he had transcribed from one of the leaves of this book, the characters which Harris had so carefully wrapped in the package which he was drawing from his pocket. The whole thing appeared to me so ludicrous and puerile, that I could not refrain from telling Mr. Harris, that I believed it a mere hoax got up to practice upon his credulity, or an artifice to extort from him money; for I had already, in the course of the conversation, learned that he had advanced some twenty-five dollars to Jo Smith as a sort of premium for sharing with him in the glories and profits of this new revelation. For at this time, his mind seemed to be quite as intent upon the pecuniary advantage that would arise from the possession of the plates of solid gold of which this book was composed, as upon the spiritual light it would diffuse over the world. My intimations to him, in reference to the possible imposition that was being practiced upon him, however, were indignantly repelled. He then went on to relate the particulars in regard to the discovery and possession of this marvelous book. As far as I can now recollect, the following was an outline of the narrative which he then communicated to me, and subsequently to scores of people in the village, from some of

[Page 225] whom in my late visit to Palmyra, I have been able to recall several particulars that had quite glided from my memory.

Before I proceed to Martin's narrative, however, I would remark in passing, that Jo Smith, who has since been the chief prophet of the Mormons, and was one of the most prominent ostensible actors in the first scenes of this drama, belonged to a very shiftless family near Palmyra. They lived a sort of vagrant life, and were principally known as money-diggers. Jo from a boy appeared dull and utterly destitute of genius; but his father claimed for him a sort of second sight, a power to look into the depths of the earth, and discover where its precious treasures were hid. Consequently long before the idea of a GOLDEN

BIBLE entered their minds, in their excursions for money-digging, which I believe usually occurred in the night, that they might conceal from others the knowledge of the place where they struck upon treasures, Jo used to be usually their guide, putting into a hat a peculiar stone he had through which he looked to decide where they should begin to dig.

According to Martin Harris, it was after one of these night excursions, that Jo, while he lay upon his bed, had a remarkable dream. An angel of God seemed to approach him, clad in celestial splendor. This divine messenger assured him that he, Joseph Smith, was chosen of the Lord to be a prophet of the Most High God, and to bring to light hidden things, that would prove of unspeakable benefit to the world. He then disclosed to him the existence of this golden Bible, and the place where it was deposited — but at the same time told him that he must follow implicitly the divine direction, or he would draw

[Page 226] down upon him the wrath of heaven. This book, which was contained in a chest, or ark, and which consisted of metallic plates covered with characters embossed in gold, he must not presume to look into, under three years. He must first go on a journey into Pennsylvania — and there among the mountains, he would meet with a very lovely woman, belonging to a highly respectable and pious family, whom he was to take for his wife. As proof that he was sent on this mission by Jehovah, as soon as he saw this designated person, he would be smitten with her beauty, and though he was a stranger to her, and she was far above him in the walks of life, she would at once be willing to marry him and go with him to the ends of the earth. After their marriage he was to return to his former home, and remain quietly there until the birth of his first child. When this child had completed his second year, he might then proceed to the hill beneath which the mysterious chest was deposited, and draw it thence, and publish the truths it contained to the world. Smith awoke from his dream, and according to Harris, started off towards Pennsylvania, not knowing to what point he should go. But the Lord directed him, and gained him favour in the eyes of just such a person as was described to him. He was married and had returned. His first child had been born and was now about six months old. But Jo had not been altogether obedient to the heavenly vision. After his marriage and return from Pennsylvania, he became so awfully impressed with the high destiny that awaited him, that he communicated the secret to his father and family. The money-digging propensity of the old man operated so powerfully, that he insisted upon it that they should go and see if the chest was there —

[Page 227] not with any view to remove it till the appointed time, but merely to satisfy themselves. Accordingly they went forth in the stillness of night with their spades and mattocks to the spot where slumbered this sacred deposit. They had proceeded but a little while in the work of excavation, before the mysterious chest appeared; but lo! instantly it moved and glided along out of their sight. Directed, however, by the clairvoyance of Jo, they again penetrated to the spot where it stood and succeeded in gaining a partial view of its dimensions. But while they were pressing forward to gaze at it, the thunder of the Almighty shook the spot and made the earth to tremble — a sheet of vivid lightning swept along over the side of the hill, and burnt terribly around the spot where the excavation was going on, and again with a rumbling noise the chest moved off out of their sight. They were all terrified, and fled towards their home. Jo took his course silently along by himself. On his way homeward, being alone, in the woods, the angel of the Lord met him clad in terror and wrath. He spoke in a voice of thunder, and forked lightnings shot through the trees and ran along the ground. The terror which the appearance of the divine messenger awakened, instantly struck Smith to the earth, and he felt his whole frame convulsed with agony, as though he were stamped upon by the iron hoofs of death himself. In language most terrific did the angel upbraid him for his disobedience, and then disappeared. Smith went home trembling and full of terror. Soon, however, his mind became more composed. Another divine communication was made to him, authorizing him to go along by himself and bring the chest and deposit it secretly under the hearth of his dwelling, but by no means to attempt

[Page 228] to look into it. The reason assigned by the angel for this removal, was that some report in relation to the place where this sacred book was deposited had gone forth, and there was danger of its being disturbed. According to Harris, Smith now scrupulously followed the divine directions. He was already in possession of the two transparent stones laid up with the GOLDEN BIBLE, by looking through which he was enabled to read the golden letters on the plates in the box. How he obtained these spectacles without opening the chest, Harris could not tell. But still he had them; and by means of them he could read all the book contained. The book itself was not to be disclosed until Smith's child had reached a certain age. Then it might be published to the world. In the interim, Smith was to prepare the way for the conversion of the world to a new system of faith, by transcribing the characters from the plates and giving translations of the same. This was the substance of Martin Harris' communication to me upon our first interview. He then carefully unfolded a slip of paper, which contained three or four lines of characters, as unlike letters or hieroglyphics of any sort, as well could be produced were one to shut up his eyes and play off the most antic movements with his pen upon paper. The only thing that bore the slightest resemblance to the letter of any language that I had ever seen, was two uprights marked joined by a horizontal line, that might have been taken for the Hebrew character ך. My ignorance of the characters in which the pretended ancient record was written, was to Martin Harris new proof that Smith's whole account of the divine revelation made to him was entirely to be relied on.

One thing is here to be noticed, that the statements of

[Page 229] the originators of this imposture varied, and were modified from time to time according as their plans became more matured. At first it was a gold Bible — then golden plates engraved — then metallic plates stereotyped or embossed with golden letters. At one time Harris was to be enriched by the solid gold of these plates, at another they were to be religiously kept to convince the world of the truth of the revelation — and, then these plates could not be seen by any but three witnesses whom the Lord should choose. How easy it would be, were there any such plates in existence, to produce them, and to show that Mormonism is not a "cunningly devised fable." How far Harris was duped by this imposture, or how far he entered into it as a matter of speculation, I am unable to say. Several gentlemen in Palmyra, who saw and conversed with him frequently, think he was labouring under a sort of monomania, and that he thoroughly believed all that Jo Smith chose to tell him on this subject. He was so much in earnest on the subject, that he immediately started off with some of the manuscripts that Smith furnished him on a journey to New York and Washington to consult some learned men to ascertain the nature of the language in which this record was engraven. After his return, he came to see me again, and told me that among others he had consulted Professor Anthon,* who thought the characters in which the book was written very remarkable, but he could not decide exactly what language they belonged to. Martin had now become a perfect believer. He said he had no more doubt of Smith's divine commission, than of the divine

* In the following chapter the reader will find an account of this interview.

[Page 230] commission of the apostles. The very fact that Smith was an obscure and illiterate man, showed that he must be acting under divine impulses: — "God had chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and the weak things to confound the mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised — yea, and things that are not to bring to nought — things that are — that no flesh should glory in his presence." That he was willing to "take of the spoiling of his goods" to sustain Smith in carrying on this work of the Lord; and that he was determined that the book should be published, though it consumed all his worldly substance. It was in vain I endeavoured to expostulate. I was an unbeliever, and could not see afar off. As for him, he must follow the light which the Lord had given him. Whether at this time Smith had those colleagues that certainly afterwards moved, unseen, the wheels of this machinery, I am unable to say. Even after Cowdery and Rigdon were lending the whole force of their minds to the carrying out of this imposture, Jo Smith continued to be the ostensible prominent actor in the

drama. The way that Smith made his transcripts and translations for Harris was the following: Although in the same room, a thick curtain or blanket was suspended between them, and Smith concealed behind the blanket, pretended to look through his spectacles, or transparent stones, and would then write down or repeat what he saw, which, when repeated aloud, was written down by Harris, who sat on the other side of the suspended blanket. Harris was told that it would arouse the most terrible divine displeasure, if he should attempt to draw near the sacred chest, or look at Smith while engaged in the work of decyphering the mysterious characters. This was Harris's

[Page 231] own account of the matter to me. What other measures they afterwards took to transcribe or translate from these metallic plates, I cannot say, as I very soon after this removed to another field of labour where I heard no more of this matter till I learned the BOOK OF MORMON was about being published. It was not till after the discovery of the manuscript of Spaulding, of which I shall subsequently give some account, that the actors in this imposture thought of calling the pretended revelation the BOOK OF MORMON. This book, which professed to be a translation of the golden Bible brought to light by Joseph Smith was published in 1830 — to accomplish which Martin Harris actually mortgaged his farm.”

It is noteworthy that John Clark, though a local minister, did not reject Joseph Smith's story because of Joseph's claims to have had a vision of the Father and Son, nor even because he said an angel appeared, but rather because of the fraudulent background of money-digging from which the story originated.

1830 First Vision Account related to Peter Bauder

1830 — Interview of Joseph Smith by Peter Bauder, recounted by Bauder in his book *The Kingdom and the Gospel of Jesus Christ*, printed in 1834, pp. 36-38 (See *Early Mormon Documents*, vol.1, compiled by Dan Vogel, Signature Books, 1996, pp. 16-17).

Principle elements of account:

- Joseph Smith could give Bauder no “christian experience”, ie. no conversion experience or manifestation of saving grace in his life
- Smith claimed an angel told him where to find a secret treasure
- Smith returned once a year for several years before getting the plates
- Angel took the plates back after the translation

The Account

“I will name some of the particular discoveries which through Divine Providence I was favored with in an interview with Joseph Smith, Jr. at the house of Peter Whitmer, in the town of Fayette, Seneca County, state of New York, in October, 1830. I called at P[eter] Whitmer's house for the purpose of seeing Smith, and searching into the mystery of his system of religion, and had the privilege of conversing with him alone, several hours, and of investigating his writings, church records, &c. I improved near four and twenty hours in close application with Smith and his followers; he could give me no christian experience, but told me that an angel told him he must go to a certain place in the town of Manchester, Ontario County, where was a secret treasure concealed, which he must reveal to the human family. He went, and

after the third or fourth time, which was repeated once a year, he obtained a parcel of plate resembling gold, on which were engraved what he did not understand, only by the aid of a glass, which he also obtained with the plate, by which means he was enabled to translate the characters on the plate into English.”

It is noteworthy that after this interview with Bauder, Joseph adds to his accounts elements which would be considered a "Christian experience" ie. Bible reading, need for forgiveness, the divine pronouncement that his sins are forgiven.

1832 First Vision Account by Joseph Smith, Jr.

1832 — Earliest known attempt at an ‘official’ recounting of the ‘First Vision, from *History, 1832, Joseph Smith Letterbook 1*, pp.2,3, in the handwriting of Joseph Smith (See *An American Prophet’s Record*, edited by Scott Faulring, Signature Books, 1989, p.5; *The Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*, compiled by Dean Jessee, Deseret Book, 1984, pp. 5-6; *Early Mormon Documents*, vol.1, compiled by Dan Vogel, Signature Books, 1996, pp. 26-31)

Historical note: During the time this account was being written, Joseph Smith was in the middle of challenges to his authority. Vogel notes in *Early Mormon Documents*, vol. 1, p. 26, regarding this account, “It is therefore not simply an autobiographical sketch, but an apology setting forth Smith’s credentials as leader of the church. The History [of Joseph’s life] therefore contains the earliest account of what is known as his “first vision” and earliest mention of angelic priesthood ordinations.” It is here that we note a switch in context from Joseph as a money-digger, to Joseph as a spiritual seeker, and see him incorporating a Christian experience of seeking forgiveness and receiving a divine pronouncement of same.

Principle elements of account:

- Smith started serious study of the scriptures at age 12
- Felt convicted of sins
- Determined all churches were wrong
- No mention of a revival
- Omits money-digging context
- Age 15 (in his 16th year)
- Location not clear
- Vision of the Savior – Jesus Christ (has a “Christian experience”)
- Told his sins were forgiven. Fell back into transgression.

- At age 17 he again prayed and an angel appeared telling him about the plates and announced again he was forgiven of his sins.
- About this time Smith dictated Sec. 84 of the D.&C. stating that no man can see the face of God without the priesthood and live [vs. 22].

The Account

Scans:

Typescript of Handwritten Manuscript	Scan of Handwritten Manuscript	Side-by-Side Comparison
Typescript of Joseph's 1832 History, p. 1	Joseph's Manuscript, p. 1	Side by Side p. 1
Typescript of Joseph's 1832 History, p. 2	Joseph's Manuscript, p. 2	Side by Side p. 2
Typescript of Joseph's 1832 History, p. 3	Joseph's Manuscript, p. 3	Side by Side p. 3
Typescript of Joseph's 1832 History, p. 4	Joseph's Manuscript, p. 4	Side by Side p. 4
	Joseph's Manuscript, p. 5	Side by Side p. 5

... thus from the age of twelve years to fifteen I pondered many things in my heart concerning the situation of the world of mankind the contentions and divi[s]ions the wicke[d]ness and abominations and the darkness which pervaded the of the minds of mankind my mind become exceedingly distressed for I become convicted of my sins and by searching the scriptures I found that <mankind> did not come unto the Lord but that they had apostatised from the true and living faith and there was no society or denomination that built upon the gospel of Jesus Christ ...

marvilous even in the likeness of him who created him (them) and when I considered upon these things my heart exclaimed well hath the wise man said the (it is a) fool (that) saith in his heart there is no God my heart exclaimed all all these bear testimony and bespeak an omnipotant and omnipreasant power a being who makith Laws and decreeeth and bindeth all things in their bounds who filleth Eternity who was and is and will be from all Eternity to Eternity and when I considered all these things and that (that) being seeketh such to worship him as worship him in spirit and in truth therefore I cried unto the Lord for mercy for there was none else to whom I could go and to obtain mercy and the Lord heard my cry in the wilderness and while in (the) attitude of calling upon the Lord (in the 16th year of my age) a pillar of fire light above the brightness of the sun at noon day come down from above and rested upon me and I was filled with the spirit of god and the (Lord) opened the heavens upon me and I saw the Lord and he spake unto me saying Joseph (my son) thy sins are forgiven thee. go thy (way) walk in my statutes and keep my commandments behold I am the Lord of glory I was crucified for the world that all those who believe on my name may have Eternal life (behold) the world lieth in sin and at this time and none doeth good no not one they have turned asside from the gospel and keep not (my) commandments they draw near to me

with their lips while their hearts are far from me and mine anger is kindling against the inhabitants of the earth to visit them according to th[e]ir ungodliness and to bring to pass that which (hath) been spoken by the mouth of the prophets and Ap[ost]les behold and lo I come quickly as it [is] written of me in the cloud (clothed) in the glory of my Father and my soul was filled with love and for many days I could rejoice with great Joy and the Lord was with me but [I] could find none that would believe the heavenly vision nevertheless I pondered these things in my heart ...

Many aspects of this account parallel other visionary accounts published by young men who, under conviction of sins, claimed to have a supernatural encounter with Jesus Christ in which they were assured of forgiveness. These accounts were published in local news sources and would have been accessible to Joseph Smith. For specific examples of similar accounts published prior to Joseph Smith's experience see *Inventing Mormonism*, by Marquardt & Walters, Signature Books, 1994, pp. 50-53.

1834-35 First Vision Account in Messenger and Advocate

1834-35 — Oliver Cowdery, with Joseph Smith's help, published the first history of Mormonism in the LDS periodical Messenger and Advocate, Kirtland, Ohio, Dec. 1834, vol.1, no.3.

Principle elements of the account:

- A revival stirred in him a desire to "know for himself of the certainty and reality of pure and holy religion."
- Desired to know if a Supreme being did exist, and wanted manifestation that his sins were forgiven.
- Age 17 (1823)
- He was in his bedroom
- Vision of an angel
- Told sins were forgiven and Lord would do a work through him
- Told about gold plates and their location

The Account

Scans:

Messenger and Advocate, v. 1, p. 42

Messenger and Advocate, v. 1, p. 78

Messenger and Advocate, v. 1, p. 79

"You will recollect that I informed you, in my letter published in the first No. of the Messenger and Advocate, that this history would necessarily embrace the life and character of our esteemed friend and brother, J Smith Jr. one of the presidents of this church, and for information on that part of the subject, I

refer you to his communication of the same, published in this paper. I shall, therefore, pass over that, till I come to the 15th year of his life. "It is necessary to premise this account by relating the situation of the public mind relative to religion, at this time: One Mr. Lane, a presiding Elder of the Methodist church, visited Palmyra, and vicinity. Elder Lane was a talented man possessing a good share of literary endowments, and apparent humility. There was a great awakening, or excitement raised on the subject of religion, and much enquiry for the word of life. Large additions were made to the Methodist, Presbyterian, and Baptist churches. ... Then strife seemed to take the place of that apparent union and harmony which had previously characterized the moves and exhortations of the old professors, and a cry — I am right — your are wrong — was introduced in their stead. "In this general strife for followers, his mother, one sister, and two of his natural brothers, were persuaded to unite with the Presbyterians. ... "After strong solicitations to unite with one of those different societies, and seeing the apparent proselyting disposition manifested with equal warmth from each, his mind was led to more seriously contemplate the importance of a move of this kind."

Oliver Cowdery continues the narrative in the next issue, on page 78-79: "You will recollect that I mentioned the time of a religious excitement, in Palmyra and vicinity to have been in the 15th year of our brother J. Smith Jr.'s age — that was an error in the type — it should have been in the 17th. — You will please remember this correction, as it will be necessary for the full understanding of what will follow in time. This would bring the date down to the year 1823. "I do not deem it necessary to write further on the subject of this excitement. ... "And it is only necessary for me to say, that while this excitement continued, he continued to call upon the Lord in secret for a full manifestation of divine approbation, and for, to him, the all important information, if a Supreme being did exist, to have an assurance that he was accepted of him. "... On the evening of the 21st of September, 1823, previous to retiring to rest, our brother's mind was unusually wrought up on the subject which had so long agitated his mind ... all he desired was to be prepared in heart to commune with some kind of messenger who could communicate to him the desired information of his acceptance with God. "... While continuing in prayer for a manifestation in some way that his sins were forgiven; endeavoring to exercise faith in the scriptures, on a sudden a light like that of day, only of a purer and far more glorious appearance and brightness burst into the room ... It is no easy task to describe the appearance of a messenger from the skies ... But it may be well to relate the particulars as far as given — The stature of this personage was a little above the common size of men in this age; his garment was perfectly white, and had the appearance of being without seam. Though fear was banished from his heart, yet his surprise was no less when he heard him declare himself to be a messenger sent by commandment of the Lord, to deliver a special message, and to witness to him that his sins were forgiven, and that his prayers were heard;"

Cowdery's narrative continues from this point and parallels others given by Smith over the years. The angel tells Joseph of a restoration and a new book of Scripture. It is interesting that this account does not follow the two event, 'double visitation' pattern of Joseph's 1832, 1835-36, and 1838 accounts, but instead parallels the earliest accounts where a single spiritual being visits Joseph and tells him of the plates. It combines the following key elements into a single event.

- Joseph as a young spiritual seeker (rather than a treasure seeker) who is unsure if God even exists
- Joseph's desire for and receiving of forgiveness
- the appearance of an angel

- first time mention of a local revival (which did occur around 1823) as an external motivator for Joseph's unrest
- the revelation about gold plates

In subsequent accounts Joseph Smith will divide these elements between two visionary experiences separated by several years.

1835 First Vision Account by Joseph Smith given to Joshua the Jewish Minister

1835-36 — Account, Joseph Smith Diary, Nov. 9, 1835 as found in *Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*, compiled by Dean C. Jessee, pp. 75-77; also in *An American Prophet's Record*, p. 51.

Principle elements of the account:

- “Wrought up” in his mind about religion
- Age 14 (1820)
- In a grove
- Had a vision of one personage and then another
- One personage testifies about Jesus, but neither is identified as Jesus
- Saw many angels in this first visitation
- Was told sins were forgiven
- Later (age 17) has *another* vision of *angels*
- No mention of revival

The Account

Scans:

Typescript of Joseph Smith Diary 1835, p. 22

Typescript of Joseph Smith Diary 1835, p. 23

Typescript of Joseph Smith Diary 1835, p. 24

Typescript of Joseph Smith Diary 1835, p. 25

“being wrought up in my mind, respecting the subject of religion and looking at the different systems taught the children of men, I knew not who was right or who was wrong and I considered it of the first importance that I should be right, in matters that involve eternal consequ[e]nces; being thus perplexed in mind I retired to the silent grove and bow[e]d down before the Lord ... I called upon the Lord for the first time, in the place above stated or in other words I made a fruitless attempt to p[r]ay ... I called on the Lord in mighty prayer, a pillar of fire appeared above my head, it presently rested down upon me, and filled me with Joy unspeakable, a personage appeard in the midst of this pillar of flame which was spread all around, and yet nothing consumed, another personage soon appeard like unto the first, he said unto me thy sins are forgiven thee, he testified unto me that Jesus Christ is the Son of God; & I saw many

angels in this vision> I was about 14 years old when I received this first communication; When I was about 17 years old I saw another vision of angels in the night season after I had retired to bed ...”

Though this account appears in Joseph Smith's diary, it was omitted from the *History of the Church*, Vol. 2, p. 304. This account contains parallels with the one Joseph related to Erastus Holmes later this same month.

1835 First Vision Account by Joseph Smith given to Erastus Holmes

1835 — Account given by Joseph Smith to Erastus Holmes on November 14, 1835, originally published in the *Deseret News* of Saturday May 29, 1852, later published in the *History of the Church*, vol. 2, p. 312. It parallels the previously cited account and lends support to the view that the dual personages in the 1835 diary account should be understood to be angels who affirm the Sonship of Jesus Christ rather than the Father and the Son.

Principle elements of the account:

- age 14 (1820)
- had a vision of angels
- later had revelations about the Book of Mormon
- this account parallels the one given to Joshua

The Account

Scans:

Deseret News, Saturday, May 29, 1852
History of the Church, vol. 2, p. 312

“This afternoon, Erastus Holmes, of Newbury, Ohio, called on me to inquire about the establishment of the church, and to be instructed in doctrine more perfectly. I gave him a brief relation of my experience while in my juvenile years, say from six years old up to the time I received the first visitation of angels, which was when I was about fourteen years old; also the revelations that I received afterwards concerning the Book of Mormon, and a short account of the rise and progress of the church up to this date.”

When this account was incorporated into the *History of the Church*, it was changed. It originally read “*first visitation of angels*” but was emended to read “*first vision*” (see scans above). Thus, by eliminating one account from the official church history (the one to Joshua) and altering the second, a clear contradiction is removed between Joseph’s earlier claim to see *angels* in the first vision, and his claim in a later version to see the *Father and Son* in the first vision.

1838 First Vision Account by Joseph Smith

1838 — This account became the official version, now part of Mormon Scripture in the Pearl of Great Price, Joseph Smith — History, 1:7-20. Though written in 1838, it was not published until 1842 in *Times and Seasons*, March 15, 1842, vol. 3, no. 10, pp. 727-728, 748-749, 753.

Principle elements of the account:

- A local revival caused him to wonder which church was right, it had never occurred to him all were wrong
- age 14 (1820)
- he was in a grove
- had a vision of two personages
- One identifies the other as his son (by implication God the Father and Jesus, but not explicitly stated)
- Was told all churches are wrong and is to join none of them
- Claimed to come under great persecution
- Fell into all kinds of temptations
- Three years later has vision of an angel

The Account

7 I was at this time in my fifteenth year. My father's family was proselyted to the Presbyterian faith, and four of them joined that church, namely, my mother, Lucy; my brothers Hyrum and Samuel Harrison; and my sister Sophronia.

8 During this time of great excitement my mind was called up to serious reflection and great uneasiness; but though my feelings were deep and often poignant, still I kept myself aloof from all these parties, though I attended their several meetings as often as occasion would permit. In process of time my mind became somewhat partial to the Methodist sect, and I felt some desire to be united with them; but so great were the confusion and strife among the different denominations, that it was impossible for a person young as I was, and so unacquainted with men and things, to come to any certain conclusion who was right and who was wrong.

9 My mind at times was greatly excited, the cry and tumult were so great and incessant. The Presbyterians were most decided against the Baptists and Methodists, and used all the powers of both reason and sophistry to prove their errors, or, at least, to make the people think they were in error. On the other hand, the Baptists and Methodists in their turn were equally zealous in endeavoring to establish their own tenets and disprove all others.

10 In the midst of this war of words and tumult of opinions, I often said to myself: What is to be done? Who of all these parties are right; or, are they all wrong together? If any one of them be right, which is it, and how shall I know it?

11 While I was laboring under the extreme difficulties caused by the contests of these parties of

religionists, I was one day reading the Epistle of James, first chapter and fifth verse, which reads: *If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.*

12 Never did any passage of scripture come with more power to the heart of man than this did at this time to mine. It seemed to enter with great force into every feeling of my heart. I reflected on it again and again, knowing that if any person needed wisdom from God, I did; for how to act I did not know, and unless I could get more wisdom than I then had, I would never know; for the teachers of religion of the different sects understood the same passages of scripture so differently as to destroy all confidence in settling the question by an appeal to the Bible.

13 At length I came to the conclusion that I must either remain in darkness and confusion, or else I must do as James directs, that is, ask of God. I at length came to the determination to "ask of God," concluding that if he gave wisdom to them that lacked wisdom, and would give liberally, and not upbraid, I might venture.

14 So, in accordance with this, my determination to ask of God, I retired to the woods to make the attempt. It was on the morning of a beautiful, clear day, early in the spring of eighteen hundred and twenty. It was the first time in my life that I had made such an attempt, for amidst all my anxieties I had never as yet made the attempt to pray vocally.

15 After I had retired to the place where I had previously designed to go, having looked around me, and finding myself alone, I kneeled down and began to offer up the desires of my heart to God. I had scarcely done so, when immediately I was seized upon by some power which entirely overcame me, and had such an astonishing influence over me as to bind my tongue so that I could not speak. Thick darkness gathered around me, and it seemed to me for a time as if I were doomed to sudden destruction.

16 But, exerting all my powers to call upon God to deliver me out of the power of this enemy which had seized upon me, and at the very moment when I was ready to sink into despair and abandon myself to destruction—not to an imaginary ruin, but to the power of some actual being from the unseen world, who had such marvelous power as I had never before felt in any being—just at this moment of great alarm, I saw a pillar of light exactly over my head, above the brightness of the sun, which descended gradually until it fell upon me.

17 It no sooner appeared than I found myself delivered from the enemy which held me bound. When the light rested upon me I saw two Personages, whose brightness and glory defy all description, standing above me in the air. One of them spake unto me, calling me by name and said, pointing to the other — *This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!*

18 My object in going to inquire of the Lord was to know which of all the sects was right, that I might know which to join. No sooner, therefore, did I get possession of myself, so as to be able to speak, than I asked the Personages who stood above me in the light, which of all the sects was right (for at this time it had never entered into my heart that all were wrong)—and which I should join.

19 I was answered that I must join none of them, for they were all wrong; and the Personage who addressed me said that all their creeds were an abomination in his sight; that those professors were all corrupt; that: "they draw near to me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me, they teach for doctrines the commandments of men, having a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof."

20 He again forbade me to join with any of them; and many other things did he say unto me, which I cannot write at this time. When I came to myself again, I found myself lying on my back, looking up into heaven. When the light had departed, I had no strength; but soon recovering in some degree, I went home. And as I leaned up to the fireplace, mother inquired what the matter was. I replied, "Never mind, all is well—I am well enough off." I then said to my mother, "I have learned for myself that Presbyterianism is not true." It seems as though the adversary was aware, at a very early period of my life, that I was destined to prove a disturber and an annoyer of his kingdom; else why should the powers of darkness combine against me? Why the opposition and persecution that arose against me, almost in my infancy?

27 I continued to pursue my common vocations in life until the twenty-first of September, one thousand

eight hundred and twenty-three, all the time suffering severe persecution at the hands of all classes of men, both religious and irreligious, because I continued to affirm that I had seen a vision.

28 During the space of time which intervened between the time I had the vision and the year eighteen hundred and twenty-three — having been forbidden to join any of the religious sects of the day, and being of very tender years, and persecuted by those who ought to have been my friends and to have treated me kindly, and if they supposed me to be deluded to have endeavored in a proper and affectionate manner to have reclaimed me—I was left to all kinds of temptations; and, mingling with all kinds of society, I frequently fell into many foolish errors, and displayed the weakness of youth, and the foibles of human nature; which, I am sorry to say, led me into divers temptations, offensive in the sight of God. In making this confession, no one need suppose me guilty of any great or malignant sins. A disposition to commit such was never in my nature. But I was guilty of levity, and sometimes associated with jovial company, etc., not consistent with that character which ought to be maintained by one who was called of God as I had been. But this will not seem very strange to any one who recollects my youth, and is acquainted with my native cheery temperament.

29 In consequence of these things, I often felt condemned for my weakness and imperfections; when, on the evening of the above-mentioned twenty-first of September, after I had retired to my bed for the night, I betook myself to prayer and supplication to Almighty God for forgiveness of all my sins and follies, and also for a manifestation to me, that I might know of my state and standing before him; for I had full confidence in obtaining a divine manifestation, as I previously had one.

30 While I was thus in the act of calling upon God, I discovered a light appearing in my room, which continued to increase until the room was lighter than at noonday, when immediately a personage appeared at my bedside, standing in the air, for his feet did not touch the floor.

This account is now LDS Scripture and is often the only account known to members of the Mormon Church. However, it contains numerous conflicts with previous versions given by Joseph Smith and is at odds with historical details that relate to Joseph Smith and his family. Some of these include:

- Date of the initial visitation being 1820. This conflicts with Joseph's statement that the revival came two years after their removal to Manchester - which took place in 1822 (brings it to 1824), the Palmyra / Manchester revival which led to his Mother and siblings joining the Presbyterian church after Alvin's death which was in 1823, and the revival itself which took place in 1824 (see *Inventing Mormonism* review for additional details).
- Joseph's claim that it had never entered into his heart that the existing churches were all wrong. This conflicts with his 1832 History where he claimed it was from Bible reading starting at age 12 that he concluded all churches were wrong.
- Joseph's claim that the Father and Son appeared, both in bodily form. This conflicts with all previous versions that mention either a spirit, an angel, Jesus, or various angels. It also conflicts with Joseph's 1832 revelation now found in D&C 84:22 which states, "For without this [authority of the priesthood] no man can see the face of God, even the Father, and live."

For a detailed and documented analysis of the problems and discrepancies related to this 1838-39 First Vision account see Vogel's *Early Mormon Documents*, vol. 1, pp. 56 ff., *New Light on Joseph Smith's First Vision*, and *Inventing Mormonism*, pp. 89 ff.

It would appear that Joseph Smith incorporated elements from various earlier versions and attempted to harmonize them into a single account that (a) eliminated the questionable and occultic aspects of his seer

stone and treasure seeking days, and (b) instead presented Joseph Smith as a young, spiritual seeker who had had singular encounters with God and angels. In doing so, however, he created an account that appears to be more fabrication than factual. This in turn raises questions about the veracity of any of the accounts provided by Joseph on the origins of Mormonism.

1844 First Vision Account by Joseph Smith

1844 — Account in *An Original History of the Religious Denominations at Present Existing in the United States*, edited by Daniel Rupp. Joseph Smith wrote the chapter on Mormonism. Contained in, *New Mormon Studies* CD-ROM, Smith Research Associates.

Principle elements of the account:

- Began reflecting on the importance of being prepared for the future state, but upon inquiring found a great conflict of religious opinion
- No mention of a revival
- Age 14 (1820)
- He was in a grove
- Had a vision of two personages - unidentified
- Was told all churches are wrong and is to join none of them
- Was told a future revelation would teach him of the fullness of the gospel
- Three years later has vision of a single personage (same description as previous personages) which is identified as an angel

The Account

Joseph Smith, *Latter Day Saints*, p.404-405

"When about fourteen years of age, I began to reflect upon the importance of being prepared for a future state; and upon inquiring the place of salvation, I found that there was a great clash in religious sentiment; if I went to one society they referred me to one place, and another to another; each one pointing to his particular creed as the "summum bonum" of perfection. Considering that all could not be right, and that God could not be the author of so much confusion, I determined to investigate the subject more fully, believing that if God had a church, it would not be split up into factions, and that if he taught one society to worship one way, and administer in one set of ordinances, he would not teach another principles which were diametrically opposed. Believing the word of God, I had confidence in the declaration of James, "If any man lack wisdom let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him."

I retired to a secret place in a grove, and began to call upon the Lord. While fervently engaged in supplication, my mind was taken away from the objects with which I was surrounded, and I was enrapt in a heavenly vision, and saw two glorious personages, who exactly resembled each other in features and likeness, surrounded with a brilliant light, which eclipsed the sun at noonday. They told me that all the

religious denominations were believing in incorrect doctrines, and that none of them was acknowledged of God as His Church and Kingdom. And I was expressly commanded to "go not after them," at the same time receiving a promise that the fullness of the gospel should at some future time be made known unto me.

On the evening of the 21st September, A.D. 1823, while I was praying unto God and endeavoring to exercise faith in the precious promises of scripture, on a sudden a light like that of day, only of a far purer and more glorious appearance and brightness, burst into the room; indeed the first sight was as though the house was filled with consuming fire. The appearance produced a shock that affected the whole body. In a moment a personage stood before me surrounded with a glory yet greater than that with which I was already surrounded. This messenger proclaimed himself to be an angel of God, sent to bring the joyful tidings, that the covenant which God made with ancient Israel was at hand to be fulfilled; that the preparatory work for the second coming of the Messiah was speedily to commence; that the time was at hand for the gospel in all its fullness to be preached in power, unto all nations, that a people might be prepared for the millennial reign. I was informed that I was chosen to be an instrument in the hands of God to bring about some of his purposes in this glorious dispensation. I was informed also concerning the aboriginal inhabitants of this country, and shown who they were, and from whence they came; a brief sketch of their origin, progress, civilization, laws, governments, of their righteousness and iniquity, and the blessings of God being finally withdrawn from them as a people, was made known unto me."

It is interesting that in this account, written by Joseph Smith only a couple of years after the "official version" is published, Joseph does not identify the messengers as the Father and the Son, nor does he mention the motivating factor of a revival. These and other discrepancies between this and the 1838 account, raise questions about the veracity and historical accuracy of the 1838 official account.

1859 First Vision Account by Martin Harris

1859 — Interview with Martin Harris, *Tiffany's Monthly*, 1859, New York: Published by Joel Tiffany, vol. v.—12, pp. 163-170. This account is included because the source, Martin Harris, was a close associate of Joseph Smith during the translation of the Book of Mormon, and one of the earliest non-family members to be introduced to Joseph's claims. His recollections are largely uninfluenced by later published accounts of Joseph Smith and therefore likely to reflect the earliest details provided to him by Joseph Smith and his family.

Principle elements of the account:

- The origin of Mormonism linked to the finding of the gold plates
- Joseph found plates using the seer stone he found in the well of Mason [Willard] Chase.
- Plates found in the context of money-digging
- Joseph's family corroborated this story to Martin Harris
- No mention of a revival
- Age 21 (1827)

- Joseph retrieves plates while out with his wife but hides them in the woods
- Angel appeared to Joseph after finding the plates, and told him it [Book of Mormon] was God's work and Joseph must "quit the company of the money-diggers."
- Angel said the plates must be translated, printed and set before the world.
- Angel revealed to Joseph that Martin Harris was the man to assist in this work.

The Account

Tiffany's Monthly, p. 163

"The following narration we took down from the lips of Martin Harris, and read the same to him after it was written, that we might be certain of giving his statement to the world We did this that the world might have a connected account of the origin of Mormonism from the lips of one of the original witnesses, upon whose testimony it was first received. ...

Mr. Harris says: "Joseph Smith, Jr., found at Palmyra N.Y., on the 22nd day of September, 1827, the plates of gold upon which was recorded in Arabic, Chaldaic, Syriac, and Egyptian, the Book of Life, or the Book of Mormon. I was not with him at the time, but I had a revelation the summer before, that God had a work for me to do. These plates were found at the north point of a hill two miles north of Manchester village. Joseph had a stone which was dug from the well of Mason Chase, twenty-four feet from the surface. In this stone he could see many things to my certain knowledge. It was by means of this stone he first discovered these plates.

Tiffany's Monthly, p. 164

"... Joseph had had this stone for some time. There was a company there in that neighborhood, who were digging for money supposed to have been hidden by the ancients. Of this company were old Mr. Stowel — I think his name was Josiah — also old Mr. Beman, also Samuel Lawrence, George Proper, Joseph Smith, jr., and his father, and his brother Hiram Smith. They dug for money in Palmyra, Manchester, also in Pennsylvania, and other places. ...

Tiffany's Monthly, p. 165

"After this, on 22nd of September, 1827, before day, Joseph took the horse and wagon of old Mr. Stowel, and taking his wife, he went to the place where the plates were concealed, and while obtaining them, she kneeled down and prayed. He then took the plates and hid them in an old black oak tree to which was hollow. ...

"Joseph did not dig for these plates. They were placed in this way: four stones were set up and covered with a flat stone, oval on the upper side and flat on the bottom. Beneath this was a little platform upon which the plates were laid; and the two stones wet in a bow of silver by means of which the plates were translated, were found underneath the plates.

Tiffany's Monthly, p. 166

"... When Joseph had obtained the plates he communicated the fact to his father and mother. The plates remained concealed in the tree top until he got the chest made. He then went after them and brought them home. ...

Tiffany's Monthly, p. 167

"... The money diggers claimed that they had as much right to the plates as Joseph had, as they were in

company together. They claimed Joseph had been traitor, and had appropriated to himself that which belonged to them. For this reason Joseph was afraid of them, and continued concealing the plates. After they had been concealed under the floor of the cooper's shop for a short time, Joseph was warned to remove them. He said he was warned by an angel. ...

"These things had all occurred before I talked with Joseph respecting the plates. But I had the account of it from Joseph, his wife, brothers, sisters, his father and mother. I talked with them separately that I might get the truth of the matter.

Tiffany's Monthly, p. 168, p. 169, p. 170

... "A day or so before I was ready to visit Joseph, his mother came over to our house and wished to talk with me. I told her I had no time to spare ... I waited a day or two, when I got up in the morning, took my breakfast, and told my folks I was going to the village, but went directly to old Mr. Smith's. I found that Joseph had gone away to work for Peter Ingersol to get some flour. I was glad he was absent, for that gave me an opportunity of talking with his wife and family about the plates. I talked with them separately, to see if their stories agreed, and I found they did agree. When Joseph came home I did not wish him to know that I had been talking with them, so I took him by the arm and led him away from the rest, and requested him to tell me the story, which he did as follows. He said, 'An angel had appeared to him, and told him it was God's work.'" Here Mr. Harris seemed to wander from the subject, when we requested him to continue and tell what Joseph then said. He replied, "Joseph had before this described the manner of his finding the plates. He found them by looking in the stone found in the well of Mason Chase. The family had likewise told me the same thing.

"Joseph said the angel told him he must quit the company of the money-diggers. That there were wicked men among them. He must have no more to do with them. He must not lie, nor swear, nor steal. He told him to go and look in the spectacles, and he would show him the man that would assist him. That he did so, and he saw myself, Martin Harris, standing before him. That struck me with surprise. I told him I wished him to be very careful about these things. 'Well, ' said he, 'I saw you standing before me as plainly as I do now.' ...

"While at Mr. Smith' I hefted the plates, and I knew from the heft that they were lead or gold, and I knew that Joseph had not credit enough to buy so much lead. I left Mr. Smith's about eleven o'clock and went home. ...

"The excitement in the village upon the subject had become such that some had threatened to mob Joseph, and also to tar and feather him. They said he should never leave until he had shown the plates. It was unsafe for him to remain, so I determined that he must go to his father-in-law's house in Pennsylvania. ... I advised Joseph that he must pay all his debts before starting. I paid them for him, and furnished him money for his journey." (pp. 168-170)

Conclusion

Despite differences in tone, there are striking similarities between this final account of Harris and the first account by Chase:

The discovery of a gold treasure in the context of money-digging

The use of a seer stone to find/obtain the plates

No indication that Joseph was a spiritual seeker before the angelic visitation

Martin Harris identified as the "divinely" appointed financier of the project

“Persecution” comes from former money-digging associates who want their share of the treasure, not from religiously incensed clergy

These common elements from early accounts raise questions about what appears to be a gradual evolution of Joseph Smith’s first vision story.

Conclusion

The evidence available from early sources, including Joseph Smith and his family establish a number of important facts.

First, Joseph did not relate his story consistently, but changed key elements over the years. He changed:

- The date / his age — from 1823 (age 16), to 1821 (age 15), to 1820 (age 14)
- The reason or motive for seeking divine help — from no motive (a spirit appears with the news of gold plates), Bible reading and conviction of sins, a revival, a desire to know if God exists.
- Who appears to him — a spirit, an angel, two angels, Jesus, many angels, the Father and the Son.

Second, common elements from early accounts raise questions about what appears to be a gradual evolution of Joseph Smith’s first vision story. Did Joseph begin to include a “Christian experience” in the telling of his story because Bauder noticed it was lacking? The earliest accounts given to Chase and Harris do not include this. There is a noticeable shift in the context of finding the gold plates, from 17 year-old money-digger to 14 year-old spiritual seeker. Is this an attempt to put his story into a more socially acceptable context? It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that as time went on, Joseph omitted uncomfortable but true parts of his history and replaced them with fictitious elements in order to make his story more socially acceptable and spiritually compelling.

One thing is clear, the LDS Church does a great disservice to investigators of its claims by presenting Joseph Smith’s 1838 account of his first vision as the only version of these events. It appears deliberately misleading to offer this account (now canonized as part of LDS Scripture) as an unquestioningly accurate and honest portrayal of its historical origins.

— *Joel B. Groat*

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MORMONS: WHO THEY ARE, WHAT THEY BELIEVE - - Discussion Guide

Stumbling Blocks to Mormons:

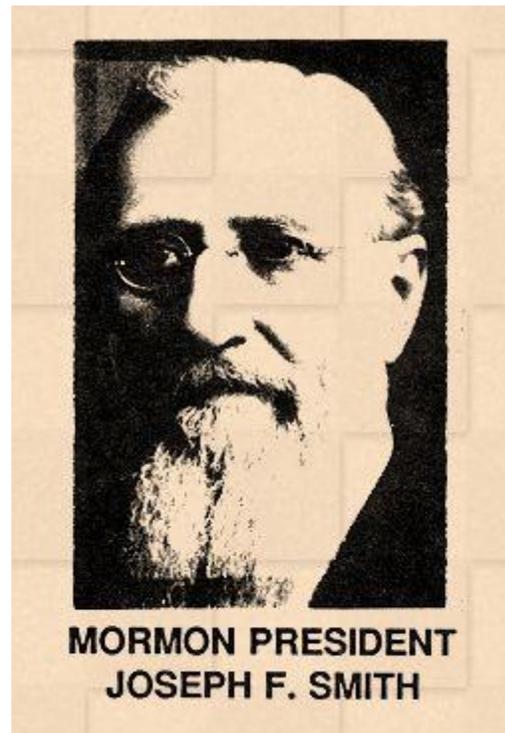
Joseph Smith's Multiple Wives:

Joseph Smith's Contradictions

http://www.utlm.org/newsletters/no66.htm#A_TANGLED_WEB

POLYGAMY AND TRUTH FROM ITS INCEPTION TO A UNITED STATES SENATE INVESTIGATION

In his book, *Joseph Smith—Seeker After Truth*, 1951, p. 324, Mormon Apostle John A. Widtsoe contended that "The record of Joseph's life is one of honesty, He taught honesty in all affairs; he insisted that his people be honest;..." In the single volume edition of *Evidences and Reconciliations*, page 282, Apostle Widtsoe boasted: "The Church ever operates in full light. There is no secrecy about its doctrine, aim or work." On page 226 of the same book, Widtsoe said that "From the beginning of its history the Church has opposed unsupported beliefs. It has fought half-truth and untruth." In this article we want to take a close look at Joseph Smith's doctrine of plural marriage in the light of Apostle Widtsoe's statements concerning truth.



A TANGLED WEB

The Prophet Joseph Smith was obviously reflecting on the question of whether polygamy was right or wrong when he wrote the Book of Mormon. He ended up taking a very strong stand against it. In Jacob 2:23-24 we read:

"But the word of God burdens me because of your grosser crimes. For behold, thus saith the Lord: This people begin to wax in iniquity; they understand not the scriptures, for they seek to excuse themselves in committing whoredoms, because of the things which were written concerning David, and Solomon his son.

"Behold, David and Solomon truly had many wives and concubines, which thing was abominable before me, saith the Lord."

The first edition of the *Doctrine and Covenants*, printed in 1835, also denounced the practice: "Inasmuch as this church of Christ has been reproached with the crime of fornication, and polygamy: we declare that we believe, that one man should have one wife, and one woman, but one husband, except in the case of death, when either is at liberty to marry again." (*Doctrine and Covenants*, section 101, verse 4) This denial of polygamy, was printed in every edition of the *Doctrine and Covenants* until the year 1876. At that time the Mormon leaders inserted section 132, which permits a plurality of wives. Obviously, it would have been too contradictory to have one section condemning polygamy and another approving of it in the same book! Therefore, the section condemning polygamy was completely removed from the *Doctrine and Covenants*.

The section which was added to the *Doctrine and Covenants* in 1876 was a revelation given by Joseph Smith on July 12, 1843. It is still published in the *Doctrine and Covenants* even though the church has gone back to practicing monogamy. The following is taken from Joseph Smith's revelation (the reader will notice that it begins by contradicting the statement in the Book of Mormon which said that "David and Solomon truly had many wives and concubines, which thing was abominable before me,...):

"Verily, thus saith the Lord unto you my servant Joseph, that inasmuch as you have inquired of my hand to know and understand wherein I, the Lord justified my servants Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as also Moses, David and Solomon, my servants, as touching the principle and doctrine of their having many wives and concubines —

"Therefore, prepare thy heart to receive and obey the instructions which I am about to give unto you; for all those who have this law revealed unto them must obey the same.

"For behold, I reveal unto you a new and an everlasting covenant; and if ye abide not that covenant, then are ye damned; for no one can reject this covenant and be permitted to enter into my glory....

"And again, very I say unto you, if a man marry a wife by my word, which is my law, and by the new and everlasting covenant,... they shall pass by the angels, and the gods, which are set there, to their exaltation...

"Then they shall be gods, because they have no end;...

"God commanded Abraham, and Sarah gave Hagar to Abraham to wife....

"Was Abraham, therefore, under condemnation? Verily I say unto you, Nay; for I, the Lord, commanded it....

"Abraham received concubines, and they bore him children; and it was accounted unto him for righteousness,...

"David also received many wives and concubines, and also Solomon and Moses my servants.... and in nothing did they sin save in those things which they received not of me.

"David's wives and concubines were given unto him of me,...

"And let mine handmaid, Emma Smith, receive all those that have been given unto my servant Joseph, and who are virtuous and pure before me; and those who are not pure, and have said they were pure, shall be destroyed, saith the Lord God....

"Let no one, therefore, set on my servant Joseph; for I will justify him;...

"And again, as pertaining to the law of the priesthood — if any man espouse a virgin, and desire to espouse another, and the first give her consent, and if he espouse the second, and they are virgins, and have vowed to no other man, then is he justified; he cannot commit adultery with that that belongeth unto him and to no one else.

"And if he have ten virgins given unto him by this law, he cannot commit adultery, for they belong to him, and they are given unto him; therefore is he justified."
(*Doctrine and Covenants*, section 132, verses 1-4, 19, 20, 34, 35, 37, 38, 39, 52, 60-62)

Just when and how the practice of plural marriage started in the Mormon Church has caused much controversy. There is evidence, however, to show that it was secretly practiced when the church was in Kirtland, Ohio, in the 1830's. In the Introduction to volume 5 of Joseph Smith's *History of the Church*, Mormon historian B. H. Roberts reveals that the "date in the heading of the Revelation [July 12, 1843]... notes the time at which the revelation was committed to writing, not the time at which the principles set forth in the revelation were first made known to the Prophet." The Mormon writer

John J. Stewart commented: "...Joseph as a servant of God was authorized to enter plural marriage, and it is not at all unlikely that he did so in the early or mid-1830's. Perhaps Nancy Johnson or Fanny Alger was his first 'plural' wife at Hiram or Kirtland, Ohio." (*Brigham Young and His Wives*, page 31) Oliver Cowdery, one of the three witnesses to the Book of Mormon, claimed that there was a relationship between Joseph Smith and Fanny Alger but he felt it was an adulterous relationship. In a letter dated Jan. 21, 1838, Cowdery wrote: "When he [Joseph Smith] was there we had some conversation in which in every instance I did not fail to affirm that what I had said was strictly true. A dirty, nasty, filthy affair of his and Fanny Alger's was talked over in which I strictly declared that I had never deviated from the truth in the matter, and as I supposed was admitted by himself." (Letter written by Oliver Cowdery and recorded by his brother Warren Cowdery; see photograph in *The Mormon Kingdom*, vol. 1, page 27)

As we have shown, Mormon apologists put the best possible light on this embarrassing situation. Andrew Jenson, who was the Assistant Church Historian, made a list of 27 women who were sealed to Joseph Smith. In this list he talked of "Fanny Alger, one of the first plural wives sealed to the Prophet." (*Historical Record*, May 1887, vol. 6, page 233)

In any case, Mormon leaders admit that by July 12, 1843, when the revelation was supposed to have been given, Joseph Smith had already acquired plural wives. The revelation itself makes it clear that he was already involved with a number of women besides his wife, Emma: "And let mine handmaid, Emma Smith, receive all those that have been given unto my servant Joseph,..." (verse 52)

The revelation itself (verse 61) makes it clear that the first wife must "give her consent." Joseph Smith, however, did not follow the rules of his own revelation, for he took plural wives without seeking consent. Emily Dow Partridge, for instance, testified that she and her sister were married to Joseph without Emma's consent:

"...the Prophet Joseph and his wife Emma offered us a home in their family,... We had been there about a year when the principle of plural marriage was made known to us, and I was married to Joseph Smith on the 4th of March 1843, Elder Heber C. Kimball performing the ceremony. My sister Eliza was also married to Joseph a few days later. This was done without the knowledge of Emma Smith. Two months afterward she consented to give her husband two wives, providing he would give her the privilege of choosing them. She accordingly chose my sister Eliza and myself, and to save family trouble Brother Joseph thought it best to have another ceremony performed. Accordingly on the 11th of May, 1843, we were sealed to Joseph Smith a second time, in Emma's presence,... From that very hour, however, Emma was our bitter enemy. We remained in the family several months after this, but things went

from bad to worse until we were obligated to leave the house and find another home." (*Historical Record*, vol. 6, page 240)

As we have already indicated, Assistant Church Historian Andrew Jenson listed 27 women who were sealed to Joseph Smith. The Mormon author John J. Stewart, however, states that Smith "married many other women, perhaps three or four dozen or more..." (*Brigham Young and His Wives*, page 31) In *No Man Knows My History*, Fawn M. Brodie included a list of 48 women who may have been married to Joseph Smith. Stanley S. Ivins, who was considered to be "one of the great authorities on Mormon polygamy," said that the number of Joseph Smith's wives "can only be guessed at, but it might have gone as high as sixty or more." (*Western Humanities Review*, vol. 10, pages 232-233)

In the Preface to the Second Edition of her book *No Man Knows My History*, Fawn Brodie revealed: "...over two hundred women, apparently at their own request, were sealed as wives to Joseph Smith after his death in special temple ceremonies. Moreover, a great many distinguished women in history, including several Catholic saints, were also sealed to Joseph Smith in Utah. I saw these astonishing lists in the Latter-day Saint Genealogical Archives in Salt Lake City in 1944." Mormon Apostle John A. Widtsoe admitted that "Women no longer living, whether in Joseph's day or later, have also been sealed to the Prophet for eternity." (*Evidences and Reconciliations*, Single Volume Edition, pages 342-343) If the Mormon doctrine concerning plural marriage were true, Joseph Smith would have hundreds of wives in the resurrection!

Some of the Mormon men seemed to have an insatiable desire for plural wives. Wilford Woodruff, the 4th president of the church, was sealed to about 400 dead women. According to the journal of the Mormon Apostle Abraham H. Cannon, a man could have up to 999 wives sealed to him for eternity:

"THURSDAY, APRIL 5th, 1894.... I met with the Quorum and Presidency in the temple.... President Woodruff then spoke '...In searching out my genealogy I found about four hundred of my femal[e] kindred who were never married. I asked Pres. Young what I should do with them. He said for me to have them sealed to me unless there were more that [than?] 999 of them. the doctrine startled me, but I had it done,...' " ("Daily Journal of Abraham H. Cannon," April 5, 1894, vol. 18, p. 66-67; original located at the Brigham Young University Library)

OTHER MEN'S WIVES

The fact that Joseph Smith asked for other men's wives was made very plain in a sermon given in the Tabernacle by Jedediah M. Grant, second counselor to Brigham Young. In this sermon, delivered Feb. 19, 1854, Grant revealed:

"When the family organization was revealed from heaven — the patriarchal order of God, and Joseph began, on the right and on the left, to add to his family, what a quaking there was in Israel. Says one brother to another, 'Joseph says all covenants are done away, and none are binding but the new covenants: now suppose Joseph should come and say he wanted your wife, what would you say to that?' 'I would tell him to go to hell.' This was the spirit of many in the early days of this Church....

"What would a man of God say, who felt aright, when Joseph asked him for his money? He would say, 'Yes, and I wish I had more to help to build up the kingdom of God.' Or if he came and said, 'I want your wife?' '**O yes,**' he would say, 'here she is, there are plenty more.'... Did the Prophet Joseph want every man's wife he asked for? ... If such a man of God should come to me and say, 'I want your gold and silver, or your wives,' I should say, 'Here they are, I wish I had more to give you, take all I have got.' " (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 2, pages 13-14)

Ann Eliza Young, who had been married to Brigham Young, charged that Joseph Smith was guilty of adultery:

"Joseph not only paid his addresses to the young and unmarried women, but he sought 'spiritual alliance' with many married ladies... He taught them that all former marriages were null and void, and that they were at perfect liberty to make another choice of a husband. The marriage covenants were not binding, because they were ratified only by Gentile laws.... consequently all the women were free....

"One woman said to me not very long since, while giving me some of her experiences in polygamy: 'The greatest trial I ever endured in my life was living with my husband and deceiving him, by receiving Joseph's attentions whenever he chose to come to me.'

"This woman, and others, whose experience has been very similar, are among the very best women in the church; they are as pure-minded and virtuous women as any in the world. They were seduced under the guise of religion,...

"Some of these women have since said they did not know who was the father of their children; this is not to be wondered at, for after Joseph's declaration annulling all Gentile marriages, the greatest promiscuity was practiced; and, indeed, all sense of

morality seemed to have been lost by a portion at least of the church." (Wife No. 19, 1876, pages 70-71)

The Mormon Apostle John A. Widtsoe admitted that Joseph Smith was sealed to married women, but he claimed that they were not to be his wives until after death:

"7. Another kind of celestial marriages seems to have been practiced in the early days of plural marriage. It has not been practised since Nauvoo days, for it is under Church prohibition. Zealous women, married or unmarried,... considered their condition in the hereafter. Some of them asked that they might be sealed to the Prophet for eternity. They were not to be his wives on earth, in mortality, but only after death in the eternities.... Such marriages led to misunderstandings by those not of the Church,... Therefore any ceremony uniting a married woman, for example to Joseph Smith for eternity seemed adulterous to such people. Yet, in any day, in our day, there may be women who prefer to spend eternity with another than their husband on earth." (*Evidences and Reconciliations*, 1960, page 343)

John A. Widtsoe's statement that Joseph Smith did not live with the married women to whom he was sealed is certainly false. Patty Bartlett Sessions, the wife of David Sessions, made it very clear in her private journal that she was married to Joseph Smith for both "time" and "eternity": "I was sealed to Joseph Smith by Willard Richards Mar 9, 1842, in Newel K. Whitney's chamber, Nauvoo, for time and all eternity,... Sylvia my daughter was present when I was sealed to Joseph Smith. I was after Mr. Sessions' death sealed to John Parry for time on the 27th, March, 1852, GSL City." (Journal of Patty Sessions, as quoted in *Intimate Disciple, Portrait of Willard Richards*, 1957, page 611)

Mary Elizabeth Rollins Lightner, the wife of Adam Lightner, stated: "Joseph said I was his before I came here and he said all the Devils in Hell should never get me from him, I was sealed to him in the Masonic Hall,... by Brigham Young in February 1842 and then again in the Nauvoo Temple by Heber C. Kimball...." (Affidavit of Mary Elizabeth Rollins Lightner, as cited in *No Man Knows My History*, page 444) In a speech given at Brigham Young University (see *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* pages 215-216), Mrs. Lightner said that Joseph claimed an "angel" came with a "drawn sword" and told him that if he did not enter into polygamy "he would slay him." She frankly admitted that she "had been dreaming for a number of years that I was his [Joseph's] wife." Since both Joseph and herself were already married, she "felt it was a sin." Joseph, however, convinced her that the "Almighty" had revealed the principle and while her "husband was far away," she was sealed to him.

In a study on Joseph Smith's wives, which we published in *Joseph Smith and Polygamy*, p. 41-47, Stanley Ivins wrote the following: "22. — MARY ELIZABETH

ROLLINS LIGHTNER. Daughter of John Rollins and wife of Adam Lightner... Married Lightner on August 11, 1835. Married Joseph Smith in February, 1843.... On January 17, 1846 she was sealed to Joseph Smith for eternity and to Brigham Young for time. However she remained with her legal husband and came to Utah with him in 1863." It would appear, then, that Mary E. Lightner had two different husbands for "time" and a third for "eternity." Mormon writer John J. Stewart confirms this in his book *Brigham Young and His Wives*, page 89: "17. Mary Elizabeth Rollins. Born April 9, 1818 at Luna, New York; died December 17, 1913. The wife of a non-Mormon, Adam Lightner. Sealed to the Prophet Joseph in February, 1842, at the age of 23, and again January 17, 1846, at which time she was sealed to Brigham for time."

In our publications, Mormonism—Shadow or Reality? and Joseph Smith and Polygamy, we present so much evidence that it is hard to escape the conclusion that Joseph Smith and Brigham Young were living in adultery. In an unpublished sermon by President Brigham Young, which has been preserved in the Historical Department of the Mormon Church, he revealed that it was possible for a man who held a "higher power" in the priesthood to take someone else's wife without a divorce:

"I will give you a few words of Doctrine,... Br Watt will write it, but it is not my intention to have it published; therefore pay good attention, and store it up in your memories.... Can a woman be freed from a man to whom she is sealed? Yes, but a bill of divorcement does not free her.... How can a woman be made free from a man to whom she has been sealed for time and all eternity? There are two ways.... The second way in which a wife can be separated from her husband, while he continues to be faithful to his God and his priesthood, I have not revealed, except to a few persons in this Church, and a few have received it from Joseph the prophet as well as myself. If a woman can find a man holding the keys of the priesthood [*sic*] with higher power and authority than her husband, and he is disposed to take her he can do so, otherwise she has got to remain where she is. In either of these ways of separation, you can discover, there is no need for a bill of divorcement. To recapitulate. First if a man forfeits his covenants with a wife, or wives, becoming unfaithful to his God, and his priesthood, that wife or wives are free from him without a bill of divorcement. Second. If a woman claims protection at the hands of a man, possessing more power in the priesthood and higher keys, if he is disposed to rescue her and has obtained the consent of her husband to make her his wife he can do so without a bill of divorcement." ("A few words of Doctrine," a speech given by President Brigham Young in the Tabernacle on Oct. 8, 1861; photocopy of a document in the Mormon Church Historical Department, Brigham Young Addresses, Ms/d/1243/Bx 49/fd 8)

Joseph Smith went to great lengths to conceal his practice of plural marriage. H. Michael Marquardt discovered that he even had a pretended marriage performed to cover up his own marriage to Sarah Ann Whitney. On July 27, 1842, the Mormon

Prophet gave a revelation to Newel K. Whitney, that he was to seal his daughter, Sarah Ann, "to Joseph Smith, to be his wife." In his booklet, *The Strange Marriages of Sarah Ann Whitney to Joseph Smith the Mormon Prophet*, Joseph C. Kingsbury and Heber C. Kimball, Mr. Marquardt reveals how he uncovered the fact that Joseph Smith actually performed a "pretended" marriage ceremony between Sarah Ann Whitney and Joseph C. Kingsbury so that his own relationship with her would not be noticed. Mr. Marquardt cited the following from "The History of Joseph C. Kingsbury," a document that is now in the Western Americana section of the University of Utah Library: "...on 29th of April 1843 I according to President Joseph Smith Council & others agreed to Stand by Sarah Ann Whitney as supposed to be her husband & had a pretended marriage for the purpose of Bringing about the purposes of God..."

Marquardt also found that Joseph Smith signed a document in which he stated: "I hereby certify, that I have upon this the 29th day of April 1843, joined together in marriage Joseph C. Kingsbury and Sarah Ann Whitney, in the City of Nauvoo, Illinois." It seems difficult to believe that a man professing to be a prophet of God would perform a "pretended" marriage to cover up his own iniquity. In his pamphlet, Mr. Marquardt goes on to show that after Joseph Smith's death, Sarah Ann Whitney continued to live with Joseph C. Kingsbury in this "pretended" marriage — he referred to her as "Sarah my Supposed wife." While still living with Kingsbury, she married the Apostle Heber C. Kimball. She was married to Kimball for time and sealed to Joseph Smith for eternity in the Nauvoo temple on Jan. 12, 1846. She became pregnant with Apostle Kimball's child but continued to live with Kingsbury until after the child was born. For more information on these strange marriages see Michael Marquardt's pamphlet, *The Strange Marriages of Sarah Ann Whitney*. Marquardt's research has brought into focus the total disregard Joseph Smith had for marriage vows. Not only did he break the sacred vows he took with his first wife, Emma, but he also encouraged Sarah Ann Whitney to take false vows pledging herself to Joseph C. Kingsbury to cover up the fact that she would be having a sexual relationship with Joseph Smith. The marriage ceremony which was supposed to be used at that time contained the following: "You both mutually agree to be each other's companion, husband and wife, observing the legal rights belonging to this condition; that is keeping yourselves wholly for each other, and from all others, during your lives." (*Doctrine and Covenants*, 1835 edition, section 101, verse 2)

According to the diary of Joseph Smith's private secretary, William Clayton, Smith would even go so far as to initiate a fake excommunication from the church to make it appear that he did not believe in polygamy:

"Thursday 19.... Prest. J... began to tell me that E. was turned quite friendly & kind.... He said it was her advice that I should keep M [Clayton's plural wife Margaret] at home and it was also his council. Says he just keep her at home and

brook it and if they raise trouble about it and bring you before me I will give you an awful scourging & probably cut you off from the church and then I will baptise you & set you ahead as good as ever." (William Clayton's Diary, Oct. 19, 1843, Andrew Ehat's typed extracts)

In the Mormon paper, *Times and Seasons*, Joseph Smith actually announced the excommunication of a man who had been preaching polygamy:

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 1844.

NOTICE.

"As we have lately been credibly informed, that an Elder of the Church of Jesus Christ, of Latter-day Saints, by the name of Hiram Brown, has been preaching polygamy, and other false and corrupt doctrines, in the county of Lapeer, state of Michigan.

"This is to notify him and the Church in general, that he has been cut off from the church, for his iniquity, and he is further notified to appear at the Special Conference, on the 6th of April next, to make answer to these charges.

JOSEPH SMITH,
HYRUM SMITH,
Presidents of said Church."

(*Times and Seasons*, vol. 5, page 423)

An index to the *Times and Seasons* reveals nothing further regarding Hiram Brown, and he is not mentioned at all in the large index of Joseph Smith's *History of the Church* compiled by E. Keith Howick. If Hiram Brown was a real person, this may be an example of the type of fake excommunication mentioned in Clayton's diary. In any case, it seems to be a strange way to handle an excommunication. It appears to be nothing but propaganda by the Smith brothers to cover their own iniquity.

ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL

After 1852, when the Mormon Church was openly practicing polygamy, the leaders of the church were declaring that it was absolutely essential for exaltation. Joseph F. Smith, who served as the 6th president of the church, made this emphatic declaration concerning the importance of polygamy:

"Some people have supposed that the doctrine of plural marriage was a sort of superfluity, or non-essential to the salvation of mankind. In other words, some of the Saints have said, and believe that a man with one wife, sealed to him by the authority of the Priesthood for time and eternity, will receive an exaltation as great and glorious, if he is faithful, as he possibly could with more than one. I want here to enter my protest against this idea, for I know it is false... Therefore, whoever has imagined that he could obtain the fullness of the blessings pertaining to this celestial law, by complying with only a portion of its conditions, has deceived himself. He cannot do it. When that principle was revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith,... he did not falter, although it was not until an angel of God, with a drawn sword, stood before him and commanded that he should enter into the practice of that principle, or he should be utterly destroyed, or rejected....

"If then, this principle was of such great importance that the Prophet himself was threatened with destruction,... it is useless to tell me that there is no blessing attached to obedience to the law, or that a man with only one wife can obtain as great a reward, glory or kingdom as he can with more than one,...

"I understand the law of celestial marriage to mean that every man in this Church, who has the ability to obey and practice it in righteousness and will not, shall be damned, I say I understand it to mean this and nothing less, and I testify in the name of Jesus that it does mean that." (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 20, p. 28-31)

In 1891 the First Presidency and Apostles of the Mormon Church made the following statement in a petition to the President of the United States: "We formerly taught to our people that polygamy or celestial marriage as commanded by God through Joseph Smith was right; that it was a necessity to man's highest exaltation in the life to come." (*Reed Smoot Case*, vol. 1, page 18)

Brigham Young made this uncompromising statement on August 19, 1866:

"The only men who become Gods, even the Sons of God, are those who enter into polygamy." (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 11, page 269)

John Taylor, the third president of the church, claimed that he believed in keeping all the laws of the United States "except one" — i.e., "The law in relation to polygamy." (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 20, page 317) Thomas G. Alexander, of Brigham Young University, admitted that "long after the 1879 Reynolds decision, Church members brought to bar for sentencing told federal judges that the law of God was higher than the law of the land and deserved prior obedience. The Manifesto officially ending polygamy as Church practice was not issued until 1890, and excommunication for practicing plural marriage did not come until 1904." (*Dialogue: A*

Journal of Mormon Thought, Summer 1966, page 128) The Mormons continued to openly preach polygamy until the year 1890. During this period the leaders taught that it was going to be a permanent part of the church and that it would never be stopped. Heber C. Kimball, First Counselor to Brigham Young, emphasized that the "principle of plurality of wives never will be done away,..." (*Deseret News*, Nov. 7, 1855) Kimball also warned:

"Some quietly listen to those who speak... against the plurality of wives, and against almost every principle that God has revealed. Such persons have half-a-dozen devils with them all the time. You might as well deny 'Mormonism,' and turn away from it, as to oppose the plurality of wives. Let the Presidency of this Church, and the Twelve Apostles, and all the authorities unite and say with one voice that they will oppose the doctrine, and the whole of them will be damned." (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 5, p. 203)

In another discourse, Kimball made this emphatic declaration: "It would be as easy for the United States to build a tower to remove the sun, as to remove polygamy, or the Church and kingdom of God." (*Millennial Star*, vol. 28, p. 190)

Apostle Orson Pratt strongly affirmed that it was absolutely essential that polygamy not be given up by the church:

"God has told us Latter-day Saints that we shall be condemned if we do not enter into that principle; and yet I have heard now and then... a brother or sister say, 'I am a Latter-day Saint, but I do not believe in polygamy! Oh, what an absurd expression! What an absurd idea! A person might as well say, 'I am a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ, but I do not believe in him.' One is just as consistent as the other.... If the doctrine of polygamy, as revealed to the Latter-day Saints, is not true, I would not give a fig for all your other revelations that came through Joseph Smith the Prophet; I would renounce the whole of them, because it is utterly impossible.... to believe a part of them to be divine — from God — and a part of them to be from the devil;... The Lord has said that those who reject this principle reject their salvation, they shall be damned, saith the Lord;...

"Now I want to prophecy a little.... I want to prophecy that all men who oppose the revelation which God has given in relation to polygamy will find themselves in darkness; the Spirit of God will withdraw from them the very moment of their opposition to that principle, until they will finally go down to hell and be damned, if they do not repent.... if you do not become as dark as midnight there is no truth in Mormonism." (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 17, p. 224-225)

In the *Deseret News* for Oct. 10, 1866, President Brigham Young responded to a question which was frequently asked: "Do you think that we shall ever be admitted

as a State into the Union without denying the principle of polygamy?' If we are not admitted until then, we shall never be admitted."

The Mormons did everything they could to escape the federal deputies. Kimball Young gives this information: "In addition to false names, disguises, and ruses, a whole system of information gathering, signaling, and spotting informers was developed. For example, the church authorities would pass the word down to the smaller communities of movements of federal deputies out of Salt Lake City in the direction of any particular town." (*Isn't One Wife Enough?* page 396) Wilford Woodruff, who became the 4th president of the church, had an armed guard to protect him. In a letter written in 1887, Woodruff wrote: "I have a large stout man who goes with me every [where?] night and day [he] carries 2 pistols & a double barrel shot gun and sayes he will shoot the marshals if they come to take me (Dont tell anybody this) so I am ___ well garded..." (Letter from Wilford Woodruff to Miss Nellie Atkin, dated Sept. 3, 1887, microfilm copy of the original)

By 1890 the church leaders were using bribery to prevent the government from arresting them. Under the dates of October 17 and 18, 1890, Apostle Abraham H. Cannon recorded the following in his journal: "Uncle David came in about noon and told me... a deputy marshal... told him that there were papers out for my arrest,... I got Chas H Wilcken to investigate... Bro. Wilcken came and informed me that he had bought Doyle off, and had got his promise that I should not be molested, nor should any other person without sufficient notice being given for them to escape, and to get witnesses out of the way. He gave Bro. Wilcken the names of some 51 persons whose arrest he intended to try to effect... A messenger was therefore despatched to give these people warning. Thus with a little money a channel of communication is kept open between the government offices and the suffering and persecuted Church members."

The government increased the pressure against polygamy, but the Mormons were determined to continue the practice. Shortly before the revelation known as the Manifesto (which declared an end to the practice of polygamy) was given, Lorenzo Snow, who later became president of the church, was claiming that no such revelation would ever come. When Snow was on trial for practicing polygamy, Mr. Bierbower, the prosecuting attorney, predicted that if he was convicted, "a new revelation would soon follow, changing the divine law of celestial marriage." To this Lorenzo Snow responded: "Whatever fame Mr. Bierbower may have secured as a lawyer, he certainly will fail as a prophet. The severest prosecutions have never been followed by revelations changing a divine law, obedience to which brought imprisonment or martyrdom.

"Though I go to prison, God will not change his law of celestial marriage. But the man, the people, the nation, that oppose and fight against this doctrine and the Church of God, will be overthrown." (*Historical Record*, 1886, vol. 5, page 144)

Although Lorenzo Snow said that the "severest prosecutions have never been followed by revelations changing a divine law," Wilford Woodruff, the 4th president of the church, issued the Manifesto in 1890. He claimed the Manifesto was given to stop the persecution the church would have to go through if the Mormons continued to practice polygamy. He stated: "The Lord showed me by vision and revelation exactly what would happen if we did not stop this practice... all ordinances would be stopped... many men would be made prisoners... I went before the Lord, and I wrote what the Lord told me to write..." (*Evidences and Reconciliations*, 3 volume edition, p. 105-106)

Before Wilford Woodruff became president of the Mormon Church, he maintained that the church could not give up polygamy (see *Journal of Discourses*, vol. 13, p. 166). On January 26, 1880, Woodruff even claimed to have a revelation which threatened the United States with destruction if it continued to oppose the "Patriarchal Law" — i.e., plural marriage:

"Thus saith the Lord unto my servant Wilford Woodruff... it is not my will that mine Elders should fight the Battles of Zion for I will fight your Battles....

"The Nation is ripened in iniquity and the Cup of the wrath of mine indignation is full, and I will not stay my hand in Judgment upon this Nation...

"And I say again *wo* unto that Nation or House or people, who seek to hinder my People from obeying the Patriarchal Law of Abraham which leadeth to a Celestial Glory... for whosoever doeth these things shall be damned Saith the Lord of Hosts and shall be broaken up & washed away from under Heaven by the Judgments which I have sent forth and shall not return unto me void." (*Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, edited by Scott G. Kenney, vol. 7, pages 615-617)

AN INVESTIGATION

According to the Mormon historian D. Michael Quinn, Mormon Church leaders considered the possibility of signing a document like the Manifesto on December 20, 1888, and rejected the idea: "After this overwhelming repudiation, Woodruff told the apostles, 'Had we yielded to that document every man of us would have been under condemnation before God. The Lord never will give a revelation to abandon

plural marriage." (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Spring 1985, page 35) Because of the fact that Wilford Woodruff had previously taught that polygamy could not be discontinued and had even claimed to have revelations to that effect, the other leaders of the church were confused by his Manifesto. Apostle Cannon's journal shows that there was division among the highest leaders of the church at the time the Manifesto was issued (see *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* page 234).

While the Manifesto was approved by the membership of the church, the Mormon writer Russell R. Rich admits that "not even among the general authorities of the Church was there unanimous support for abolishing the practice." (*Brigham Young University Week, Those Who Would Be Leaders*, page 71)

In October, 1891, President Woodruff testified that the Manifesto not only prohibited any more plural marriages, but that it also forbid the unlawful cohabitation of those who were already in polygamy. While Wilford Woodruff and other Mormon leaders were publicly stating that members of the church should observe the law concerning unlawful cohabitation, they were secretly teaching that it was all right to break it. The leaders of the Mormon Church, in fact, had promised the government they would obey the law of the land, but many of them broke their promises. Few people, however, realized to what extent until they were called to testify in the "Proceedings Before the Committee on Privileges and Elections of the United States Senate in the Matter of the Protests Against the Right of Hon. Reed Smoot, a Senator From the State of Utah, to Hold His Seat." Joseph F. Smith, who was the sixth President of the church, testified as follows in the Reed Smoot Case:

"The CHAIRMAN. Do you obey the law in having five wives at this time, and having them bear to you eleven children since the manifesto of 1890?

"Mr. SMITH. Mr. Chairman, I have not claimed that in that case I have obeyed the law of the land.

'The CHAIRMAN. That is all.

"Mr. SMITH. I do not claim so, and I have said before that I prefer to stand my chances against the law." (*Reed Smoot Case*, vol. 1, page 197)

"Mr. TAYLER. You say there is a State law forbidding unlawful cohabitation?

"Mr. SMITH. That is my understanding.

"Mr. TAYLER. And ever since that law was passed you have been violating it?

"Mr. SMITH. I think likely I have been practicing the same thing even before the law was passed." (*Ibid.*, p. 130)

"The CHAIRMAN. ...you are violating the law?

"Mr. SMITH. The law of my State?

"The CHAIRMAN. Yes.

"Mr. SMITH. Yes, sir.

"Senator OVERMAN. Is there not a revelation published in the Book of Covenants here that you shall abide by the law of the State?

"Mr. SMITH. It includes both unlawful cohabitation and polygamy.

"Senator OVERMAN. Is there not a revelation that you shall abide by the laws of the State and of the land?

"Mr. SMITH. Yes, sir.

"Senator OVERMAN. If that is a revelation, are you not violating the laws of God?

"Mr. SMITH. I have admitted that, Mr. Senator, a great many times here." (*Ibid.*, p. 334-335)

When Senator Hoar was questioning President Joseph F. Smith concerning polygamy, Smith finally stated: "I presume I am the greatest culprit." (page 312)

Charles E. Merrill, the son of the Apostle Marriner W. Merrill, testified that he took a plural wife after the Manifesto and that his father performed the ceremony:

"Mr. TAYLER.... When was it you married your second wife; that is, the second wife you now have?

"Mr. MERRILL. In the fall of 1888.

.....

"Mr. TAYLER. And the next marriage took place in 1891?

"Mr. MERRILL. Yes, sir.

"Mr. TAYLER. Who married you in 1891?

"Mr. MERRILL. My father.

"Mr. TAYLER. When were you married?

"Mr. MERRILL. I could not give you the exact date, but it was in March.

"Mr. TAYLER. 1891?

"Mr. MERRILL. Yes, sir.

"Mr. TAYLER. Was your father then an apostle?

"Mr. MERRILL. Yes, sir." (*Reed Smoot Case*, vol. 1, p. 408-409)

Walter M. Wolfe, who was at one time professor of geology at Brigham Young College, claimed that the Apostle John-Henry Smith made this statement to him: " 'Brother Wolfe, don't you know that the manifesto is only a trick to beat the devil at his own game?' " (*Reed Smoot Case*, vol. 4, page 13)

Anthony W. Ivins, who later became a member of the First Presidency of the Mormon Church, was appointed by the church leaders to perform plural marriages in Mexico after the Manifesto. His son, Stanley S. Ivins, told us that his father received instructions after the Manifesto to perform marriages for time and all eternity outside of the Mormon temples. He received a ceremony for these marriages (which Stanley S. Ivins had in his possession). He was sent to Mexico and was told that when the First Presidency wanted a plural marriage performed they would send a letter with the couple who were to be married. Whenever he received these letters from the First Presidency, he knew that it was all right to perform the ceremony. After his father's death, Stanley S. Ivins copied the names of those who had been married in polygamy into another book and then gave the original book to the Mormon leaders. Wallace Turner says that "More than fifty polygamist marriages were easily identifiable, beginning in June, 1897, when three men from Utah were married at Juarez,... They had crossed over into Mexico just for the marriage ceremony, then went back into the United States. However, Ivins refused to perform marriages for the regular population of the Mormon colonies because the men lacked the letters from Salt Lake City which he considered to be his authority for the ceremony. However, by 1898 polygamous marriages were being performed routinely in Mexico by other Mormon leaders." (*The Mormon Establishment*, 1966, p. 187)

Stanley Ivins claimed that his father continued to perform plural marriages for the church until the year 1904. In the *Reed Smoot Case*, vol. 4, page 11, Walter M. Wolfe testified that Ovena Jorgensen told him how she had obtained approval from George Q. Cannon, of the First Presidency, to enter into polygamy. Stanley S. Ivins confirmed the fact that his father, Anthony W. Ivins, performed the marriage ceremony. Stanley Ivins related to us that Walter Wolfe's testimony concerning this marriage hurt the church's image so much that the First Presidency of the church sent Anthony Ivins a letter requesting him to go back to Washington, D.C. and give false testimony before the Committee on Privileges and Elections of the United States Senate. The First Presidency of the Mormon Church actually wanted him to lie under oath and state he did not perform the ceremony. Stanley Ivins said that even if Walter Wolfe's testimony did damage the image of the church, his father refused to go back to Washington, D.C. and lie about the marriage.

Frank J. Cannon, a very prominent Mormon who served as United States Senator for Utah, related that just after the death of his brother, Apostle Abraham H. Cannon, in July 1896, his father, George Q. Cannon, told him that it was fortunate for the church that Abraham had died because he had taken Lillian Hamlin as a plural wife. This fact had become known, and he "would have had to face a prosecution in Court." President Cannon denied that he had anything to do with the marriage (a claim that is inconsistent with facts which have recently come to light) and went on to say: "President Smith obtained the acquiescence of President Woodruff, on the plea that it wasn't an ordinary case of polygamy but merely a fulfillment of the biblical instruction that a man should take his dead brother's wife. Lillian was betrothed to David, and had been sealed to him in eternity after his death. I understand that President Woodruff told Abraham he would leave the matter with them if he wished to take the responsibility — and President Smith performed the ceremony." (Under the Prophet in Utah, pages 176-177)

According to the diary of Abraham H. Cannon, his father, George Q. Cannon, a member of the First Presidency, lamented the fact that his sons could not raise up seed to David through polygamy: "My son David died without seed, and his brothers cannot do a work for him, in rearing children to bear his name because of the manifesto." (Journal of Abraham H. Cannon, April 5, 1894, vol. 19, page 70) From an entry in Apostle Cannon's diary for Oct. 24, 1894, it would appear that the Mormon leaders had decided that a plural marriage could be performed in Mexico to raise up seed to David. Although the diary has been damaged at this point and a few words are missing, the remaining portion shows that the Mormon leaders did not take the Manifesto seriously:

"After meeting I went to the President's Office and _____ Father [George Q. Cannon] about taking a wife for David. I told him David had taken Anni[e] _____

cousin, through the veil in life, and suggested she might be a good pe_____ sealed to him for eternity. The suggestion pleased Father very much, and _____ Angus was there, He spoke to him about it in the presence of the Presidency. _____ not object providing Annie is willing. The Presidents Woodruff and Smith both sa[id] they were willing for such a ceremony to occur, if done in Mexico, and Pres. Woodruff[f] promised the Lord's blessing to follow such an act." (Journal of Abraham H. Cannon, Oct. 24, 1894, vol. 18, p. 170; original at Brigham Young University)

The Mormon scholar D. Michael Quinn, professor of American History at Brigham Young University, has found another important reference which he feels proves beyond all doubt that "President Woodruff personally authorized Apostle Abraham H. Cannon to marry a new plural wife..." This reference is also in Apostle Cannon's own journal:

" 'Father [George Q. Cannon] also spoke to me about taking some good girl and raising up seed by her for my brother David.... Such a ceremony as this could be performed in Mexico, so Pres. Woodruff has said.' " (Abraham H. Cannon Journal, Oct. 19, 1894, as cited in *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Spring 1985, page 62)

It is startling, to say the least, that President Wilford Woodruff approved of and promised "the Lord's blessing" on the plural marriage which was being planned. This was four years after he published a "solemn" denial of the practice in the Manifesto: "We are not teaching polygamy or plural marriage, nor permitting any person to enter into its practice,..." (*Doctrine and Covenants*, Official Declaration, page 256 of 1978 printing)

It was some two years after the plural marriage was approved by the First Presidency that Abraham Cannon actually took Lillian Hamlin as his plural wife. The evidence indicates that Joseph F. Smith, who became the 6th president of the church, married the couple himself. President Smith denied that he performed the ceremony, but he acknowledged: "I accompanied Abraham H. Cannon and his wife on that trip, and had one of my wives with me on that trip." (*Reed Smoot Case*, vol. 1, page 111) When President Smith was asked when he first learned that Lillian Hamlin was Apostle Cannon's wife, he responded: "The first that I suspected anything of the kind was on that trip, because I never knew the lady before." (*Ibid.*) Like the other Mormon leaders, Joseph F. Smith was supposed to be doing all in his power to prevent the practice of polygamy, yet his testimony gives the impression that he was oblivious to what was going on when he went on the trip with Lillian Hamlin and Apostle Cannon:

"Mr. TAYLOR. Did you have any talk on that journey or after you left Salt Lake - after you first heard or learned that Lillian Hamlin was the wife of Abraham Cannon - as to when they were married?"

"Mr. SMITH. No, sir.

"Mr. TAYLOR. Did you have any talk with either of them?

"Mr. SMITH. Not in the least.

"Mr. TAYLER Not in the least?

"Mr. SMITH. Not in the least, sir; and no one ever mentioned to me that they were or were not married. I simply judged they were married because they were living together as husband and wife.

.....

"Mr. TAYLER. Did you say anything by way of criticism to Abraham Cannon?

"Mr. SMITH. No, sir." (*Reed Smoot Case*, vol. 1, page 128)

Unfortunately, Abraham Cannon's 1896 journal is not available. D. Michael Quinn informs us that "Apostle Cannon's 1896 diary is the only volume missing of his many diaries,..." (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Spring 1985, p. 83-84). John Henry Hamlin, however, testified that his sister, Lillian Hamlin, was married to Apostle Cannon. When he was asked who performed the ceremony, he replied: "Well, our understanding was that President Joseph F. Smith married her." Wilhelmina C. Ellis, who had been one of Apostle Cannon's wives, testified that Abraham Cannon was not married to Lillian Hamlin until he went on the trip with President Smith:

"Mr. TAYLER. What conversation did you have with him then about his going away and about his getting married again? What did he say first about going?

"Mrs. ELLIS. He told me he was going to marry her for time, and that she would be David's wife for eternity.

"Mr. TAYLER. What did he say about Miss Hamlin?

"Mrs. ELLIS. ...he said she was going with him and President Smith." (*Reed Smoot Case*, vol. 2, page 143)

Because her husband was not married to Lillian Hamlin when he left on the trip with Joseph F. Smith and came back as her husband, Mrs. Ellis inferred that President Smith had performed the marriage ceremony. She admitted, in fact, that she had frequently stated that Smith did marry them. Since Abraham H. Cannon had previously written that "Presidents Woodruff and Smith both sa[id] they were willing

for such a ceremony to occur," it would be stretching our credulity to believe President Smith's denial that he knew anything about the marriage. It is difficult, in fact, to deny Frank Cannon's charge that his father [George Q. Cannon] told him that President Smith performed the ceremony. While those who knew about this marriage usually felt that Joseph F. Smith married the couple "on the high sea" just off the coast of California, Mormon scholar D. Michael Quinn seems confident that the ceremony was performed in the Salt Lake Temple. His research in temple records reveals the following:

"When Lillian Hamlin was endowed in the Salt Lake Temple on 17 June 1896, she was sealed by proxy to the deceased David H. Cannon. Abraham H. Cannon was the proxy, and Joseph F. Smith performed the sealing. The next day, the Smiths and Cannons left Salt Lake City for California. Therefore, Joseph F. Smith actually performed his only post-Manifesto polygamous marriage as a proxy ceremony in the Salt Lake Temple for Abraham H. Cannon but could legally claim that he [was] simply officiating in a sealing on behalf of the deceased brother." (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Spring 1985, page 84)

Professor Quinn bases this argument on the fact that the records of earlier sealings for the dead indicate that "one ceremony united the living woman for eternity to the deceased husband and for time to the proxy husband." While Quinn's argument is persuasive, the fact that Joseph F. Smith traveled with the couple after the temple ritual may still leave open the possibility that it was a separate ceremony in California or on the "high sea" — i.e., beyond the boundary of the United States. In any case, Quinn's discovery of temple records linking President Smith to a sealing ceremony in which both Apostle Cannon and Lillian Hamlin participated just the day before he traveled with the couple seems to sew up the case against Joseph F. Smith.

Apostle Abraham H. Cannon's journals not only reveal that the Mormon leaders approved of polygamy after the Manifesto, but they also show they were considering the idea of a secret system of concubinage wherein men and women could live together without actually being married:

"Father [George Q. Cannon] now spoke of the unfortunate condition of the people at present in regard to marriage.... I believe in concubinage, or some plan whereby men and women can live together under sacred ordinances and vows until they can be married.... such a condition would have to be kept secret, until the laws of our government change to permit the holy order of wedlock which God has revealed, ... — — President Snow. 'I have no doubt that concubinage will yet be practiced in this church,...' — — Pres. Woodruff. 'If men enter into some practice of this character to raise a righteous posterity, they will be justified in it..'" (Journal of Abraham H. Cannon, April 5, 1894, vol. 18, p. 70)

As we have shown earlier, Joseph Smith's revelation on polygamy also said that concubinage was justifiable in God's sight: "Abraham received concubines and they bore him children; and it was accounted unto him for righteousness,..." (*Doctrine and Covenants*, 132:37)

After making a long and careful study of the Mormon Church's attitude toward polygamy, the Committee on Privileges and Elections submitted a report in which it claimed that the Manifesto was a deception:

"A sufficient number of specific instances of the taking of plural wives since the manifesto of 1890, so called, have been shown by the testimony as having taken place among officials of the Mormon Church to demonstrate the fact that the leaders in this church, the first presidency and the twelve apostles, connive at the practice of taking plural wives, and have done so ever since the manifesto was issued which purported to put an end to the practice.... as late as 1896 one Lillian Hamlin became the plural wife of Abraham H. Cannon, who was then an apostle... The prominence of Abraham H. Cannon in the church, the publicity given to the fact of his taking Lillian Hamlin as a plural wife, render it practically impossible that this should have been done without the knowledge, the consent, and the connivance of the headship of that church.

"George Teasdale, another apostle of the Mormon Church, contracted a plural marriage with Marion Scholes since the manifesto of 1890.... Charles E. Merrill, a bishop of the Mormon Church, took a plural wife in 1891,... The ceremony... was performed by his father, who was then and until the time of his death an apostle in the Mormon Church. It is also shown that John W. Taylor, another apostle of the Mormon Church, has been married to two plural wives since the issuing of the so-called manifesto.

"Matthias F. Cowley, another of the twelve apostles, has also taken one or more plural wives since the manifesto.... Apostles Taylor and Cowley, instead of appearing before the committee and denying the allegation, evade service of process issued by the committee for their appearance and refuse to appear after being requested to do so,... about the year 1896 James Francis Johnson was married to a plural wife,... the ceremony in this instance being performed by an apostle of the Mormon Church. To these cases must be added that of Marriner W. Merrill, another apostle;...

"It is a fact of no little significance in itself, bearing on the question whether polygamous marriages have been recently contracted in Utah by the connivance of the first presidency and twelve apostles of the Mormon Church, that the authorities of said church have endeavored to suppress, and have succeeded in suppressing, a great deal of testimony by which the fact of plural marriages contracted by those who were high

in the councils of the church might have been established beyond the shadow of a doubt. Before the investigation had begun it was well known in Salt Lake City that it was expected to show on the part of the protestants that Apostles George Teasdale, John W. Taylor, and M. F. Cowley, and also Prof. J. M. Tanner, Samuel Newton and others who were all high officials of the Mormon Church had recently taken plural wives, and that in 1896 Lillian Hamlin was sealed to Apostle Abraham H. Cannon as a plural wife... All, or nearly all, of these persons except Abraham H. Cannon, who was deceased, were then within reach of service of process from the committee. But shortly before the investigation began all these witnesses went out of the country.

"Subpoenas were issued for each one of the witnesses named, but in the case of Samuel Newton only could the process of the committee be served. Mr. Newton refused to obey the order of the committee, alleging no reason or excuse for not appearing. It is shown that John W. Taylor was sent out of the country by Joseph F. Smith on a real or pretended mission for the church....

"It would be nothing short of self-stultification for one to believe that all these important witnesses chanced to leave the United States at about the same time and without reference to the investigation. All the facts and circumstances surrounding the transaction point to the conclusion that every one of the witnesses named left the country at the instance of the rulers of the Mormon Church and to avoid testifying before the committee.

"It was claimed by the protestants that the records kept in the Mormon temple at Salt Lake City... would disclose the fact that plural marriages have been contracted in Utah since the manifesto with the sanction of the officials of the church. A witness who was required to bring the records in the temple at Salt Lake City refused to do so after consulting with President Smith.... it was shown by the testimony, and in such a way that the fact could not possibly be controverted, that a majority of those who give the law to the Mormon Church are now, and have been for years, living in open, notorious, and shameless polygamous cohabitation. The list of those who are thus guilty of violating the laws of the State and the rules of public decency is headed by Joseph F. Smith, the first president, 'prophet, seer, and revelator' of the Mormon Church,...

"The list also includes George Teasdale, an apostle; John Henry Smith, an apostle; Heber J. Grant, an apostle; M. F. Cowley, an apostle; Charles W. Penrose, an apostle; and Francis M. Lyman, who is not only an apostle, but the probable successor of Joseph F. Smith as president of the church. Thus it appears that the first president and eight of the twelve apostles, a considerable majority of the ruling authorities of the Mormon Church, are noted polygamists." (*Reed Smoot Case*, vol. 4, p. 476-480)

While the Committee on Privileges and Elections was hampered by the Mormon Church's attempt to impede the investigation and to suppress evidence, it did find enough documentation to put the church in a very embarrassing position. When we published the 1982 edition of *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* we felt that we had enough new evidence to completely disprove the claim that polygamy in the Mormon Church ended with the Manifesto (see pages 231-244F). We were, of course, somewhat limited in our research because we did not have access to a great deal of important material in the Mormon Archives. Fortunately, however, one of the church's most qualified historians, D. Michael Quinn, began researching this matter. While he certainly did not have access to all of the secret records of the church, he was entrusted with some extremely important church documents and was able to ferret out enough material to write what many people consider to be the definitive work on the subject. His article is entitled, "LDS Church Authority and New Plural Marriages, 1890-1904." It is found in the Spring 1985 issue of *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*. Although he claims he still has faith in Mormonism, he believes in honest history and pulls no punches in his presentation. Dr. Quinn gives the following information in his article:

"Ninety percent of new polygamous marriages contracted from September 1890 through December 1904 directly involved Church authority... On 11 September 1901, the *Deseret Evening News* branded as 'groundless' and 'utterly false' the statement of a Protestant minister that 'one of the Apostles had recently taken an additional wife,' when in fact four apostles had married plural wives so far that year....

"The year 1903 was the climax of post-Manifesto polygamy with Church authority....apostles were performing new polygamous marriages in the United States and Mexico, where both the stake patriarch and president were also officiating for residents of the Juarez Stake. The stake president had, furthermore, been authorized by the First Presidency to perform plural marriages for U.S. residents with the necessary letters from Salt Lake City. In addition, for the first time since the establishment of the Canadian settlement of Mormons, the Church president authorized local Church authority to perform plural marriages there for Canadian Mormons. Although those presently unavailable manuscripts would bring further corroboration and precision, sufficient information exists to verify the participation of Church authorities in new plural marriages from September 1890 through the end of 1904.... When Byron H. Allred asked for permission to marry the young woman who accompanied him to the President's office on 4 October 1890, President Woodruff patiently explained the reasons he had issued the Manifesto and then told Allred to move as soon as possible with his intended plural wife to Mexico where Alexander F. Macdonald would perform the ceremony. Anson B. Call was bold enough to come to Woodruff's own home... President Woodruff told him to sell all his property in the

United States and move to Mexico with his intended wife.... Apostle Young,... performed at least five plural marriages there [in Mexico] when he returned in May-June 1894. Among these plural marriages was one for Franklin S. Bramwell, then a stake high councilman, who later wrote, 'When I took my second wife I had a letter signed by President Woodruff himself and went to Mexico with a personal letter from Prest. George Q. Cannon.'... In June 1897, the First Presidency authorized Juarez Stake President Anthony W. Ivins to perform polygamous ceremonies in Mexico, and in the fall President Woodruff authorized Anthon H. Lund to perform two plural marriages aboard ship, one on the Pacific Ocean and one on the Great Lakes....

"Circumstantial evidence indicates that Wilford Woodruff married Madame Mountford as a plural wife in 1897....

"In the last year of his life, Wilford Woodruff thus maintained a public stance that was at variance with his private activities regarding polygamy. When Protestant ministers charged the Church with allowing new plural marriages, President Woodruff wrote the editor of the Protestant newspaper that 'no one has entered into plural marriage by my permission since the Manifesto was issued.'...

"The First Presidency's office not only authorized these post-Manifesto plural marriages in Mexico as performed by the presiding authority there, but also was aware of and recorded the plural marriages that visiting apostles performed in Mexico.... during the presidency of Lorenzo Snow in 1901, four apostles (including Brigham Young, Jr.) married plural wives... John W. Taylor claimed that he married two plural wives in August 1901 with the permission of the Church president; but the clearest evidence that Lorenzo Snow gave permission individually to the apostles to marry plural wives in 1901 comes from Heber J. Grant, who later wrote: 'Before I went to Japan [in July 1901] my President intimated that I had better take the action needed to increase my family,' and Grant's notebook indicates that President Snow gave this permission on 26 May 1901: 'Temple Fast mtg — 17 years since Gusta and I married — She willing to have me do my duty. & Pt Snow....

"After George Q. Cannon's death in April 1901, Joseph F. Smith, as sole counselor, was one who sent prominent Mormons to Matthias F. Cowley for polygamous ceremonies; and upon Lorenzo Snow's death in October 1901, his successor Joseph F. Smith promoted and protected new polygamous marriages more actively than the two previous Church presidents....

"By the fall of 1903, Joseph F. Smith had decided to expand new polygamous marriages even further....

"Joseph F. Smith continued the familiar pattern of denying publicly what was happening privately throughout these years. More significantly he was keeping his own counselors and half of the apostles in the dark about what he and the other half were doing to promote new polygamous marriages.... Joseph F. Smith divided the Church against itself and apostle against brother apostle over the question of new polygamous marriages. He did it with the best of intent — to preserve 'the principle' as well as to protect the institution of the Church by filing official minutes of quorum meetings with repudiations of what he was actually allowing individual Church officers to do with his authorization and blessing as Church president. This allowed plausible denial to the Church's enemies, but the policy created double definitions of authority, sanction, permission, knowledge, validity, loyalty, and truth — a wind that would begin to reap the whirlwind in 1904." (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Spring 1985, pages 56, 58-60, 62, 65, 72, 73, 90, 93, 95 and 96)

According to Professor Quinn, Heber J. Grant, who served as the 7th president of the church from 1918 until 1948, did not actually go through with the plural marriage which President Snow suggested that he enter into on May 26, 1901. (*Ibid*, p. 73) Nevertheless, Grant did have problems with the law after the Manifesto. In 1899 — nine years after Woodruff's Manifesto — he was convicted of unlawful cohabitation (see the *Daily Tribune*, Sept. 9, 1899). In 1903 Heber J. Grant had to flee the country to avoid being arrested. According to the testimony of Charles Mostyn Owen, Grant had been boasting about his relationship "with two women as his wives." Mr. Owen "went before the county attorney and swore to an information for him, and a warrant was issued on that information." Before Grant could be arrested, "He left suddenly on the night of the 10th of November last year — 1903." Owen said that Grant had gone to England and was still there while the Smoot investigation was going on (see *Reed Smoot Case*, vol. 2, pages 401-402).

The reader will remember the D. Michael Quinn says that Joseph F. Smith was more actively involved in promoting polygamy after the Manifesto than the other presidents of the church. Professor Quinn has put forth a devastating case against President Smith. This is very interesting because Joseph F. Smith emphatically denied in his testimony given in the Reed Smoot Case that polygamy was ever approved by church leaders after the Manifesto: "Mr. SMITH. ... It has been the continuous and conscientious practice and rule of the church ever since the manifesto to observe that manifesto with regard to plural marriages; and from that time till to-day there has never been, to my knowledge, a plural marriage performed in accordance with the understanding, instruction, connivance, counsel, or permission of the presiding authorities of the church, or of the church, in any shape or form; and I know whereof I speak, gentlemen, in relation to that matter." (*Reed Smoot Case*, vol. 1, page 129) When President Smith was asked if he knew of any plural marriage being performed by

church authority in any part of the world since 1890, he responded: "No, sir; I do not." (*Ibid.*, p. 177)

If the Committee on Privileges and Elections had possessed the documentation which Dr. Quinn has compiled, Joseph F. Smith would probably have been prosecuted for perjury. On page 98 of his article, Quinn pointed out that President Smith was "risking a perjury indictment by concealing any evidence detrimental to the Church as an institution or to any individual (including himself) who acted in his capacity as a Church official in promoting post-Manifesto polygamy. As President Smith told another prospective witness in the Smoot case, 'We should consider the interests of the Church rather than our own.' "

Although the senators believed that President Smith was not telling the truth, they also knew that it would be very difficult to prosecute him since he had control over most of the witnesses. Professor Quinn has found evidence that Joseph F. Smith did, in fact, obstruct the investigation by the Committee on Privileges and Elections just as the report had charged:

"...Joseph F. Smith throughout 1904 maintained that despite his best efforts, the subpoenaed apostles were either too ill or too recalcitrant to testify in the Smoot investigation.

"It is far more probable, however, that the Church president did not want the Senate to question anyone who had married and fathered children by post-Manifesto plural wives.... President Smith told Apostle [Abraham Owen] Woodruff midway through April conference, 'You would not be a good witness,' [and] advised him to 'stay in retirement' to avoid a subpoena in Utah, and to prepare immediately to preside over the LDS mission in Germany.... Five days after he presented the second Manifesto, Joseph F. Smith instructed California Mission President Joseph E. Robinson to move his two post-Manifesto plural wives and their children from Salt Lake City to Mexico to avoid a subpoena.

"A plural wife of John W. Taylor later provided the background to the letters her husband and Apostle Cowley sent to Joseph F. Smith about refusing to testify before the Senate Committee. 'He received two contradictory letters in the mail, for him to sign and return. One said he would go to Washington, the other said he would not go to Washington. Nellie cried: 'John, you don't intend to place yourself in a trap by signing both those letters, do you?' He pointed at the signature of President Joseph F. Smith and said, 'I will do what my Prophet orders me to do.' President Smith used the letter for each man he felt the circumstances of April 1904 required.... President Smith sent George Teasdale to Mexico to avoid testifying. The apostle chafed at this forced exile, and President Smith relented enough to have George F. Gibbs notify Teasdale

in August 1904 that he and Apostle Cowley could leave Mexico and speak at three stake conferences in Arizona, provided that the local stake authorities did not publish any reference to their visit in the *Deseret News* or local papers and that they provide no information on their itinerary." (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Spring 1985, pages 100-101)

Joseph F. Smith, the 6th president of the church, not only had the power to avoid being indicted for perjury, but was also able to escape prosecution in Utah for many years. It was 16 years after the Manifesto was issued when President Smith was finally convicted of unlawful cohabitation. The church's *Deseret Evening News*, for November 23, 1906 reported: "...President Smith appeared forthwith and entered a plea of guilty and was fined three hundred dollars. The fine was promptly paid and the defendant discharged."

TRAIL OF DISHONESTY

While Mormon apologists would have us believe otherwise, untruth and secrecy were used by the church leaders to cover up polygamy. D. Michael Quinn has discovered that in just "thirteen and a half years" after the Manifesto, when the leaders of the church were deeply involved in secretly promoting the practice of polygamy, "the First Presidency individually or as a unit published twenty-four denials that any new plural marriages were being performed." (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Spring 1985, page 9)

A careful examination of Mormon history reveals that this pattern of dishonesty stemmed from Joseph Smith himself. Smith always publicly denied the practice, and as we have already shown, he was even willing to perform a fake excommunication to hide the practice. On May 3, 1844, the *History of the Church*, vol. 6, p. 411, reported that Joseph Smith responded as follows to the accusation that he "kept six or seven young females as wives": "What a thing it is for a man to be accused of committing adultery, and having seven wives, when I can only find one.

"I am the same man, and as innocent as I was fourteen years ago; and I can prove them all perjurers."

In his article in *Dialogue*, page 21, D. Michael Quinn noted that Joseph Smith had "more than thirty plural wives" at the time he made this denial. We have previously cited a notice printed in the *Times and Season* in which both Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum, who was a member of the First Presidency of the church, signed a statement saying Hiram Brown had been cut off from the church for

"preaching polygamy, and other false and corrupt doctrines." The following month, Hyrum Smith wrote the following for the *Times and Seasons* (March 15, 1844, vol. 5, p. 474): "...brother Richard Hewitt... states to me that some of your elders say, that a man having a certain priesthood, may have as many wives as he pleases, and that doctrine is taught here: I say unto you that that man teaches false doctrines, for there is no such doctrine taught; neither is there any such thing practised here. And any man that is found teaching privately or publicly any such doctrine, is culpable, and will stand a chance to be brought before the High Council, and lose his license and membership..."

The article on marriage, which was published in the early editions of the *Doctrine and Covenants* was frequently used by the early Mormon Church to counteract the report that polygamy was being practiced. On Sept. 1, 1842, this statement appeared in the *Times and Seasons* (vol. 3, p. 909): "Inasmuch as the public mind has been unjustly abused... we make an extract on the subject of marriage, showing the rule of the church on this important matter. The extract is from the Book of Doctrine and Covenants, and is the only rule allowed in the church.

" '...Inasmuch as this church of Christ has been reproached with the crime of fornication, and polygamy; we declare that we believe, that one man should have one wife, and one woman, but one husband,... ' "

In vol. 4, p. 143, of the *Times and Seasons*, we find the following: "We are charged with advocating a plurality of wives, and common property. Now this is as false as the many other ridiculous charges which are brought against us. No sect have [*sic*] a greater reverence for the laws of matrimony, or the rights of private property, and we do what others do not, practice what we preach." In the Latter-Day Saints' *Millennial Star*, vol. 3, p. 74, the following denial appeared: "But, for the information of those who may be assailed by those foolish tales about two wives, we would say that no such principle ever existed among the Latter-Day Saints, and never will;... the Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants; and also all our periodicals are very strict on that subject, indeed far more so than the bible."

After Joseph Smith's death the denials of polygamy continued to come forth in Mormon publications. When someone stated that Joseph Smith taught polygamy, the Latter-Day Saints' *Millennial Star* (vol. 12, p. 29-30) called it a lie:

"12th Lie — Joseph Smith taught a system of polygamy.

"12th Refutation. — The Revelations given through Joseph Smith, state the following:... 'We believe that one man should have one wife.' *Doctrine and Covenants*, page 331."

As late as 1850 John Taylor, who became the 3rd president of the church, denied that the Mormons believed in the practice of plural marriage:

"We are accused here of polygamy,... and actions the most indelicate, obscene, and disgusting, such that none but a corrupt and depraved heart could have contrived. These things are too outrageous to admit of belief;... I shall content myself by reading our views of chastity and marriage, from a work published by us containing some of the articles of our Faith. 'Doctrine and Covenants,' page 330... Inasmuch as this Church of Jesus Christ has been reproached with the crime of fornication and polygamy, we declare that we believe that one man should have one wife, and one woman but one husband, except in the case of death,...' " (A tract published by John Taylor in 1850, page 8; found in Orson Pratt's Works, 1851 edition)

On page 23 of his article in *Dialogue*, Dr. Quinn revealed that at the time he made this denial of polygamy "in 1850, John Taylor had married twelve polygamous wives who had already borne him eight children."

At the beginning of this article we quoted Apostle John A. Widtsoe as saying that Joseph Smith "taught honesty in all affairs, he insisted that his people be honest..." Our research concerning polygamy shows that these statements concerning Joseph Smith are wishful thinking. He not only deceived his own wife about polygamy, but was willing to go to almost any length to keep some of his own followers in the dark concerning what he really believed.

Those who were close to him seem to have picked up his deceptive ways and taught them to those who followed. Consequently, the record of at least the first seven presidents of the church is marred by the transgression of the law and duplicity.

On April 6, 1904, President Joseph F. Smith issued what is known as the "Second Manifesto." This document claimed that since the Manifesto given in 1890, no plural marriages "have been solemnized with the sanction, consent or knowledge of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints." (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Spring 1985, p. 10) Although President Smith's statement is certainly untruthful, the Smoot investigation put a great deal of pressure on the church leaders and it was not long before the practice of polygamy died out within the church. Unfortunately, however, the insincerity of the Mormon leaders after the Manifesto left such a credibility gap that many Mormons continued to hold to polygamy even after the church withdrew its support of the practice. Like Joseph Smith, they secretly entered into polygamy, and even though the Mormon Church excommunicated a large number of them, the movement did not die out. Consequently, almost a century after Wilford Woodruff issued the Manifesto, there are thousands of people who are still practicing polygamy in Utah. On Dec. 27, 1965, the *New York Times* reported that as "many as

30,000 men, women and children live in families in which polygamy is practiced." In 1966 the Mormon writer Leonard J. Arrington claimed that this was a "far-fetched estimate." The following year, however, Ben Merson reported: "'Today in Utah,' declares William M. Rogers, former special assistant to the State Attorney General, 'there are more polygamous families than in the days of Brigham Young. At least 30,000 men, women and children in this state are now living in plural households — and the number is rapidly increasing! Thousands now live in the adjoining states of Idaho, Nevada, Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico and Arizona — plus sizable populations in Oregon, California, Canada and Mexico.'" (*Ladies' Home Journal*, June 1967, page 78)

Because they claim to go back to the fundamental doctrines of Mormonism, those who believe in practicing polygamy today are usually known as Mormon "Fundamentalists." The Mormon leaders now find themselves in a very strange situation. On the one hand, they have to uphold polygamy as a righteous principle, but on the other, they have to discourage the members of the church from actually entering into its practice. If they completely repudiated the doctrine of polygamy, they would be admitting that Joseph Smith was a deceiver, and that the church was founded on fraud. If, however, they openly preached and defended the doctrine, many people would probably enter into the practice and bring disgrace upon the church. Their position is about the same as a person saying, "My church believes in water baptism, but we are not allowed to practice it." Because of this peculiar dilemma, church officials prefer that there is not much discussion of plural marriage. As long as the Mormon leaders continue to publish Joseph Smith's revelation on polygamy (Doctrine and Covenants, Section 132), there will, no doubt, be many people who will enter into the practice. They cannot completely repudiate this revelation, however, without destroying their doctrine concerning temple marriage because the two doctrines were revealed in the same revelation. (Temple marriage, of course, is the marriage of a man and woman for time and all eternity in a secret ritual performed only in a Mormon temple.) Although the Mormon Church no longer allows a man to be sealed to more than one living woman, in Mormon doctrine all women who marry for eternity in the temple have to face the possibility that they could end up living in polygamy in heaven without their consent. If the wife should die before her husband, he is allowed to be sealed to another woman for eternity. The woman, however, is not allowed to be sealed to two husbands for eternity. Joseph Fielding Smith, who became the 10th president of the church, explained how the rules of the temple discriminate against women: "When a man and a woman are married in the temple for time and all eternity, and then the man dies and the woman marries another man, she can be married to him for time only." (*Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. 2, p. 78) President Smith himself remarried after the death of his first wife, and in the same book, page 67, he remarked: "...my wives will be mine in eternity."

Mormon writer John J. Stewart made it very clear that although the church does not allow a man to have more than one living wife at the present time, the doctrine of plural marriage is still an "integral part of LDS scripture":

"...the Church's strictness in excommunicating those advocating and practicing plural marriage today has apparently been misconstrued by not a few loyal Church members as an acknowledgement that the evil falsehoods... and other misconceptions about plural marriage, are true, and that the Church's near silence on the doctrine today is further evidence that it regrets and is embarrassed by the whole matter of plural marriage. Such an inference is, of course, unjustified and unrealistic. The Church has never, and certainly will never, renounce this doctrine. The revelation on plural marriage is still an integral part of LDS scripture, and always will be." (*Brigham Young and His Wives*, pages 13-14)

MOMENT OF TRUTH

Notwithstanding Apostle Widstoe's bold assertions concerning the honesty of Joseph Smith and the Mormon Church itself, the evidence with regard to polygamy reveals exactly the opposite. A majority of the church presidents (7 out of 13) who were supposed to have been "prophets, seers, and revelators to the Church," were involved in a doctrine which led them into breaking the law, adultery, deception, perjury, bribery and a massive cover-up which has continued on until the present time. Since Jesus Himself told us to beware of "false prophets," and instructed us that we will "know them by their fruits" (Matthew 7:15-16), it seems imperative that we face the truth about Mormonism. There is no way around the problem; the deceptive practices used by Joseph Smith and the other early leaders of the Mormon Church must be recognized for what they are — the "evil fruit" which Jesus attributed to "false prophets." While we do not agree with much of the material written by President Joseph Fielding Smith, he did make one statement that really gets to the heart of the matter: "Mormonism, as it is called, must stand or fall on the story of Joseph Smith. He was either a prophet of God, divinely called, properly appointed and commissioned, or he was one of the biggest frauds this world has ever seen. There is no middle ground.

"If Joseph Smith was a deceiver, who wilfully attempted to mislead the people, then he should be exposed; his claims should be refuted, and his doctrines shown to be false,..." (*Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. 1, p. 188-189)

We sincerely hope that Mormons who read this will see the futility of trusting in leaders who have used so much deceit and cover-up in establishing their work. We pray that they will awaken to the true message of Christ, realizing that in Him, and Him alone, can we have salvation.

ANOTHER GOSPEL?

A number of years ago there was a popular saying that went something like this: "I know you think you understood what you thought I said, but what you heard was not what I meant." We remember smiling in recognition of the problems we have communicating with one another. For decades Protestants and Catholics have faced a serious problem when talking to their LDS friends about Christianity and the Bible. This was especially brought to our attention recently as we read a speech by Theodore M. Burton, a Mormon General Authority. He recounted a conversation he had with a young stewardess while traveling on a plane to New England:

"She told me that she had recently been converted from her former manner of living and was now 'saved.'... she was now a 'born-again Christian.'... She said, '...I am now on the path of eternal life.'... she said, 'I have felt a marvelous spiritual change come over me which has purged all evil from my soul.'... '...I've had a sanctification experience, not through any work that I or any other person has done for me, but a work of grace whereby Jesus has pardoned my sins and promised me eternal life. I don't need any formal church organization to accomplish this....' She added that she had truly been reborn spiritually. From her words, I knew she did not understand what is meant by being 'born again' nor what is termed the second birth." (*The Ensign*, Sept. 1985, p. 66)

Later in his speech, Elder Burton observed: "When people of the world speak of being 'saved,' they refer to being saved from death to rise in the resurrection." (p. 68) Burton's comment demonstrates that he did not understand what the young woman was saying. When Christians speak of being 'born again' or 'saved' they are referring to eternal life, not just resurrection. Mormons divide 'saved by grace' and 'eternal life' into separate conditions, Christians do not. Bible verses such as 1 John 5:12-13 and John 3:16-17 portray faith in Christ as the necessary act to receive eternal life. When Christians talk about 'being saved' or 'born again' they understand that to include everlasting life in God's presence. Mormonism, however, teaches one can be

resurrected to a part of heaven — they divide it into three parts — but still **not** have eternal life! Latter-day Saints believe the only ones enjoying eternal life will be those who have been both baptized into the LDS Church (born again) and married in one of its temples. Spencer W. Kimball, 12th president and prophet of the LDS Church, taught:

"Only through celestial marriage can one find the strait way, the narrow path. Eternal life cannot be had in any other way. The Lord was very specific and very definite in the matter of marriage." (*Deseret News*, Nov. 12, 1977, Church Section)

In his speech, Theodore M. Burton maintains salvation by grace is that "which Jesus Christ gives to *every* person who has lived on the earth, and is independent of the works we do. But to be *exalted* to eternal life and to be able to live the kind of life that God the Eternal Father lives requires not only the gift of grace that Jesus gives to all mankind through his atonement, but that gift coupled with our own obedience and conformity to all the requirements of righteous living prescribed by the gospel of Jesus Christ. Exaltation, or the eternal life Jesus spoke about, comes from a partnership with Jesus Christ, which begins in the ordinance of baptism, by which we are reborn, and is developed through a lifetime of righteous living." (*The Ensign*, Sept. 1985, p. 68-69) Elder Burton also says this on page 68 of the same article: "Thus, through the atonement of Jesus Christ, together with the proper ordinances performed in the proper manner by proper authority and coupled with obedience to the laws and commandments of God, we can be saved from spiritual death and can be exalted to live in the presence of God the Eternal Father."

Thus we see how differently Mr. Burton and the stewardess were approaching the words "eternal life." Traditionally, Christians have insisted that God revealed all things necessary for eternal life in the Bible, citing such verses as John 20:30-31: "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name." Mormonism, on the other hand, goes far beyond the Bible to the revelations of Joseph Smith for its final word on doctrine.

The language barrier goes very deep and stems from the fact that Mormons have such a totally different concept of God and humans that it colors all their theological statements. In an official LDS handbook titled, *Achieving a Celestial Marriage*, Mormonism declares its belief in a God who was once a human on another earth, along with his wife, and that they are now resurrected beings who have achieved Godhood:

"The gospel of Jesus Christ teaches that man is an eternal being, made in the image and likeness of God. It also holds that man is a literal child of God and has the potential, if faithful to divine laws and ordinances, of becoming like his heavenly parent.... God is an exalted man who once lived on an earth and underwent experiences of mortality.... The progression of our Father in heaven to godhood, or exaltation, was strictly in accordance with eternal principles,... His marriage partner is our mother in heaven. We are their spirit children, born to them in the bonds of celestial marriage....

" 'God himself was once as we are now, and is an exalted man,...' (Smith, *Teachings*, p. 345.)...

"Remember that God, our heavenly Father, was perhaps once a child, and mortal like we ourselves, and rose step by step in the scale of progress, in the school of advancement; has moved forward and overcome, until He has arrived at the point where He now is (Orson Hyde, *JD*, 1:123.)" (Achieving a Celestial Marriage, 1976, page 129)

Another LDS manual holds out the hope to faithful LDS that they, too, can one day be Gods over their own earths:

"Exaltation is eternal life, the kind of life that God lives.... We can become Gods like our Heavenly Father. This is exaltation.... Those who live the commandments of the Lord and receive eternal life (exaltation) in the celestial kingdom... will become gods.... They will have their righteous family members with them and will be able to have spirit children also. These spirit children will have the same relationship to them as we do to our Heavenly Father. They will be an eternal family." (Gospel Principles, Published by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1986, pages 289-290)

Mormonism maintains God and man are the same species and part of an eternal procession of men becoming gods. Included in this concept is an innumerable host of parent-gods, grandparent-gods, etc., extending back into the past. Christianity, on the other hand, sees God as unique, holy, eternally existing as God from all ages past as well as future. Christians have cited such passages as the following to support this belief:

"... I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me.

"I, even I, am the Lord and besides me there is no saviour." (Isaiah 43:10-11)

"God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good? (Numbers, 23:19)

Writing in Galatians 1:8, the Apostle Paul declared: "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." The reader will remember that in our lead article we quoted President Joseph F. Smith as claiming that "an angel of God, with a drawn sword, stood before him [Joseph Smith] and commanded that he should enter into the practice of that principle [i.e., polygamy], or he should be utterly destroyed, or rejected." Joseph Smith also told this same story to Mrs. Lightner when he tried to persuade her to enter into the practice. While it is possible that Joseph Smith made up this story just to talk young women into going into plural marriage, Paul's warning in Galatians would lead us to conclude that if such "an angel" did, in fact, appear with "a drawn sword" in hand it would have to be from the wrong source. Paul also warns that "Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light." (2 Corinthians 11:14)

While the present Mormon leaders have given up the idea that exaltation comes from plural marriage, as we have already shown, they still maintain that "Eternal life cannot be had any other way" than through celestial marriage in a Mormon temple. In other words, they still cling to the same revelation which Joseph Smith gave to establish polygamy (Doctrine and Covenants, Section 132). This is clearly some "other gospel" than what we find in the Bible. Jesus Himself proclaimed that "whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." (John 3:15) Moreover, the Apostle John declared: "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God." (1 John 5:13)

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MORMONS: WHO THEY ARE, WHAT THEY BELIEVE - - Discussion Guide

Stumbling Blocks to Mormons:

Joseph Smith's Multiple Wives:

Marrying a Child

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MARRYING A CHILD

The Mormon prophet Joseph Smith married a number of young women before his death in 1844. One of his victims was Helen Mar Kimball. Todd Compton wrote: "Having married Joseph Smith at the age of fourteen, Helen Mar is the youngest of Smith's known wives." (In Sacred Loneliness, page 487)

Even before Joseph Smith's marriage to Helen Kimball, Smith had upset the Kimball family when he asked for Heber C. Kimball's wife, Vilate Kimball. Todd Compton wrote:

"The first chapter in the story of Smith, the Kimballs, and polygamy is that of Vilate's offering, which Orson Whitney, Helen's own son, recounted in his biography of Heber. In early 1842, apparently, Joseph approached Heber and made a stunning demand: 'It was no less than a requirement for him to surrender his wife, his beloved Vilate, and give her to Joseph in marriage!' wrote Orson. Heber, naturally was 'paralyzed' and initially unbelieving. 'Yet Joseph was solemnly in earnest.'... For three days Heber endured agonies. Finally asked to choose between his loyalty to Mormonism and his intimacy with his wife, Mormonism and Smith won out. 'Then, with a broken and bleeding heart, but with soul-mastered for the sacrifice, he led his darling wife to the Prophet's house and presented her to Joseph.' 'Joseph wept at this proof of devotion, and embracing Heber, told him that was all that the Lord required.' It had been a test, said Joseph, to see if Heber would give up everything he possessed...

"This prefigured the next test for the couple, which was nearly as difficult as the first: Smith now taught Heber the principle of polygamy and required him to take a plural wife... Smith had already selected Heber's first plural wife... to add to the trial, Joseph commanded Heber to keep the plural marriage secret even from Vilate 'for fear that she would not receive the principle.' Helen wrote, 'This was the greatest test of his [Heber's] faith he had ever experienced... the thought of deceiving the kind and faithful wife of his youth, whom he loved with all his heart, and who with him had

borne so patiently their separations and all the trials and sacrifices they had been called to endure, was more than he felt able to bear.'

"According to Orson, 'Heber was told by Joseph Smith that if he did not do this he would lose his apostleship and be damned.' As so often, Joseph Smith taught polygamy as a requirement, and to reject it was to lose one's eternal soul. Once one had accepted him as a prophet, one had to comply or accept damnation.... Heber and Vilate had passed through the fiery ordeal of two polygamic tests. One more, this one involving Helen, still awaited them.... Polygamy was inching closer and closer to the unsuspecting teenager... Orson Whitney wrote, 'soon after the revelation [to Vilate] was given, a golden link was formed whereby the houses of Heber and Joseph were indissoluble and forever joined. Helen Mar, the eldest Daughter of Heber Chase and Vilate Murray Kimball, was given to the Prophet in the holy bonds of celestial marriage.'"... As Helen told the story, polygamy entered her life when her father approached her one day... in the early summer of 1843. 'Without any preliminaries [my father] asked me if I would believe him if he told me that it was right for married men to take other wives.' Helen's response was instinctual Victorian: 'The first impulse was anger... My sensibilities were painfully touched. I felt such a sense of personal injury and displeasure; for to mention such a thing to me I thought altogether unworthy of my father, and as quick as he spoke, I replied to him short and emphatically, No I wouldn't!... This was the first time that I ever openly manifested anger towards him.'...

"Helen listened in disbelief and complete dismay. She wrote that, for her, this first interview 'had a similar effect to a sudden shock of a small earthquake. When he found (after the first outburst of displeasure for supposed injury) that I received it meekly, he took the first opportunity to introduce Sarah Ann to me as Joseph's wife. This astonished me beyond measure.' However, before introducing Helen to the subject of her possible marriage to Smith, Heber had apparently already offered her to the Prophet. In her 1881 reminiscence Helen wrote, 'Having a great desire to be connected with the Prophet, Joseph, he offered me to him; this I afterwards learned from the Prophet's own mouth. My father had but one Ewe Lamb, but willingly laid her upon the alter: how cruel this seemed [seemed] to the mother whose heartstrings were already stretched until they were ready to snap asunder, for he had taken Sarah Noon to wife & she thought she had made sufficient sacrifice [sic] but the Lord Required more.' Heber thus ended his first interview with Helen by asking her if she would become Joseph Smith's wife. If possible, Helen was even more astounded than before. She wrote, 'I will pass over the temptations which I had during the twenty four hours after my father introduced to me this principle & asked me if I would be sealed to Joseph.' Undoubtedly, unbelief and rebelliousness were part of these temptations.

"In a published account Helen described her indecision during this twenty-four-hour period, but her trust in her father turned the scales toward accepting polygamy: "[He] left me to reflect upon it for the next twenty-four hours... I was skeptical—one minute believed, then doubted. I thought of the love and tenderness that he felt for his only daughter... I knew that he loved me too well to teach me anything that was not strictly pure... and no one could have influenced me at that time or brought me to accept of a doctrine so utterly repugnant and so contrary to all of our former ideas and traditions."

"The mention of twenty-four hours shows that time pressures were being placed on the prospective bride, just as Smith had applied a time limit to Lucy Walker.

"The next morning Joseph himself appeared in the Kimball home and personally explained 'the principle of Celestial marriage' to Helen. In her memoir Helen wrote, 'After which he said to me, "If you will take this step, it will ensure your eternal salvation & exaltation and that of your father's household & all of your kindred.["] This promise was so great that I willingly gave myself to purchase so glorious a reward.' As in the case of Sarah Whitney, Joseph gave the teenage daughter responsibility not only for her own salvation but for that of her whole family. Thus Helen's acceptance of a union that was not intrinsically attractive to her was an act of youthful sacrifice and heroism.

"The only person still reluctant to see the marriage performed, after Helen had accepted the proposal, was Vilate. Helen wrote, 'None but God & his angels could see my mother's bleeding heart—when Joseph asked her if she was willing, she replied "If Helen is willing I have nothing more to say." ' This is far from a glowing positive bestowal of permission... Despite Vilate's obvious deep reluctance to see her daughter enter plurality, the ceremony took place. In May 1843... she was married to Joseph... it appears that Helen, when she married Smith, understood that the marriage would be 'for eternity alone,' and that it would leave her free to marry someone else for time. But apparently this was not the case, as is shown by a number of factors. First, there is no evidence elsewhere that Smith ever married for eternity, only not including 'time.' For instance, in the marriage ceremony used for Smith and Sarah Ann Whitney... they both agreed 'to be each other's companion so long as you both shall live' as well as for eternity... So apparently Helen had expected her marriage to Joseph Smith to be for eternity only, then discovered that it included time also." (In Sacred Loneliness, pages 495-500)

TAKING OTHER MEN'S WIVES

Many members of the Mormon Church find it very difficult to believe that the prophet Joseph Smith would be involved in anything unseemly. Some of them, in fact, cannot believe that he had sex with his wives. The evidence, however, is irrefutable. Todd Compton wrote:

"Emily Partridge Young said she 'roomed' with Joseph the night following her marriage to him, and said that she had 'carnal intercourse' with him.

"Other early witnesses also affirmed this. Benjamin Johnson wrote: 'On the 15th of May... the Prophet again Came and at my hosue [house] ocupied [sic] the Same Room & Bed with my sister that the month previous he had ocupied with the Daughter of the Later [late?] Bishop Partridge as his wife.' According to Joseph Bates Noble, Smith told him he had spent a night with Louisa Beaman... many of Joseph's wives affirmed that they were married to him for eternity and time, with sexuality included. Eliza Snow... wrote that 'I was sealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith for time and eternity, in accordance with the Celestial Law of Marriage which God has revealed.'" (In Sacred Loneliness, pages 12-14)

Todd Compton frankly discussed the issue of Joseph Smith marrying women who already had husbands. This strange type of marriage is known as polyandry (i.e., the practice of a woman having more than one husband at the same time.)

On pages 15-16 of his book, Compton wrote:

"Polyandry is one of the major problems found in Smith's polygamy and many questions surround it. Why did he at first primarily prefer polyandrous marriages?... In the past, polyandry has often been ignored or glossed over, but if these women merit serious attention, the topic cannot be overlooked... A common misconception concerning Joseph Smith's polyandry is that he participated in only one or two such unusual unions. In fact, fully one-third of his plural wives, eleven of them, were married civilly to other men when he married them. If one superimposes a chronological perspective, one sees that of Smith's first twelve wives, nine were polyandrous. So in this early period polyandry was the norm, not the anomaly... Polyandry might be easier to understand if one viewed these marriages to Smith as a sort of de facto divorce with the first husband. However, none of these women divorced their 'first husbands' while Smith was alive and all of them continued to live with their civil spouses while married to Smith... In the eleven certain polyandrous marriages, only three of the husbands were non-Mormon (Lightner, Sayers, and Cleveland) and only one was disaffected (Buell). All other husbands were in good standing in the church at the time Joseph married their wives. Many were prominent

church leaders and close friends of Smith. George W. Harris was a high counselor... a position equivalent to that of a twentieth-century general authority. Henry Jacobs was a devoted friend of Joseph and a faithful missionary. Orson Hyde was an apostle on his mission to Palestine when Smith married his wife. Johathan Holmes was one of Smith's bodyguards... Windsor Lyon was a member in good standing when Smith united with Sylvia Lyon, and he loaned the prophet money after the marriage. David Sessions was a devout Latter-day Saint.

"These data suggest that Joseph may have married these women, often, not because they were married to non-members but because they were married to faithful Latter-day Saints who were his devoted friends. This again suggests that the men knew about the marriages and permitted them.

"Another theory is that Joseph married polyandrously when the marriage was unhappy. If this were true, it would have been easy for the woman to divorce her husband, then marry Smith. But none of these women did so; some of them stayed with their 'first husbands' until death. In the case of Zina Huntington Jacobs and Henry Jacobs—often used as an example of Smith marrying a woman whose marriage was unhappy—the Mormon leader married her just seven months after she married Jacobs, and then she stayed with Jacobs for years after Smith's death. Then the separation was forced when Brigham Young (who had married Zina polyandrously in the Nauvoo temple) sent Jacobs on a mission to England and began living with Zina himself." (In *Sacred Loneliness*, pages 15-16)

In the fourth chapter of his book Todd Compton gives a great deal of information regarding Joseph Smith's polyandrous relationship with Zina Diantha Huntington:

"On February 2, 1846, in an inner room in the Nauvoo temple, Zina Huntington Jacobs stood by the side of Brigham Young, presiding apostle and de facto president of the Mormon church... Somewhat apart stood Henry B. Jacobs, whom Zina had married in a civil ceremony in March 1841. She was now seven months pregnant with their second child... That Henry Bailey was inside the temple shows that he was considered a faithful, worthy Latter-day Saint.

"Zina and Brigham turned toward each other and Kimball sealed (married) Zina to Joseph Smith for eternity; Brigham stood proxy for the dead prophet, answering in his stead when the ceremony required a response... as was customary in temple proxy marriages, Zina and Brigham turned to each other and were sealed to each other for time. Once again Henry stood as witness. One suspects that none of the four participants in these ceremonies understood their full significance. Henry and Zina probably felt that they would continue living together as husband and wife, as they had during Joseph Smith's life. Young had married some women by proxy with whom

he never lived... But Brigham Young would eventually decide that Zina must become his wife fully, and the story of Zina Huntington would run its enigmatic course.

"Zina... was a polyandrous plural wife of both Joseph Smith and Brigham Young. It is well documented that she married Henry Jacobs in March 1841 and continued to live with him until May 1846, bearing him two children... It is also well documented that Zina married Joseph Smith in October 1841 and Brigham Young in February 1846. While 'official' Mormon biographies have Zina marrying Smith and Young after she left Henry, her marriages are so well documented that one is forced to reject this sequence and confront the issue of Nauvoo polyandry... as was the case with many of Joseph Smith's plural wives, Zina lived in his house before her marriage to him... Apparently in the midst of Henry Jacobs's suit, Joseph Smith taught Zina the principle of plural marriage and then proposed to her. One can only imagine the shock this must have caused her. The 'cult of true womanhood' in nineteenth-century America required that a woman live by the ideals of purity, piety, domesticity, and submissiveness; and Smith's new doctrine offended against domesticity (the sanctity of the home), piety (typical American religious mores), and purity (the belief that sexuality should be reserved for monogamous Christian marriage). So it is not surprising that despite her religious reverence for the Mormon leader, she either flatly rejected his proposals or put him off. Furthermore, she was probably in love with Jacobs, and may have revered Joseph's wife Emma, whom she probably realized would be unsympathetic to an extramonogamous union... Smith was always persistent in his marriage proposals, and rejections usually moved him to further effort, so he continued to press his suit with Zina at the same time that she was courting Henry. And Smith usually expressed his polygamous proposals in terms of prophetic commandments. In addition to the religious dilemmas she faced, Zina was also choosing between two men, both of whom she cared for in different ways. In early 1841 Zina made her choice: she would marry Henry Jacobs, her romantic soulmate. The engagement was announced. By making this decision, she probably felt that she had put an end to Smith's suit and to the specter of polygamy in her life. It is not known whether Henry knew that Smith had also proposed to Zina, but it is known that he was a close friend and disciple of Smith. According to family tradition, as the day of marriage approached, Henry and/or Zina asked Smith to perform the marriage, and he agreed... but Smith did not appear, so they turned to John C. Bennett... to officiate. Zina must have felt a sense of relief and finality as she and Henry exchanged vows and began their married life in Nauvoo.

"However, Zina learned soon afterwards, undoubtedly to her complete astonishment, that Smith had not given up. Again according to family tradition, she and Henry saw Smith soon after the marriage and 'asked why he had not come... he told them the Lord had made it known to him she was to be his celestial wife.' Once

again Zina was plunged into a quandary. Smith told them that God had commanded him to marry her. However, he apparently also told them they could continue to live together as husband and wife. According to family tradition, Henry accepted this, but Zina continued to struggle. If polygyny offended against the American cult of true womanhood, polyandry offended even more. Nevertheless... submissiveness required her to obey. Disobeying Smith would also be an offense against Mormon piety. So polygamy divided the cult of true womanhood against itself. If a woman interpreted Smith's polygyny and polyandry as sacred, she would become entirely devoted to the new system... Zina remained conflicted until a day in October, apparently, when Joseph sent Dimick to her with a message: an angel with a drawn sword had stood over Smith and told him that if he did not establish polygamy, he would lose 'his position and his life.' Zina, faced with the responsibility for his position as prophet, and even perhaps his life, finally acquiesced... Apparently, Henry knew of the marriage and accepted it. He believed that 'whatever the prophet did was right, without making the wisdom of God's authorities bend to the reasoning of any man'... Zina and Henry stayed married, cohabiting, throughout Smith's life. Thus Zina's explanation for her marriage to Smith may be a 'revision' of history to gloss over her simultaneous marriage to both men. It is certain that the marriage was not enough to cause the couple to stop living together during Smith's lifetime, or for years after his death... for reasons that are not completely clear, Brigham Young pressed his suit with Zina. According to family traditions, 'President Young told Zina D. if she would marry him she would be in a higher glory.'... Brigham approached her after Smith's death and she apparently married him for time in September 1844. Nevertheless, she remained married and cohabiting with Jacobs, which was consistent with Smith's practice of polyandry... At Winter Quarters the next development in Zina's marriage history took place: she began to live openly as Brigham Young's wife. She later wrote, 'Those days of trial and grief [at Mt. Pisgah] were succeeded by my journey to Winter quarters, where in due time I arrived, and was welcomed by President Young into his family.' This method of practicing polyandry contrasted sharply with Joseph Smith's. Smith had never required any of his polyandrous wives to leave their first husbands and never lived openly with any of his polyandrous wives. Another problematic aspect of Zina's relationship to Young was that they apparently did not write Henry and tell him of the development. (In Sacred Loneliness, pages 71-72, 78-81, 84, 90)

Many years ago we searched through the Mormon Church's publication Journal of Discourses and found a sermon delivered in the Tabernacle by Jedediah M. Grant, second counselor to Brigham Young. In this sermon, delivered February 19, 1854, Jedediah Grant made these weird comments:

"There were quite a majority, I believe, in the days of Joseph, who believed he had no right to dictate in temporal matters, in farms, houses, merchandize, gold, silver, &c.; and they were tried on various points.

"When the family organization was revealed from heaven—the patriarchal order of God, and Joseph began, on the right and on the left, to add to his family, what a quaking there was in Israel. Says one brother to another, ‘Joseph says all covenants are done away, and none are binding but the new covenants; now suppose Joseph should come and say he wanted your wife, what would you say to that?’ ‘I would tell him to go to hell.’ This was the spirit of many in the early days of this Church... If Joseph had a right to dictate me in relation to salvation, in relation to a hereafter, he had a right to dictate me in relation to all my earthly affairs, in relation to the treasures of the earth, and in relation to the earth itself... What would a man of God say, who felt aright, when Joseph asked him for his money? He would say, ‘Yes, and I wish I had more to help to build up the kingdom of God.’ Or if he came and said, ‘I want your wife?’ ‘O yes,’ he would say, ‘here she is, there are plenty more.’... Did the Prophet Joseph want every man’s wife he asked for? He did not, but in that thing was the grand thread of the Priesthood developed. The grand object in view was to try the people of God, to see what was in them. If such a man of God should come to me and say, ‘I want your gold and silver, or your wives,’ I should say, ‘Here they are, I wish I had more to give you, take all I have got.’ " (Journal of Discourses, Vol. 2, pages 13-14)

Todd Compton made this observation regarding Jedediah Grant’s sermon:

"Grant disapproves of those who were asked to give up their wives and refused... He states that Smith did not want every wife he asked for, which implies that he wanted some of them... the fact that at least eleven women were married to Joseph polyandrously, including the wife of prominent apostle Orson Hyde, shows that in many cases Joseph was not simply asking for wives as a test of loyalty; sometimes the test included giving up the wife. (*In Sacred Loneliness*, pages 18-19)

COVERING UP MORMON POLYGAMY

On April 5, 1998, the Associated Press reporter Vern Anderson reported that the leaders of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (the Mormons) were attempting to hide the fact that polygamy was once an important part of Mormonism. Joseph Smith, the first Mormon prophet, actually claimed that God gave him a revelation that polygamy was to be practiced by the Mormons!

A STRANGE REVELATION

The revelation, dated July 12, 1843, contained the following:

"Verily, thus saith the Lord unto you my servant Joseph, that inasmuch as you have inquired of my hand to know and understand wherein I, the Lord Justified my servants Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as also Moses, David and Solomon, my servants, as touching the principle and doctrine of their having many wives and concubines—

"Behold, and lo, I am the Lord thy God, and will answer thee as touching this matter.

"Therefore, prepare thy heart to receive and obey the instructions...

"For behold, I reveal unto you a new and everlasting covenant; and if ye abide not that covenant, then are ye damned; for no one can reject this covenant and be permitted to enter into my glory....

"And let mine handmaid, Emma Smith [Joseph Smith's wife] receive all those that have been given unto my servant Joseph, and are virtuous and pure before me; and those who are not pure, and have said they were pure, shall be destroyed, saith the Lord God....

"And again, as pertaining to the law of the priesthood – if any man espouse a virgin, and desire to espouse another... he is justified; he cannot commit adultery with that that belongeth unto him and to no one else.

"And if he have ten virgins given unto him by this law, he cannot commit adultery, for they belong to him and they are given unto him; therefore is he justified."
(Doctrine and Covenants, Section 132, verses 1-3, 52, 61-62)

Smith secretly entered into plural marriage taking many wives for himself. In addition, he encouraged the brethren to do the same. In 1887, Assistant Church Historian Andrew Jenson made a list of 27 women who were sealed to Joseph Smith. (Historical Record, Vol. 6, page 233) More recent research, however, demonstrated that the number 27 was too small. Mormon writer John J. Stewart believed that Smith married "three to four dozen or more" (Brigham Young and His Wives, 1961, pages 30-31)

IN SACRED LONELINESS

While the leaders of the Mormon Church have tried to down play the fact that the early leaders of the church were polygamists, Mormon writer Todd Compton has compiled an astounding amount of material regarding the suffering Joseph Smith's plural wives endured.

Compton's 788-page book is entitled: *In Sacred Loneliness – The Plural Wives of Joseph Smith*. Unlike some of the leaders of the church, Dr. Compton is willing to tell what really happened in the early years of Mormonism. In the preface of his book Compton wrote:

"All historians are subject to the limitations of the evidence available, and this book is no exception. But it is surprising that these key women have been comparatively forgotten, especially considering the reverence Mormons hold for their founding prophet, and considering how important polygamy was to Smith. In fact, one occasionally meets Mormons who have no idea that Joseph Smith had plural wives at all: twentieth-century Mormons are undoubtedly uncomfortable with the details of nineteenth century polygamy." (page xi)

Further on Compton observed: "Often plural wives who experienced loneliness also reported feelings of depression, despair, anxiety, helplessness, abandonment, anger, psychosomatic symptoms, and low self-esteem. Certainly polygamous marriage was accepted by nineteenth-century Mormons as thoroughly sacred – it almost defined what was most holy to them – but its practical result, for the woman, was solitude." (p. xiv-xv)

Many scholars have sought to ascertain exactly how many wives Joseph Smith had during his lifetime. Compton addressed this issue on the first page of his book:

"I have identified thirty-three well-documented wives of Joseph Smith, which some may regard as an overly conservative numbering... Historians Fawn Brodie, D. Michael Quinn, and George D. Smith list forty-eight, forty-six, and forty-three, respectfully. Yet in problematic areas it may be advisable to err on the side of caution."

Compton made it clear that Joseph Smith wanted to marry even more women. He noted that Joseph "proposed to at least five more women who turned him down." Compton also reported that Smith "apparently experimented with plural marriage in the 1830s in Ohio and Missouri... In 1841 Smith cautiously added three wives in the first eight months of the year ... during the first half of 1843, Joseph Smith married fourteen more wives, including five in May." (pages 2-3)

Since most people who lived in Illinois in the 1840's were very opposed to polygamy and adultery, Joseph Smith's secret teaching caused a great deal of conflict. Despite the fact the Smith attempted to hide these strange practices and even publicly denied them, leaks occurred and the practice became known to his enemies. Just about a month before his death Joseph Smith was charged with adultery (see History of the Church, Vol. 6, page 403).

When Joseph Smith learned that some of his own followers had become disenchanted with his leadership and were planning to publish the fact that he was deeply involved in polygamy he panicked. Instead of handling matters in a peaceful way, he ordered the destruction of the opposition's newspaper, the Nauvoo Expositor. This incident was very disturbing to non-Mormons who lived in or near Nauvoo. They were convinced that Smith had violated freedom of the press and that something had to be done. The noted Mormon historian B.H. Roberts wrote: "The legality of the action... was of course, questionable, though some sought to defend it on legal grounds; but it must be conceded that neither proof nor argument of legality are convincing." (History of the Church, Introduction to Vol. 6, pages xxxviii)

Unfortunately for Joseph Smith, this incident eventually led to his death. While Joseph and his brother Hyrum were being held in the Carthage Jail a mob attacked the jail. Both Joseph and Hyrum were murdered by their assailants. This, of course, was a very cowardly act and even anti-Mormon writers refer to it as "cold-blooded murder."

ASHAMED OF POLYGAMY?

Joseph Smith's revelation regarding polygamy caused serious difficulties for faithful Mormons who followed him. After Smith's death Brigham Young, the second prophet of the church, continued to stress the importance of plural marriage. On June 3, 1866, Brigham Young declared:

"We are told that if we would give up polygamy—which we know to be a doctrine revealed from heaven, and it is of God and the world for it—but suppose this Church should give up this holy order of marriage, then would the devil, and all who are in league with him against the cause of God, rejoice that they had prevailed upon the Saints to refuse to obey one of the revelations and commandments of God to them ... Will the Latter-day Saints do this? No; they will not to please anybody." (Journal of Discourses, Vol. 11, page 239)

On August 19th, 1866, Brigham Young strongly admonished his people to continue the practice of plural marriage:

"The only men who become Gods, even the sons of God, are those who enter into polygamy... I heard the revelation on polygamy, and I believed it with all my heart ... 'Do you think that we shall ever be admitted as a State into the Union without denying the principle of polygamy?' If we are not admitted until then, we shall never be admitted." (Journal of Discourses, Vol. 11, page 269)

On another occasion President Brigham Young warned: "Now if any of you will deny the plurality of wives and continue to do so, I promise that you will be damned..." (Deseret News, November 14, 1855)

President Young, like Joseph Smith, was very emphatic about the need for his people to practice polygamy. In 1873, he gave this stern warning:

"Now, where a man in this church says, 'I don't want but one wife, I will live my religion with one,' he will perhaps be saved in the Celestial kingdom; but when he gets there he will not find himself in possession of any wife at all. He has had a talent that he has hid up. He will come forward and say, 'Here is that which thou gavest me, I have not wasted it, and here is the one talent,' and he will not enjoy it but it will be taken and given to those who have improved the talents they received, and he will find himself without any wife, and he will remain single forever and ever." (Deseret News, Sept. 17, 1873)

The reader will note that the quotations above were taken from the church's own publications, Deseret News and Journal of Discourses.

After Brigham Young's death the Mormon Church continued to practice plural marriage. The government, however, was determined to stop polygamy. Consequently, many Mormons were imprisoned.

Lorenzo Snow, who became president of the church in 1898, strongly argued that the church would never cease plural marriage. When Snow was on trial for the practice of polygamy, Mr. Bierbower, the prosecuting attorney, predicted that if he were convicted, "a new revelation would soon follow, changing the divine law of celestial marriage." To this Lorenzo Snow responded: "Whatever fame Mr. Bierbower may have secured as a lawyer, he certainly will fail as a prophet. The severest prosecutions have never been followed by revelations changing a divine law, obedience to which brought imprisonment or martyrdom.

"Though I go to prison, God will not change his law of celestial marriage. But the man, the people, the nation that oppose and fight against this doctrine and the Church of God, will be overthrown." (Historical Record, page 144)

Although Lorenzo Snow said that the "severest prosecutions have never been followed by revelations changing a divine law," Wilford Woodruff, the 4th president of the church, issued the Manifesto in 1890. This document proclaimed the church would not continue to allow the practice of plural marriage.

Although the highest leaders of the Mormon Church promised to obey the law of the land, many of them broke their promises. Few people, however, realized to what extent until they were called to testify in the "Proceedings Before the Committee on Privileges and Elections of the United States Senate in the Matter of the Protests Against the Right of Hon. Reed Smoot, a Senator From the State of Utah, to Hold His Seat." It is commonly referred to as the Reed Smoot Case.

Joseph F. Smith, the 6th president of the church, testified as follows in the Reed Smoot Case:

"The CHAIRMAN. Do you obey the law in having five wives at this time, and having them bear to you eleven children since the manifesto of 1890?

"Mr. SMITH. Mr. Chairman, I have not claimed that in that case I have obeyed the law of the land.

"The CHAIRMAN. That is all.

"Mr. SMITH. I do not claim so, and I have said before that I prefer to stand my chances against the law." (Reed Smoot Case, Vol. 1, page 197)

"Mr. TAYLER. You say there is a State law forbidding unlawful cohabitation?

"Mr. SMITH. That is my understanding.

"Mr. TAYLER. And ever since that law was passed you have been violating it?

"Mr. SMITH. I think likely I have been practicing the same thing even before the law was passed." (Ibid., page 130)

"The CHAIRMAN. ...you are violating the law?

"Mr. SMITH. The law of my State?

"The CHAIRMAN. Yes.

"Mr. SMITH. Yes, sir.

"Senator OVERMAN. Is there not a revelation published in the Book of Covenants [i.e., the Doctrine and Covenants] here that you shall abide by the law of the State?

"Mr. SMITH. It includes both unlawful cohabitation and polygamy.

"Senator OVERMAN. Is there not a revelation that you should abide by the laws of the State and of the land?

"Mr. SMITH. Yes, sir.

"Senator OVERMAN. If that is a revelation, are you not violating the laws of God?

"Mr. SMITH. I have admitted that, Mr. Senator, a great many times here." (Ibid., pages 334-335)

It seems incredible that President Joseph F. Smith could admit that he violated both "the laws of the State" and "the laws of God" and still remain the "Prophet, Seer, and Revelator" of the Mormon Church.

After making a long and careful study of the church's cover-up of polygamy, the Committee on Privileges and Elections submitted a report showing that the Manifesto was a deception:

"A sufficient number of specific instances of the taking of plural wives since the manifesto of 1890, so called, have been shown by the testimony as having taken place among officials of the Mormon Church... the leaders in this church, the first presidency and the twelve apostles, connive at the practice of taking plural wives, and have done so ever since the manifesto was issued which purported to put an end to the practice... As late as 1896 one Lillian Hamlin became the plural wife of Abraham H. Cannon, who was then an apostle... The prominence of Abraham H. Cannon in the church, the publicity given to the fact of his taking Lillian Hamlin as a plural wife, render it practically impossible that this should have been done without the knowledge, the consent, and the connivance of the headship of that church.

"George Teasdale, another apostle of the Mormon Church, contracted a plural marriage with Marion Scholes since the manifesto... Charles E. Merrill, a bishop of the Mormon Church, took a plural wife in 1891... The ceremony... was performed by his father, who was then and until the time of his death an apostle in the Mormon Church. It is also shown that John W. Taylor, another apostle of the Mormon Church, has been married to two plural wives since the issuing of the so-called manifesto.

"Matthias F. Cowley, another of the twelve apostles, has also taken one or more plural wives since the manifesto... Apostles Taylor and Cowley, instead of appearing before the committee and denying the allegation, evade service of process issued by the committee for their appearance and refuse to appear after being requested to do so...

"It is also proved that about the year 1896 James Francis Johnson was married to a plural wife ... the ceremony in this instance being performed by an apostle of the Mormon Church. To these cases must be added that of Marriner W. Merrill, another apostle; J. M. Tanner, superintendent of church schools; Benjamin Cluff, Jr., president of Brigham Young University; Thomas Chamberlain, counselor to the president of a stake; Bishop Rathall, John Silver, Winslow Farr, Heber Benion, Samuel S. Newton...

"It is morally impossible that all these violations of the laws of the State of Utah by the contracting of plural marriages could have been committed without the knowledge of the first presidency and the twelve apostles of the Mormon Church... the authorities of said church have endeavored to suppress, and have succeeded in suppressing, a great deal of testimony... it was well known in Salt Lake City that it was expected to show... that Apostles George Teasdale, John W. Taylor, and M.F. Cowley, and also Prof. J.M. Tanner, Samuel Newton and others who were all high officials of the Mormon Church had recently taken plural wives... All, or nearly all, of these persons... were then within reach of service of process from the committee. But shortly before the investigation began all these witnesses went out of the country....

"It would be nothing short of self-stultification for one to believe that all these important witnesses chanced to leave the United States at about the same time and without reference to the investigation. All the facts and circumstances surrounding the transaction point to the conclusion that every one of the witnesses named left the country at the instance of the rulers of the Mormon Church and to avoid testifying before the committee." (Reed Smoot Case, Vol. 4, pages 476-482)

Although Mormon leaders promised the government in 1890 that they would not sanction any more plural marriages, they secretly continued the practice until 1904! This, of course, casts serious doubt on their integrity. Unfortunately, these authorities

followed the path of Joseph Smith, who always denied the practice of polygamy even though he actually had many plural wives.

An example of Joseph Smith's deception is found in the official History of the Church. On May 3, 1844, Joseph Smith responded to the accusation that he "kept six or seven young females as wives":

"What a thing it is for a man to be accused of committing adultery, and having seven wives, when I can only find one.

"I am the same man, and as innocent as I was fourteen years ago; and I can prove them all perjurers." (History of the Church, Vol. 6, page 411)

REVELATION REMAINS

While the Mormon Church leaders no longer allow their members to practice polygamy, they will not remove Joseph Smith's revelation concerning plural marriage from the Doctrine and Covenants. Although this book is canonized as one of the four standard works of the Mormon Church, it is not usually given to outsiders. Many non-Mormons who live outside of Utah have told us that they could not obtain this book from the Mormon missionaries. The church is apparently embarrassed by the polygamy revelation which appears in that book.

The church's reluctance to remove the revelation from the Doctrine and Covenants led to a great deal of confusion. Unfortunately, the double standard of the Mormon leaders after the Manifesto left such a credibility gap that many Mormons continued to hold to polygamy even after the church withdrew its official support of the practice. Like Joseph Smith, they secretly entered into polygamy, and even though the Mormon Church excommunicated a large number of them, the movement did not die out. Consequently, almost a century after Wilford Woodruff issued the Manifesto; there are thousands of people who are still practicing polygamy in Utah. On December 27, 1965, the New York Times reported that as "many as 30,000 men, women and children live in families in which polygamy is practiced." Ben Merson reported:

" 'Today in Utah,' declares William M. Rogers, former special assistant to the State Attorney, 'there are more polygamous families than in the days of Brigham Young. At least 30,000 men, women and children in this state are now living in plural households—and the number is rapidly increasing.' Thousands now live in the adjoining states of Idaho, Nevada, Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico and Arizona—

plus sizable portions in Oregon, California, Canada and Mexico." (Ladies' Home Journal, June 1967, page 78)

The number of polygamists has of course grown since Ben Merson wrote his article. On June 7, 1998, Maxine Hanks wrote an article in the Salt Lake Tribune pointing out that polygamy is a serious problem:

"Utah usually ignores polygamy, hoping it will go away. But its scope and problems have grown and 'festered like cancer,' according to an ex-wife... Polygamy is a relic of 19th-century Mormon fundamentalism, still thriving. Today, there are a dozen major clans consisting of hundreds of families. And there are small independent groups. Often the clans are eccentric and insular, while other polygamists blend unnoticed into contemporary American society. Estimates vary widely, but insiders claim that Mormon fundamentalism may involve 60,000 people scattered from Canada to Mexico across seven Western states. Most of them are practicing some form of polygamy."

Because they claim to go back to the original teachings of Joseph Smith and Brigham Young concerning polygamy and the Adam God Doctrine, they are usually referred to as Mormon "Fundamentalists." The Mormon leaders now find themselves in a very strange situation. On the one hand, they have to uphold polygamy as a righteous principle, but on the other, they have to discourage members of the church from actually entering into its practice. If they completely repudiated the doctrine of polygamy, they would be admitting that Joseph Smith was a deceiver, and that the church was founded on fraud. If, however, they vigorously defended the doctrine, many people would probably enter into the practice and bring disgrace upon the church. Their position is about the same as a person saying, "My church believes in water baptism, but we are not allowed to practice it." Because of this peculiar dilemma, church officials discourage discussion of plural marriage.

As long as the Mormon leaders continue to publish Joseph Smith's revelation on polygamy (Doctrine and Covenants, Section 132), there will no doubt be many people who will enter into the practice. Church leaders of course cannot repudiate this revelation without destroying their doctrine concerning temple marriage. The two doctrines were revealed in the very same revelation. (Temple marriage is the marriage of a man and woman for time and all eternity in a secret ritual performed only in a Mormon temple.)

The fact that polygamy and temple marriage stand or fall together was made very clear by Charles Penrose, who was later sustained as first counselor in the First Presidency, at a conference in Centerville, Utah: "Elder Charles W. Penrose ... showed that the revelation... was [the] only one published on Celestial Marriage,

and if the doctrine of plural marriage was repudiated so must the glorious principle of marriage for eternity, the two being indissolubly interwoven with each other." (Millennial Star, Vol. 45, page 454)

Apostle Orson Pratt argued that "if plurality of marriage is not true or in other words, if a man has no divine right to marry two wives or more in this world, then marriage for eternity is not true, and your faith is in vain, and all the sealing ordinances and powers pertaining to marriages for eternity are vain, worthless, good for nothing; for as sure as one is true the other also must be true." (Journal of Discourses, Vol. 21, page 296)

DAMAGE CONTROL

In 1997, the First Presidency of the Mormon Church and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles decided to publish a manual entitled: "Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Brigham Young." This manual has generated a good deal of controversy. As noted above, Vern Anderson wrote an interesting article that demonstrated the church's attempt to suppress information regarding Brigham Young's plural wives.

Anderson reported that a young woman who had recently married a Mormon came to the home of Valeen Tippetts Avery, a noted Mormon writer, seeking to know why the new manual overlooked Brigham Young's practice of polygamy. Vern Anderson wrote: "She was confused now, and someone had suggested she talk to Avery.

" 'Dr. Avery,' " she said, 'I just got the new Relief Society manual, which is about Brigham Young, and he only has one wife.'

"Avery, a Mormon who knew the pioneer leader had 55 wives, couldn't explain why the lesson manual being used since January by male and female church members in 22 languages paints America's most famous polygamist as a monogamist.

"But she had some advice.

" 'The Mormon church is trying to say to the new people coming into the church, as well as to the larger American society, that there was nothing questionable in the Mormon past,' Avery told the woman. 'And if you want answers to these kinds of sticky questions, you're not going to find them inside accepted Mormon manuals and doctrines'.

"The absence of any mention of polygamy is just one of the criticisms being leveled at the manual...

" 'Whoever compiled the manual is extraordinarily embarrassed by the church's second president,' says Ron Priddis of Signature Books.

" 'It's a religious tract, not history,' scoffs historian Nancy J. Taniguchi....

"Within months of assuming the church presidency in March 1995, Gordon B. Hinckley told the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles to begin updating the curriculum of the adult male priesthood quorums and the Relief Society, both of which had always been separate... Soon, a writing committee was formed, using Discourses of Brigham Young, a 1954 compilation of Young's teachings by Apostle John A. Widtsoe, as the primary source for a new priesthood manual...

"Widtsoe's work, narrowly windowed from the hundreds of Young speeches contained in the multivolume Journal of Discourses, had served to spruce up and sanitize the rough-and-ready frontier prophet for modern audiences. Widtsoe eliminated many of the cantankerous, contradictory, hyperbolic rantings for which Young was known...

"Polygamy, which church founder Joseph Smith secretly practiced... and which Young publicly championed, was dropped 13 years after his death... and appears nowhere in the Widtsoe index or the new manual.

"Also missing from the manual are Young's theories that Adam was God the Father and that Eve was just one of God's wives, the rest having been left on other worlds. Blood atonement was another casualty.

"Worse than a glaring lack of context, though, say critics who have closely compared statements in the manual of Young's sermons, are the resulting misrepresentations of his ideas.

" 'I'd say that about 10 percent of the quotes are overtly lifted out of context, with about another 10 percent that are more subtly altered. In addition, about 5 percent have been abbreviated to avoid offense regarding race, nationality, gender and so on,' Priddis said."

HIDING YOUNG'S WIVES

As noted above, the manual authorized by the church's highest leaders carefully plows around the question of polygamy. The manual does contain a "Historical Summary" that mentions Young's first wife, Miriam Works, and tells of her death. It then states that he married Mary Ann Angell in 1834 (see page vii). On page 4, the manual notes that "six children were born into their family." Unfortunately, the fact that Young actually had 55 wives and 56 children during his lifetime is entirely omitted from the record!

Sandra Tanner, who is the great-great-granddaughter of Brigham Young and one of the editors of this newsletter, finds it ironic that the church would try to hide the truth about Brigham Young's polygamous practices when there must be hundreds of his descendants in the church.

The attempt to conceal Brigham Young's numerous wives is evident. Interestingly, the Deseret News 1997-98 Church Almanac mishandled the matter in the same way. It noted that Joseph Smith was married to "Emma Hale Jan. 18, 1827." The fact that he actually had many plural wives, however, is not found in the "Historical Listing of General Authorities" (see pages 40-41). As a matter of fact, in the Deseret News 1997-98 Church Almanac there is a deliberate attempt to whitewash the first seven presidents of the church because they were all polygamists. The names of these leaders of the church are as follows: Joseph Smith, Jr., Brigham Young, John Taylor, Wilford Woodruff, Lorenzo Snow, Joseph Fielding Smith, and Heber Jeddy Grant.

The interesting thing about this matter is that after mentioning the death of the seventh president of the church in 1945 (Heber Jeddy Grant) the 1997-98 Church Almanac switches its emphasis. From that point on it lists the names of the women that were married to the presidents of the church. Furthermore, it tells the number of children that they had. For example, George Albert Smith, the eighth president, was not a polygamist. Consequently, those who compiled the Almanac were able to provide information regarding his wife and the number of children they had. It was noted that George Albert Smith, "Married Lucy Emily Woodruff May 25, 1892 (she died Nov. 5, 1937); they had three children."

David Oman McKay, the ninth president of the church, lived to the age of 96. His marriage and his children are mentioned in the Almanac. It was noted that he was, "Married to Emma Ray Riggs Jan. 2, 1901 (she died Nov. 14, 1970): they had seven children."

The next six presidents of the church: Joseph Fielding Smith, Harold Bingham Lee, Spencer Woolley Kimball, Ezra Taft Benson, Howard William Hunter and the current leader of the church, President Gordon B. Hinckley, all had the names of their wives mentioned in the current Almanac as well as the number of children they fathered.

The attempt to conceal the fact that the early Mormon leaders were all polygamists is evident to anyone who takes a serious look at the matter (see the Deseret News 1997-98 Church Almanac, pages 14, 40-42).

Some interesting examples of suppression are found on page 165 of the church manual. In the first example we find this admonition by Brigham Young: "...Set that example before your wives and your children..." (Journal of Discourses, Vol. 15, page 229)

In his book published in 1946, Apostle John A. Widtsoe rendered the quote as it appeared in the original Journal of Discourses. Unfortunately, however, those who were in charge of preparing the new manual decided that the word wives should not be used. Consequently, they fixed the text so it read: "...Set that example before your [wife] and your children..." The reader will notice that the word wife is set in brackets. This was clearly an attempt to remove material about plural marriage from the text.

On the same page of the manual we find another attempt to cover up the past. Young is quoted as saying: "Let the husband and father learn to bend his will to the will of his God, and then instruct his [wife] and children..." The reader will note that "wives" has been replaced with the word "wife." Neither the Journal of Discourses nor Apostle Widtsoe's book agrees with the new manual.

Although we have not had the time to make a through search of the material found in the manual, we did find additional evidence of tampering with the text. For example, Brigham Young stated:

"The ordinance of sealing must be performed here man to man, and woman to man..." (Journal of Discourses, Vol. 12, page 165)

In the manual, however, this has been changed to read:

"The ordinance of sealing must be performed here [son] to [father], and woman to man..."

It is obvious that those in authority did not want Brigham Young's comments concerning men being sealed to men to appear in the manual. Another example of the same type of cover-up is found on page 334 of the manual. Brigham Young stated:

"Then man will be sealed to man until the chain is made perfect... (Journal of Discourses, Vol. 15, page 139)

The manual, however, has been changed to read as follows:

"Then [children] will be sealed to [parents] until the chain is made perfect... (Manual page 334)

Most people who are familiar with present-day Mormonism know that dedicated Mormons have a wedding ceremony in the temple in which they seal women to men for time and all eternity. Their children are also sealed to them for eternity. Most Mormons, however, are not aware of the fact that the early leaders of the church had a very unusual ceremony known as the "the law of adoption." Thus a man could have any number of men adopted to him as sons for eternity. Interestingly, the adopted sons were sometimes older than the men who adopted them! Wilford Woodruff, the fourth president of the church, wrote in his journal that he "officiated in Adopting 96 Men to Men." (Wilford Woodruff's Journal, edited by Scott G. Kenney, 1985, Vol. 9, page 408.

The noted Mormon historian Juanita Brooks reported that when a man was sealed to another man it was not considered improper for him to take the surname of that man. Mrs. Brooks also wrote: "If the prophet Joseph were to become a God over a minor planet, he must not only have a large posterity but able assistants of practical skills. Brigham Young had been 'sealed' to Joseph under this law; now he in turn had some thirty-eight young men sealed to him." (John D. Lee: Zealot-Pioneer-Builder-Scapegoat, page 73)

Those who censored the church manual concerning Brigham Young obviously did not want their people to know about this strange doctrine of sealing men to men. This attempt to disguise the truth about what was going on in the early years of Mormonism is deplorable. For more information about this matter see our book, Mormonism: Shadow or Reality? pages 480-483.

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MORMONS: WHO THEY ARE, WHAT THEY BELIEVE - - Discussion Guide

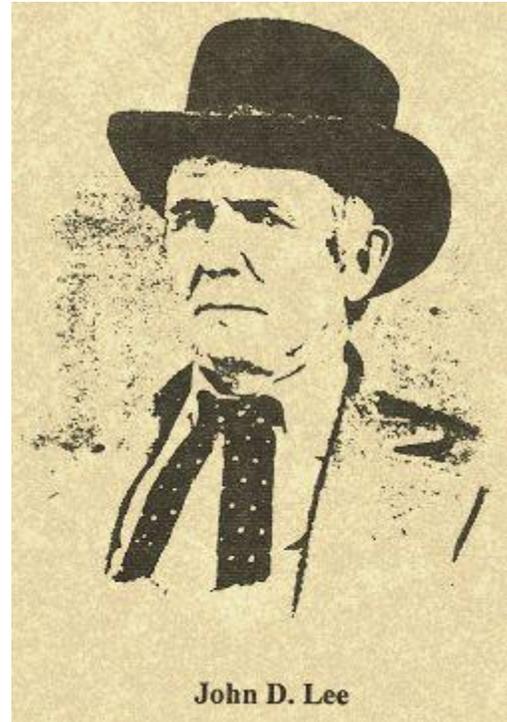
Stumbling Blocks to Mormons:

The Mountain Meadows Massacre

<http://www.utlm.org/newsletters/no98.htm>

September 11th Massacre

September 11, 2001 will forever be an important date to Americans. On that day over 3,000 people on the east coast were killed by foreign terrorists. However, there is another reason this date will never be forgotten. On September 11, 1857, in southern Utah, approximately 120 unarmed non-Mormon men, women and children were murdered in cold blood by Mormons and Indians. This massacre of Americans by Americans was surpassed only by the Oklahoma bombing in 1995. The Provo Herald reported that the 1857 massacre was perpetrated "by the Iron County Mormon militia and a band of Indians at the meadow,..." (Daily Herald, Provo, Utah, December 29, 1996, p. A-1) The article goes on to state:



It was undoubtedly one of the most lamentable tragedies to ever occur in the history of the American West - a debacle the reverberations from which have echoed down through several generations and are still being felt by the descendants of both the perpetrators and those who died.

The attack on the Fancher wagon train at Mountain Meadows was once again in the newspapers this year when a metal plate was discovered that was supposedly written by John D. Lee, one of several local LDS leaders in southern Utah during the 1850's, who participated in the massacre. The Salt Lake Tribune reported:

On Jan. 22, a National Park Service volunteer cleaning out Lee's Fort at Lee's Ferry along the Colorado River discovered a thin sheet of weathered metal inscribed with what purports to be a deathbed confession and blame-fixing of John D. Lee, the only

person convicted in the conspiracy and mass murders of California-bound emigrants at Mountain Meadows in Washington County [Utah].

Lee hid out at Lee's Ferry before he was convicted and executed by firing squad in 1877, going to his grave claiming that LDS Church President Young had scape-goated him. (Salt Lake Tribune, March 16, 2002, p. B3)

In another article, the Tribune reported:

The National Park Service is attempting to determine the authenticity of the rolled message... The misspelled text is dated Jan. 11, 1872, and states that "the time is closing and am willing to tak the blame for the Fancher [wagon train]- Col. Dane - Maj. Higby and me - on orders from Pres. Young thro Geo Smith took part..."

Although other sources attributed to Lee had inferred LDS President Brigham Young's complicity in the crime, the inscription's discovery triggered worldwide media coverage. (Salt Lake Tribune, March 20, 2002, p. B8)

While document experts are questioning the plate's authenticity (see Salt Lake Tribune, May 1, 2002, pp. B1 & 3), the text is consistent with John D. Lee's statements in his book, *Mormonism Unveiled*, reprinted as *Confessions of John D. Lee*.

Prelude to Murder

The attack on the Fancher wagon train in 1857 is a sad example of innocent people being in the wrong place at the wrong time. Richard Abanes explained that the group came through Utah during a particularly tense time:

Conflict between Mormons and federal appointees to various government posts in Utah was inevitable. These began almost immediately after the region was declared a U.S. Territory in 1850, as federal officers were subjected to threats, harassment, and physical violence at the hands of Young and his security forces....

Washington officials finally decided that only a military expedition sent to Utah would be able to restore territorial order to the region....

On May 28, 1857, marching orders to Utah were given to three full regiments (at least 2,500 men), or one-sixth of the U.S. Army, with a compliment of artillery. President James Buchanan's justification to Congress for the decision came in the form of nearly five dozen letters and reports written over a six-year period, "alleging treason,

disloyalty, or other serious offenses," against Mormon leaders. The president's detachment of soldiers,...would eventually be led by Col. Albert Sidney Johnston of the Second U.S. Cavalry,... (One Nation Under Gods, by Richard Abanes, Four Walls Eight Windows Press, 2002, pp. 227-231)

Abanes further comments:

Barely a year had transpired since the inauguration of Brigham's reformation. Moreover, winter was coming, which always meant additional hardship for the Saints. And Johnston's approaching [U.S.] army was almost within striking distance of the territory. "We are invaded by a hostile force who are evidently assailing us to accomplish our overthrow and destruction," Young announced on August 5 [1857]. Anticipating an attack [by the U.S. Army], he then declared martial law, ordering all his forces to "hold themselves in readiness to march, at a moment's notice, to repel any and all such threatened invasion." (One Nation Under Gods, by Richard Abanes, pp. 243-244)

Emotions ran high among the Mormons. Some had taken an oath to avenge the deaths of Joseph Smith and his brother, Hyrum, and held the gentiles [non-Mormons] responsible for their being driven out of their homes. Apostle Abraham H. Cannon recorded in his journal that his father, George Q. Cannon (a member of the First presidency) admitted that when "he had his endowments in Nauvoo that he took an oath against the murderers of the prophet Joseph as well as other prophets, and if he had ever met any of those who had taken a hand in that massacre he would undoubtedly have attempted to avenge the blood of the martyrs." (Daily Journal of Abraham H. Cannon, Dec. 6, 1889, p. 205, original at BYU; photocopy at University of Utah)

This oath took on added meaning when word was received that Apostle Parley P. Pratt had been murdered in Arkansas on May 13, 1857. Apostle Wilford Woodruff recorded in his journal for June 23, 1857:

The Eastern mails arived at 5 past 2 oclok 23 days from Indipendance....We learn that all Hell is boiling over against the saints in Utah. We also are informed that Elder Parley P Pratt was Murdered By [] MCLain who shot him in Arkansas. This was painful news to his Family. The papers of the United States are filled with bitter revileings against us. The devil is exceding mad. (Wilford Woodruff's Journal, edited by Scott Kenney, Signature Books, Vol. 5, p. 61)

It appears that this murder helped to seal the fate of the peaceful, wealthy group of non-Mormon farmers from Arkansas. Besides the Mormons avenging the blood of the

prophets, there was the added incentive of money, property and livestock to be gotten from the group. A description of the wagon train is given by David Bigler:

Led by 52-year-old John T. Baker and Alexander Fancher, 45, the company was made up mainly of farm families from northwest Arkansas moving west to make new homes in California. Among an estimated 135 members, it numbered at least fifteen women, most young mothers. Dependent children made up the largest age group, more than sixty, or roughly half the total. Of these, more than twenty were girls between the ages of seven and eighteen. The rest were adult males, mostly heads of families, but they also included some teamsters and other hired hands.

The Arkansas company was relatively affluent. Most of its wealth took the form of a large herd of cattle, estimated by various observers to number from three hundred to a thousand head, not including other animals, work oxen, horses, or mules....

Since they were moving permanently, Baker-Fancher train members were also better off in other worldly possessions than typical emigrant parties on the California Trail. John W. Baker later placed the value of property his father took on the journey at "the full sum of ten thousand dollars." Besides animals, some thirty or forty wagons and equipment, members also carried varying amounts of cash to cover unforeseen costs on the journey. (Forgotten Kingdom: The Mormon Theocracy in the American West, 1847-1896, by David Bigler, Utah State University Press, 1998, pp.159-160)

At first the large wagon train was traveling south at the rate of about seven miles a day. But after a troubling meeting with a Mormon Apostle and some Indian chiefs on August 25th, they increased their speed to twelve miles a day (see Forgotten Kingdom, p.167). Bigler commented:

As they [the wagon train] hurried to get away, [newly appointed Santa Clara Indian Mission president Jacob] Hamblin and some twelve Indian chiefs on September first met with Brigham Young and his most trusted interpreter, 49-year-old Dimick B. Huntington, at Great Salt Lake. Taking part in this pow-wow were...leaders of desert bands along the Santa Clara and Virgin rivers.

Little was known of what they talked about until recently when it came to light that Huntington (apparently speaking for Young) told the chiefs that he "gave them all the cattle that had gone to Cal[ifornia by] the south rout[e]." The gift "made them open their eyes," he said. But "you have told us not to steal," the Indians replied. "So I have," Huntington said, "but now they have come to fight us & you for when they kill us they will kill you." The chiefs knew what cattle he was giving them. They belonged to the Baker-Fancher train. (Forgotten Kingdom, pp.167-168)

Mormon writers have claimed that some in the Fancher group had been boasting that they had been involved in the murder of Smith (see Comprehensive History of the Church, vol.4, pp.154-155). However, this may have just been a rumor used to justify the killings. In her biography of John D. Lee, Juanita Brooks tells of the meeting of the local LDS leaders in Cedar City, on September 6th, to discuss the fate of the wagon train. She concludes:

So the discussion went on, some in favor of "doing away with" the men who had been the chief offenders, others preferring to let them all go...

Thus events followed one another, leading inexorably to the final tragedy....Strong hatred, deep-seated beliefs, and greed were all combined in the drama. That this was a wealthy train with good wagons and ox teams and horses; with a large herd of cattle; and with loads of household goods and necessities was without doubt a factor with some who were involved. Their own deep religious convictions increased in potency—that "the blood of the Prophet should be avenged" and that by their own covenants, taken in the Nauvoo Temple or in the Endowment House, they were bound to help carry out God's will. (John Doyle Lee, by Juanita Brooks, Utah State University, pp. 207-208)

The initial attack on the group was started on September 7th, but the immigrants held their ground. It became apparent that it would take a greater effort to conquer the wagon train. When the first attempt was not successful, the Mormon leaders called a meeting and developed a new strategy. Richard Abanes writes:

So on September 11, John D. Lee and William Bateman approached the wagon-train under a white flag. After entering the camp, they convinced the Arkansans that their only chance was to surrender their arms and exit the area under the protection of the Mormon militia that had arrived and was waiting to serve as an escort. Soon afterward, the men of the Baker-Fancher party gave up their weapons and fell into a procession suggested by their Mormon rescuers.

The first wagon, carrying children under six years old, was driven by Samuel McCurdy. The second wagon, driven by Samuel Knight, carried two or three wounded men and a woman. The remaining women and older children marched at a slight distance. About a quarter of a mile farther back walked the unarmed men, formed in a single line, each one escorted by an armed Mormon guard. Then without warning, the wagons stopped between some hills thick with brush.

Higbee, on horseback at the rear flank of the male emigrants, also halted. "Do your duty," he shouted. With sudden fury, the Mormon soldiers shot and/or knifed the men they were escorting, as the women and children up ahead looked back and began

screaming in horror. At that same moment, the gunfire cued Indians hiding in the nearby brush to emerge and begin their attack against the defenseless children and their mothers, all of whom finally understood with terrible clarity what was happening. The Indians, along with several Mormons disguised by native clothes and war-paint, butchered their victims...The screams and gunshots continued, as the wounded emigrants [from the earlier attack] in the wagons were executed at point blank range. A few of the Arkansas men, who had managed to avoid the initial assault by their escorts, desperately tried to run to the aid of their families. But they were cut down by Mormons on horseback almost as soon as they began racing toward the carnage....

The brutal assault lasted but a few minutes. The only survivors were seventeen children and infants, all six years old or younger, some of whom had been wounded by the gunfire. They had been spared because their blood, according to the Mormon doctrine, was still innocent. Fifty men, about twenty women, and approximately fifty children between the ages of seven and eighteen, had been slaughtered. Their bodies were left exposed until the next day, when [John D.] Lee, Haight, and other local church leaders rode back to the location and dumped the corpses into shallow trenches, covered by a thin layer of dirt. (One Nation Under Gods, pp. 247-250)

After the Massacre

After the massacre the surviving children were rounded up and taken to Jacob Hamblin's home. A few were later placed in various LDS families. The goods and wagons were later distributed among the Mormons and Indians. Mr. Abanes explains:

Regarding the property taken from the train, it was divided up throughout the various Mormon communities via a public auction at Cedar City. Nothing was discarded. According to [U.S. Army Maj. James] Carleton's report, the Mormons even took "[t]he clothing stripped from the corpses, bloody and with bits of flesh upon it, shredded by the bullets." ...As for the seventeen remaining children, they were finally returned in 1859 to Arkansas relatives, after being located and claimed by federal agent Jacob Forney. The Mormons, in turn, actually billed the U.S. government thousands of dollars in reimbursements for boarding, clothing and schooling the children during their time in Utah. (One Nation Under Gods, p. 251)

Why Participate?

Outsiders often wonder why a person would have agreed to participate in such a horrible act. Weber State University professor Gene Sessions commented on the pressure to go along with the crowd:

Somebody made a terrible decision that this has got to be done...I don't justify it in any way. But I do believe it would have taken more guts to stay home in Cedar City on those days in 1857 than it would to go out there to the meadows and take part. (Salt Lake Tribune, March 14, 2000, p. A-4)

To understand that type of fanaticism, one must understand early Mormon trials, fears, prejudices, oaths of obedience sworn in the temple and Brigham Young's teachings on "blood atonement." Historian David Bigler, author of *Forgotten Kingdom*, says:

When you have 50 to perhaps more than 70 men participate in an event like this, you can't just say they got upset.... We have to believe they did not want to do what they did any more than you or I would. We have to recognize they thought what they were doing is what authority required of them. The only question to be resolved is did that authority reach all the way to Salt Lake City? (Salt Lake Tribune, March 14, 2000, p. A-4)

Brigham Young Responsible?

Whether or not Brigham Young directly ordered the massacre may never be known. However, he seemed to have no problem with the bloody deed after the fact. When Young visited the site in 1861 Apostle Wilford Woodruff wrote in his diary:

May 25 [1861] A very cold morning much ice on the creek. I wore my great coat & mittens. We visited the Mt. Meadows Monument not up at the burial place of 120 persons killed by Indians in 1857. The pile of stone was about twelve feet high but beginning to tumble down. A wooden cross is placed on top with the following words, Vengeance is mine and I will repay saith the Lord. Pres. Young said it should be Vengeance is mine and I have taken a little. (The Mountain Meadows Massacre, by Juanita Brooks, University of Oklahoma, p. 182).

David Bigler adds:

One of Young's escort lassoed the cross [on the burial site] with a rope, turned his horse, and pulled it down. Brigham Young "didn't say another word," recalled Dudley Leavitt. "He didn't give an order. He just lifted his right arm to the square [a temple gesture], and in five minutes there wasn't one stone left upon another. He didn't have to tell us what he wanted done. We understood." (Forgotten Kingdom, p.178)

Juanita Brooks observed:

While Brigham Young and George A. Smith, the church authorities chiefly responsible, did not specifically order the massacre, they did preach sermons and set up social conditions which made it possible....Brigham Young was accessory after the fact, in that he knew what had happened, and how and why it happened. Evidence of this is abundant and unmistakable, and from the most impeccable Mormon sources.

Knowing then, why did not President Young take action against these men?... He did have the men chiefly responsible released from their offices in the church following a private church investigation, but since he understood well that their acts had grown out of loyalty to him and his cause, he would not betray them into the hands of their common "enemy."...Someone assuredly warned all the participants, so that for many years they were all able to evade arrest.

The church leaders decided to sacrifice Lee only when they could see that it would be impossible to acquit him without assuming a part of the responsibility themselves.... this token sacrifice had to be made. Hence the farce which was the second trial of [John D.] Lee. The leaders evidently felt that by placing all the responsibility squarely upon him, already doomed, they could lift the stigma from the church as a whole. (The Mountain Meadows Massacre, p. 219-220)

The Scapegoat

Twenty years after the massacre John D. Lee, one of dozens of men involved in the attack, was the only man convicted and executed by the U.S. government for the crime. Mr. Bigler comments:

But too many had been involved to cover up the atrocity by tearing down monuments, taking oaths of secrecy, or swearing to falsehoods, however artfully contrived. As more and more of the story was revealed, protests spread and outrage grew....So it came about that one man was chosen to pay the price for many.

The most likely candidate, John D. Lee, was excommunicated by his church in 1870 as a show of punishment and sent to operate a ferry at a remote location... In November 1874 Lee was arrested. He was tried a year later at Beaver, Utah, for his part in the massacre, but the trial was abortive. Others included on the indictment could not be found. Missing, too, were key witnesses, and those who did appear suffered lapses in memory....as a result, while all four non-Mormon jury members voted for conviction, eight Mormon jurors chose acquittal.

In a second trial, restricted by agreement to Lee's role, witnesses found their memories restored and an all-Mormon jury unanimously found him guilty. On March 23, 1877, he was taken to Mountain Meadows, the scene of the crime, where at age 64 he was perched on the edge of his coffin and shot to death by a firing squad. (Forgotten Kingdom, pp.178-179)

Cover-Up

The Mormon efforts to cover-up the details and white-wash the massacre continues even today. In March of 2000 the Salt Lake Tribune told of the accidental unearthing of "the skeletal remains of at least 29 slain emigrants" at Mountain Meadows in Southern Utah. (Salt Lake Tribune, March 13, 2000, p. A1)

Scientists wanted to do a full study of the remains. However, Gov. Mike Leavitt, a descendent of one of the participants of the massacre, "encouraged state officials to quickly rebury the remains, even though the basic scientific analysis required by state law was unfinished.... the governor's intercession was one of many dramas played out last summer, all serving to underscore Mountain Meadows' place as the Bermuda Triangle of Utah's historical and theological landscape. The end result may be another sad chapter in the massacre's legacy of bitterness, denial and suspicion. (Salt Lake Tribune, March 12, 2000, p. A-1)

A rushed examination of the bones prior to reburial in 2000 showed:

At least five adults had gunshot exit wounds in the posterior area of the cranium — a clear indication some were shot while facing their killers....Women also were shot in the head at close range....At least one youngster, believed to be about 10 to 12 years old, was killed by a gunshot to the top of the head. ... Virtually all of the "post-cranial" (from the head down) bones displayed extensive carnivore damage, confirming written accounts that bodies were left on the killing field to be gnawed by wolves and coyotes. (Salt Lake Tribune, March 13, 2000, p. A-5)

The Salt Lake Tribune quoted the following from Gene Sessions, president of the Mountain Meadows Association:

It raises the old question of whether Brigham Young ordered the massacre and whether Mormons do terrible things because they think their leaders want them to do terrible things. (Salt Lake Tribune, Mar. 14, 2000, p. A-4)

The paper went on to report:

Noted Mormon writer Levi Peterson has tried to explain the difficulty that Mormons and their church face in confronting the atrocity of Mountain Meadows.

"If good Mormons committed the massacre, if prayerful leaders ordered it, if apostles and a prophet knew about it and later sacrificed John D. Lee, then the sainthood of even the modern church seems tainted," he has written. "Where is the moral superiority of Mormonism, where is the assurance that God has made Mormons his new chosen people?" ...

But acknowledging any complicity in Mountain Meadows' macabre past is fundamentally problematic for the modern church.

"The massacre has left the Mormon Church on the horns of a dilemma," says Utah historian Will Bagley, author of a forthcoming book on Mountain Meadows. "It can't acknowledge its historic involvement in a mass murder, and if it can't accept its accountability, it can't repent." (Salt Lake Tribune, March 14, 2000, p. A-4)

(To date the most thorough research on the 1857 attack has been *The Mountain Meadows Massacre*, by Juanita Brooks. However, Oklahoma University Press has just announced the forthcoming book, *Blood of the Prophets: Brigham Young and the Massacre at Mountain Meadows*, by Will Bagley. Publication date is set for September 2002, price will be \$39.95 in hardcover.)

LDS Church Suppresses Documents

In October, 2001, controversy erupted over who had the rights to various research papers of Dr. Leonard Arrington. Arrington, a well-respected historian and former professor at Utah State University, served as the official LDS Church historian from 1972-1982 and was then transferred to the Brigham Young University. During his lifetime of research he collected a vast amount of photos and documents relating to sensitive areas of Mormon history. After his death in 1999, his papers and research

were placed in the Utah State University Library in Logan, Utah, but were not opened to the public until October 2001. The Salt Lake Tribune explained:

The LDS Church contended Thursday it has an "ironclad" document giving it full ownership of some of the papers historian Leonard Arrington deeded to Utah State University before his death. USU isn't so sure. ...

On Oct. 11, the Arrington Collection, containing 658 boxes, was opened to the public.

Within days, eight LDS Church employees went through the entire collection, some boxes more than once, over four days, said Ann Buttars, director of USU's special collections. ...

After that initial search, the church asked the university to set aside about 148 boxes of papers. ... Some of the items in the collection, such as minutes of meetings of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, are copies of documents the church does not make available to researchers, [Richard] Turley [managing director of the LDS Church's Historical Dept.] said.

"We consider they are of a sacred, private and confessional nature," he said. (Salt Lake Tribune, Oct. 26, 2001, p. A1 &A11)

The Tribune article on October 26th contained a long list of disputed documents, minutes of various Council of Twelve meetings, items relating to the temple ceremony, private letters of church leaders, etc.

Then, on Nov. 4, 2001, University of Utah Professor Dean May wrote to the Tribune protesting that the Arrington papers did not belong to the LDS Church and should be given to the Utah State University as Arrington requested (Salt Lake Tribune, Editorial page p. AA3).

In a letter to the Tribune, Steven Sorensen, director of LDS Church Archives, argued that Arrington's papers included items owned by the LDS Church and they should be returned to them. "Among those items were some 70 years of minutes of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, temple records, employment files, and other materials considered by church officials to be sacred, private, or confidential." (Salt Lake Tribune, Nov. 11, 2001, p. AA11)

One wonders how the church determined what was "sacred, private, or confidential"? Or was the real criteria whether the documents were potentially embarrassing? After all, most of this material is about 150 years old and some of it is already available in college libraries.

On Nov. 25, 2001, the Salt Lake Tribune reported:

Barely a month after LDS Church officials said they owned up to 60 percent of a huge collection of papers donated to Utah State University by the late Mormon historian Leonard Arrington, the church graciously accepted a half-box of material....They include only a copy of a Book of Anointings, which describes sacred Mormon rituals; portions of LDS Apostle Heber C. Kimball's 1845-56 diaries discussing temple ceremonies, and partial copies of minutes from the church's Council of Twelve meetings between 1877 and 1950. (Salt Lake Tribune, Nov. 25, 2001, pp. A1 and A15)

Ironically, the Book of Anointings material is already in the Marriott Library at the University of Utah, and Heber C. Kimball's diaries have been published (see *On the Potter's Wheel: The Diaries of Heber C. Kimball*, edited by Stanley B. Kimball, Signature Books, 1987). Quotes from the Book of Anointings are also in the book, *The Mysteries of Godliness*, pp. 87-90.

The Deseret News described the non-temple documents as follows:

The other returned documents consist of a "smattering" of minutes of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles regarding a particular topic that Arrington was commissioned to research for a private church study. Daines [the Arrington family lawyer] declined to identify the topic....Daines said the issue regarding the minutes was not one of content, but of ownership, and that details of how these papers ended up in Arrington's collection are unclear." (Deseret News, Nov. 25, 2001)

Since the documents in question were copies and not the originals, one is forced to conclude that the issue is truly one of "content" rather than "ownership." Even the topic of the "private church study" is being suppressed.

Second Anointing

Most people are aware of the LDS Church's expanding temple building program. To date, there are over 100 temples in operation around the world. Through the years there have been numerous published exposés of the endowment ritual (see *Evolution of the Mormon Temple Ceremony: 1842-1990*). However, there is another little known ceremony given by invitation from church leadership called the Second Anointing. In order to qualify for this anointing one must have proven him/herself worthy and already participated in the endowment ceremony.

LDS researcher David Buerger pointed out:

The higher ordinance was necessary to confirm the revealed promises of "kingly powers" (i.e., godhood) received in the endowment's initiatory ordinances. Godhood was therefore the meaning of this higher ordinance, or second anointing... (Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought, Spring 1983, p. 21).

The couple receiving their second anointing were to go to the temple, and then dress in their temple robes. On December 26, 1866, LDS Apostle Wilford Woodruff wrote in his journal:

I met with The Presidency and Twelve at President Youngs Office at about 12 oclok. The subject of the Endowments & 2d Anointings was presented when President Young said that the order of the 2n anointing was for the persons to be anointed to be cloathed in their Priestly robes the man upon the right hand and wife or wives upon the left hand. The Administrator may be dressed in his usual Clothing or in his Priestly Robes as he may see fit. The meeting Should be opened by Prayer then the Administrator should Anoint the man A King & Priest unto the Most High God. Then he should Anoint his wife or wives Queens & Priestess unto her husband. (Wilford Woodruff's Journal, vol. 6, p.307)

On Jan. 11, 1846, Brigham Young and his wife received their second anointing. Part of their anointing reads:

Brother Brigham Young, I pour this holy, consecrated oil upon your head, and anoint thee a King and a Priest of the Most High God... for princes shall bow at thy feet and deliver unto thee their treasures; ...And I seal thee up unto Eternal Life,...And thou shalt attain unto [the] Eternal Godhead... that thou mayest... create worlds and redeem them; so shall thy joy be full...

Elder Heber Chase Kimble then anointed Mary An Young, a Queen & Priestes unto her husband (Brigham Young) in the Church...Sister Mary Ann Young, I pour upon thy head this holy, consecrated oil, and seal upon thee all the blessings of the everlasting priesthood, in conjunction with thy husband: and I anoint thee to be a Queen and Priestess unto thy husband,... inasmuch as thou dost obey his counsel;... And I seal thee up unto Eternal Life, thou shalt come forth in the morning of the first resurrection and inherit with him all the honors, glories, and power of Eternal Lives, and that thou shalt attain unto the eternal Godhead, so thy exaltation shall be perfect,... (Book of Anointings, as quoted in The Mysteries of Godliness: A History of Mormon Temple Worship, by David John Buerger, Smith Research Associates, 1994, pp. 88-90)

Originally, this ceremony seemed to be a guarantee of godhood. Mr. Buerger observed:

Because of the strict confidentiality surrounding second anointings, it is unclear precisely what long-term effect they had on recipients nor, for that matter, the degree to which the conferral of godhood was held to be conditional or unconditional. Most early nineteenth-century statements imply that the ordinance was unconditional. (The Mysteries of Godliness, p.112-3)

Today, the church leaders seem to be minimizing the importance of the second anointing and refer to it as a "special blessing" but not necessary for exaltation (godhood) (see The Mysteries of Godliness, p.165). The official LDS magazine Ensign, March 2002, p.18, emphasized the necessity of the endowment (as opposed to the second anointing) for "eternal exaltation." The article went on to state: "Obedience to the sacred covenants made in temples qualifies us for eternal life..." According to Mormonism, a person's endowment and temple marriage starts one on the road to godhood (D&C 132:20 - "Then shall they be gods"). While some Mormons emphasize that the word "gods" in the revelation is not capitalized, editions prior to 1900 have it capitalized. Also an official statement of the LDS First Presidency used the capitalized form, and declared that man's ultimate goal was to evolve "into a God." (Ensign, Feb. 2002, p. 30)

Joseph Smith taught that men had the capacity to achieve Godhood and rule their own planets. He also taught that our God was originally a mortal who achieved Godhood under the direction of another God. (see History of the Church, Vol. 6, pp. 305-6, 474) While Mormons say they worship only one God, they believe there are countless Gods in the universe.

However the Bible clearly teaches that there is only one God. Isaiah 44:8 says: "Is there a God beside me? Yea, there is no God; I know not any."

Innocent Blood?

While the Bible offers the repentant sinner forgiveness for any sin, including murder (see Matt. 12:31; Mark 3:28-29; Acts 8:1; Acts 9:1; 1 Tim. 1:15), the LDS Church maintains a murderer cannot achieve eternal life (which is different from merely going to heaven). One of the few conditions placed on those who received their temple endowment and second anointing was that they were not to shed innocent blood. The Doctrine and Covenants states:

Thou shalt not kill; and he that kills shall not have forgiveness in this world, nor in the world to come. (D&C 42: 18)

It also states that those who have been married "in the new and everlasting covenant" will be forgiven of any sin except murder "wherein they shed innocent blood." (D&C 132:19 & 26) This was a major concern for those involved in planning the Mountain Meadows massacre. Mr. Buerger explains:

John D. Lee's recollection of the deliberations preceding the 1857 Mountain Meadows massacre describes their concern that by killing the women and children, they might be guilty of shedding innocent blood. This task was left to the Indians so that "it would be certain that no Mormon would be guilty of shedding innocent blood—if it should happen that there was any innocent blood in the company that were to die." (John D. Lee, *Mormonism Unveiled*,...) ...Lee received his second anointing on 17 January 1846,... (The Mysteries of Godliness, p.124)

The LDS teaching on murder has led the Mormons to conclude that when King David, in the Bible, arranged to have Uriah killed (2 Samuel 11:15-17) he committed an unpardonable sin that would keep him from exaltation. Joseph Smith taught:

...no murderer hath eternal life. ... Now, we read that many bodies of the Saints arose at Christ's resurrection,... but it seems that David did not. Why? Because he had been a murderer.... the man who forfeited his life to the injured laws of his country, by shedding innocent blood;...cannot be forgiven,... (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, compiled by Joseph Fielding Smith, Deseret Book, 1977, p.188)

Evidently the LDS Church has now decided that John D. Lee did not shed "innocent blood" as they restored all of his temple blessings, which would include his sealings to his plural wives, in 1961 (see *The Mountain Meadows Massacre*, by Juanita Brooks, p.223). John D. Lee was married to nineteen women, and fathered 60 children. (see John Doyle Lee, Appendix) Three of his marriages were after the massacre, thus showing that the LDS leadership still considered him a faithful Mormon.

One wonders how the LDS Church makes a distinction between King David's sin being unforgivable and John D. Lee's actions acceptable? King David only conspired to have one innocent person killed. Lee helped orchestrate the murder of 120 innocent men, women and children.

Husband to Call Wife from the Grave

Early Mormon Apostle Heber C. Kimball recorded the second anointing ceremony in his diary:

February the first 1844. My self and wife Vilate was annointed Preast and Preastest [Priestess] unto our God under the Hands of B[righam]. Young and by the voys [voice] of the Holy Order.

Apriel the first 4 day 1844. I Heber C. Kimball recieved the washing of my feet, and was annointed by my wife Vilate fore my burial, that is my feet, head, Stomach. Even as Mary did Jesus, that she mite have a claim on Him in the Reserrection. In the City of Nauvoo.

In 1845 I recieved the washing of my feet by \[which follows is in Vilate's hand:]\

I Vilate Kimball do hereby certify that on the first day of April 1844 I attended to washing and anointed the head, /Stomach/ and feet of my dear companion Heber C. Kimball, that I may have claim upon him in the morning of the first Reserrection. Vilate Kimball. (On the Potter's Wheel: The Diaries of Heber C. Kimball, pp.56-7)

Mr. Buerger gave the following outline of the current second anointing ceremony:

In practice today the second anointing is actually the first of two parts comprising the fullness of the priesthood ceremony....In the Salt Lake temple, second anointings are usually administered on Sunday afternoons....The first part of the ceremony—being anointed and ordained a king and priest or queen and priestess—is administered in a Holy of Holies or special sealing room and is performed by or under the direction of the president of the church. There are usually but not always two witnesses. Only the husband and wife need to dress in temple robes. The husband leads in a prayer circle, offering signs and praying at an altar. He is then anointed with oil on his head, after which he is ordained a king and a priest unto God to rule and reign in the House of Israel forever... He is also blessed with the following (as the officiator determines): the power to bind and loose, curse and bless, the blessings of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; the Holy Spirit of Promise; to attain godhood; to be sealed to eternal life (if not done previously); to have the power to open the heavens; and other blessings.

Next the wife is anointed...to be an heir to all the blessings sealed upon her husband...to receive the blessings of godhood;...to have the power of eternal lives (of posterity without end);...

At the conclusion of this ordinance, the washing of the husband's feet by his wife is explained to the couple. It is a private ordinance, without witnesses. Its significance is related to the resurrection of the dead, as Heber Kimball noted. The couple is told to attend to the ordinance at a date of their choosing in the privacy of their home. At the determined time the husband dedicates the home and the room in which they perform the ordinance, which then follows the pattern of Mary's anointing Jesus in Matthew 12. The ordinance symbolically prepares the husband for burial, and in this way the wife lays claim upon him in the resurrection.....Kimball's journal entry derives from a speculative belief taught by early Mormons that Jesus married Mary and Martha, the sisters of Lazarus. (The Mysteries of Godliness, pp. 66-67)

The emphasis on the wife's assertion that "I may have claim upon him in the morning of the first Resurrection" seems to relate to the teaching in the temple that the woman is called from the grave to exaltation by her husband. Men and women are given new names in the temple and the wife is instructed not to tell her name to anyone other than her husband. Preaching in 1857, Apostle Erastus Snow declared:

Do you uphold your husband before God as your lord?...Can you get into the celestial kingdom without him?...No woman will get into the celestial kingdom, except her husband receives her... (Journal of Discourses, vol.5, p.291)

Apostle Charles Penrose, writing in 1897, explained:

In the resurrection, they stand side by side and hold dominion together. Every man who overcomes all things and is thereby entitled to inherit all things, receives power to bring up his wife to join him in the possession and enjoyment thereof.

In the case of a man marrying a wife in the everlasting covenant who dies while he continues in the flesh and marries another by the same divine law, each wife will come forth in her order and enter with him into his glory. ("Mormon" Doctrine Plain and Simple, by Charles W. Penrose, p.66)

Writing in 1846, one former Mormon woman described receiving her new temple name:

In one place [during the temple ritual] I was presented with a new name, which I was not to reveal to any living creature, save the man to whom I should be sealed for eternity. By this name I am to be called in eternity as after the resurrection. (As quoted in The Mysteries of Godliness, p. 94)

Temples and the Bible

One of the most important tenets of the LDS Church is the necessity of temple ordinances. LDS Apostle Bruce R. McConkie explained:

From the days of Adam to the present, whenever the Lord has had a people on earth, temples and temple ordinances have been a crowning feature of their worship. ... The inspired erection and proper use of temples is one of the great evidences of the divinity of the Lord's work....where these are not, the Church and kingdom and the truth of heaven are not. (Mormon Doctrine, p.780-781)

The LDS Church teaches that only those with proper priesthood authority can administer these essential rites. Joseph Smith supposedly restored the original temple ceremony of the Old Testament. The LDS temples are used for eternal marriages for both the living and the dead, as well as baptisms for the dead. A person must have a temple marriage in order to progress to godhood. LDS prophet Spencer W. Kimball said:

Only through celestial marriage can one find the strait way, the narrow path. Eternal life cannot be had in any other way. (Deseret News, Church Section, November 12, 1977, Salt Lake City, Utah)

These ordinances, which are performed in special white clothing and a green apron, include secret handshakes and passwords. These are kept secret and are never to be discussed outside of the temple.

The LDS temple endowments and other rites are not based on biblical teaching. The temple in the Old Testament, with its High Priest and animal sacrifices, was a foreshadowing of Christ's role as both our final High Priest and last blood offering for sin (Hebrews, chapters 5-9). When Christ died on the cross the veil of the temple was torn in half (Luke 23:45) thus signifying that the Old Testament temple ritual had been replaced by the atonement of Christ.

Eternal Marriage

There is nothing in the New Testament about "eternal marriages" and secret rituals in a Christian temple. The Jewish temple ceremonies had no baptisms or marriages and are clearly explained in the Old Testament (Exodus, chapters 26-30). The only eternal marriage in the Bible is the spiritual marriage of the believer to Christ. Paul wrote to the Christians at Corinth: "I have espoused you to one husband [Christ], that

I may present you [the Christians] as a chaste virgin to Christ" (2 Corinthians 11:2). Paul also wrote in Romans 7:4 that Christians are to be "married to another, even to him [Christ] who is raised from the dead,...." This is a spiritual union, not an actual marriage. Christ never mentions the need for an eternal marriage. In fact, he taught just the opposite. In Luke 20:34-36 Christ said:

The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage: but they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage:...for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God,...

Notice that Christ equated those who are "the children of God" with angels, not married couples. Christians look forward to being with their loved ones in heaven. As brothers and sisters in Christ we will be together as one large family, the family of God (Galatians 3:26). However, there is nothing in the Bible to indicate that this would include marriage relationships.

There is nothing in the Bible to indicate that the Christians were to build temples. Some of the early Jewish Christians met in the courtyard of the temple in Jerusalem for prayer but they certainly were not performing any rites like the Mormon ceremony. The New Testament teaches that God's temple is a spiritual building made up of all Christians, with Christ as the foundation (1 Corinthians 3:16). This is emphasized in Ephesians 2:19-22:

Now therefore ye are no more strangers...but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

Contrary to the LDS teaching on the necessity of temple ritual, the Bible offers eternal life, in its fullest meaning, to all those who have placed their trust in Christ's atonement. (1 John 5:11-13)

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MORMONS: WHO THEY ARE, WHAT THEY BELIEVE - - Discussion Guide

Stumbling Blocks to Mormons:
Brigham Young's Teachings on Blood Atonement
<http://mormonthink.com/QUOTES/bloodatonement.htm>

Blood Atonement

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”
- Holy Bible, KJV, John 1:9

“For you know that it was not with perishable things... that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.”
- Holy Bible, 1 Peter 1:18

“But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.”
- Holy Bible, 1 John 1:7

“I [am] opposed to hanging, even if a man kill another, I will shoot him, or cut off his head, spill his blood on the ground, and let the smoke thereof ascend up to God; and if ever I have the privilege of making a law on that subject, I will have it so.”
- Prophet Joseph Smith, Jr., *History of the Church*, v. 5, p. 296, 1949

“[My life was in danger] if I remained there, because of my protest against the doctrine of Blood Atonement and other new doctrines that were brought into the Church.”
- Apostle William Smith, brother of Joseph Smith, Jr., *Temple Lot Case*, p. 98

“I will tell you how much I love those characters. If they had any respect to their own welfare, they would come forth and say, whether Joseph Smith was a Prophet or not, ‘We shed his blood, and now let us atone for it;’ and they would be willing to have their heads chopped off, that their blood might run upon the ground, and the smoke of it rise before the Lord as an incense for their sins.”
- Prophet Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, v. 2, p. 179, February 18, 1855

“The time has been in Israel under the law of God, the celestial law, or that which pertains to the celestial law, for it is one of the laws of that kingdom where our Father dwells, that if a man was found guilty of adultery, he must have his blood shed, and that is near at hand.”
- Prophet Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, v. 4, p. 219

“Will you love your brothers and sisters likewise, when they have committed a sin that cannot be atoned for without the shedding of their blood? Will you love that man or woman well enough to shed their blood? That is what Jesus

Christ meant.”

- Prophet Brigham Young, *Deseret News*, April 16, 1856

“Any of you who understand the principles of eternity – if you have sinned a sin requiring the shedding of blood, except the sin unto death – would not be satisfied or rest until your blood should be spilled, that you might gain the salvation you desire. This is the way to love mankind.”

- Prophet Brigham Young, *Deseret News*, April 16, 1856

“I say, rather than that apostates should flourish here, I will unsheath [sic] my bowie knife, and conquer or die [Great commotion in the congregation, and a simultaneous burst of feeling, assenting to the declaration.]. Now, you nasty apostates, clear out, or judgment will be put to the line, and righteousness to the plummet [Voices, generally, ‘go it, go it.']. If you say it is right, raise your hands [All hands up.]. Let us call upon the Lord to assist us in this, and every good work.”

- Prophet Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, v. 1, p. 83; online at http://journals.mormonfundamentalism.org/Vol_01/refJDvol1-16.html

“Suppose you found your brother in bed with your wife, and put a javelin through both of them. You would be justified, and they would atone for their sins, and be received into the Kingdom of God. I would at once do so, in such a case; and under the circumstances, I have no wife whom I love so well that I would not put a javelin through her heart, and I would do it with clean hands.... There is not a man or woman, who violates the covenants made with their God, that will not be required to pay the debt. The blood of Christ will never wipe that out, your own blood must atone for it.”

- Prophet Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, v. 1, pp. 108-109

“If you want to know what to do with a thief that you may find stealing, I say kill him on the spot, and never suffer him to commit another iniquity. I will prove by my works whether I can mete out justice to such persons, or not. I would consider it just as much my duty to do that, as to baptize a man for the remission of his sins.”

- Prophet Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, v. 1, pp. 108-109

I know that there are transgressors, who, if they knew themselves and the only condition upon which they can obtain forgiveness, would beg of their brethren to shed their blood, that the smoke might ascend to God as an offering to appease the wrath that is kindled against them, and that the law might have its course.”

- Prophet Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, v. 4, p. 43

“Now take a person in this congregation who has knowledge with regard to being saved... and suppose that he has committed a sin that he knows will deprive him of that exaltation which he desires, and that he cannot attain to it without the shedding of blood, and also knows that by having his blood shed he will atone for that sin and may be saved and exalted with the God, is there a man or woman in this house but what would say, ‘shed my blood that I may be saved and exalted with the Gods?’”

- Prophet Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, v. 4, pp. 219-220

“It is true that the blood of the Son of God was shed for sins through the fall and those committed by men, yet men can commit sins which it [the blood of Christ] can never remit.”

- Prophet Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, v. 4, p. 54

“This is loving your neighbour as ourselves; if he needs help, help him; and if he wants salvation and it is necessary to spill his blood on the earth in order that he may be saved, spill it.”

- Prophet Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, v. 4, p. 220

“If men turn traitors to God and His servants, their blood will surely be shed, or else they will be damned, and that too according to their covenants.”

- Apostle Heber C. Kimball, *Journal of Discourses*, v. 4, p. 375

“It is not fully comprehended why it was necessary that Jesus Christ should leave the heavens, ... and come upon the earth to offer himself up a sacrifice; ... why this should be, why it was necessary that his blood should be shed is an apparent mystery.... What sins of the world did he take away? We are told that it is the sin which Adam committed.”

- Prophet John Taylor, *Journal of Discourses*, v. 10, pp. 114-115

“The people of Utah are the only ones in this nation who have taken effectual measures... to prevent adulteries and criminal connections between the sexes. The punishment, for these crimes is death to both male and female. And this law is written on the hearths and printed in the thoughts of the whole people.”

- Apostle Orson Pratt, *The Seer*, p. 223

“I say, there are men and women that I would advise to go to the Presidency immediately, and ask him to appoint a committee to attend to their care; and then let a place be selected, and let that committee shed their blood. We have amongst us that are full of all manner of abominations, those who need to have their blood shed, for water will not do, their sins are too deep a dye... I believe that there are a great many; and if they are covenant breakers we need a place designated, where we can shed their blood... Brethren and sisters, we want you to repent and forsake your sins. And you who have committed sins that cannot be forgiven through baptism, let your blood be shed, and let the smoke ascend, that the incense thereof may come up before God as an atonement for your sins, and that the sinners in Zion may be afraid.”

- Apostle Jebediah M. Grant, 2nd counselor to Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, v. 4, pp. 49-51

“We would not kill a man, of course, unless we killed him to save him...”

- Apostle Jebediah M. Grant, *Deseret News*, July 27, 1854

"I would have a tendency to place terror on those who leave these parts [Utah], that may prove their salvation when they see the heads of thieves taken off, or shot down before the public... I believe it would be pleasing in the sight of heaven to sanctify ourselves and put these things out of our midst.”

- Apostle Orson Hyde, *Journal of Discourses*, v. 1, p. 73

“... We may talk of men being redeemed by the efficacy of his [Christ’s] blood; but the truth is that that blood has no efficacy to wash away our sins. That must depend upon our own action.”

- Apostle Amasa M. Lyman, Apostle, *Journal of Discourses*, v. 7, p. 299, 1859

“Has Jesus done anything that will bring salvation to you and me? The chief of what he has done is that he has revealed the plan of the Gospel – the scheme of human redemption, and manifested himself among his brethren; and we may say he has done a great deal more, for he has shed his blood for it. So have others shed their blood. But whose blood has cleansed you and me? It is said that the blood of Jesus cleanses from all sins. Then why is it that we remain sinners? It is simply because the blood of Jesus has not cleansed us from sin – because it has not reached us.”

- Apostle Amasa M. Lyman, Apostle, *Journal of Discourses*, v. 7, p. 298

“... inasmuch as the blood of Christ was shed for original sin unconditionally, but for the remission of actual sin conditionally.”

- Apostle Charles W. Penrose, *Journal of Discourses*, v. 21, pp. 81-82

“The principle, the only one that beats and throbs through the heart of the entire inhabitants of this Territory, is simply this: The man who seduces his neighbors wife must die, and her nearest relative must kill him!”

- Apostle George A. Smith, *Journal of Discourses*, v. 1, p. 97

“Joseph Smith taught that there were certain sins so grievous that man may commit, that they will place the transgressors beyond the power of the atonement of Christ. If these offenses are committed, then the blood of Christ will not cleanse them from their sins even though they repent. Therefore their only hope is to have their blood shed to atone, as far as possible, in their behalf. This is scriptural doctrine, and is taught in all the standard works of the Church.”

- Prophet Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, v. 1, pp. 135-136, 1954

“The Mormons believe in blood atonement. It is taught by the leaders, and believed by the people, that the Priesthood are inspired and cannot give a wrong order. It is the belief of all that I ever heard talk of these things – and I have been with the Church since the dark days in Jackson County – that the authority that orders is the only responsible party and the Danite who does the killing only an instrument, and commits no wrong.... Punishment by death is the penalty for refusing to obey the orders of the Priesthood.

“I knew of many men being killed in Nauvoo by the Danites. It was then the rule that all the enemies of the Prophet Joseph should be killed, and I know of many a man who was quietly put out of the way by the orders of Joseph and his apostles while the Church was there. It has always been a well understood doctrine of the Church that it is right and praiseworthy to kill every person who speaks evil of the Prophet. This doctrine was strictly lived up to in Utah...”

- Elder John D. Lee, Brigham Young’s adopted son and member of the Danites, John D. Lee Diaries

Others:

“I married Jesse Hartly, knowing he was a ‘Gentile’ in fact, but he passed for a Mormon, but that made no difference with me, although I was a Mormon, because he was a noble man, and sought only the right. By being my husband, he was brought into closer contact with the members of the Church, and was thus soon enabled to learn many things about us, and about the Heads of the Church, that he did not approve, and of which I was ignorant, although I had been brought up among the Saints; and which, if known among the Gentiles, would have greatly damaged us. I do not understand all he discovered, or all he did; but they found he had written against the Church, and he was cut off, and the Prophet required as an atonement for his sins, that he should lay down his life. That he should be sacrificed in the endowment rooms; where human sacrifices are sometimes made in this way. This I never knew until my husband told me, but it is true. They kill those there who have committed sins too great to be atoned for in any other way. The Prophet says, if they submit to this he can save them; otherwise they are lost. Oh! that is horrible. But my husband refused to be sacrificed, and so set out alone for the United States: thinking there might be at least a hope of success. I told him when he left me, and left his child, that he would be killed, and so he was. William Hickman and another Danite, shot him in the canyons; and I have often since been obliged to cook for this man, when he passed this way, knowing all the while, he had killed my husband. My child soon followed after its father, and I hope to die also; for why should I live? They have brought me here, where I wish to remain, rather than to return to Salt Lake where the murderers of my husband curse the earth, and roll in affluence unpunished.”

- Miss Bullock of Provo, Utah, quoted by Mary Ettie V. Smith, in Nelson Winch Green, *Mormonism: its rise, progress, and present condition...*, 1858, 1870 ed., p. 273

“In the excavations made within the limits of Salt Lake City during the time I have resided there, many human skeletons have been exhumed in various parts of the city.... I have never heard that it was ever the custom to bury the dead promiscuously throughout the city; and as no coffins were ever found in connection with any of these skeletons, it is evident that the death of the persons to whom they once belonged did not result from natural causes, but from the use of criminal means.”

- R.N. Baskin, *Reminiscences of Early Utah*, 1914, pp. 154-155

“It was one of the hot-beds of fanaticism, and I expect that more men were killed there, in proportion to population, than in any other part of Utah. In that settlement it was certain death to say a word against the authorities, high or low.”

- Danite William Hickman, *Brigham Young's Destroying Angel*, 1964, p. 284

Concerning two captured Confederate commissioners in Utah, Brigham Young said he: “would put them where they would never peep. He [Brigham Young] uttered this sentiment with such a wicked wording of the lower jaw and lip, and such an almost demon spirit in his whole face, that quite disposed to be incredulous on those matters...”

- *New York Tribune*, July 15, 1865

“In the past decade, potential jurors in every Utah capital homicide were asked whether they believed in the Mormon concept of ‘blood atonement.’”

- *Salt Lake Tribune*, Nov. 5, 1994, p. D1

“Just last month, attorneys for condemned child-killer James Edward Wood in Pocatello, Idaho, argued that his defense was undermined by a visit from local [Mormon] church leaders who talked to him about shedding his own blood...”

“His [Wood's] attorneys contend Wood is a victim of a Mormon belief in ‘blood atonement.’ ... Judge Lynn Winmill... heard hours of testimony during the past week about Mormon doctrine on apostasy and forgiveness of sin. Wood's lawyers even asked the bishop who presided over the church court that excommunicated Wood about secret temple rituals involving symbolic throat and slashing or disembowelment, but Winmill did not require him to respond.”

- *Salt Lake Tribune*, Nov. 5, 1994, p. D1, D5

“Accordingly, the doctrine asserts that those who commit certain grievous sins such as murder and covenant-breaking place themselves beyond the atoning blood of Christ, and their only hope for salvation is to have their own blood shed as an atoning sacrifice. In his writings, Joseph Smith only hinted at the doctrine, Brigham Young successively denied and asserted it, Joseph F. Smith ardently defended it, and in more recent years, Hugh B. Brown repudiated it and Joseph Fielding Smith and Bruce R. McConkie both have vigorously defended it in principle while staunchly denying that the Church has ever put it into actual practice, whereas most other General Authorities have prudently preferred to remain silent on the subject. It should be noted that the whole notion of blood atonement is so obviously linked to the Mormon literal mind-set that it does not seem to admit of a mitigated, symbolic interpretation and is either accepted or rejected outright, depending on one's level of literalistic belief.”

- *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, v. 15, no. 3, p. 93

“To whatever extent the preaching on blood atonement may have influenced action, it would have been in relation to Mormon disciplinary action among its own members. In point would be a verbally reported case of a Mr. Johnson in Cedar City who was found guilty of adultery with his step-daughter by a bishop's court and sentenced to death for atonement of his sin. According to the report of reputable eyewitnesses, judgment was executed with consent of the offender who went to his unconsecrated grave in full confidence of salvation through the shedding of his blood. Such a case, however primitive, is understandable within the means of this doctrine and the emotional extremes of the [Mormon] reformation.”

- Dr. Gustive O. Larson, BYU Professor, *Utah Historical Quarterly*, Jan. 1958, p. 62, note 39

Blood Atonement and Apostle Bruce R. McConkie (1915 - 1985)

“From the days of Joseph Smith to the present, wicked and evilly-disposed persons have fabricated false and slanderous stories to the effect that the Church, in the early days of this dispensation, engaged in a practice of blood atonement whereunder the blood of apostates and others was shed by the Church as an atonement for their sins...”

there is not one historical instance of so-called blood atonement in this dispensation, nor has there been one event or occurrence whatever, of any nature, from which the slightest inference arises that any such practice either existed or was taught....

“But under certain circumstances there are some serious sins for which the cleansing of Christ does not operate, and the law of God is that men must then have their own blood shed to atone for their sins.”

- Apostle Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, p. 92

“Well, if I understand Elder McConkie [in the above quote], he was saying that, although earlier Church leader’s never believed, preached, or practiced blood atonement, we actually do believe in it and would practice it if we had the legal and political power to do so. (Even though we didn’t when Brigham Young presided over the theocratic territory of Deseret.)”

- Keith Norman, Mormon scholar, *Sunstone*, Aug. 1990, p. 11

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MORMONS: WHO THEY ARE, WHAT THEY BELIEVE - - Discussion Guide

Latter-day Saints and Biblical Christianity

<http://www.utlm.org/onlineresources/ldschurchleadersdeclarechristianitytotalapostasy.htm>

LDS Church Leaders Declare Christianity to be in a State of Total Apostasy

By Sandra Tanner

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, also known as the Mormons, claims that with the death of Jesus' apostles the Christian church went into total apostasy. This lasted until God chose Joseph Smith to restore the true faith in 1830. LDS Apostle Bruce R. McConkie stated:

If it had not been for Joseph Smith and the restoration, there would be no salvation. There is **no salvation outside The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.** (*Mormon Doctrine*, 1979, p. 670)

Joseph Smith claimed that in the spring of 1820, as a young man praying for direction on which church to join, he was visited by God the Father and Jesus Christ. He later gave this account of the event:

My mind at times was greatly excited, the cry and tumult were so great and incessant. The **Presbyterians** were most decided against the **Baptists** and **Methodists**, and used all the powers of both reason and sophistry to prove their errors, or, at least, to make the people think they were in error. On the other hand, the **Baptists** and **Methodists** in their turn were equally zealous in endeavoring to establish their own tenets and disprove all others.

In the midst of this war of words and tumult of opinions, I often said to myself: What is to be done? Who of all these parties are right; or, are they all wrong together? . . .

After I had retired to the place where I had previously designed to go, having looked around me, and finding myself alone, I kneeled down and began to offer up the desires of my heart to God. . . .

I was answered that I must join **none of them**, for they were **all wrong**; and the Personage who addressed me said that **all their creeds** were an **abomination** in his sight; that those professors were **all corrupt**; that: "they draw near to me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me, they teach for doctrines the commandments of men, having a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof."

He again **forbade** me to join with any of them; and many other things did he say unto me, which I cannot write at this time. When I came to myself again, I found myself lying on my back, looking up into heaven. When the light had departed, I had no strength; but soon recovering in some degree, I went home. And as I leaned up to the fireplace, mother inquired what the matter was. I replied, "Never mind, all is well—I am well enough off." I then said to my mother, "I have learned for myself that **Presbyterianism is not true.**" (Joseph Smith—History 1:9-20, *Pearl of Great Price*)

Thus we see that at the heart of Mormonism is a condemnation of all other churches. This view is also promoted in the Book of Mormon, first published in 1830. In it we read a clear denunciation of the various churches:

And he said unto me: Behold there are save **two churches only**; the one is the church of the Lamb of God, and the other is the **church of the devil**; wherefore, whoso belongeth **not** to the church of the Lamb of God belongeth to that great church which is the **mother of abominations**; and she is the **whore of all the earth.** (1 Nephi 14:10)

And when the day cometh that the wrath of God is poured out upon the **mother of harlots**, which is **the great and abominable church** of all the earth, whose foundation is the **devil**, then, at that day, the work of the Father shall commence . . . (Book of Mormon, 1 Nephi 14:17)

Joseph Smith's contempt for ministers of other churches is seen in this quote:

The only principle upon which they judge me [Joseph Smith] is by comparing my acts with the **foolish traditions** of their fathers and nonsensical teachings of **hireling priests**, whose object and aim were to keep the people in **ignorance** for the sake of **filthy lucre**; or as the prophet says, to feed themselves, not the flock. (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, Deseret Book, 1977, p. 315)

At another time Smith claimed:

"What is it that inspires professors of Christianity generally with a hope of salvation? It is that smooth, sophisticated **influence of the devil**, by which he deceives the whole world." (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 270)

When Joseph Smith was asked "Do you believe the Bible?" he replied "If we do, **we are the only people under heaven that does**, for there are **none of the religious sects of the day that do**." (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 119)

Only True Church

The LDS Church leaders continue to affirm that their church is the "only true church," thus excluding all others. Brigham Young went so far as to state:

. . . he that confesseth not that Jesus has come in the flesh and sent **Joseph Smith** with the fullness of the Gospel to this generation, is not of God, but is anti-christ. (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 9, p. 312)

Even the *Doctrine and Covenants* quotes God as saying that the LDS Church is "the **only true** and living church upon the face of the whole earth" (*Doctrine and Covenants*, 1:30).

Past LDS President Ezra Taft Benson said:

This is not just another Church. **This is not just one of a family of Christian churches**. This is the Church and kingdom of God, **the only true Church** upon the face of the earth . . . (*Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson*, pp. 164-165)

Temple Changes

The LDS contempt for other churches was clearly portrayed in their temple ritual prior to 1990. The temple film contained a segment depicting the devil making a deal with a minister, in clerical attire, to preach his doctrines for pay. In the 1990 version the devil said:

LUCIFER: — If you will preach your orthodox religion to these people, and convert them, I will pay you well. (*Evolution of the Mormon Temple Ceremony: 1842-1990*, by Jerald and Sandra Tanner, 1990, p. 19)

After this portion of the ceremony was deleted in 1990, Vern Anderson reported:

Among the changes . . . a portion of the ceremony with an actor portraying a non-Mormon "preacher" paid by Satan to spread false doctrine has been eliminated. "The general consensus is that it's a breath of fresh air," said Ross Peterson . . . "You don't put down other churches, or imply that they are Satan's children." (*Salt Lake Tribune*, April 29, 1990)

We have been told that all the material belittling both Protestants and Catholics has now been eliminated. The ceremony as it was previously given, not only implied that all ministers were working for the Devil, but also had Lucifer claiming he would buy up "Popes" to help him in his evil work.

Doctrine of God

Mormons insist that part of the evidence of the total apostasy was the loss of the true understanding of the nature of God and Christ. Contrary to the teachings of the Bible and Christianity at large, Mormonism teaches that God has not always been God, that he was once a mortal, finite being. They also teach that there are multitudes of beings who have achieved godhood and rule other planets. Each god also has a wife. Joseph Smith stated:

God himself was once as we are now, and is an **exalted man** . . . I am going to tell you **how God came to be God**. We have imagined and supposed that God was God from all eternity. **I will refute that idea** . . . God himself, the Father of us all, **dwelt on an earth**, the same as Jesus Christ Himself did; . . . you have got to learn **how to be gods yourselves**, and to be kings and priests to God, the same as **all gods** have done before you . . . (*History of the Church*, vol. 6, ch. 14, pp. 305-6).

LDS President Brigham Young declared that God was once a finite being:

It appears ridiculous to the world, under their darkened and erroneous traditions, that God has once been **a finite being**. (*Deseret News*, Nov. 16, 1859, p. 290)

LDS Apostle Melvin Ballard explained that God has a wife:

"For as we have a Father in heaven, so also we have **a Mother** there, a glorified, exalted, ennobled Mother." (As quoted in *Achieving a Celestial Marriage*, LDS Church manual, 1976, p. 129)

In 1998 President Gordon B. Hinckley admitted that the Mormons do not believe in the same Christ as traditional Christianity:

In bearing testimony of Jesus Christ, President Hinckley spoke of those outside the Church who say Latter-day Saints "do not believe in the traditional Christ." "**No, I don't. The traditional Christ of whom they speak is not the Christ of whom I speak**. For the Christ of whom I speak has been revealed in this the Dispensation of the Fulness of Times. He together with His Father, appeared to the boy Joseph Smith in the year 1820, and when Joseph left the grove that day, he knew more of the nature of God **than all the learned ministers of the gospel of the ages**." (*Deseret News*, Church News, June 20, 1998)

Speaking at the April 2002 LDS General Conference, President Gordon B. Hinckley stated:

As a Church we have critics, many of them. They say we do not believe in the **traditional Christ of Christianity. There is some substance to what they say**. Our faith, our knowledge is **not** based on ancient tradition, the creeds which came of a finite understanding and out of the almost infinite discussions of men trying to arrive at a definition of the risen Christ. Our faith, our knowledge comes of the witness of **a prophet in this dispensation** who saw before him the great God of the universe and His Beloved Son, the resurrected Lord Jesus Christ. They spoke to him. He spoke with Them. He testified openly, unequivocally, and unabashedly of that great vision. It was a vision of the Almighty and of the Redeemer of the world, glorious beyond our understanding but certain and unequivocating in the knowledge which it brought. (*Ensign*, May 2002, p. 90)

LDS Denounce Other Churches

Mormons often complain that they are being persecuted when members of other faiths question LDS claims. They state that their church does not attack other people's religion and resent those who challenge their doctrine. However, this is overlooking the whole history of the LDS Church and its attack on historic Christianity.

Below are a number of statements by various LDS leaders denouncing all of the Christian churches.

Brigham Young, second prophet and president of the LDS Church preached:

The Christian world, **so-called**, are **heathens** as to the knowledge of the salvation of God. (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 8:171)

With a regard to true theology, a more ignorant people never lived than the present **so-called** Christian world. (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 8:199)

Should you ask why we differ from other Christians, **as they are called**, it is simply because they are **not** Christians as the New Testament defines Christianity. (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 10:230)

The religion of God embraces every fact that exists in all the wide arena of nature, while the religions of men consist of theory devoid of fact, or of any true principle of guidance; hence **the professing Christian world** are like a ship upon a boisterous ocean without rudder, compass, or pilot, and are tossed hither and thither by every wind of doctrine. (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 10:265)

. . . the time came when Paganism was engrafted into Christianity, and at last Christianity was converted into Paganism rather than converting the Pagans. (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 22:44)

In 1858 LDS apostle John Taylor preached:

The world has been apostate for generations past: it has been under the dominion of the prince and power of the air, even the god of this world, . . . **We talk about Christianity, but it is a perfect pack of nonsense**. . . it is as corrupt as hell; and the Devil could not invent a better engine to spread his work than the Christianity of the nineteenth century. (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 6, p. 167)

Brigham Young was the next speaker after Taylor and Young commented:

Brother Taylor has just said that the religions of the day were hatched in hell. The eggs were laid in hell, hatched on its borders, and kicked on to the earth. (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 6:176)

B. H. Roberts, one of the Seventy and noted LDS historian, declared that every church and minister, at the time of Joseph Smith, was in a state of total apostasy:

The Announcement of the Universal Apostasy

It is a most startling announcement with which the Prophet Joseph Smith begins his message to the world. Concerning the question, he asked God—"Which of all the sects is right, and which shall I join?" he says:

"I was answered that I must join none of them, for they were **all wrong**, and the personage who addressed me said that **all their creeds were abomination in His sight**: that those professors were **all corrupt**; . . ." [*Pearl of Great Price*]

This is a tremendous arraignment of all Christendom. It charges a condition of **universal apostasy** from God, especially upon **Christendom** that was dwelling in a fancied security of being the farthest removed from the possibility of such a charge; each division of the **so-called** Christian Church felicitating itself with the flattering unctiousness that its own particular society possessed the enlightened fullness of the Christian religion. While the boldness of this declaration of the young Prophet is astounding, upon reflection it must be conceded that just such a condition of affairs in the religious world is consistent with the work he, under the direction of divine Providence, was about to inaugurate. **Nothing less than a complete apostasy from the Christian religion would warrant the establishment of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints**. Of sects there were already enough in existence. Division and subdivision had already created of confusion more than enough, and there was no possible excuse for the introduction of a new Christian sect. But if men through **apostasy** had **corrupted the Christian religion** and **lost** divine

authority to administer the ordinances of the Gospel, it was of the utmost importance that a new dispensation of the **true** Christian religion should be given to the world. It should also be observed at this point, that Joseph Smith, then but a boy, scarcely removed from childhood. was not himself pronouncing judgment upon the status of Christendom. It was not he who declared **the sects to be all wrong, their creeds an abomination, and the professors thereof corrupt**. He of all persons, both on account of his extreme youthfulness and his lack of general information, was among the least qualified to pronounce upon such a question. . . . His seeking knowledge from God upon this very question—"which of all the sects is right?" is a confession of his own inability to determine the matter. No human wisdom was sufficient to answer that question. . . . God has been the judge of **apostate Christendom**, Joseph Smith but His messenger, to herald that judgment to the world.

It now becomes my melancholy task to trace through the early Christian centuries the **decline** of the Christian religion. By this phrase I mean that a **really unChristian** religion was gradually substituted for the beautiful religion of Jesus Christ; that a **universal apostasy** from the Christian doctrine and the Christian Church took place. So tracing the **decline of Christianity**, I shall establish the truth of the first great message with which the modern prophet, Joseph Smith, came to the world; and shall also prove the fact, that a necessity existed for the establishment of such a work as he claims, under God, to have founded, and of which the several volumes of this work are the detailed history. (*History of the Church*, by Joseph Smith, Introduction and notes by B. H. Roberts, Deseret Book, 1951, vol. 1, pp. XL-XLI)

Writing in the 1850's, LDS Apostle Orson Pratt declared:

Since the Church with its authority and power has been caught away from the earth, **the great mother of harlots with all her descendants has blasphemously assumed the authority of administering some of the sacred ordinances of the gospel**. They have blasphemed the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, by using it without authority in their ministrations. They have dishonored the name of Christ, by calling their powerless, apostate, filthy and most abominable churches, the Church of Christ. **The whole Romish, Greek and Protestant ministry, from the pope down through every grade of office, are as destitute of authority from God, as the devil and his angels**. The Almighty abhors all their wicked pretensions, as He does the very gates of hell. (A Series of 6 Pamphlets, Liverpool, England, 1850-51, No. 1, "Divine Authenticity of the Book of Mormon," by Orson Pratt, pp. 18-19)

Further on in the same pamphlet, Orson Pratt wrote:

28. . . . The word of God given in past ages, whether written or unwritten, was never considered by the true Church a sufficient rule of faith in any dispensation since the creation of man. Such an idea was never originated in the Church of God. It was the **apostate Catholics** that first originated the idea and by them the fatal delusion has been handed down from generation to generation; and all the children that she has brought forth, or that have left her communion, have, more or less, imbibed the same great features of the **apostasy**. Well might the Revelator John, speaking by the spirit of prophecy, call her "the Mother of Harlots and abominations of the earth!" It is her true name, for all the "harlots" which she has brought forth have walked in the footsteps of their "Mother" in declaring against new revelation, and in pretending that ancient revelation is a sufficient rule of faith. It is to be expected that as is the **Mother, so will be her Harlot daughters**. The daughters in some respects are more corrupt than the mother; for they have limited their rule of faith much more than the mother. . . . As the mother decided on the word of God by tradition, so did the daughter, and as tradition taught the mother to reject many books and receive others, so tradition taught the daughter to reject all that her mother rejected, and some half-a-score besides. After awhile this harlot daughter brings forth a numerous progeny of children, each of whom alters her creeds, so as to disagree with both mother and grandmother's creeds; yet the **church of England** with all her daughters agrees in the rejection of the old canon of scripture, and in the reception of the newly-formed one.

29. In the meantime **another harlot daughter of the Catholics—the Lutherans**, formed another canon, and rejected many books that the English daughter did not. . . .

40. Secondly, it is objected that if the Church of Christ has not continued, then the gate of hell must have prevailed against her; and they refer us to that cheering passage in Matthew 16:18 which reads thus:—"And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall riot prevail against it." They argue, that if the Church has ceased to exist, the gates of hell have prevailed over her and the promise of Jesus must be falsified. **But we would inform the Catholics, that**

the Church of Christ has not ceased to exist, neither has Peter ceased his existence, but both the Church and Peter are in heaven, far out of the reach of the gates of hell, and far out of the reach of the abominable soul-destroying impositions of popery. The gates of hell have prevailed and will continue to prevail over the Catholic mother of harlots, and over all her Protestant daughters; but as for the apostolical Church of Christ, she rests secure in the mansion of eternal happiness, where she will remain **until the apostate Catholic church, with all her popes and bishops, together with all her harlot daughters shall be hurled down to hell;** then it shall be said, "Rejoice over her thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her;" . . . (Orson Pratt, *Divine Authenticity of the Book of Mormon*, pp. 39-44)

On January 25, 1874, LDS Apostle Orson Pratt declared:

It is said by some that the church has continued from the Apostolic period down until the present century of the Christian era. But if it has, I cannot find it, . . . Its members may believe in the Bible, and they may be honest, we do not dispute the honesty of men; but unless they have this distinguishing characteristic [of apostles] of the church of the living God, we have no right to suppose them to be the real, true Christian church. . . . The people had **entirely apostatized** from that ancient order of things. There were no doubt many who were very zealous and who professed Christianity, and claimed to be the church of God, but where were their Apostles? Nowhere to be found among men. Where were the Prophets in what was called the Christian church towards the latter part of the second century? Nowhere upon the face of the earth; the spirit of prophecy was entirely rooted out, and the Gentiles, through **apostacy** and unbelief, had fallen as the Jews had done before them. . . .

"Well," says one, "am I to understand from your remarks that there has been **no real Christian Church** on the earth, for a great many centuries that are passed?" These are my views, and these are the views of the Latter-day Saints—we believe that, so far as the eastern hemisphere is concerned, there has been no true Christian Church for some seventeen centuries past. . . .

. . . **Says one, "Do you mean to unchristianize not only the Roman Catholic and Greek Churches, but also all those Protestant denominations who have sprung from them?" Certainly I do,** and it is in fulfillment of that which was spoken of by Paul in the 11th chapter of Romans, where he declares that if they do not continue in the goodness of God, they also shall be cut off, that is, cut off from all those blessed privileges and spiritual gifts which characterized the Church of Christ whilst it was on the earth.

This being the condition of things no wonder that God has left on record, in this good old book, that in the latter days he would again restore the kingdom to the earth; as **there has been no Christian Church, with divine authority, in the four quarters of the globe for many centuries past,** it is no wonder that the ancient Prophets saw a period of time when God would restore to the earth the true Church. . . . Go and ask any of these fallen churches,—go to the oldest among them, the Roman Catholic, or the Greek church, . . . How can I obey any institution that belongs to the Christian Church, wherein authority is necessary, unless such authority be on the earth? Consequently if they, in their zeal towards God, say that they have the Gospel, I will admit it so far as the letter of the word is concerned, but they have not the authority to administer its ordinances, having lost it, because they have lost the power of revelation, and the power of the Priesthood. (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 16, pp. 344-349)

Orson Pratt, writing in 1854, stated:

Q. Is the Roman Catholic Church the Church of Christ?

A. **No:** for she has no inspired priesthood or officers, without which the Church of Christ never did nor never can exist.

Q. How long since the Roman Catholic Church lost the authority and ceased to be the Church of Christ?

A. She never had authority, and never was the Church of Christ; and consequently she could not lose that which she never was in possession of.

Q. If the Roman Catholics are not the Church of Christ, where has the Church of Christ existed since inspired men ceased from the earth:

A. She has existed in heaven where the gates of hell never can prevail against her, because she is built upon the rock; and the inspired Apostles are in heaven with her whom the Saviour promised to be with always, even unto the end of the world.

Q. What has become of the Apostles' successors?

A. **The Apostles had no successors after those died off** who were called by inspiration and new revelation.

Q. After the Church of Christ fled from earth to heaven, what was left?

A. **A set of wicked Apostates**, murderers, and idolaters, who, after having made war with the saints, and overcome them, and destroyed them out of the earth, were left to follow the wicked imaginations of their own corrupt hearts, and to build up churches by human authority, and to follow after the cunning craftiness of uninspired men; having no Apostle, Prophet, or Revelator to inquire of God for them: and thus, because of wickedness, the Church, and Priesthood, and gifts, and ordinances and blessings of the everlasting Gospel, were taken from the earth, and reserved in heaven until the fulness of times, when it was predicted that they should again be restored among men to continue until the end should come.

Q. **Who founded the Roman Catholic Church?**

A. **The Devil**, through the medium of Apostates, who subverted the whole order of God by **denying immediate revelation**, and substituting in the place thereof, tradition and ancient revelations as a sufficient rule of faith and practice.

Q. **Did the great Protestant Reformers restore the Church of Christ** to the earth?

A. **No**: for they had no inspired Apostles, Prophets, or Revelators among them, without which the Church could not be restored . . .

Q. But did not the first Protestant Reformers receive their ordination and authority from the Catholics?

A. Yes: and in this manner they received all the authority that their mother church was in possession of; and **the mother having derived her authority from the Devil, could only impart that which his Satanic majesty was pleased to bestow upon her**. . . .

Q. Are all the Baptisms administered by the Catholics and Protestants, and the different sects which have, from time to time, dissented from them, **illegal**, because the ministers were not authorized?

A. **They are**, every one of them, illegal, and null, and void, and without effect; and will not be considered baptism in the day of judgment any more than the acts of unauthorized men in human governments are considered legal. (*The Seer*, vol. 2, no. 1, pp. 204-206)

Further on in the same volume, Orson Pratt wrote:

Baptism in order to be acceptable in the sight of God must be administered by a man ordained of God and authorized of Jesus Christ, otherwise, it will be a solemn mockery before God, and highly sinful in His sight. But who in this generation have authority to baptize? None but those who have received authority in the church of Jesus Christ of Latter day Saints: **all other churches are entirely destitute of all authority from God**; and any person who receives Baptism or the Lord's supper from their hands will highly offend God, for he looks upon them as the most corrupt of all people. **Both Catholics and Protestants are nothing less than the "whore of Babylon" whom the Lord denounces by the mouth of John the Revelator as having corrupted all the earth by their fornications and wickedness**. And any person who shall be so wicked as to receive a holy ordinance of the gospel from the ministers of any of these

apostate churches will be sent down to hell with them, unless they repent of the unholy and impious act. If any penitent believer desires to obtain forgiveness of sins through baptism, let him beware of having any thing to do with the churches of apostate Christendom, lest he perish in the awful plagues and judgments, denounced against them. **The only persons among all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people who have authority from Jesus Christ to administer any gospel ordinance are those called and authorized among the Latter-day Saints.** Before the restoration of the church of Christ to the earth in the year 1830, there have been no people on the earth for many generations possessing authority from God to minister gospel ordinances. We again repeat. beware of the hypocritical false teachers and imposters of Babylon. . . .

But the moment that God sent angels from heaven to earth [to Joseph Smith], and raised up inspired men, and **once more restored the true Christian Church** to the earth, the devil, with all his combined armies of Catholics and Protestants, was enraged . . . **The devil soon found that there was not the least shadow of evidence to sustain the Catholic and Protestant imposition against the doctrine of continued revelation.** This forlorn hope having utterly failed him, his next and most successful operation was to ridicule and denounce the doctrine, and lie about it, and, if possible, to close the eyes, and ears, and hearts of the people effectually against it. . . . (*The Seer*, vol. 2, no. 5, pp. 255-258)

Thus we see that Mormonism has always drawn a clear line of distinction between their church and all others naming the name of Christ. They continue to preach the total apostasy of Christianity shortly after the death of Christ's apostles and that the true church was taken from the earth until restored by Joseph Smith.

However, the Christian church is not a particular organization, it is the spiritual union of all believers in Christ. As born-again Christians we are part of God's church. Paul wrote of the various parts of the body as being an example of how all the Christians make up the body of Christ, the church:

For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many. (1 Corinthians 12:12-14)

Christ promised that "where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matthew 18:19-20).

He also promised that the "gates of hell" would not prevail against his church (Matthew 16:18). Then it could not have been lost from the earth for over 1700 years.

For further information on the nature of the true church, see J. C. Ryle's article, **The True Church**.

(**Bold** added for emphasis)

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