

The Madness of Mormonism

A Prophet Named Joseph Smith Jr.

by

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The Word of God has many warnings to the Christian community to be on the alert for individuals who would destroy the faith of the Church.

- ◆ *Matt 7:15 Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.*
- ◆ *2 Cor 11:13 For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ.*
- ◆ *2 Peter 3:16 As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.*
- ◆ *Rev 2:2 "I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars;*
- ◆ *Rev 22:18 For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book;*
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The history of Mormonism, with its unique teaching and its impact on American society makes Mormonism worthy of careful observation. The influence of this group is rather awesome reflected in several ways.

- ◆ **Moral Influence.** The average Mormon is presented as being sound in moral virtues. He is unusually gracious, hospitable, devoted to family, and the teaching of the Church.
- ◆ **Financial Resources.** The Mormon Church requires all members to meet the biblical tithing with the result that they have one of the highest budgets per capita. The money has been invested in vast land holdings and building projects.
- ◆ **Political Arena.** Mormons have more adherents listed in Who's Who in America than any other religion, which also holds true for the scientific honor societies of our nation. Former Mormon leaders in government have included such men as Ezra Taft Benson, Secretary of Agriculture, Ivy Baker Priest, former U.S. Treasurer, former Michigan Governor George Romney. Men like Senator Orrin Hatch of Utah have made a tremendous impact on society.
- ◆ **Missionary Zeal.** It is the practice of the Mormon Church to ask young men twenty years of age and girls twenty three to dedicate two years of their lives to missionary work on a self supporting basis. Their success rate at recruiting is well known. Prior to going forth the missionaries are well trained in their own dogmas and are also able to quote the Bible freely.

The Mormons are growing in strength and in power each year. All of this activity finds historical root in the fertile mind of a man named Joseph Smith, Jr. Smith was born in Sharon, Vermont, December 23, 1805, the fourth child of Lucy Mack Smith and Joseph Smith, Sr. The elder Smith was by all accounts a mystic and in the minds of many of his neighbors, a quack. He spent a large part of his time digging for imaginary buried treasure. In particular he searched for Captain Kidd's legendary gold.

To help Smith in his digging efforts, he used a "Peeping Stone." Smith would place a peculiar stone he had into a hat through which he looked to decide where they should begin to dig. Joseph Smith Jr. dug with his father as might be expected. Such a powerful visual influence on the young boy emerged in latter years in another form. (*Book of Mormon, Helaman* 12:18-19; 13:19)

When Joseph Smith Jr. was 15 years of age he allegedly became the recipient of a marvelous vision in which God the Father and God the Son both materialized and spoke to him as he prayed in a wooded area. The reason Smith was praying was because of a concern over which Church to join. He leaned towards the Methodist church while his parents and brothers and sisters favored the Presbyterian structure. What should he do? Smith records what happened next.

Pearls of Great Price
p. 47-48; 2:11-19

Even though Smith was singled out as the Lord's anointed for this dispensation nothing happened again until the year 1823. One night the angel Moroni appeared at the quaking Smith's bedside to tell him about some fabulous golden plates or what was to become the *Book of Mormon*.

Morni was once himself a man, the son of Mormon. He had died about AD 400, the last of the Nephites, which were crushed out by the rival Lamanites. But who were the Nephites and the Lamanites? Morni shared that the whole story was recorded on certain golden plates, which Moroni had hidden under the hill Cumorah just awaiting the appointed time for their disclosure to the prophet of the Latter-day Church. Naturally, Joseph Smith greatly desired to find the golden plates but was told he must wait.

Four more years passed. In 1827 Smith claimed to receive the golden plates upon which the *Book of Mormon* is alleged to have been written. With his wife Emma Hale, whom Smith had married, and with a borrowed horse and buggy, Emma and Joseph went to the Hill Cumorah and Joseph brought the plates back to the elder Smith's home in Palmyra, New York. The plates were hid under the hearth in the fireplace.

Shortly after this alleged historic find of monumental significance Joseph began to translate what he called “*Reformed Egyptian Hieroglyphics*” by means of the “*Urim*” and “*Thummin*” which were of a type of miraculous spectacles which the thoughtful angel Morni provided. Such spectacles were needed because there is no such thing as “*Reformed Egyptian Hieroglyphics*”.

What did Joseph show to people to convince them that he was telling the people the truth? He showed them the thoughts of his imagination reflected by John H. Gilbert, September 8, 1892. Gilbert was the man who printed the first *Book of Mormon*.

1830 First Edition

cp.

Pearl of Great Price 2:64-65

P.T. Barnum once said, “*There is a sucker born every minute.*” Joseph Smith, Jr. had a way of surrounding himself with a number of them. Remember the year 1827. Joseph Smith began to translate the golden plates by means of the special spectacles. To assist him in the writing he used Oliver Cowdery, an itinerant schoolteacher who had been persuaded that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God. Cowdery became the scribe who wrote down what Joseph *said* the plates read in spite of the fact that he himself never actually saw them. There is good reason for that. The golden plates never existed.

Smith and Cowdery grew in friendship during the period of translation (1827-1829) and also in spiritual zeal. The highlight came on May 15, 1829, when heaven itself could wait no longer and sent John the Baptist in person to Pennsylvania with orders to confer on Smith and Cowdery the “*Aaronic Priesthood*” after which Cowdery baptized Smith and vice versa. (see Pearl of Great Price 2:68-73) The baptism took place in the Susquehanna River in Harmony,

Susquehanna, Pennsylvania. After the baptism Smith moved to the home of Peter Whitmer in Fayette, New York where he remained until the alleged translation from the plates was completed and the Book of Mormon was published and copyrighted in the year 1830.

On April 6, 1830, the Prophet Smith as he now liked to be called, in company with his brothers Hyrum and Samuel, Oliver Cowdery, and David and Peter Whitmen, Jr. officially founded a new religious society called *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints*. Mormonism had begun in earnest. Missionary efforts were soon underway. Smith found capable zealots in such men as Parley P. Pratt and Sidney Rigdon, a former Campbellite preacher from Ohio. Success came quickly to the Mormon movement as the story circulated of the angelic appearance, a Latter Day Prophet, and a new word from God.

Smith proved to be a capable leader with unlimited ideas. It helped to be in direct contact with God. Between the years 1831 and 1844, the prophet received 135 revelations. Many of these revelations helped to build the Mormon metropolis of Nauvoo, Illinois, where the practice of polygamy was instituted by Smith and confirmed by divine revelation. It was at Nauvoo that Smith met his sudden death, which would not have happened if Smith had not been personally sensitive. What happened was this.

An anti-Mormon publication entitled *The Nauvoo Expositor* angered Smith because it attacked him, his teachings, and his followers. Smith decided to retaliate by destroying the printing presses. The State of Illinois intervened and Smith was arrested with his brother Hyrum. They were placed in a jail in Carthage, Illinois to await trial. However, before the trial could take place, a mob stormed the jail on June 27, 1844, and murdered Joseph and Hyrum. Mormonism had an unwanted martyrdom. Smith was thirty-eight and a half years old. From this composite picture, several things emerge about Joseph Smith.

- ◆ Joseph Smith was a man with a very vivid imagination.
- ◆ Smith was self-centered to an extreme claiming that he alone was the Prophet of God who finally had the truth.
- ◆ He was religiously inclined but without any moral restraint. The lies Smith fostered, the sexually immorality he displayed, the brutality he expressed, the total domination of all others speaks for itself.
- ◆ Like other men of this magnitude, the world will not soon recover from the corruption bred in the soul of a child of the Devil. Joseph Smith Jr. is honored today because his character has been recast. Historian Fawn Brodie recognized this and entitled her definitive work on ***Mormonism Joseph Smith the Prophet: No Man Knows My History***. But we must know.

Three Books Verses the Bible

In addition to the Bible, the Mormon Church recognizes three other works as authorized Scripture: *The Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants*, and *The Pearl of Great Price*. While The Bible is quoted extensively the King James Version is recognized only insofar as it is correctly translated. Mormon doctrine comes mainly from the two smaller works, *Doctrine and Covenant and The Pearl of Great Price*.

Taking first the *Book of Mormon*, the work purports to be a history of two ancient civilizations, which were located on the American continent. “*One [civilization] came from Jerusalem in 600 BC and afterward separated into two nations, known as the Nephites and the Lamanites. The other [civilization] came much earlier (c. 2,250 BC) when the Lord confounded the tongues at the Tower of Babel. This group is known as the Jaredites.*” (**Intro. Book of Mormons**)

The Jaredites crossed over into Europe and immigrated to the eastern cost of what we know as Central America. Later, when the second group left Jerusalem in 600 BC, the people crossed the Pacific Ocean, landing on the continent of South America in what is now known as the country of Peru. Walter Martin summarizes what happened next to each group after arrival.

Kingdom of the Cults

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The immediate question that comes to mind is whether or not the Jaredites, Nephites, and Lamanites have ever really existed on the North American continent or anywhere else for that matter. No less an authority than the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, DC has lifted its voice against archeological claims of the *Book of Mormons*.

(Ibid. p. 162-163)

Turning to the *Book of Mormon* itself several observations can be made. First, *the Book of Mormon* is constantly being revised. Since it was first published in 1830, it has undergone over 2,000 changes, many of which are significant. For example, in the original edition, the Book of Mormon confirms that Marry is the mother of God, which is a Roman Catholic dogma. 1 Nephi 11:18 has been changed to read, ***“Behold the virgin whom thou seest, is the mother of the Son of God.”***

The changing of the translation would not be so significant if Smith had not claimed that his work came by way of Divine revelation with the Urim and Thummin. The original should have been the most perfect.

In addition to the number of changes there is the problem of plagiarism from the King James Version. For example, chapter 14 in the *Book of Mosiah* is a reproduction of the 53rd chapter of Isaiah the prophet. **3 Nephi** 13:1-18 copies Matthew 6:1-23. The Mormons explain all this away by saying that Christ simply used the same language as recorded in the Bible. Also, they point out, when Nephi came to America he brought copies of the Hebrew Bible with him—which accounts for the quotations from the Old Testament. However, as Dr. Martin points out, ***“The only difficulty with these excuses is that the miraculous plates upon which they were all inscribed, somehow or another, under translation, came out in perfect King James English without variation approximately a thousand years before this 1611 version was written.”*** The problem of plagiarism becomes more problematic for the Mormons when passages such as 1 John 5:7 reproduced in 3 Nephi 11:27,35 and Mark 16:16 reproduced in 3 Nephi 11:33-34 are now known to be an interpolation missing from all the major ancient manuscripts of the New Testament but present in the King James Version. There is any number of textual errors in the

King James Version, which are copied by the *Book of Mormon*. (Note Isa. 5:25 cp. 2 Nephi 15:25 where the word torn is *suchah* and should be translated “*refuse*”)

On a lighter note, the *Book of Mormon* has the Jewish Jaredites enjoying glass windows on the barges in which they crossed the ocean, using a compass centuries before it was invented, and in battle wielding steel swords (1 Nephi 4:9) when steel was non-existent in the Old Testament period.

Perhaps the most serious problem is that the *Book of Mormon* not only contradicts the Bible but contradicts other revelations purporting to come from the same God who inspired the Book of Mormon. In Micah 5:2 the Bible declares that Messiah would be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2) and Matthew 2:1 says He was. Alma 7:9,10 states that Jesus was to be born at Jerusalem.

When Joseph Smith Jr. turned to prophecy he failed miserably. One of the most famous prophecies concerned the Civil War. Smith predicted that England would go to war with the northern states on behalf of the South. He also said that the slaves would rise up against their masters and the “remnants” (Indians) would win a battle against the Gentiles. In fact, the Indians were themselves “vexed” by the Gentiles as they were defeated in war and placed on reservations.

See Doctrine and Covenant

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It is interesting to notice that despite the historical inaccuracies, the false prophecies, the blatant plagiarisms, despite the contradictions with the Bible and the lack of archeological support, the Book of Mormon does manage to teach several biblical truths. These biblical truths

are denied and repudiated in latter revelations, but the words are still there for Mormons to wrestle with. Notice the following.

- ◆ ***The Book of Mormon*** teaches the doctrine of the trinity. (2 Nephi 31:21b cp. Deut. 6:4,13; Alma 11:22,26-29) also stresses Divine unity.
- ◆ ***The Book of Mormon*** teaches that it is unchangeable. (Mormon 9:9,10; 8:18; 7:22)
- ◆ ***The Book of Mormon*** teaches that God is the Creator of all things. Mosiah 4:9 The problem is this. How can God create all the planets and yet once be a man in need of a planet upon which to live in order to progress to a stage so he could create?
- ◆ ***The Book of Mormon*** teaches that God is Spirit. (Alma 19:25; 22:19; cp. Doctrine and Covenant 130:22)
- ◆ ***The Book of Mormon*** teaches the biblical doctrine of hell. Hell is permanent, eternal, unending, and without a second chance (Alma 34:32; 2 Nephi 1:13; 9:16; 28:21,22; 28:24,25; 14:3; 15:35)
- ◆ ***The Book of Mormon*** teaches a salvation that is based neither on the resurrection nor on exaltation but faith in Christ. (Mosiah 3:9a; Alma 11:40; 3 Nephi 9:16,17; 9:14 cp. 1 John 5:13; and Alma 24:10)

Summary

The Book of Mormon is at best an interesting story born of a fertile imagination. It has no scientific, archeological, or biblical value or support. ***The Book of Mormon*** is a lie given to the world by Joseph Smith Jr. in fulfillment of 2 Thessalonians 2:11,12. ***“And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.”*** Joseph Smith Jr. did not believe the truth though he knew it well. Rather, he found pleasure in unrighteousness through the Doctrine of Polygamy.

The Sins of the Saints

Without doubt, one of the most disturbing elements of Mormon theology was the introduction of plural marriage. The revelation sanctioning the practice was given by the prophet Joseph Smith, Jr. on July 12, 1843. (*Doctrine and Covenant* Sec. 132: 1-4,19,20,34,35—p. 239) Initially, Mormon Church leaders claimed they did not believe in the practice of plural marriages. In the first edition of the *Doctrine and Covenant* printed in 1835, there was a section that denounced the practice of polygamy. Section 101:4 read “*In as much 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.*”

This section was printed in every edition of *Doctrine and Covenant* until the year 1876. At that time Section 132 was installed to permit polygamy and Section 101:4 was removed. Once again Mormon history and belief was changed. Even though the revelation of plural marriages was given in July, 1843, the practice was well established many years earlier. There is evidence that as early as July 1831, a “*revelation*” was given in Missouri in the presence of Oliver Cowdery, W.W. Phelps and others.

According to Michael Marquardt, a student of Mormon history, the 1831 revelation commanded the Mormons to marry the Indians to make them a white and delight-some people. In Mormon theology, a dark skin is a sign of God’s displeasure. *The Book of Mormon* teaches this quite plainly in a number of passages. (1 Nephi 12:23; 2 Nephi 5:21; Alma 3:6; 3 Nephi 2:15) Joseph Smith conceived of the idea that the Indians could be made white through intermarriage with the Mormons.

While the prophet encouraged the marriage of Mormons to Indians he himself preferred the white women. There would be a number of Mrs. Smiths (27 in all) beginning with Nancy Johnson of Ohio. While still in Kirkland, Ohio, the name of Smith was linked with Fanny Alger. Smith was charged with an adulterous relationship by Oliver Cowdery who was one of the three witnesses to the original golden plates. Later, Cowdery would be excommunicated from the Church, April 12, 1838.

When Joseph Smith wanted to marry 17 year old Sarah Ann Whitney, a revelation was conveniently given on July 27, 1842 commanding and consecrating the union. The child's father, Newel K. Whitney was promised immortality and eternal life if he agreed to the marriage.

It is interesting to note that Emma Hale Smith's reaction to all of this nonsense was anger. William Clayton, who wrote the 1843 revelation as Smith dictated it, provides this intimate information.

(See Tanner, page 218-219)

Upon the examination of the 1843 revelation a number of inconsistencies can be noted. The first problem is the date given. The date on the revelation reads July 12, 1843, yet as the fifth president of the Mormon Church testified, anyone who lived in plural marriages prior to the time of the revelation was living *“in adultery under the laws of the Church and under the laws of the State too.”*

If President Lorenzo Snow's statement is allowed to stand than Joseph Smith was by the Mormon churches own standards an adulterer because prior to July 12, 1843 Smith was married to at least twelve women.

Second, the 1843 revelation on polygamy contradicts *Doctrine of Covenants Sec. 58:21.*

“Let no man break the laws of the land, for he that keepeth the laws of God hath no need to break the laws of the land.”

Since the law for the State of Illinois had laws against both adultery and bigamy the Mormon Church leaders understood that polygamy was a crime. After the Mormons came to Utah, Brigham Young boasted, ***“If I had 40 wives in the United States they did not know it, and could not substantiate it, neither did I ask any lawyer, judge, or magistrate for them. I live above the law, and so do this people.”*** Just before his murder, Joseph Smith was indicted because of his practice of polygamy. Had he lived, it is possible he would have gone to prison for being a polygamist.

A third problem with the 1843 revelation is that it is contrary to ***The Book of Mormon***, which condemns polygamy. (Jacob 2:22-24)

Turning to the Word of God, the Bible condemns the practice of polygamy. Deut. 17:17, ***“Neither shall he multiply wives to himself that his heart turn not away...”*** The New Testament teaches that bishops and deacons are instructed to have only one wife. (1 Tim. 3:2,12) It is true that polygamy was practiced in the Old Testament but God did not sanction it.

There are other problems in the 1843 revelation such as the fact that the revelation states that a man must first have the consent of his first wife before he can multiply others. Joseph Smith never had Emma’s approval. Emma was damned to hell if she did not approve. Also, having concubines is recognized as an acceptable practice.

Prior to his death Joseph Smith knew no boundaries in his quest to multiply wives. Smith was not even opposed to the taking of the wives of other men. Smith at one time demanded the wives of all the twelve Apostles that were at home then in Nauvoo. Joseph Smith set a precedent that opened up the pits of hell. In later years in the Mormon community there would be cases of

exchanging wives and incest when a man named Winchester married his mother. Brigham Young himself sealed a mother and daughter to their cousin, Luman A. Shurtliff. Young also sealed or married an elderly man to a 57-year-old woman and her 14-year-old granddaughter.

Mormon leaders such as Herbert C. Kimball, Brigham Young, and Orson Pratt blasphemed Christ Himself when they taught that “*the great Messiah who was the founder of the Christian religion was a polygamist.*” Even God the Father is charged with having a plurality of wives.

Here then is Mormon theology. God the Father was once a man. Through good works He exalted Himself in the Spirit world to a state of glorification. Now, as the God of this world, He, with His spiritual wives beget spiritual children. The souls of these children need bodies to inhabit. Therefore, on earth the command is given for Mormons to have many children in order to have bodies for the pre-existing souls to inhabit. While on earth male Mormons are suppose to maintain a high standard of righteousness so that when they die they will be exalted in the spirit world and shall one day have their own universe. Of course they will keep their many wives in order to have spirit children.

In Mormon theology only men can be gods; women must find their salvation by being sealed for all eternity to their husbands. (Tanner, p. 255) In 1890 in the providence of God, due to pressure by the US Government Mormon President, Wilford Woodruff received an amazing revelation. The Manifesto signed by the President and accepted by the Latter Day Saint Church voted to abandon the practice of plural marriages. But old revelations are hard to overturn.

Sixteen years after the Manifesto was issued, President Joseph F. Smith was brought to trial for unlawful co-habitation. Herbert J. Grant, who served as President from 1918-1945 was also convicted of unlawful co-habitation.

On November 21, 1955, *Newsweek Magazine* reported that Utah polygamy may number 20,000. In 1965 one expert estimates that as many as 30,000 men, women, and children live in families in which polygamy is protected. Perhaps the number is still growing.

There are a number of practical lessons and warnings that the Church of Jesus Christ would do well to learn. First, Christians in particular, people in general are open to sexual sins. As 1 Cor. 5 teaches, it is possible for the worst type of immorality to be found inside the professing Church. The danger is to tolerate it instead of discipline the offender with a view to forsaking the sin and restored to fellowship. When proper discipline is not administered the perversion becomes worse. People grow bold in their sin witnessed by the degradation of the Mormons.

Second, God has boundaries in sexual matters in order to protect the purity of His people. Boundaries include one man for woman one and the honoring of the marriage covenant.

Third, there is danger in living out sexual sins vicariously. “*And ye are puffed up*” wrote Paul which means that people of Corinth were actually proud that they had such situations in their congregation.

Polygamy is not an aberration of Mormon theology, it is an essential part of it