

***Latter-day Saint Swindle:***  
***The Mormon Church's \$200-Billion Scam***

*by*

***Blair D. Watson***



LATTER-DAY SAINT SWINDLE: THE MORMON CHURCH'S \$200-BILLION  
SCAM

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To my four young nephews, who, like millions of Latter-day Saints since the nineteenth century, have always deserved to know the full truth about Mormonism and been kept in the dark about it.



**The truth is incontrovertible. Malice may attack it, ignorance may deride it, but in the end, there it is.** – Winston Churchill, journalist, soldier, politician, and British prime minister during and after the Second World War.

**It is error only, and not truth, that shrinks from inquiry.** – Thomas Paine, intellectual, philosopher, writer, and one of the Founding Fathers of the United States of America.

**Am I to be obliged to believe every absurdity? And if not, why this one in particular?** – Sigmund Freud, the founder of psychoanalysis, from his 1927 book about religion, *The Future of an Illusion*.





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## Introduction

Forbes.com, the website of the renowned American business magazine, has some intriguing webpages collectively titled “The 10 Biggest Frauds In Recent U.S. History.” Photographs of the worst swindlers—corporations and individuals—in the United States of the past generation and text summarizing their multi-million- or multi-billion-dollar deceptions are online.<sup>1</sup>

Topping the list of fraudsters is Enron, the ruined energy, commodities, and services company based in Houston, Texas that was led by corrupt men who committed “massive accounting fraud,” quoting the *Forbes* webpage.<sup>2</sup> The company went bankrupt in 2001, with shareholders losing \$74 billion, pensions of retired employees shrinking by \$2 billion, and thousands of personnel suddenly finding themselves out of work. Sixteen staff members were charged, found guilty, and sentenced.

Not far behind Enron in terms of ignominy and financial chicanery is Bernie Madoff, a New York money manager (of sorts) whose \$65-billion Ponzi scheme was, according to federal investigators, “the largest fraud ever by an individual.”<sup>3</sup> His swindle began in 1960 and lasted an impressive—to scammers—forty-eight years before collapsing. In March 2009, the seventy-year-old pled guilty to eleven felony charges, and three months later he began his prison sentence of a century and a half, the maximum allowed.

Other prominent financial deceivers listed on Forbes.com are: defunct investment bank Lehman Brothers, brokerage firm MF Global, and telecommunications giant WorldCom; Walter Forbes, a former chief executive officer of the Cendant Corporation and CUC International, and Qwest Communications CEO Joseph Nacchio; and various managers at Fannie Mae, Health South, and Tyco International.

One chronically dishonest and very rich American organization not on the *Forbes* list (it should be) is the Mormon Church. Officially known as the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS), since its establishment in April 1830 the religious-corporate conglomerate headquartered in Salt Lake City, Utah has perpetrated the largest fraud, by far, in U.S. history. This book describes the genesis and expansion of the fundamentally corrupt organization, and how it has extracted roughly \$200 billion from its duped membership during the past seven generations and amassed real estate holdings, companies, and other assets worth many billions of dollars.<sup>4</sup>

Mormonism was in the news in 2012 because Mitt Romney, a Latter-day Saint and former Massachusetts governor and private equity manager, was vying for the leadership of the Republican Party, and after he won that race, the White House. In November of that year, he lost the presidential election to Democrat incumbent Barack Obama, a fortunate outcome for the American people. Why? Because the LDS religion is cultic and “programs” Mormons to ignore or trivialize facts that conflict with their beliefs. Moreover, it “brainwashes” people to think magically and wounds them psychologically via its fear-, guilt-, and shame-inducing doctrines and teachings.

Who is aware of the psychological dysfunction and harm caused by the misleading and manipulative Latter-day Saint Church? Not only hundreds of thousands of former Mormons, but also Steve Hassan, a leading expert in the United States on cults. As a licensed mental health professional with decades of cult exit counseling experience, Hassan knows a fraud wrapped in the cloak of religion when he sees one. He has provided information about cults to Congress and the *Wall Street Journal*, *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Los Angeles Times*, *USA Today*, and *Newsweek* as well as on *Larry King Live*, *60 Minutes*, *Night Line*, *Geraldo*, *Good Morning America*, *The Oprah Winfrey Show* and the *Today Show*.<sup>5</sup> On his website, Hassan lists the Latter-day Saint Church as a thought-control organization.<sup>6</sup> The psychological effects of Mormon indoctrination and conditioning, which have been foundational to the LDS scam since its inception, are explained in Chapter 11.

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Mormonism was created and marketed in the United States in the early nineteenth century by a convicted scammer who grew up in a poor family and had a fertile imagination: Joseph Smith, Jr. Born in Vermont in 1805 and a New York State resident during his teenage and young adult years, Smith was fascinated with hunting for imagined buried treasure using occult aids and methods, and began his “career” as a charlatan Christian “prophet” in the latter 1820s. During his relatively short life of thirty-eight years, he repeatedly got in trouble with the law, launched a fraudulent “bank” in Ohio, and illegally married several single and espoused females (his practice of polygamy included girls as young as fourteen, at least fifteen single women, and the wives of eleven men – see Chapter 9 for more information). Smith was killed while incarcerated in June 1844. Five chapters of this book deal with his unscrupulous life, and part of the ninth chapter explains why and how it came to a violent end.

Chapters 4 and 5 cover the *Book of Mormon*, a work of fiction crafted and hyped by Smith, a plagiarizing writer, as compiled ancient American history. Latter-day Saints have been taught from childhood onward to believe that the volume is not only historically accurate, it is what Smith declared it to be: Mormonism’s “keystone.” However, the foundational LDS volume has been discredited by work done during the past century and a half by archeologists, linguists, geneticists, and other researchers (details are in the two chapters).

\*\*\*

I am very familiar with Mormonism because I was raised in the cultic religion by my mother, a naïve and emotionally vulnerable convert. Like Romney and legions of other young Mormon males, during my formative years I was subjected to thousands of hours of LDS indoctrination, and as a young adult performed several months of full-time, unpaid, proselyting (i.e., marketing) work for the church. The former U.S. presidential candidate was sent to liberal France in 1966 and I was deployed to poverty- and terrorism-plagued Peru eighteen years later.

Unlike Romney, I left the dishonest LDS organization less than a decade after finishing my stint as a young missionary in 1985. What prompted me to

get out was fortuitously encountering and reading an extraordinary book, *The Mormon Murders: A True Story of Greed, Forgery, Deceit, and Death*, by two American lawyers (see Chapter 3 for more information). The historical facts presented in their volume, which was first published in 1988, made me realize that the “only true church,” quoting Latter-day Saint leaders, had deceived not only my mother and her three children, but also millions of unsuspecting people worldwide. As a duped member, I had unwittingly helped—financially, as a missionary, and in other ways—to expand the Mormon fraud.

Unwilling to ignore the truth about Mormonism, I terminated my church membership, an act that, according to the LDS religion, ended the protective influence of the Holy Ghost, allowed Satan (a.k.a. the Devil) to interfere with my life, and resulted in God punishing me. According to Latter-day Saint teachings, my so-called “rebellion” also means that my “soul” will suffer forever after death. Shamefully, Mormonism has included coercive supernatural threats since Smith’s time as its “prophet of the Restoration.”<sup>7</sup>

During the past seventeen years I have helped, via online message boards, mostly, more than a quarter million Latter-day Saints learn about actual Mormon history—in contrast to the LDS Church’s plentiful propaganda—and assisted them in scrutinizing their religion.<sup>8</sup> Since the mid-1990s, countless Mormons have realized that the exceptionally wealthy Latter-day Saint organization systematically abused their trust and defrauded them, enriching itself hugely in the process. According to a *Reuters* special report in January 2012, members were leaving the church “in droves,” a phenomenon that has continued to the present.<sup>9</sup> This book will help the reader understand why.

Blair Watson  
September 2014



## Chapter 1 “Hail to the Prophet”

**I boast that no man ever did such a work as I. The followers of Jesus ran away from him, but the Latter-day Saints never ran away from me yet.** – Joseph Smith, Jr., Mormonism’s founder, publicly vaunting in May 1844 what he believed was his greatest achievement.

**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 willfully attempted to mislead the people, then he should be exposed; his claims should be refuted, and his doctrines shown to be false.** – Senior Latter-day Saint apostle Joseph Fielding Smith in 1954; his great-uncle was Joseph Smith, Jr.

**Praise to the man [Joseph Smith] who communed with Jehovah! Jesus anointed that Prophet and Seer. Blessed to open the last dispensation, Kings shall extol him, and nations revere. Hail to the Prophet, ascended to heaven! Traitors and tyrants now fight him in vain. Mingling with Gods, he can plan for his brethren; Death cannot conquer the hero again.** – Excerpt from “Praise to the Man,” a Latter-day Saint hymn.

Joseph Smith, Jr. was born on December 23, 1805 in the small farming community of Sharon, Vermont, and for more than a century a fifty-foot-high Mormon granite obelisk has marked his birthplace. The Latter-day Saint Church’s main website, lds.org, says that a “visitors’ center [in nearby South Royalton, VT] provides further information on the life of this exceptional man.”<sup>1</sup> Synonyms for “exceptional” include “abnormal,” “deviant” and “unusual,” adjectives that aptly describe Smith, one of the most controversial figures in American history.



Joseph Smith Sr.

Joseph Smith, Jr.

Lucy Mack Smith

The creator of Mormonism grew up in a family of several children in which the Bible was read and Protestant concepts were taught. It was also an environment in which both parents, Joseph Sr. and Lucy, believed in folk magic and used occult paraphernalia to hunt for hidden items, a fact that the LDS Church does not divulge to its members or potential converts (the latter are called "investigators"). Few, if any, people would believe in "Prophet" Smith if they knew the unvarnished truth, which is why a lot of whitewash about him has been created and used by the Mormon Church since 1830. Fortunately, there are honest materials about the Latter-day Saint movement's founding leader, including:

- *No Man Knows My History: The Life of Joseph Smith* by Fawn Brodie, a twentieth-century historian and professor at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA).
- *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View* by historian Dr. D. Michael Quinn, formerly of the Latter-day Saint Church's Brigham Young University (BYU).
- *An Insider's View of Mormon Origins* by Grant Palmer, a Mormon history researcher and retired LDS Church Educational System educator and director.

It is unfortunate that relatively few Latter-day Saints have read these illuminating works and are thus ignorant of the actual genesis of their religion. It has been a terrible shock to Mormons to learn "faith"-destroying facts about the man of whom LDS scripture declares: "Joseph Smith, the Prophet and Seer of the Lord, has done more, save Jesus only, for the salvation of men in this world, than any other man that ever lived in it."<sup>2</sup> For example, the *New York Times* reported in July 2013 that a Swedish Mormon named Hans Mattsson had "followed his father and grandfather into church leadership and finally became an 'area authority' overseeing the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints throughout Europe."<sup>3</sup> Some members had gone to him "with information from the Internet that contradicted the church's history and teachings," which he initially dismissed as "'anti-Mormon propaganda,' the whisperings of Lucifer." However, Mattsson went online to investigate and "discovered credible evidence that the church's founder, Joseph Smith, was a polygamist and that the Book of Mormon and other scriptures were rife with historical anomalies." The *Times* report also explained that "Mr. Mattsson said he felt that the foundation on which he had built his life began to crumble." Since the emergence of the Internet in the 1990s, many believing, sacrificing Latter-day Saints have had a similarly cataclysmic psychological experience after learning "inconvenient" truths about Smith and Mormonism (there are many).

From an early age, Joseph Smith, Jr. was taught to believe in the supernatural, chiefly by his parents. While Lucy was drawn to organized religion,



Joseph Sr. was convinced that "there was no order or class of religionists that knew any more concerning the kingdom of God than those of the world."<sup>4</sup> Although he did not share his wife's religious enthusiasm, the patriarchal head of the Smith clan did claim to have visionary dreams.<sup>5</sup> His religion-founding son went much further, asserting throughout his adult life that he had visions and received "revelations" from "the Lord" (Jesus Christ), an idea foundational to Mormonism that has not withstood scrutiny.

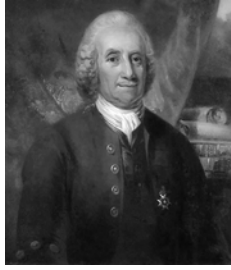
Brodie wrote that the Smith family suffered grave financial losses in the 1810s due to crop failures and Joseph Sr.'s business agent absconding to Canada with all of his money. The senior member of the Smith household had invested his savings in a shipment of exotic flora—so he was led to believe—after hearing of "the fantastic profits pouring into the laps of speculators who exported the aromatic ginseng, the root of a plant that grew wild in the Green Mountains" of Vermont.<sup>6</sup> By the summer of 1816, the family was close to penniless and left their home, heading west toward upstate New York, eager for a new start. Joseph the son apparently learned a key "business" lesson from the agent who swindled his father because as a young man, he repeatedly scammed people in order to make a quick buck and ran afoul of the law (more information about this aspect of Smith's life appears later in this chapter).

It was in the Palmyra area of northwestern New York that the Smiths rented a farm, worked the land, and developed a few micro-businesses to bring in badly-needed income. The central-western part of the state was known as the "burned-over district" due to several religious movements and revivals there in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.<sup>7</sup> The region had been so heavily evangelized that there was no "fuel" (unconverted persons) left to "burn" (convert). It was in the religiously flammable sector of the young United States that Joseph Jr. created and promoted his initial version of Mormonism, beginning in the late 1820s.

### **A smorgasbord of religious doctrines and metaphysical concepts**

The books by Brodie, Quinn, and Palmer as well as nineteenth-century writings have revealed that during his formative and young adult years, Smith was exposed to a buffet of religious, mystical, and occult ideas, including:

- Presbyterian, Baptist, and Methodist doctrines;
- Purported spiritual experiences of Americans and Europeans, including theophanies (visions of God) and angelic visitations described in local newspapers and books in area libraries (details are in the next two chapters); and
- Astrology<sup>8</sup> and the supernaturalism of Emanuel Swedenborg, an eighteenth-century Swedish nobleman and mystic who claimed to have conversed with spirits from Jupiter, Mars, Mercury, Saturn, Venus, and the moon.<sup>9</sup>



Portrait of Emanuel Swedenborg  
by Swedish artist Carl Fredrik von Breda

Many Christians think that Latter-day Saints are not true followers of Jesus Christ due to the hodgepodge of Smith’s metaphysical notions—and to a lesser degree those of later LDS “prophets”—that have formed the doctrinal structure of Mormonism, inconstant as it has been.<sup>10</sup> Historical documents have revealed that Joseph took concepts from other traditions—acceptably Protestant in his day plus ones that were derived from the occult and Freemasonry—and created a seemingly spiritual offering to promote in the “burned-over district” and beyond.

The historical evidence points to Smith believing that he could become a spiritual celebrity like Swedenborg and other renowned visionaries, an achievement that would spare him, a working-class nobody, a life of tough physical labor and put him in the impressive—and potentially lucrative—spotlight as God’s chosen spokesman. However, before launching his career as a self-declared “prophet,” he repeatedly took advantage of the human foible of greed and the predilection of some of his fellow Americans to think magically.

#### **Tapping into the occult to search for dreamed-up riches**

*Early Mormonism and the Magic World View* explains that young Smith “learned from village mentors how to use a divining rod; a seer stone; a hat to shield his eyes in order to see hidden treasures; and amulets, incantations, and rituals to summon spirits.”<sup>11</sup> Searching for fantasized wealth using a supposedly mystical “peep stone”—also called a “seer stone”—ran in the Smith family long before Joseph Jr. created the Latter-day Saint religion, which Mormons believe is “restored” Christianity. Quinn explained in his 646-page book:

Joseph Sr. expressed [a] belief in seer stones before the family moved to New York... [A] revelatory stone, the divining rod, and the treasure-quest [for an envisaged hoard of wealth buried by the eighteenth-century Scottish pirate Captain Kidd] were all part of Joseph Sr.’s beliefs and practices for more than a decade before he moved to Palmyra, New York.<sup>12</sup>

Activities of Smith father and son<sup>13</sup> included hunting for imagined riches employing the occult aids mentioned (a white stovepipe hat was part of young Joseph's equipment).<sup>14</sup> The peep/seer stone was put in a hat, which was then positioned tightly over the treasure-seeker's face, blocking out ambient light. In the darkness, the small rock apparently gave off some sort of mystical illumination, revealing the location of the sought-after booty. Or so the Smiths desperately hoped: tapping into magical forces—so they had convinced themselves—to find a buried fortune would quickly eliminate the family's financial troubles. It was a get-rich-quick scheme with a supernatural twist that made a huge impression on Joseph Jr. and later strongly influenced his Mormon religion.

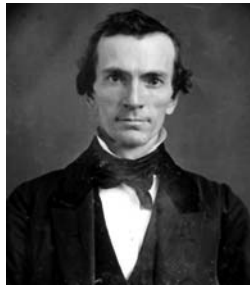
#### **The "Glass Looker" in court**

Before and after the Latter-day Saint movement was officially established as a church on April 6, 1830, Smith was held responsible by local authorities for scamming some of his fellow citizens. *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View* provides details:

A newspaper article in 1831 claimed that about 1826 or 1827 a court tried Smith "as a disorderly person" because "he was about the country in the character of a glass-looker: pretending to discover lost goods, hidden treasures, mines of gold and silver, etc." The claim was entirely consistent with early New York statutes defining the criminal status (misdemeanour) of "Disorderly Persons."

Oliver Cowdery's officially published history [he was a close associate of Mormonism's founder] in 1835 also referred to Smith being brought to trial prior to 1827 "as a disorderly person" due to his treasure-hunting activities with Josiah Stowell.

In the 1970s a non-Mormon researcher verified the existence of the 1826 trial through the county court house. A manuscript itemized the court costs for the March 1826 legal process against "Joseph Smith The Glass Looker."<sup>15</sup>



Oliver Cowdery

*An Insider's View of Mormon Origins* says that Smith “was brought to court three times for stone-gazing.”<sup>16</sup> Not surprisingly, the truth-shy LDS Church does not inform investigators or its members about this troubling fact or many others in relation to Smith’s dishonest behavior. Tenacity was also part of his character, and throughout most of the 1820s he repeatedly suckered people by claiming that he was able to find misplaced items, concealed treasure, and mines of precious metals using his supposedly magical rock (the “glass”). Palmer politely noted that Smith “never obtained any riches by this method,” a fact that “may argue against the efficacy of the endeavor.”<sup>17</sup> Still, Mormonism’s confident fraudster pressed on.

A few months after Smith launched his religious scam, he was again arrested on a charge of being a “disorderly person” in connection with his attempts to sell his services as a “Glass Looker.” He was jailed and later appeared before Justice of the Peace Joseph Chamberlain in South Bainbridge, Chenango County, New York. A physician who attended the court proceedings in July 1830, Dr. Abram Benton, reported that a witness, Addison Austin, asked Joseph the defendant about his self-professed supernatural ability to see hidden treasure (the practice was called “scrying”). Under oath, the Mormon “prophet” admitted: “[T]o be candid, between you and me, I cannot, any more than you or any body else; but any way to get a living.”<sup>18</sup>

The Illinois State Historical Library has a letter by a Joel Noble in its Jonathan B. Turner Collection that confirms what Dr. Benton reported. Also, affidavits signed by Issac Hale (Smith’s father-in-law), Alva Hale (brother-in-law to the Mormon leader), and Peter Ingersoll (neighbor and friend of the Smith family) all stated that Joseph Jr. told them that he could not find treasure, but pretended to possess the requisite occult talent in order to make money.<sup>19</sup> In the context of Mormonism, the significance of Smith hunting for fantasized wealth using a “glass” is enormous and will be explained later in this chapter.

### **The “infamous impostor” and “his credulous dupes”**

In early 1831, Dr. Benton wrote about Smith and his scrying practice, legal troubles, and budding religious scam in a letter, as follows, to the editor of a New York State periodical, the *Evangelical Magazine and Gospel Advocate* (some paragraph breaks have been added for ease of reading):

In the sixth number of your paper I saw a notice of a sect called Mormonites; and thinking that a fuller history of their founder, Joseph Smith, Jr., might be interesting to the community, and particularly to your correspondent in Ohio, where, perhaps, the truth concerning him may be hard to come at, I will take the trouble to make a few remarks on the character of that infamous impostor. For several years preceding the appearance of his book [the *Book of Mormon*], he was about the country in the character of a glass-looker; pretending, by means of a certain stone, or glass, which he put in a hat, to be able to

discover lost goods, hidden treasures, mines of gold and silver, &c [etc.]. Although he consistently failed in his pretensions, still he had his dupes who put implicit confidence in all his words. In this town [Bainbridge Township, New York], a wealthy farmer, named Josiah Stowell, together with others, spent large sums of money in digging for hidden money, which this Smith pretended he could see, and told them where to dig; but they never found their treasure.

At length the public, becoming wearied with the base imposition which he was palming upon the credulity of the ignorant, for the purpose of sponging his living from their earnings, had him arrested as a disorderly person, tried and condemned before a court of Justice. But, considering his youth, (he then being a minor,) and thinking he might reform his conduct, he was designedly allowed to escape. This was four or five years ago. From this time he absented himself from this place, returning only privately, and holding clandestine intercourse with his credulous dupes, for two or three years.

It was during this time, and probably with the help of others more skilled in the ways of iniquity than himself, that he formed the blasphemous design of forging a new revelation [Mormonism], which, backed by the terrors of an endless hell, and the testimony of base unprincipled men, he hoped would frighten the ignorant, and open a field of speculation for the vicious, so that he might secure to himself the scandalous honor of being a founder of a new sect, which might rival, perhaps, the Wilkinsonians, or the French Prophets of the 17th century.

During the past Summer he was frequently in this vicinity, and others of the baser sort, as Cowdry, Whitmer, etc., holding meetings, and proselyting a few weak and silly women, and still more silly men, whose minds are shrouded in a mist of ignorance which no ray can penetrate, and whose credulity the utmost absurdity cannot equal.

In order to check the progress of delusion, and open the eyes and understandings of those who blindly followed him, and unmask the turpitude and villany of those who knowingly abetted him in his infamous designs[,] he was again arraigned before a bar of Justice, during last Summer [July 1830], to answer a charge of misdemeanor. This trial led to an investigation of his character and conduct, which clearly evinced to the unprejudiced whence the spirit came which dictated his inspirations. During the trial it was shown that the Book of Mormon was brought to light by the same magic power by which he pretended to tell fortunes, discover hidden treasures, &c. Oliver Cowdry, one of the three witnesses of the book, testified under oath, that said Smith found with the plates, from which he translated his

book, two transparent stones, resembling glass, set in silver bows. That by looking through these, he [Smith] was able to read in English, the reformed Egyptian characters, which were engraved on the plates.

So much for the gift and power of God, by which Smith says he translated his book... Two transparent stones, undoubtedly of the same properties, and the gift of the same spirit as the one in which he looked to find his neighbor's goods. It is reported, and probably true, that he commenced his juggling by stealing and hiding property belonging to his neighbors, and when inquiry was made, he would look in his stone (his gift and power), and tell where it was.

As for his book [the *Book of Mormon*], it is only the counterpart of his money-digging plan. Fearing the penalty of the law, and wishing still to amuse his followers, he fled for safety to the sanctuary of pretended religion.<sup>20</sup>

### **Peep/seer stones and "restored" Christianity**

According to the Latter-day Saint Church, Smith's remarkable rocks as well as his hat played important roles in the re-establishment of Christianity as it was practiced in the pre-Columbian Western Hemisphere. The organization's Joseph Smith Papers website says:

With his 1827 reception of the [very aged American gold] plates, the ancient seer stones (sometimes called interpreters), and a mandate from heaven, Joseph Smith embarked on a new path as a translator of ancient records. He began translating the Book of Mormon in early 1828, and the translation, as he explained it, was made known to him through the stones or interpreters. Whether using the interpreters or his own stone, he characterized as divine his power to look into seer stones and translate.<sup>21</sup>

An article by Russell Nelson, one of the LDS Church's high-ranking Twelve Apostles, in the July 1993 issue of the church's *Ensign* magazine for adult members described the highly unorthodox *Book of Mormon* "translation" method reputedly used by the organization's founder:

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 on that appeared the writing. One character at a time 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.<sup>22</sup>

Nelson, a lifelong Latter-day Saint and former heart surgeon, called Smith's face-and-seer-stone-in-hat technique "miraculous."<sup>23</sup> However, Emma, the first and only legal wife of Mormonism's founder—Joseph unlawfully had at least thirty-two wives before he was killed—did not use any spiritual adjective when she told her son, Joseph Smith III:

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.<sup>24</sup>

On November 19, 2003, the Comedy Central television network aired an episode of the popular cartoon *South Park* titled "All About Mormons."<sup>25</sup> Smith was shown putting his face into his hat and "translating" the *Book of Mormon* via his "miraculous" stone. Latter-day Saints who heard about the cartoon were offended by what they regarded as a mockery of their revered leader, ignorant of the fact that the animation was based on recorded LDS history.

### **The "curious instrument"**

An article on lds.org from the *Friend*, the Mormon Church's monthly periodical for children, provides more information about Smith's purportedly mystical rocks as well as an outlandish "translation" contraption worn by him:

Translating the ancient and strange looking writing on the gold plates was not a job that just anyone could do. Such an important work needed to be done by someone who was especially prepared by the Lord to do it.

Because of his spiritual nature and his willingness to learn the truth, Joseph Smith was tested [by God] and found worthy to be the translator of the Book of Mormon. To help him with the translation, Joseph found with the gold plates "a curious instrument which the ancients called Urim and Thummim, which consisted of two transparent stones set in a rim of a bow fastened to a breastplate."

Joseph also used an egg-shaped, brown rock for translating called a seer stone. The translating was done at Peter Whitmer's home, a friend of the Prophet's where Oliver Cowdery, Emma Smith (Joseph's wife),

one of the Whitmers, or Martin Harris wrote down the words spoken by the Prophet as soon as they were made known to him.

Martin Harris said that on the seer stone “sentences would appear and were read by the Prophet and written by [the one writing them down] and when finished [that person] would say ‘written’; and if correctly written, the sentence would disappear and another take its place; but if not written correctly it remained until corrected, so that the translation was just as it was engraven on the plates.”

Even with the help of the Urim and Thummim and the seer stone, it wasn’t easy to translate the sacred record. It required the Prophet’s greatest concentration and spiritual strength.<sup>26</sup>

The LDS Church has on its main website more than three hundred references to the apparently magical Urim and Thummim. A picture of Smith wearing the strange “translation” equipment—a golden breastplate with glassy stones as spectacles attached to silver bows connected to the piece of armor covering much of his torso—is also online.<sup>27</sup>

One of Mormonism’s many strange “truths” is that a “seer” can be a person as well as one or more rocks imbued with supernatural power. Transcripts of sermons by LDS leaders, church articles and lessons, and verses of Mormon scripture about mortal and terrene “seers” can be read at [lds.org](http://lds.org).<sup>28</sup>

It is noteworthy that the Bible and ancient Christian writings say nothing about stones—“egg-shaped” and “brown,” or of another appearance—being employed to translate religiously important documents (the New Testament, for example, was originally written in Koine Greek). There is also no evidence that any document related to the Bible from the Christian era or after was translated using fantastical stones-bows-breastplate gear.

### **Smith’s “seer” rock collection and “profession of a water-witch”**

Quinn explained in *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View* that Smith possessed at least three stones that he believed could be used for mystical purposes. One was whiteish and opaque, another was brown—mentioned in the *Friend* article—and the third was greenish with brown, irregular spots.<sup>29</sup> According to the Mormon history expert, of the three small rocks:

Smith and his followers had the highest regard for the brown stone. Both Mormon and non-Mormon sources stated that he found it as he dug a well for the Chase family of Palmyra. According to Willard Chase, this occurred in 1822. From the early 1830s onward, Palmyra neighbors affirmed that Smith used this stone in treasure-digging.<sup>30</sup>



An article in the August 1880 issue of *Lippincott's Magazine of Popular Literature and Science* titled "The Early Days of Mormonism" provided related information:

Joseph [Smith] , Jr. grew up with the reputation of being an idle and ignorant youth, given to chicken-thieving, and, like his father, extremely superstitious. Both father and sons [Hyrum, Joseph's elder brother, was also mentioned] believed in witchcraft, and they frequently 'divined' the presence of water by a forked stick or hazel rod...

The profession of a water-witch did not bring enough ducats to the Smith family; so the attempt was made to find hidden treasures. Failing in this, the unfolding flower of Mormonism would have been nipped in the bud had not Joe's father and brother been engaged in digging a well upon the premises of Clark Chase in September, 1819. Joseph, Jr., stood idly by with some of the Chase children when a stone resembling a child's foot was thrown from the well. The Chase children claimed the curiosity, as it was considered, but Joe seized and retained it. Afterward, for a series of years, he claimed that by the use of it he was enabled to discover stolen property and to locate the place where treasure was buried.<sup>31</sup>

Returning briefly to Quinn's book, *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View* also says that Joseph's mother "used seer stones."<sup>32</sup> On one occasion, Lucy Mack Smith went to her neighbour, Samantha Payne, to ask for "a stone the children had found, of curious shape. She wanted to use it as a peepstone."<sup>33</sup>

### **Smith's pirate 'vision'**

Not only was Mormonism's enterprising "Glass Looker" keen to search for imagined underground riches when not "translating" purportedly ancient American "characters" of Egyptian origin or using the mysterious—and never displayed—Urim and Thummim "instrument," he sometimes divulged information about his treasure-hunting activities. For example, *An Insider's View of Mormon Origins* says that Smith told W. R. (William Riley) Hine of Windsor, New York that he saw:

Captain Kidd sailing on the Susquehanna River during a freshet [a sudden rise in the water level caused by heavy rains or the rapid melting of snow and ice], and that he buried two pots of gold and silver. He [Smith] claimed he saw writing cut on the rocks in an unknown language telling where Kidd buried it, and he translated it through his peepstone...[and] dug for Kidd's money, on the west bank of the Susquehanna.<sup>34</sup>

While Smith failed to locate the envisaged “pots” of precious metals, he continued to act on his fantasy of unearthing buried wealth well into his career as the founding Mormon “prophet” (Chapter 3 provides more information). His story about seeing the ghost of Captain Kidd—the pirate was executed in England in May 1701—on the Susquehanna River was possibly influenced by Washington Irving’s *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*, which was first published in 1820, the year Joseph turned fifteen. The yarn about Kidd on the American waterway is one of many tall tales created by Smith, who repeatedly used his story-crafting and -recounting talent as the father of the Latter-day Saint version of Christianity.

Palmer also mentioned Emily Coburn, whose sister, Sally, married a close friend of Smith, Newell Knight, who became one of the first church members. Coburn met the young LDS leader on his parents’ farm and learned of his “profession” as an occult-employing treasure-hunter. In her book, *Mormonism: Or Life Among the Mormons*, Emily related that Smith “told his friends that he could see money in pots, under the ground...and [they would] dig for the treasures, which were hidden in the earth... While I was visiting my sister, we have walked out to see the places where they dug for money, and laughed to think of the absurdity of any people having common intellect to indulge in such a thought or action.”<sup>35</sup>

### **Mystical visitation stories**

Smith not only claimed that he possessed supernatural powers that enabled him to find subterranean treasure and translate “reformed Egyptian characters” using one or two magical rocks, he also asserted that he was visited by heavenly beings, including an ancient American prophet of Hebrew ancestry.<sup>36</sup> Documents penned by Mormonism’s stone-gazing founder as well as transcripts of sermons by Latter-day Saint apostles and other Mormon leaders plus several church materials explain what supposedly happened. For example, *The Life and Ministry of Joseph Smith*, one of the church’s instruction manuals, states:

God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, appeared to him [Smith], teaching him more about the nature of God than had been known for centuries. Ancient prophets and apostles bestowed sacred priesthood power upon Joseph, making him a new, authorized witness of God in this last dispensation. An incomparable outpouring of knowledge and doctrine was revealed through the Prophet, including the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants [*D&C*], and the Pearl of Great Price [all volumes of LDS scripture]. Through him, the Lord’s true Church was organized once again upon the earth.<sup>37</sup>

In the Latter-day Saint lexicon, a “dispensation” is a period of human history, and we are living in a crucial one called “the fulness of times.”<sup>38</sup> The

concept is similar to the “end time” or “end times” of other apocalyptic religions (see Chapter 8 for more information).<sup>39</sup>

Although God the Father and the resurrected Christ appeared to Smith, according to one of Joseph’s incongruous narratives that became the core of LDS theology, Mormonism’s “new, authorized witness of God” failed to stick with a single name for “the Lord’s true Church...organized once again upon the earth.” First, it was called the Church of Christ, followed by the Church of the Latter Day Saints, and then the Church of Jesus Christ. The Church of God was next, and finally the lengthy name by which it is formally known today, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.<sup>40</sup> Apparently, God’s son, whom Smith claimed transmitted to him “revelations” about how to organize and manage the church, was indecisive for nearly a decade (1829 to 1838) about what his re-established religious community should be called. In truth, it was Smith experimenting with different names for *his* church as part of establishing *his* religious brand.

### **The official First Vision**

Since the nineteenth century, millions of Latter-day Saints have been taught—starting in early childhood in most cases—about the seminal event in official Mormon history: the First Vision. During indoctrination sessions, toddlers are shown related pictures<sup>41</sup> and children age three and older are told that “Joseph Smith saw Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ”<sup>42</sup> and “Heavenly Father and Jesus talked with Joseph Smith.”<sup>43</sup> The church’s materials for teenagers such as the *New Era* magazine contain more than 140 First Vision references, and for adult Mormons, in excess of four hundred.<sup>44</sup>

Conspicuously, Smith did not write about his self-professed theophany until 1838, eighteen years—nearly half his lifetime—after the event supposedly took place. His First Vision story, which is regarded as entirely accurate in the LDS Church, was corrected in terms of its spelling, punctuation, and other types of errors and added to Mormon scripture after 1838. The following text is part of the lengthy narrative written by the imaginative Latter-day Saint leader:

I was at this time [the spring of 1820] 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.

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 [religious] 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.

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? If any one of them be right, which is it, and how shall I know it?

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 [in the Bible], 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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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!

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.

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." It seems as though the adversary [Satan/the Devil] 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?<sup>45</sup>

Since 1830, hundreds of thousands of Mormon missionaries have proselytized on six continents and told millions of people about Joseph Smith and his First Vision experience, per his 1838 narrative. I did as a missionary in Peru in 1984/5, and Mitt Romney, another example, accomplished the same in France in the latter 1960s. Latter-day Saints have shared their testimonies—uttered words of fervent belief based on church teachings and conditioned feelings—that they have “known” that what Smith described and the LDS Church has taught about the First Vision was indeed the beginning of the “restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ.”<sup>46</sup> However, the chief problem with this approach to “knowing” is that emotions have never been an infallible guide to the truth, an important reality elaborated on later in this chapter.

### **The “practicing necromancer” joined the Methodists**

To review, Smith wrote in 1838 that the “Personage” who appeared in the woods in early 1820 and talked the most—Jesus Christ, according to Mormon theology—told him to stay away from churches because “they were all wrong,” their “creeds were an abomination in his [God’s] sight,” their “professors were all corrupt,” and they taught “for doctrines the commandments of men, having a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof.” Assuming for a moment that the First Vision happened as Smith described, the order from Christianity’s resurrected founder, per the New Testament, to young Joseph to not get involved in any religious sect was unambiguous.

Disturbing for Latter-day Saints, however, is the historical fact that in June 1828 the Mormon “prophet” joined the Methodist Episcopal class in Harmony, Pennsylvania.<sup>47</sup> One of Emma’s cousins, Joseph Lewis, learned what Smith had done, and knowing of his unprincipled character, told him to either “publicly ask to have his name stricken from the class book, or stand a disciplinary investigation.”<sup>48</sup> Years later, Lewis related the following to the newspaper in his community of Amboy, Illinois:

I, with Joshua McKune, a local preacher at that time...in June 1828, heard on Saturday that Joe Smith had joined the church on Wednesday afternoon, (as it was customary in those days to have circuit preaching at my father’s house on [a] week-day). We thought it was a disgrace to the church to have a practicing necromancer, a dealer in enchantments and bleeding ghosts, in it. So on Sunday we went to father’s, the place of meeting that day, and got there in season to see Smith and talked with him some time in father’s shop before the meeting. Told him that his occupation, habits, and moral character were at variance with the [religious] discipline, that his name would be a disgrace to the church, that there should have been recantation,

confession and at least promised reformation – [t]hat he could that day publicly ask that his name be stricken from the class book, or stand an investigation. He chose the former, and did that very day make the request that his name be taken off the class book.<sup>49</sup>

Mormon leaders, particularly Latter-day Saint “prophets,” have never explained why Smith disobeyed Jesus Christ—assuming Joseph’s 1838 narrative was truthful—and wasted his time by uniting himself with the doctrinally “corrupt” Methodists.

### **Mormonism’s “whole strength”**

How important is the First Vision to Mormonism? During the LDS Church’s General Conference in October 1998, then-president Gordon Hinckley told members in a sermon that was broadcast worldwide:

Our entire case as members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints rests on the validity of this glorious First Vision. It was the parting of the curtain to open this, the dispensation of the fulness of times. Nothing on which we base our doctrine, nothing we teach, nothing we live by is of greater importance than this initial declaration. I submit that if Joseph Smith talked with God the Father and His Beloved Son, then all else of which he spoke is true. This is the hinge on which turns the gate that leads to the path of salvation and eternal life.<sup>50</sup>

Or, it can rightly be said, the hinge on which the gate of truth is anchored and moves, proving that Mormonism is a sham. Four years later, Hinckley told Latter-day Saints in General Conference:

We declare without equivocation that God the Father and His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, appeared in person to the boy Joseph Smith.

When I was interviewed by Mike Wallace on the [CBS] 60 Minutes program, he asked me if I actually believed that. I replied, “Yes, sir. That’s the miracle of it.”

That is the way I feel about it. Our whole strength rests on the validity of that vision. It either occurred or it did not occur. If it did not, then this work is a fraud. If it did, then it is the most important and wonderful work under the heavens.<sup>51</sup>

### **Verification problem**

Clearly, it is impossible to verify that any so-called “spiritual” experience claimed by an individual actually happened. If someone says that he or she saw God or was visited by an angel, for example, there is no way to confirm

his or her story. Supernatural forces or beings do not give interviews to sceptics or even impartial journalists. The verification problem is exacerbated by a lack of photos, video and/or audio captured during the purported encounter. Consequently, people who read or hear about a seemingly mystical story such as Joseph Smith's First Vision can do one of three things: accept it, ignore it, or reject it.

Some people accept narratives of a metaphysical nature at face value. Why? For emotional reasons. They feel that what the storyteller is saying is "true," a word often used by Mormons in relation to "knowing" (e.g., "I know that Joseph Smith was a true prophet of God and the Book of Mormon is true."). However, the main problem with basing assessments on how one feels without balancing out the judgment process with critical thinking is the fallibility of emotions in terms of being a consistently correct guide to comprehending reality.

Verifiable truth is independent of people's feelings and emotion-based beliefs. For example, the facts about the universe from the time of Aristotle to the Renaissance had nothing to do with Europeans' religious thoughts and feelings about "the heavens." Over many generations, people in Europe were taught erroneous ideas by the Catholic Church that were derived from centuries of passed-down Aristotelian cosmology. It included the incorrect idea that our planet was at the center of a divinely-constructed universe and the moon, planets, sun, and other celestial bodies rotated around the stationary earth in perfect, circular orbits. Despite Europeans' fervent beliefs and comforting emotions about an unchanging, eternal cosmos and their special place in it, namely, at the center of God's attention, they were wrong.

So it is with Mormons. Since the 1830s, they have been taught Latter-day Saint "truths"—Smith's purported First Vision encounter chief among them—and "programmed" to believe that the imagined and retold "events" actually occurred. In the next chapter, the reader will learn that the historical evidence—from Smith, no less—has revealed that he repeatedly lied in order to make himself appear to be God's very special "prophet." Why the myth-making and deception on his part? So that "he might secure to himself the scandalous honor of being a founder of a new sect" in "the sanctuary of pretended religion," again quoting Dr. Benton. Crucially for Mormonism's cash-strapped founder, his movement could be financially advantageous if he gained enough psychological influence over his followers, which he, a charismatic and practiced fraudster, did with ease.

By the early 1830s, Smith, who was not unintelligent, had probably realized that his "Glass Looker" scam had created more trouble than it was worth. If he continued to dupe people about being able to locate buried treasure using his peep stone, sooner or later he would again end up in court and be fined and/or jailed due to his previous convictions as a "disorderly person." If he gave up his scrying "career," he would have to become a laborer, just like his contemporaries who had little, if any, formal education. However, if he managed to concoct a religion based on his imaginative tales—presented as historical realities—and fool enough "weak and silly women, and



still more silly men" to join his movement and hand over at least part of their money and other assets, he could avoid a difficult life of hard physical work and become, just maybe, as famous as Swedenborg and other renowned mystics.

Not lacking in ambition but "[f]earing the penalty of the law" (Dr. Benton's astute observation), young adult Joseph Smith, Jr. launched "a new revelation"—Mormonism—that "he hoped would frighten the ignorant, and open a field of speculation" to benefit himself and other "base unprincipled [Mormon] men." Thus, the costliest swindle in American history was born more than 184 years ago.

## Chapter 2

### Mystical Beings from the Kolob Extraterrestrial Neighborhood

**If you could hie to Kolob / In the twinkling of an eye;  
And then continue onward / With that same speed to fly.  
Do you think that you could ever / Through all eternity;  
Find out the generation / Where Gods began to be?**

**Or see the grand beginning / Where space did not extend?  
Or view the last creation / Where Gods and matter end?  
Methinks the Spirit whispers / No man has found ‘pure space’;  
Nor seen the outside curtains / Where nothing has a place.**

– Two verses of LDS hymn #284, “If You Could Hie [Travel Quickly] to Kolob”

**The angels do not reside on a planet like this earth;**

**But they reside in the presence of God, on a globe like a sea of glass and fire, where all things for their glory are manifest, past, present, and future, and are continually before the Lord.**

**The place where God resides is a great Urim and Thummim.**

**This earth, in its sanctified and immortal state, will be made like unto crystal and will be a Urim and Thummim to the inhabitants who dwell thereon, whereby all things pertaining to an inferior kingdom, or all kingdoms of a lower order, will be manifest to those who dwell on it; and this earth will be Christ’s.**

– Verses 6 to 9 of Section 130 of the *Doctrine and Covenants*, one of four main volumes of Latter-day Saint scripture. According to the LDS Church, Joseph Smith provided these “items of instruction” in April 1843.

During much of his controversy-laden life, Mormonism’s founder claimed to have had encounters with supernatural entities. They included the “being from the unseen world” in the woods that allegedly caused Smith to suddenly become mute, enveloped him in “thick darkness,” and nearly destroyed him, and the “two Personages, whose brightness and glory defy all description,” floating above him on some undated morning “early in the spring of eighteen hundred and twenty.” According to the LDS Church’s “Joseph Smith—History” section of scripture, the Mormon leader also recounted how other mystical male beings visited him outdoors and at home.<sup>1</sup> The following are excerpts from his narrative:

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 [the First Vision].<sup>2</sup>

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[O]n the evening of the above-mentioned twenty-first of September [1823], 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 [involving “some actual being from the unseen world” and the “two Personages” in the woods].

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.

He had on a loose robe of most exquisite whiteness. It was a whiteness beyond anything earthly I had ever seen; nor do I believe that any earthly thing could be made to appear so exceedingly white and brilliant. His hands were naked, and his arms also, a little above the wrist[s]; so, also, were his feet naked, as were his legs, a little above the ankles. His head and neck were also bare. I could discover that he had no other clothing on but this robe, as it was open, so that I could see into his bosom.

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. When I first looked upon him, I was afraid; but the fear soon left me.

He said there was a book deposited, written upon gold plates, giving an account of the former inhabitants of this continent [North America], and the source from whence they sprang. He also said that the fulness of the everlasting Gospel [Mormonism] was contained in it, as delivered by the Savior [Jesus Christ] to the ancient inhabitants;

Also, that there were two stones in silver bows—and these stones, fastened to a breastplate, constituted what is called the Urim and Thummim—deposited with the plates; and the possession and use of these stones were what constituted “seers” in ancient or former times; and that God had prepared them for the purpose of translating the book.<sup>3</sup>

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[H]e told me, that when I got those plates of which he had spoken—for the time that they should be obtained was not yet fulfilled—I should not show them to any person; neither the breastplate with the Urim and Thummim; only to those to whom I should be commanded to show them; if I did I should be destroyed. While he was conversing with me about the plates, the vision was opened to my mind that I could see the place where the plates were deposited, and that so clearly and distinctly that I knew the place again when I visited it.<sup>4</sup>

### **A mystical visit by Nephi – or was it Moroni?**

Smith’s supposedly historical account about a heavenly male “personage” in his bedroom was included in the LDS Church’s 1851 edition of its *Pearl of Great Price* book of scripture. The floating masculine being was “a messenger sent from the presence of God” called Nephi, according to Mormon scripture more than a century and a half ago.<sup>5</sup> Strangely, the *Pearl of Great Price* today says:

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.<sup>6</sup>

There are multiple Nephis and Moronis in the *Book of Mormon*, which was first published in 1830. The literary work states that the first Nephi lived six hundred years before Jesus Christ.<sup>7</sup> The LDS Church teaches that the last Moroni finished engraving the gold plates with compiled ancient American history—in “reformed Egyptian” for some bizarre reason<sup>8</sup>—more than one thousand years later, in “A.D. 421.”<sup>9</sup> According to Latter-day Saint doctrine, the various Nephis and Moronis died at some point and became resurrected “personages” in the same Celestial Kingdom—the LDS version of heaven<sup>10</sup>—where Jesus Christ and Heavenly Father (a.k.a. Elohim) and their wives have been residing.<sup>11</sup>

### **Kolob: “The first creation”**

According to Smith, the giant sphere “like a sea of glass and fire” upon which God lives is close to a sun called Kolob, which is “the governing star in all the universe” and “symbolic of Jesus Christ.”<sup>12</sup> Mormonism’s founder also wrote that “time passes more slowly on Kolob than on any other star in this order.”<sup>13</sup> LDS Church material for adult members provides additional Mormon astronomical information:

President Joseph Fielding Smith [the highest-ranking Latter-day Saint leader in the early 1970s] wrote: “The Lord made known to him [Joseph Smith, Jr.] the following facts: That Kolob is the first creation, and is nearest to the celestial, or the residence of God. It is the first in

government, the last pertaining to the measurement of time. This measurement is according to celestial time. One day in Kolob is equal to a thousand years according to the measurement of this earth, which by the Egyptians was called Jah-oh-eh.

[Biblical] Abraham learned that, like Kolob, there were other stars that were “very great,” and that these great stars were governing stars (see Abraham 3:2–3 [in the *Pearl of Great Price*]). The Lord taught Abraham about “the set time of all the stars”... Abraham also learned that there are other governing stars located nearer to Kolob and that they rotate more slowly, or “longer,” than many other stars (but not more slowly than Kolob).

The Lord’s teachings [i.e., those of the intelligence-spirit called Jehovah, who was the Bible’s Jesus Christ before he was born, according to Mormon theology] about stars and planets helped Abraham understand more about this earth and its relationship to Kolob. For example, he taught Abraham that one day on Kolob was equal to one thousand years of time on our earth (see Abraham 3:4).<sup>14</sup>

The Latter-day Saint concept that Jesus existed before his birth is explained in Chapter 6. Based on what is written in the New Testament and ancient texts translated by scholars, the man regarded by Christians as God’s only begotten son never talked about Kolob, “stars and planets,” celestial bodies that “rotate more slowly,” and other aspects of LDS cosmology. However, Mormonism’s Jesus seems to have been an astronomy enthusiast of the first order.

### **The Latter-day Saint universe**

Because of Smith, Mormon scripture says that the correct name for the sun in our solar system is Shinehah; the moon, Olea; and all of the stars throughout the universe are collectively called Kokaubeam, which sounds quasi-Hawaiian.<sup>15</sup> Text on lds.org says that stars “receive their light from Kolob,” “the great stars in the expanse of space...help govern with power,” and the “moon, earth, and sun in our solar system are examples of these kinds of [governing] stars,” which “could also be symbolic of other great and noble spirits in the premortal existence.”<sup>16</sup> A church instruction manual adds:

Oliblish, so called by the Egyptians, stands next to Kolob in the grand governing creation near the celestial, or place where God resides. This great star is also a governing star and is equal to Kolob in its revolutions and in its measuring of time.<sup>17</sup>

Since the nineteenth century, several aspects of Mormonism have been weird, but none more so than:

- “Jesus Christ is the source of light for the immensity of space, including the sun, moon, stars, and earth”<sup>18</sup>;
- The moon and sun are inhabited;
- The earth has a spirit that speaks; and
- Stars are in fact “celestialized” planets.<sup>19</sup>

Brigham Young, the Mormon Church’s second president and its senior “prophet, seer, and revelator” for nearly thirty years, expounded on some of these Latter-day Saint “truths” in one of his sermons (paragraph breaks have been added for the reader’s benefit):

It has been observed here this morning that we are called fanatics. Bless me! That is nothing. Who has not been called a fanatic who has discovered anything new in philosophy or science? We have all read of Galileo the astronomer who, contrary to the system of astronomy that had been received for ages before his day, taught that the sun, and not the earth, was the center of our planetary system. For this the learned astronomer was called “fanatic,” and subjected to persecution and imprisonment of the most rigorous character.

So it has been with others who have discovered and explained new truths in science and philosophy which have been in opposition to long-established theories; and the opposition they have encountered has endured until the truth of their discoveries has been demonstrated by time.

The term “fanatic” is not applied to professors of religion only...I will tell you who the real fanatics are: they are they who adopt false principles and ideas as facts, and try to establish a superstructure upon a false foundation. They are the fanatics; and however ardent and zealous they may be, they may reason or argue on false premises till doomsday, and the result will be false.

If our religion is of this character we want to know it; we would like to find a philosopher who can prove it to us. We are called ignorant; so we are: but what of it? Are not all ignorant? I rather think so. Who can tell us of the inhabitants of this little planet that shines of an evening called the moon? When we view its face we may see what is termed “the man in the moon,” and what some philosophers declare are the shadows of mountains. But these sayings are very vague, and amount to nothing; and when you inquire about the inhabitants of that sphere you find that the most learned are as ignorant in regard to them as the most ignorant of their fellows.

So it is with regard to the inhabitants of the sun. Do you think it is inhabited? I rather think it is. Do you think there is any life there? No question of it; it was not made in vain. It was made [by God] to give light to those who dwell upon it, and to other planets; and so will this earth when it is celestialized. Every planet in its first rude, organic state receives not the glory of God upon it, but is opaque; but when celestialized, every planet that God brings into existence is a body of light, but not till then. Christ is the light of this planet. God gives light to our eyes.<sup>20</sup>



Brigham Young

The LDS Church's March 1997 *Ensign* periodical included another strange cosmological quote from Young:

When the earth was framed and brought into existence and man was placed upon it, it was near the throne of our Father in heaven [i.e., near the star Kolob]... But when man [spiritually] fell, the earth fell into space [i.e., it was supernaturally transported through the universe], and took up its abode in this planetary system... This is the glory the earth came from [the Celestial Kingdom/Mormon heaven near Kolob], and when it is glorified [after the end of the Millennium following the return of Jesus Christ, according to Mormonism] it will return again [through space] unto the presence of the Father [near Kolob], and it will dwell there, and these intelligent beings [Latter-day Saints] that I am looking at, if they live worthy of it, will dwell upon this earth [repositioned back to the vicinity of Kolob].<sup>21</sup>

#### **Ancient Biblical men also visited Smith?**

In addition to Heavenly Father (Elohim) and Jesus Christ (Jehovah) leaving their fiery, glassy home near a Mormon-imagined star, traveling through the cosmos, and visiting Smith outdoors in upstate New York, and Moroni, the resurrected being formerly known as Nephi, suddenly appearing and levitating in Joseph's bedroom, Mormonism's founder also claimed that other Celestial Kingdom residents met with him. Mormon.org, another LDS Church website, explains:

Prior to the organization of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Joseph Smith received priesthood authority at the hands of John the Baptist, Peter, James, and John who received that same power and authority from Jesus Christ Himself.<sup>22</sup>

How did Smith receive “priesthood authority” from John the Baptist, whom King Herod had ordered to be executed via beheading some eighteen centuries earlier, according to the Bible? Lds.org provides the Latter-day Saint explanation:

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.<sup>23</sup>

The reader will learn later in this chapter how the decapitated Biblical John apparently became “a resurrected being.” His visit to the northeastern United States—after a mystical and joyous reunion with his head, one would assume—with Smith and Cowdery was not the only supernatural encounter they claimed to have had outdoors during 1829. Both Mormon men later asserted—and the LDS Church has taught for generations—that in the same year, the ancient Christian apostles Peter, James, and John also appeared in the woods to bestow upon the two Americans the Melchizedek or “higher” priesthood.<sup>24</sup> For some reason, neither Smith nor Cowdery bothered to record the date of that unusual encounter. Perhaps by mid-1829 they had become so accustomed to visitors from the Kolob extraterrestrial neighborhood stopping by that they felt that jotting down day and month details was no longer necessary. Nevertheless, to reassure Mormons that the Latter-day Saint Church is the only religious organization on this planet with God’s priesthood power and authority, drawings of the four Biblical men visiting Smith and Cowdery are at lds.org.<sup>25</sup>

### **The Great Apostasy**

No discussion about the origins of Mormonism would be complete without expanding on the Latter-day Saint idea of the Great Apostasy, which the visitations of Peter, James and John and the re-headed John the Baptist were crucial in terms of ending, according to LDS doctrine. Mormon.org states:



Without authority or divine direction, Christianity struggled to survive with conflicting opinions on even the most basic teachings of the gospel. Without priesthood authority or the full gospel, people had to rely on human wisdom to interpret the scriptures, principles and ordinances [Mormon rituals]. Many false ideas were taught as truth, and much of what we [Latter-day Saints] know about the true character and nature of God the Father, His Son Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost was lost. Essential doctrines like faith, repentance, baptism, and the gift of the Holy Ghost became distorted and important doctrines [e.g., polygamy, blacks being cursed by God with dark skin] were lost entirely.

Centuries later, inspired people, such as Martin Luther and John Calvin, recognized that practices and doctrines had been changed or lost and tried to reform the churches to which they belonged. But without the authority of the apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ, His gospel and Church could not be returned to their original form.<sup>26</sup>

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#### The Dark Ages of Christianity

Regardless of the valiant efforts of Christ's apostles and their faithful followers, the original church that Christ restored began to fade away. Members faced severe persecution and all but one of the apostles were martyred. This is a period called the Great Apostasy, when there was a "falling away"...from the gospel Christ organized. The apostolic authority to bestow priesthood keys and to receive revelation for the Church was lost along with many precious teachings. Errors about His teachings crept into the church resulting in conflicting opinions and lost truths. This period is what we call the Great Apostasy.<sup>27</sup>

Actually, the concept of the "Great Apostasy" predates Mormonism by centuries. Prior to Smith launching his movement in the late 1820s, various religious groups in the United States and some European nations believed that the Holy Roman Catholic Church had long ago become doctrinally and ritually corrupted. How? By allowing Greco-Roman mysteries and ideas about gods of solar monism such as Sol Invictus and Mithras as well as idol worship into the early church.<sup>28</sup> For generations, Anabaptists, Adventist elements of the Millerite tradition, Jehovah's Witnesses, and followers of other religious belief systems have been convinced that the Catholic Church has not faithfully represented the spiritual movement founded by Jesus of Nazareth and expanded by his disciples after his death.

### **Luther the unhappy Catholic**

I will digress for a moment to provide some information about Martin Luther and then connect it to the discussion about Mormon origins. For readers not familiar with European religious history, Luther was an early-sixteenth-century German priest and theology professor who condemned the Catholic practice of indulgences, a doctrinal means by which “the faithful can obtain the remission of temporal punishment resulting from sin for themselves and also for the souls in Purgatory.”<sup>29</sup> By the late Middle Ages, those “means” had become a profitable racket for enterprising *quaestores*—“professional” pardoners—as well as Catholic leaders who wanted to raise cash for projects, including military campaigns.<sup>30</sup>

Imagine in today’s world a church official visiting a community and charging believers a not-insignificant sum, say, three hundred dollars, for a piece of paper on which one of the organization’s leaders—or an intrepid swindler—has written some text that says the buyer is free from the “temporal punishment” due for one or more “sins.” To make the enterprise work, potential customers would have to first believe in the concepts of “sin” and obtaining “the remission of temporal punishment resulting from sin” via indulgences sold by church authorities or their designated officers (or enterprising individuals posing as them). Crucially, the seller’s revenue stream would require people to not doubt the religious doctrine about indulgences. In other words, no belief, no transfer of cash from indulgence buyer to seller.

One does not need a degree in psychology or finance to realize that Catholics’ fear of “sin” and “temporal punishment”—psychological results of church indoctrination—and the Catholic concept of indulgences made possible a lot of money-making. Philosophically, it was just capitalism at work, but Luther, who was not a businessman, did not see it that way. He thought that selling indulgences was ungodly and said so in his *Disputatio pro declaratione virtutis indulgentiarum (Ninety-Five Theses on the Power and Efficacy of Indulgences)* in 1517 A.D. (C.E.).<sup>31</sup> His treatise effectively kicked off the Protestant revolution against the Catholic Church and led to profound changes—religious, political, and other—in Europe. By December 1805 when Joseph Smith was born, Protestantism was firmly rooted in the young United States of America.<sup>32</sup>

In the context of Mormonism, using fear of negative “spiritual” consequences, including threatened punishments from God, to coerce members to pay a considerable portion of their income, money gifts, pension, inheritance(s), and other financial increases to the Latter-day Saint Church and otherwise obey its many requirements is discussed in Chapter 11.

### **An inconsistent religion**

The LDS Church teaches that the Great Apostasy “lasted until the Restoration through the Prophet Joseph Smith.”<sup>33</sup> According to Mormonism, the key volume of scripture of “the Restoration” is the *Book of Mormon*, which

says that Jesus Christ, Heavenly Father's son in the spirit and flesh, "is the same yesterday, today, and forever."<sup>34</sup> The crucial Latter-day Saint canonical work also states that "God is the same yesterday, today, and forever, and in him there is no variableness neither shadow of changing."<sup>35</sup>

Despite this *Book of Mormon* declaration, the historical evidence shows that several "eternal truths" which supposedly originated with the two unchanging LDS deities—Elohim/Heavenly Father and Jehovah/Jesus Christ—have either been altered or discarded since Smith started his religious movement.<sup>36</sup> One example of many is the Mormon theological incongruity that "[t]he Father" is "a personage of spirit," per Latter-day Saint scripture in the early nineteenth century, but "the Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man's," quoting LDS scripture today.<sup>37</sup>

The variable body of doctrine leaves one wondering what *is* foundational to the Mormon Church other than taking billions of dollars each year from its misled membership, investing in large commercial real estate projects and other money-making ventures, and expanding its wealth, while not allowing members to examine its financial records to ascertain how their donated funds have been spent (see Chapter 12 for more information).

### **"Fundamental to Our Faith"**

In February 2010, a member of the LDS Church's Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, Dallin Oaks, spoke to an audience of Harvard Law School faculty and students about Mormonism in a speech titled "Fundamental to Our Faith." Before becoming an apostle, Oaks was a law professor at the University of Chicago's law school, president of Brigham Young University, and a Utah Supreme Court justice. The full text of his address, which touched on the origins of the Latter-day Saint movement but did not mention Mormonism's ancient American gold plates engraved with "reformed Egyptian characters," Smith's peep/seer stones and scrying "business," the mystical parchment-like apparition in his hat, or the Urim and Thummim "instrument," is online.<sup>38</sup> The following paragraphs are from Oaks' address:

We Latter-day Saints know that our doctrines and values are not widely understood by those not of our faith. This was demonstrated by Gary C. Lawrence's nationwide study published in his recent book, *How Americans View Mormonism*. Three-quarters of those surveyed associated our Church with high moral standards, but about half thought we were secretive and mysterious and had "weird beliefs." When asked to select various words they thought described Latter-day Saints in general, 87 percent checked "strong family values," 78 percent checked "honest," and 45 percent checked "blind followers."

When Lawrence's interviewers asked, "To the best of your understanding, what is the main claim of Mormonism?" only 14 percent could describe anything close to the idea of restoration or reestablishment of

the original Christian faith. Similarly, when another national survey asked respondents what one word best described their impression of the Mormon religion, not one person suggested the words or ideas of original or restoration Christianity.

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For us the truth about the nature of God and our relationship to Him is the key to everything else. Significantly, our belief in the nature of God is what distinguishes us from the formal creeds of most Christian denominations. Our Articles of Faith begin as follows: “We believe in God, the Eternal Father, and in His Son, Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost.”

We have this belief in the Godhead in common with the rest of Christianity, but to us it means something different than to most. We maintain that these three members of the Godhead are three separate and distinct beings and that God the Father is not a spirit but a glorified Being with a tangible body, as is His resurrected Son, Jesus Christ. Though separate in identity, They are one in purpose... Our unique belief that “the Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man’s; the Son also; but the Holy Ghost has not a body of flesh and bones, but is a personage of Spirit”...is vital to us.

Our belief in the nature of God comes from what we call the First Vision, which began the Restoration of the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Joseph Smith, an unschooled boy of 14 seeking to know which church he should join, was given a vision in which he saw “two Personages” of indescribable “brightness and glory.” One of Them pointed to the other and said, “This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!” God the Son [Jesus Christ] told the young prophet that all the “creeds” of the churches of that day “were an abomination in his sight.”

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Joseph Smith’s First Vision showed that the prevailing concepts of the nature of God and the Godhead were untrue and could not lead their adherents to the destiny God desired for them. A subsequent outpouring of modern scripture revealed the significance of this fundamental truth and gave us the Book of Mormon. This new book of scripture is a second witness of Jesus Christ. It affirms the biblical prophecies and teachings of the nature and mission of Christ. It enlarges our understanding of His gospel and His teachings during His earthly ministry. It also provides many teachings and illustrations of the revelations by which we may know the truth of these things.

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As an Apostle I am called to be a witness of the doctrine, work, and authority of Christ in all the world. In that capacity I bear witness of the truth of these premises of our faith.

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These teachings explain our testimony of Christ. We are not grounded in the wisdom of the world or the philosophies of men—however traditional or respected they may be. Our testimony of Jesus Christ is based on the revelations of God to His prophets and to us individually.

Not being “grounded in the wisdom of the world,” including more than five centuries of accumulated scientific knowledge, or “the philosophies of men” such as logic, has created huge problems for the LDS Church and its members. Why? Because there are scores of facts that do not support key aspects of Mormonism, including Smith’s First Vision stories (yes, he created more than one, as explained in the next chapter). Moreover, the purported historicity of the *Book of Mormon* and the Book of Abraham in the *Pearl of Great Price*, including the verses about Kolob and “governing stars,” as well as many other “vital” elements of the Latter-day Saint religion, have been discredited by documented historical facts and a great deal of scientific evidence (details are provided in the next few chapters).

Importantly, whether Oaks and other credulous Mormons accept the many truths, which anyone can scrutinize, that conflict with LDS foundational stories, doctrines, and teachings or not does not alter their veracity.

### **Against the “powerful tide” of “political correctness”**

Oaks’ speech at the Harvard Law School was crafted for people who are non-Mormons. Compare it to his address—titled “The Only True and Living Church”—given in June 2010 at a seminar for new LDS mission presidents:

I will speak about The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints as the only true and living Church. In doing so I know I speak against the powerful tide of what is called “political correctness.”

The fashionable opinion of this age is that all churches are true. In truth, the idea that all churches are the same is the doctrine of the anti-Christ, illustrated by the Book of Mormon account of Korihor [an ancient American character who lived circa 75 B.C., according to the LDS scriptural volume].

A revelation given to the Prophet Joseph Smith in 1831, soon after the organization of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, spoke of those who had been given “power to lay the foundation of this church.” The Lord then referred to the Church as “the only true and living church upon the face of the whole earth, with which I, the Lord, am well pleased.”

Because of this declaration of the Lord, we refer to this, His Church—our Church—as the “only true Church.” Sometimes we do

this in a way that gives great offense to people who belong to other churches or who subscribe to other philosophies.

The Bible is clear that priesthood authority is necessary and that this authority had to be conferred by the laying on of hands by those who held it. Priesthood authority did not come from a desire to serve or from reading the scriptures. When that priesthood authority was lost through apostasy, it had to be restored by those resurrected beings who had held it in mortality and who were sent to confer it. That happened as part of the Restoration of the gospel, and that priesthood authority, together with the keys necessary to direct its operations, are in this Church and no other.<sup>39</sup>

Actually, the New Testament says nothing about “priesthood authority” in connection with Jesus’ spiritual movement. And who were the “resurrected beings” mentioned by Oaks? According to LDS theology, the aforementioned John the Baptist and Peter, James and John. Mormonism asserts that their decomposed bodies were supernaturally extracted from where they had been deposited and “perfected” by God.<sup>40</sup> Spiritually reconstituted flesh was magically adhered to their skeletons, but their resurrected bodies contained no blood. As with the “two Personages,” the baptizing John and later the Christian apostolic trio supposedly traveled from the Celestial Kingdom near the Latter-day Saint star Kolob to a wooded area in northwestern New York State to visit with Smith and Cowdery. The Mormon religion also maintains that through the power of the priesthood, John the Baptist’s severed head was divinely re-attached to his corpse—Peter, James, and John were apparently buried with their craniums on their necks—and his dead body was mystically re-energized.

These LDS “truths” are part of a larger Mormon concept that all humans, regardless of when they lived and died, will be resurrected.<sup>41</sup> The reader can, according to Latter-day Saint doctrine, look forward to the day when a large number of former mortals will reside on a transfigured earth, a humungous, crystal-like orb supernaturally transported through space back toward Kolob.<sup>42</sup> Will the moon also be going on the intergalactic trip? No Mormon leader, including Oaks, has provided a trustable answer.

### **Smith’s stories featuring the Christian apostles and John the Baptist**

While Oaks stated in his address to Mormon mission presidents that “[w]hen that priesthood authority was lost through apostasy, it had to be restored by those resurrected beings who had held it in mortality and who were sent to confer it,” LDS Church Assistant Historian and General Authority (First Council of the Seventy member) Brigham Henry (B. H.) Roberts wrote in the first volume of the official *History of the Church*: “There is no definite account of the event [the purported visit of the three Christian apostles] in the history of the Prophet Joseph or, for matter of fact, in any of our annals.”<sup>43</sup>

Equally distressing for devout Latter-day Saints is what Lucy Smith recounted after her son's death in 1844, namely, that while he and Cowdery were working on a section of the *Book of Mormon* called Third Nephi, "the first thing that presented itself to Joseph was a commandment from God that he and Oliver should repair [go] to the water & each of them be baptized[. T]hey immediately went down to the [S]usquehanna river and obeyed the mandate given them through the [U]rim and Thummim."<sup>44</sup>

So, instead of the official, faith-bolstering LDS stories about John the Baptist and Peter, James, and John visiting Smith and Cowdery outdoors and conferring upon them the "lesser" (Aaronic) and "higher" (Melchizedek) priesthoods, it was, reportedly, the "curious instrument" comprised of "two transparent stones set in a rim of a bow fastened to a breastplate" that initiated the men's process of seeking "the eternal power and authority of God." Why the troubling discrepancy between what the Latter-day Saint Church has indoctrinated millions of people to believe and what Roberts and Lucy wrote? Palmer provided the answer in *An Insider's View of Mormon Origins*:

When Joseph and Oliver began mentioning their angelic ordinations in late 1834 and early 1835, they were facing a credibility crisis that threatened the church's survival. In late 1833 a group in Kirtland, Ohio, denounced Joseph Smith for ministering "under pretense of Divine Authority." They employed D. P. Hurlbut to investigate Joseph's past, hoping to bring him down "from the high station he pretends to occupy." Hurlbut traveled to Palmyra, New York, and collected affidavits from residents about Joseph's early treasure seeking and other aspects of his youth. Hurlbut began a lecture tour starting in January 1834 to "numerous congregations in Chagrin, Kirtland, Mentor, and Painesville [Ohio communities]; and...[he] fired the minds of the people with much indignation against Joseph and the Church."

Finding disillusionment spreading among the Saints, Joseph and Sidney Rigdon [one of Smith's inner circle] began preaching against Hurlbut. It was under these circumstances, exacerbated by problems associated with the failure of Zion's Camp – the paramilitary trek to assist fellow Saints in Missouri – that Joseph mentioned for the first time in public that his priesthood had "been conferred upon me by the administering by the Angel of God." Ironically, Hurlbut's, Rigdon's, and Joseph Smith's speeches all became advance publicity for E. D. Howe's scathing *Mormonism Unveiled*.

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By May 1834, Joseph's Pennsylvania in-laws had issued similar affidavits about Joseph's treasure digging and his supposed motivations for starting Mormonism. Howe published all of these in his book in November 1834. Meanwhile, Oliver Cowdery, with Joseph's assistance and sensitive to the negative impact of the recent disclosures,

decided to write “on the subject of those affidavits.” Oliver’s first refutation, published in the October 1834 *Messenger and Advocate* [a Latter-day Saint periodical], included the narrative of being ordained by an unnamed angel. Shortly thereafter, this angel was identified as John the Baptist. Simultaneously, a statement about Peter, James, and John appearing to Joseph and Oliver was added to an earlier revelation. This information appeared in the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants. Thus, by degrees, the accounts become more detailed and more miraculous. In 1829 Joseph said he was called by the Spirit; in 1832 he mentioned that angels attended these events; in 1834-35 the spiritual manifestations became literal and physical appearances of resurrected beings. Details usually become blurred over time; in this case, they multiplied and sharpened. These new declarations of literal and physical events facilitated belief and bolstered Joseph’s and Oliver’s authority during a time of crisis.<sup>45</sup>

### **“The eternal power and authority of God”**

The purported visits of John the Baptist and Peter, James and John to Smith and Cowdery are foundational to the Mormon organization’s claim that it is “the only true and living church.” Integral to that assertion is the Latter-day Saint doctrine that not only is God’s “priesthood authority” necessary, so too are ecclesiastical “keys,” which the LDS Church has taught since the nineteenth century were supernaturally “restored” to Smith and passed down through subsequent generations of ordained Mormon males. The concept of priesthood is so vital to Mormonism that there are in excess of 14,700 instances of the word on lds.org. What is it, exactly? The church’s main website explains:

The priesthood is the eternal power and authority of God. Through the priesthood God created and governs the heavens and the earth... Priesthood holders can be authorized to preach the gospel, administer the ordinances of salvation, and govern the kingdom of God on the earth.<sup>46</sup>

Only “worthy” Latter-day Saint males age twelve and older are ordained to the priesthood, to receive and wield “the eternal power and authority of God” (so they are taught from childhood onward to believe). According to church doctrine, “worthiness” is secured through strict obedience to Mormonism and “the words of the prophets” (see Chapter 6 for more information).

Unfortunately, the LDS Church’s patriarchal leadership has always prohibited Mormon females from being ordained to the priesthood and participating in its functions, including preparing, blessing, and passing the weekly sacrament; organizing and leading church worship services and conferences; blessing, baptizing, and ordaining converts and children born to Latter-day



Saint parents; and administering temple rituals (“ordinances”). They are permitted, however, to lead the women’s, young women’s, and children’s auxiliaries and teach certain classes. In all cases, Mormon women and girls answer to Latter-day Saint priesthood/male authority, regardless of the church function they perform.

At age twelve, compliant Mormon boys become Deacons, followed by a promotion, as it were—and only if they are still deemed to be “worthy”—to Teacher at age fourteen, and Priest at sixteen. These three “offices,” as they are called in the LDS Church, are within the Aaronic priesthood. After their eighteenth birthday, young Mormon men with the requisite level of “worthiness” are ordained to the office of Elder in the Melchizedek priesthood. According to Latter-day Saint doctrine, it is the same “power and authority” that God has employed for eons of time to create and govern Kolob, Jah-oh-eh, Oliblish, Shinehah, Olea, Kokaubeam, and the rest of the Mormon-Egyptian cosmos. Above Elder is another office, Seventy, and above it, High Priest. Oaks and his fellow apostles as well as many other middle-aged and elderly LDS men are High Priests.

Mormonism maintains that because of the Melchizedek priesthood, premortal Jesus—again, the intelligence-spirit without a physical body called Jehovah in the Bible—was able to create the universe, including our planet with its diverse flora and fauna, and the Biblical first humans, Adam and Eve. According to LDS teachings, “seer stones” and the rest of the Urim and Thummim “translation” equipment, which have been hidden in a mystical cave in upstate New York (see Chapter 4 for details), cannot function without the male Mormon user possessing the “higher” priesthood. During General Conference in April 1982, another Mormon High Priest and apostle, Bruce McConkie, told Latter-day Saints:

If one-third of the hosts of heaven [i.e., evil Lucifer and tens of billions of his malevolent spirit followers] were cast down to earth by the power of the priesthood, surely that same power can put at defiance the armies of nations or stay the fall of atomic bombs.

Truly, there is power in the priesthood—power to do all things!

If the world itself was created by the power of the priesthood, surely that same power can move mountains and control the elements.<sup>47</sup>

“Power of the priesthood” is not a fringe Latter-day Saint concept: it is at the doctrinal heart of Mormonism. Many LDS males ordained to the priesthood are convinced—because they have been repeatedly taught to believe—that they possess God’s “eternal power and authority.” From a young age, they are “programmed” to think that because of the priesthood not only was the universe created, but dead people have been—and will be—made alive, diseased persons have been—and can be—miraculously healed, Smith translated ancient writings

(“reformed Egyptian” and other) into English, the future can be known (“prophesying”), and other mystical actions performed.

Unfortunately for Mormonism’s founder, his imagined “power to do all things” did not deflect or stop the lead balls fired at him from his attackers’ guns on June 27, 1844, which killed him. Did Smith believe that his priesthood “power” would magically protect him? If he did, what transpired must have been a terrible shock to him. Tragically, since his violent death many Latter-day Saints ordained to the priesthood have perished or been injured in attacks and accidents.

If what McConkie said decades ago—“the world itself was created by the power of the priesthood, [so] surely that same power can move mountains and control the elements”—has been true, why haven’t Mormon males with “the eternal power” used it for humanity’s benefit? For example, why haven’t they employed it to stop hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, and other deadly natural phenomenon, saving countless lives in the process?

Mystically empowered to “put at defiance the armies of nations,” according to McConkie, a “prophet, seer, and revelator” in the LDS Church for several years, why haven’t Mormon males with “the eternal power and authority of God” intervened in armed conflicts on behalf of innocent, vulnerable civilians and protected them from the horrors of war? As well, with the “power to do all things” at their disposal, according to Mormonism, why haven’t Latter-day Saint men halted the spread of epidemics that have killed tens of millions of people since 1829?

The answer to each of these questions is obvious and the same: Mormon males have never had a supernatural “power” through which “God created and governs the heavens and the earth.” They have, however, been systematically indoctrinated to believe they do. How they regard themselves and what they believe they can accomplish has always been a function of Latter-day Saint “programming.” Reality, however, has been quite a different matter.

### **“The kingdom of God on the earth”**

Mormonism includes not only outlandish notions about “the eternal power and authority of God,” but also the demonstrably false idea that the LDS Church is “the kingdom of God on earth.”<sup>48</sup> For generations, it has been an elitist belief derived from the Mormon doctrine articulated by Oaks that “priesthood authority was lost through apostasy” and so “it had to be restored by those resurrected beings who had held it in mortality and who were sent to confer it” on Smith and Cowdery. LDS indoctrination material states:

The Prophet Joseph Smith explained his role in the kingdom of God:

“The ancient prophets declared that in the last days the God of heaven should set up a kingdom which should never be destroyed, nor left to

other people; and the very time that was calculated on, this people were struggling to bring it out...

“I [Joseph Smith] calculate to be one of the instruments of setting up the kingdom of Daniel [a Biblical prophet] by the word of the Lord, and I intend to lay a foundation that will revolutionize the whole world... It will not be by sword or gun that this kingdom will roll on: the power of truth is such that all nations will be under the necessity of obeying the Gospel [i.e., Mormonism].”<sup>49</sup>

Before he died in 1933, Mormon apostle James Talmage wrote:

The kingdom of God is the Church of Christ [i.e., the Latter-day Saint organization]; the kingdom of heaven is that system of government and administration which is operative in heaven, and which we pray may some day prevail on earth. The kingdom of heaven will be established when the King [Jesus] shall come...in power and might and glory, to take dominion in and over and throughout the earth.<sup>50</sup>

Years later, senior Mormon leader Ezra Benson preached:

This is the last and great dispensation in which the great consummation of God’s purposes will be made, the only dispensation in which the Lord has promised that sin will not prevail. The Church will not be taken from the earth again. It is here to stay. The Lord has promised it and you [Latter-day Saints] are a part of that Church and kingdom—the nucleus around which will be builded the great kingdom of God on the earth. The kingdom of heaven and the kingdom of God on the earth will be combined together at Christ’s coming—and that time is not far distant.<sup>51</sup>

In 1957, Benson’s apostolic colleague, Spencer Kimball, said:

Everyone must be baptized [as a Mormon], he must receive the Holy Ghost, and when he is baptized and confirmed, he is a member of the kingdom of God upon the earth.<sup>52</sup>

In General Conference in April 1990, LDS apostle and First Presidency counselor Gordon Hinckley told Latter-day Saints:

It should be recognized that this church is not a social club. This is the kingdom of God in the earth.<sup>53</sup>

A year later, another Mormon “prophet, seer, and revelator,” Howard Hunter, said in his General Conference address:

We represent and speak today for a worldwide church, the organized and established kingdom of God on earth.<sup>54</sup>

And in 1996, an article in the LDS Church's *Ensign* magazine said:

Elder Bruce R. McConkie of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has written: "With the millennial advent, the kingdom of God on earth [the Mormon Church] will step forth and exercise political jurisdiction over all the earth as well as ecclesiastical jurisdiction over its own citizens."<sup>55</sup>

Chapter 8 provides more information about the Mormon-dominated theocratic system of government "over all the earth" that will, according to LDS doctrine, last one thousand years following the current period of history, namely, "the last days."

### **Revelation**

The LDS Church and its leadership have always maintained that "revelation" has been critical to the organization doctrinally and in terms of its operations. What is it from the Mormon perspective? Lds.org states that "revelation is communication from God to His children."<sup>56</sup> The church also says online that there are "different types of revelation, such as visions, dreams, and visitations by angels. Through such channels, the Lord has restored His gospel in the latter days and revealed many truths. However, most revelations to leaders and members of the Church come through the whisperings of the Holy Ghost."<sup>57</sup>

There are nearly 8,000 instances of the word "revelation" on lds.org, an indication of how fervently Mormons believe that they are able to receive "very delicate, fine spiritual communications...not seen with our eyes nor heard with our ears," quoting apostle Boyd Packer in February 2010.<sup>58</sup> He also stated:

We talk about confining on little computer chips vast amounts of information; through the processes of revelation and through this language of the Spirit ["a voice that one feels more than hears," Packer said in his sermon], tremendous amounts of inspiration and information can be given to us instantly.<sup>59</sup>

Smith also claimed to hear God's voice, which apparently instructed him in 1836 to establish a bank in Ohio. It was a fraud-based venture that went bust within months, wreaked financial havoc, and landed the Mormon "prophet" in legal hot water (more on this aspect of Latter-day Saint history later). Also, the LDS Church's *Doctrine and Covenants* is filled with written "revelations" purportedly received by Smith's mind, including a "divine" threat of destruction directed at his wife Emma, who was, understandably, no fan of her

husband's intimate relations with single and married females (details are in Chapter 9).

Curiously, the Bible states that “the Lord” told the Old Testament prophet Hosea: “Go, marry a promiscuous woman and have children with her.”<sup>60</sup> If a Mormon man today claimed that God told him via a revelation to marry a woman who had cheated on her husband or was a prostitute—Mormonism maintains that adultery, fornication, and selling sex are “whoredoms”—he would suffer severe church disciplinary action.

Clearly, people need to be careful about how they interpret what they have convinced themselves to be “spiritual communications” from God (or other imagined metaphysical sources such as ghosts or beings in other dimensions). Mental health professionals call such phenomena auditory hallucinations or delusions. Despite great advances in psychiatry and psychology during the past century, the notion that “the Lord” transmits “revelations” to Mormons, particularly senior church leaders, has persisted. One of them in the late twentieth century, apostle James Faust, told Latter-day Saints in 1989:

In our lifetime we have been favored with ongoing communication from the heavens, which have been open to the prophets of our time.

Revelation was required to establish this church. Revelation has brought it from its humble beginnings to its present course. Revelation has come like flowing, living water. Continuing revelation will lead it forward to the windup scene.<sup>61</sup>

The “windup scene” is a key aspect of apocalyptic Mormonism, the period of human history “not far distant,” again quoting LDS apostle Benson, during which “[t]he kingdom of heaven and the kingdom of God on the earth will be combined.”

### **The Mormon Word of Wisdom**

In 1833, Smith said he received a “revelation” from “the Lord” directing church members to refrain from consuming alcoholic beverages or “strong drinks”—interpreted as coffee, tea, and later, cola beverages—or use tobacco for smoking or chewing. The Latter-day Saint health code became known as the Word of Wisdom and joined other supposed utterances of “the Spirit” in the *Doctrine and Covenants* volume of scripture.<sup>62</sup> Smith wrote that he had learned from God that “conspiring men in the last days” were responsible for the production of wine and “strong drink” as well as tobacco products and related business activities, all of which were apparently displeasing to Mormonism’s Jesus.<sup>63</sup> Smith also penned the following text as part of the Word of Wisdom “revelation”:

[S]trong drinks are not for the belly, but for the washing of your bodies.<sup>64</sup>

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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;

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.<sup>65</sup>

### **Not walking the talk**

Despite God purportedly revealing to Smith a unique health code and its advantages, the “prophet of the Restoration” did not comply with it, another historical fact that the LDS Church does not disclose to Latter-day Saints or potential converts in its lesson manuals, classes, audio-video productions, etc. Brodie explained in *No Man Knows My History*:

For some years, in fact, Joseph did not take his “Word of Wisdom” seriously. After a double wedding in January 1836 he wrote in his journal: “We then partook of some refreshments, and our hearts were made glad with the fruit of the vine [i.e., wine]. This is according to the pattern set by our Savior Himself, and we feel disposed to patronize all the institutions of heaven.”<sup>66</sup>

Also, twenty-six days before his death Smith recorded that he “[d]rank a glass of beer at Moessers.”<sup>67</sup> Amasa Lyman, Mormon apostle and First Presidency counselor, wrote that Joseph “rode through the streets of Nauvoo, Illinois smoking a cigar.”<sup>68</sup> John Taylor, apostle and the LDS Church’s third president, wrote about his time in jail with Joseph Smith and his brother, Hyrum, in June 1844:

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 believe we all drank of the wine, and gave some to one or two of the prison guards.<sup>69</sup>

Interestingly, the LDS Church’s official history states:

Before the jailor came in [to the room in Carthage, Illinois where Joseph and Hyrum were being held], his boy brought in some water, and said the guard wanted some wine. Joseph gave [Mormon apostle and First Presidency counselor] Dr. [Willard] Richards two dollars to

give the guard; but the guard said one was enough, and would take no more. The guard immediately sent for a bottle of wine, pipes, and two small papers of tobacco; and one of the guards brought them into the jail soon after the jailor went out. Dr. Richards uncorked the bottle, and presented a glass to Joseph, who tasted, as [did his] brother and the Doctor, and the bottle was then given to the guard, who turned to go out.<sup>70</sup>

In Nauvoo, Smith sold liquor.<sup>71</sup> His successor as church president and senior “prophet,” Brigham Young, was also a hypocrite: he drank coffee and chewed tobacco.<sup>72</sup> As well, he operated a distillery in Utah, an enterprise he publicly acknowledged: “When there was no whisky to be had here, and we needed it for rational purposes, I built a house to make it in.”<sup>73</sup> The Mormon Church’s first and second presidents apparently had no qualms about being “conspiring men in the last days.”

Yet another troubling aspect of Latter-day Saint history is that in 1858, the *New York Times* reported that the “principal drinking-saloon and gambling-room are in [the] Salt Lake House, a building under the control of the Church and the immediate superintendency of [LDS apostle] Heber C. Kimball.”<sup>74</sup>

Despite the fact that Mormonism has always maintained that “obedience is the first law of heaven,”<sup>75</sup> documents have revealed that compliance with the religion’s stipulations by various Mormon leaders has been spotty. Evidently, Smith, Young, and other LDS “prophets” behaved as they pleased, independent of “true” church doctrines and teachings. However, Latter-day Saints have been led to believe that the senior church officers were “exalted” in the Celestial Kingdom after death due to their exemplary adherence during mortality to reputed “revelations” from “the Lord.”

### Chapter 3

#### First Visions, a Mystical Amphibian, the Book of Gold, and a Dead Swede

**During a 10-year period (1832–42), Joseph Smith wrote or dictated at least four accounts of the First Vision. These accounts are similar in many ways, but they include some differences in emphasis and detail... Joseph Smith did not prepare a single, comprehensive account describing everything he experienced and learned from his initial vision but, rather, he presented several accounts at different times.** – Text from the LDS Church’s “Accounts of the First Vision” webpage.

**I called upon the Lord for the first time, in the place above stated [“the silent grove”] or in other words I made a fruitless attempt to pray, my tounge seemed to be swollen in my mouth, so that I could not utter, I heard a noise behind me like some person walking towards me, I strove again to pray, but could not, the noise of walking seemed to draw nearer, I sprung up on my feet, and looked around, but saw no person or thing that was calculated to produce the noise of walking.** – Part of Joseph Smith’s First Vision narrative from his November 1835 journal entry.

**The truthfulness of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints rests on the truthfulness of the First Vision and the other revelations the Lord gave to the Prophet Joseph.** – From a webpage about Mormonism’s founder on lds.org.

To briefly re-visit information presented in the first chapter, LDS Church president Gordon Hinckley said in October 1998 that “[o]ur entire case as members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints rests on the validity of this glorious First Vision.” But which of Smith’s “several accounts” of his claimed theophany happened, if any? Did his narrative written in early 1838—the story quoted in the first chapter—truthfully describe the First Vision? Or perhaps his journal entry of November 9, 1835 accurately detailed his epiphany when he was a teenager? Or was another of his stories about the seminal event in Mormon history correct?

This chapter begins with an examination of Smith’s First Vision accounts that “are similar in many ways,” but differ “in emphasis and detail.” If his narratives are reasonably alike, the probability that the mystical experience happened increases. The opposite is also true: conflicting stories would be evidence that the Latter-day Saint leader lied.

#### **The official First Vision**

Mormons are typically not aware—because the LDS Church does not inform them—that Smith’s assertion that two celestial beings visited him in a grove of



trees in upstate New York when he was fourteen was not known to early members of the Latter-day Saint movement. His authority-bolstering theophanic narrative of 1838 was first published on March 15, 1842 in the Mormon periodical, *Times and Seasons*, nearly a dozen years after the church was officially established and about twenty-two years after the event purportedly happened. To review, Smith's 1838 story, which was later added to LDS scripture, contained the following main elements:

1. There was “unusual excitement on the subject of religion” in the Palmyra area leading up to the First Vision, which caused young Joseph to wonder which religious sect was doctrinally correct and right for him to join.
2. In the spring of 1820, at age fourteen (his “fifteenth year”), Joseph went to the woods to ask God which of the “parties of religionists” had divine approval.
3. After beginning to pray, “some power” overcame Smith, enveloping him in “thick darkness,” and an “actual being from the unseen world” nearly destroyed him.
4. Next, two heavenly “Personages” suddenly appeared, saving adolescent Joseph from the power/darkness/unseen being.
5. One of the glorified men identified the other as his male offspring: “God the Father and His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ,” Hinckley said.
6. Smith was forbidden by the second “Personage”—Jesus, according to Mormonism—to “join with any of them” (religious sects) because they were all an “abomination” and had “corrupt” teachers who taught “for doctrines the commandments of men, having a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof.”
7. The “adversary” (Satan/the Devil) caused Joseph to experience persecution after “his initial vision.”<sup>1</sup>

According to the LDS Church—and in the minds of believing Latter-day Saints—Smith's First Vision narrative of 1838 is as factual as a news report, an incontestable account of a holy experience centered around an innocent, truth-seeking, God-fearing adolescent. But did it happen?

### **The amazing First Vision amphibian**

Unfortunately for Mormons, their trust in Smith and his 1838 First Vision account has been misplaced. More to the point, there are conflicting stories about his supposed epiphany, including ones written by him. For example, in 1827, the year when treasure-hunting Joseph Jr. turned twenty-two, his father

informed Willard Chase, a family friend and Methodist class leader, about his son's professed mystical experience.<sup>2</sup> In his 1833 affidavit, Chase described what he was told (two paragraph breaks have been added):

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 [the autumn equinox, an astrologically important date], he must repair [go] 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 [went] 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 [a] 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 [tried] 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.[”]<sup>3</sup>

Dr. Quinn explained in *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View* that a neighbor of the Smith family, Benjamin Saunders, gave an interview in which he said:

I heard Joe tell my Mother and Sister how he procured the plates. He said he was directed by an angel where it was. He went in the night to get the plates. When he took the plates there was something down near the box that looked some like a toad that rose up into a man which forbid him to take the plates... He told his story just as earnestly as anyone could. He seemed to believe all he said.<sup>4</sup>

The former BYU history professor also provided the following information in his volume about Mormonism's genesis:

In the Anglo-American occult tradition, the toad has always been associated with Satanism, black magic, sorcery, and witchcraft. The toad has only an evil meaning in the magic world view, a perception to which Joseph Smith and his family were demonstrably attuned...if anything changed from the appearance of a toad to the appearance of a person, that thing was an evil spirit, or a witch, or a bewitched person... The salamander was [the] only other amphibian that could appear in human or spirit form, according to the magic world view of this time [i.e., the early nineteenth century]. In that context, Joseph Sr. and Jr. undoubtedly used the word “salamander” or one of its equivalent descriptions from the occult traditions clearly in evidence on the Smith family’s magic parchments.<sup>5</sup>

### **Inspiration for a master forger**

Smith’s story about the shape-shifting First Vision amphibian came to play a key role more than 150 years later in the creation of the Salamander Letter,<sup>6</sup> a document fabricated by master forger Mark Hofmann, a Mormon who lived in Utah.<sup>7</sup> The letter, which the LDS Church acquired before Hofmann was imprisoned for killing two people with homemade bombs, certainly seemed to be associated with early Latter-day Saint history. However, after its contents<sup>8</sup> became publicly known in April 1985 the impact on church members was singularly negative because the document mentioned:

- A “white salamander” that “transfigured himself” into a talking spirit;
- Smith seeing “any thing he wishes by looking at a stone”;
- Mormonism’s founder being instructed by the spirit to “look to the stone”;
- and
- Smith beholding spirits “with great kettles of coin money” and finding “some giant silver spectacles with the plates,” which he “puts...in an old hat & in the darkness reads the words [written in ‘short hand Egyptian’] & in this way it is all translated & written down.”

In the early 1980s, the LDS Church bought forgeries from Hofmann, who reportedly met with some of the organization’s General Authorities, including various apostles.<sup>9</sup> According to Latter-day Saint doctrine, they possessed a God-given “gift of discernment,”<sup>10</sup> a sort of mystical early-warning system that was one of the “gifts of the spirit.”<sup>11</sup> Assuming for a moment that their reputed supernatural ability was genuine, it had clearly malfunctioned because they kept buying for the church Hofmann’s fake documents while detecting no alerts via Mormonism’s Holy Ghost that the cunning Utahn was fooling them and later intended to commit lethal acts of violence.

Details about Hofmann and his relationships with senior Latter-day Saint leaders are in *The Mormon Murders: A True Story of Greed, Forgery, Deceit, and Death* by Steven Naifeh and Gregory White Smith. *Publishers Weekly* said of their book, which was first published in 1988:

As part of a scathing depiction of a deceitful, materialistic Mormon Church, lawyers Naifeh and Smith (co-editors of the biennial directory *The Best Lawyers in America*, etc.) point out that the 1985 Salt Lake City scandals and bombings that convulsed the community had a precedent in certain dubious practices of the church's prophet and founder Joseph Smith. The suspenseful plot, involving a series of murders and a large cast of Mormons and police investigators, centers on the purchase and suppression by church officials of authentic and forged documents that cast doubts on basic tenets of their faith and attested to the cover-up of Smith's unsavory past. Under the threat of blackmail, the church bought many of these documents from the dealer-bomber Mark Hofmann; according to the authors, Hoffmann, after confessing the murders and forgeries, was allowed, thanks to the church's political influence, to plea bargain the murder indictment into a manslaughter charge thereby sparing the church an embarrassing trial that could have revealed its complicity.<sup>12</sup>

### **Upsetting the faithful, and “no christian experience”**

In October 1987, the LDS Church informed Mormons via the *Ensign* that “[a]s a result of the confession of convicted murderer and forger Mark William Hofmann, numerous historical documents are now known to be forgeries.”<sup>13</sup> This disconcerting announcement listed ten materials with “fraudulent contents” that, Latter-day Saints were warned, “should not be used, even though they may have appeared in previous Church publications.”<sup>14</sup> Forged documents once believed by Mormon leaders and lay members to have been penned by Smith and thus “true” were listed.

One legitimate written work with a direct connection to Mormonism's founder and his religious movement was *The Kingdom and Gospel of Jesus Christ: Contrasted with That of Anti-Christ. A Brief Review of Some of the Most Interesting Circumstances, Which Have Transpired Since the Institution of the Gospel of Christ, from the Days of the Apostles* by early-nineteenth-century writer Peter Bauder. Half a year after Smith's religious movement was formally launched, the Mormon leader was interviewed at length by Bauder, who wrote the following (two paragraph breaks have been added):

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 [an associate of Smith], in the town of Fayette, Seneca County, state of New York, in October, 1830. I called at P. 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 [spent] near four and twenty hours in close application [meeting] 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 [in northwestern New York State], 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 [the “seer stone”] which he also obtained with the plate, by which means he was enabled to translate the characters on the plate into English.

He says he was not allowed to let the plate be seen only by a few individuals named by the angel, and after he had a part translated, the angel commanded him to carry the plate into a certain piece of woods, which he did:—the angel took them and carried them to parts unknown to him. The part translated he had published, and it is before the public, entitled the Book of Mormon.<sup>15</sup>

Conspicuously, Smith failed to mention to Bauder the following key “facts” that he later claimed—in his First Vision narrative of 1838—took place:

- The “unusual excitement on the subject of religion” in his area;
- Being confused about which religious sect to join;
- Following the counsel of James 1:5 in the Bible about asking God for guidance, and going to the woods to pray;
- Suddenly being overpowered by “some power” and enveloped in “thick darkness”;
- Two heavenly “Personages” appearing and rescuing him from destruction;
- One of the floating male beings telling him to stay away from all churches because they were an “abomination” and had “corrupt” teachers;
- Later telling his mother that he had learned for himself that Presbyterianism was “not true”; and
- “[P]owers of darkness” combining against him and “opposition and persecution” being directed at him, almost from his “infancy.”

Smith also said nothing to Bauder about encountering a magical amphibian protector of the “book of gold” in the stone box, per his earlier First Vision story related to his father. Mormonism’s founder was, however, willing to go out on a limb as a new religious leader and inform the writer that an angel had met with him. Having failed to recount a “christian experience,” Smith could not let Bauder finish the important interview without saying *something* involving an otherworldly being. After all, who would want to join a new religious movement in the “burned-over district” led by an obscure, self-proclaimed, twenty-something “prophet” who failed to recount a seemingly “spiritual” narrative that would pique people’s curiosity and excite their emotions and faith? The answer

is few potential converts, if any. The angel tale was not a bad start for an imaginative young adult male looking to get into the religion business—and Smith would do much better later in the decade.

### **The “boy of no consequence in the world”**

It is extremely difficult to think that Joseph Smith could have experienced what he claimed in 1838 had happened to him eighteen years earlier and said nothing to Bauder about that apparently transcendent experience. Latter-day Saints might think that the “prophet of the Restoration” kept details of his theophany in the “Sacred Grove”—what Mormons call the wooded area beyond the Smith family farm—private due to the “holy” nature of Smith’s First Vision, but he himself made clear in his early thirties that such was not the case. Specifically, he wrote in his 1838 narrative:

I soon found, however, that my telling the story [of the First Vision] had excited a great deal of prejudice against me among professors of religion, and was the cause of great persecution, which continued to increase; and though I was an obscure boy, only between fourteen and fifteen years of age, and my circumstances in life such as to make a boy of no consequence in the world, yet men of high standing would take notice sufficient to excite the public mind against me, and create a bitter persecution; and this was common among all the sects—all united to persecute me.<sup>16</sup>

Was Smith afraid in October 1830 of possible ridicule if he told Bauder that he had been enveloped in “thick darkness” caused by a powerful “being from the unseen world” and miraculously rescued by God the Father and Jesus Christ? If yes, why then did he expose himself to potential scorn by informing the writer about the “angel,” “secret treasure” (the “parcel of plate resembling gold”), and the “glass” (“seer stone”) to be used “to translate the characters on the plate into English”? It makes no sense. What is rational—and vexing for Mormons—is learning that there has never been any evidence corroborating Smith’s assertion in 1838 that “men of high standing...united to persecute” him when he was “between fourteen and fifteen years of age.” Indeed, there are no contemporary accounts that such opposition existed, even nominally.

### **Smith’s written First Vision v1.0**

The earliest known attempt by Smith to record information about what he claimed was his initial theophany was done not in 1838, as the reader may have assumed, but six years earlier.<sup>17</sup> The Mormon leader’s story penned in 1832 included the following key aspects:

1. He was fifteen (in his sixteenth year; it was 1821).

2. He had determined that all churches were wrong before commencing to pray.
3. He felt convicted of his sins.
4. While praying, a “pillar [Smith’s spelling] of light above the brightness of the sun at noon day” descended upon him and he “was filled with the spirit of god and the Lord opened the heavens upon” him and he “saw the Lord.” Crucially, the second celestial “Personage”—Heavenly Father, according to Latter-day Saint theology—was not mentioned (apparently, he didn’t show up).
5. While bathed in mystical “light,” Smith was informed that his sins were forgiven, but he later fell back into transgression.

Smith’s 1832 First Vision account was also at odds with his 1838 story because:

- He wrote nothing about an “unusual excitement on the subject of religion” in the Palmyra area, or anything similar;
- He chronicled nothing about the location of the First Vision (i.e., no trip to the woods);
- He did not mention the sudden appearance of an evil power/darkness/unseen being that allegedly overpowered him and made him mute;
- Jesus did not express his disapproval of “abominable” religious sects and their “corrupt” teachers; and
- The Son of God, per Christian theology, said nothing to young Joseph about staying away from churches because they were doctrinally “corrupt.”

The following text is Smith’s 1832 narrative (he did not use paragraph breaks, which have been inserted for the reader’s benefit; capitalization has also been added, as indicated; various spelling errors have been left uncorrected):

At about twelve years of age my mind became seriously imprest with regard to the all important concerns for the welfare of my immortal Soul which led me to searching the scriptures believeing as I was taught, that they contained the word of God[. T]hus applying myself to them and my intimate acquaintance with those of different denominations led me to marvel exceedingly for I discovered that they [religious congregants] did not of[ten] adorn their profession with a holy walk and Godly conversation agreeable to what I found contained in that sacred depository [the Bible.] [T]his was a grief to my Soul...

[T]hus from the age of twelve to fifteen I pondered many things in my heart concerning the situation of the world of mankind[,] the contentions and divi[sions], the wicke[d]ness and abominations and the darkness which pervaded the minds of mankind[. M]y 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 liveing faith and there was no society or denomination that built upon the gospel of Jesus Christ as recorded in the new testament and I felt to mourn for my own sins and for the sins of the world...

[T]herefore I cried unto the Lord for mercy for there was none else to whom I could go and 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 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. [G]o thy way[,] walk in my statutes and keep my commandments[;] behold I am the Lord of glory[,] I was crucifyed for the world that all those who believe in my name may have Eternal life[;]

[B]ehold the world lieth in sin 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[ostles][,] behold and lo I come quickly[,] as it is written of me[,] in the cloud clothed in the glory of my Father[. A]nd 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 hevny vision[. N]evertheless I pondered these things in my heart.<sup>18</sup>

It is noteworthy that about two years after Smith's interview with Bauder—the one in which Joseph did not recount any “christian experience”—Mormonism's founder had thoroughly Christian-ized his First Vision story. In his 1832 narrative, he portrayed himself as a Bible-reading, penitent teenager who felt so “distressed” and “convicted” because of his “sins” that he cried “unto the Lord for mercy.” Conveniently for the young treasure-hunter and occult aficionado, Christianity's Son of God not only heard his pleading, but mystically bathed him in “a pillar of light,” filled him “with the spirit of god,” opened “the heavens” to reveal himself, and told Joseph that his misdeeds were forgiven—if we are to believe what the convicted “Glass Looker” wrote.

In terms of a solidly Christian story that would make Smith appear to be a nascent prophet to whom the Bible's resurrected Jesus had appeared in a glorious epiphany, Joseph's 1832 First Vision narrative was hard to beat. Yet before the decade was over, he would concoct an even more captivating tale. Why? To keep his religious fraud from collapsing (details are presented later).



### **The First Vision v2.0**

About two years after Smith's mystical story involving the "pillar of light," he produced the first official history of Mormonism with the help of Cowdery, who was the second elder of the church and had been made an apostle in 1829.<sup>19</sup> This latest version of the First Vision was published in the Latter-day Saint periodical *Messenger and Advocate*<sup>20</sup> in December 1834 and consisted of the following main elements:

1. A religious revival caused teenage Joseph to want to know "of the certainty and reality of pure and holy religion."
2. Smith desired to find out if a supreme being existed as well as receive divine confirmation that his sins were forgiven.
3. He was seventeen (the year was 1823).
4. He was in his bedroom.
5. An angel appeared and told Joseph that his sins were forgiven and God would do a work through him.
6. The angel talked about gold plates and their location.

Not only was Smith three years older and in his parents' home when this First Vision supposedly happened, the power/darkness/unseen being and "two Personages" were not mentioned. Why? Had the Devil been too busy tempting mortals or organizing the eternal suffering of souls and forgotten about his wicked need to destroy young Joseph? Were Mormonism's Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ preoccupied with other celestial duties and couldn't get away from the Celestial Kingdom, travel through space to earth, and make an appearance among the trees in the Palmyra area? Smith never explained why this First Vision account of his conflicted with the others, and the LDS Church's patriarchal leadership has likewise failed to convincingly explain his incongruous narratives.

### **More First Vision stories**

There are seven other known versions of the First Vision, the most important event in Christian history since Jesus' resurrection, according to twentieth-century Mormon apostle and church president Ezra Benson.<sup>21</sup> Three are accounts directly from Smith and the other four are via Mormon and non-LDS sources.<sup>22</sup> Of particular significance in terms of scrutinizing Smith's claim that God selected him to be the one mortal through whom Christianity would be "restored" is the fact that the various First Vision accounts, including his own, disagree with each other. Depending on the version, Joseph was fourteen, fifteen, seventeen, eighteen, nineteen, or twenty-one. Location is another troubling issue: Mormonism's founder was in the woods, his bedroom, or somewhere he did not bother to mention. Prominent characters in the disparate narratives included a spirit, a supernatural amphibian capable of changing form, an angel, multiple angels, one "personage," two "Personages,"

and the “heavens” being opened to reveal Jesus Christ (but not God the Father).

Also conspicuous is the fact that Smith wrote in September 1832 that without the “greater [Melchizedek] priesthood,”<sup>23</sup> which he did not have until the spring of 1829, according to official LDS history, “no man can see the face of God, even the Father, and live.”<sup>24</sup> However, Smith’s 1838 account described him looking at and speaking with both Godhood members eighteen years earlier and, contradictorily, continuing to exist during the theophany.

The recorded information, much of it from Smith, compels rational people to rightly conclude that his 1838 account about the pair of celestial male beings visiting him outdoors in early 1820—the Mormon “hinge on which turns the gate that leads to the path of salvation and eternal life,” Hinckley said—was one of his many fabrications. The “entire case” of the multi-billion-dollar Latter-day Saint Church rests on a fable, a foundational lie.

### **Plenty of competition**

In *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View*, Dr. Quinn noted that “during the American [spiritual] revivals of the mid-1700s (‘The Great Awakening’) and early 1800s (‘Second Great Awakening’), vision-claims were frequent among deeply religious persons.”<sup>25</sup> He also wrote:

Richard Brothers published his visions, prophecies, and revealed expansions of biblical texts in multiple editions in the 1790s in Pennsylvania, New York, and Massachusetts. He claimed that in 1791 “I was in a vision, and being carried up to heaven, the Lord God spoke to me from the middle of a large, white cloud.” His publications reached such hinterland towns as Hanover, New Hampshire, where early Mormon leader Hyrum Smith attended school near the home of his father Joseph Smith Sr. Brothers was an English sectarian, yet such testimonies of theophany were even more common among early American evangelicals.<sup>26</sup>



Hyrum Smith

The Mormon history expert explained that in addition to Brothers, “David Brainerd’s conversion narrative, published in twenty-five editions from 1749

to 1835, reported his vision: ‘My soul rejoiced with joy unspeakable to see such a God, such a glorious divine Being.’”<sup>27</sup> Quinn also pointed out that in 1816 Elias Smith published in New Hampshire an account of his morning vision in the woods involving “a light” that “appeared to shine from heaven.”<sup>28</sup>

*Early Mormonism and the Magic World View* provides additional information about self-professed visionaries during Smith’s formative years:

In Vermont five years later [i.e., in 1821] Benjamin Putnam wrote of the experience in his fourteenth year: “I instantly had a view as I thought, of the Lord Jesus Christ with his arms extended in an inviting posture.”<sup>29</sup>

A Universalist minister, John Samuel Thompson, published his theophanic story in *The Christian Guide* in 1826, using a Utica, New York publisher (Utica is 112 miles east of Palmyra):

Before I left England [in 1822], I dreamed Christ descended from the firmament, in a glare of brightness, exceeding ten fold the brilliancy of the meridian Sun, and that he came to me, saying: “I commission you to go and tell mankind that I am come; and bid every man to shout victory.”<sup>30</sup>

Conspicuously, Thompson preached at Palmyra from January to March 1825 when Joseph Smith, Jr. was nineteen.<sup>31</sup> Palmer wrote in *An Insider’s View of Mormon Origins* that Palmyra’s newspaper, the *Wayne Sentinel*, reported a “religious fervor” in the area at the time that Thompson was preaching and “fifteen accounts of this 1824-25 revival have been found.”<sup>32</sup> He also noted: “There is not a single reference to a Palmyra revival between 1818 and 1821 in any of the major religious periodicals.”<sup>33</sup> But Smith had claimed in his First Vision narrative of 1838 that there had been “unusual excitement on the subject of religion” in his community, which spurred him to seek God’s wisdom via prayer in the woods “in the spring of eighteen hundred and twenty.” The reality that there was no documented religious “excitement” in Palmyra between 1818 and 1821 is one of many blows to Mormonism’s core story.

On October 22, 1823, the *Wayne Sentinel* also published the following headline on page four: “Remarkable VISION and REVELATION, as seen and received by Asa Wild, of Amsterdam, (N.Y.).”<sup>34</sup> Clearly, anyone who was not a prominent citizen in upstate New York, as was the case with working-class Joseph Smith, and wanted to be in the public spotlight, could achieve some notoriety by claiming to have had a vision and/or received a revelation from God. The “infamous impostor” from Palmyra who had fled “to the sanctuary of pretended religion” following his “disorderly person” convictions covered his bases and did both.

### **The famous dead Swede**

*Early Mormonism and the Magic World View* says that a library in the village of Manchester, seven miles south of Palmyra, housed a popular reference work on religion. The volume described the theophany of Emanuel Swedenborg, a seventeenth-century Swedish scientist, inventor, nobleman, writer, and mystic, as follows:

On a certain night, a man appeared to him [Swedenborg] in the midst of a strong shining light, and said: “I am God the Lord, the Creator and Redeemer.”<sup>35</sup>

After this purported vision, Swedenborg claimed to have “conversed with angels and spirits in the same manner as with men.”<sup>36</sup> In 1808, his apparently miraculous story made the front page of the newspaper at Canandaigua, just seventeen miles from Palmyra. A generation later, when Smith was in his mid-twenties, Swedenborg was back in the local news, as noted by Quinn in his book: “Palmyra’s newspaper specified in 1830 that ‘the Lord manifested himself to him [Swedenborg] by a personal appearance.’”<sup>37</sup>

Swedenborg died in England in 1772, and more than half a century later a newspaper in northern New York State was publishing information about one of his reputed mystical experiences. Did young adult Joseph Smith note the dead Swede’s staying power in terms of religious celebrity? Probably. He also likely noticed that the spiritually popular Scandinavian had none of the Halloween-ish occult elements—dark clothes and horse and meeting up with a shape-shifting amphibian-guardian during the astrologically important autumn equinox—in his mystical accounts. People in Smith’s area had not flocked to his initial, occult-laden, “spiritual” offering, so he needed to Christian-ize what he was peddling to make it appealing to a greater number of potential patsies.

Interestingly, despite Swedenborg claiming that Jesus had visited him, the nobleman did not “start a church, believing rather that the philosophy contained within his writings would affect the religious ideas of his day for the better,” quoting a webpage from the New Church site. The group “draws on the spiritual philosophy that is given to us in the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg, a remarkable mystic, Christian theologian and author who was born in 1688.”<sup>38</sup> It is also noteworthy that the Swede did not need followers flocking to a church established by him; he was content to share his ideas and let individuals decide for themselves which of his concepts, if any, they believed. Most beneficially for them, Swedenborg’s school of spiritual thought did not require adherents to part with their property and hard-earned money as the fee during mortality to live forever with God and the angels after death. Not so with Joseph Smith, Mormonism’s failed treasure-hunting “prophet.”

### **‘Morphing’ First Vision stories**

In a court of law, if a witness recounts an experience and then on cross-examination provides information that contradicts his or her testimony, people

in the courtroom quickly recognize that the individual is either confused or lying. Either way, the witness has not instilled confidence that he or she has communicated the truth, and is rightly regarded as unreliable and possibly ethically deficient.

For someone who had, according to Smith's 1838 narrative, the most remarkable spiritual experience since the Christian apostles witnessed the ascension of Jesus Christ into heaven, per the New Testament story, Mormonism's founder was unsettlingly inconsistent in terms of his First Vision accounts. They were incongruous, as explained, and reveal an evolution in his story-crafting. Specifically, what started out as a weird occult yarn—Joseph attired in dark clothes, riding a black horse, and meeting up with a supernaturally powerful amphibian to acquire the “plates of gold”—had become by October 1830 a First Vision tale involving “an “angel” and a “secret treasure concealed.”

With the passage of a couple of years, Smith new “truth” (of 1832) was that his initial theophany had in fact involved a “pillar of light” and a vision of Jesus in heaven, a suitably Christian-esque story with greater appeal factor to potential converts than his previous stories. However, by late 1834 he had changed his First Vision narrative *again* to include a resurrected angel who had left heaven and come to his bedroom to inform him that his transgressions were forgiven and God would do a work through him—and about the unique-to-Mormonism golden “record.” None of the renowned mystics—Richard Brothers, David Brainerd, Emanuel Swedenborg, et al.—had a levitating, celestial male messenger talking about ancient American gold plates inscribed with “reformed Egyptian characters” in their epiphany stories!

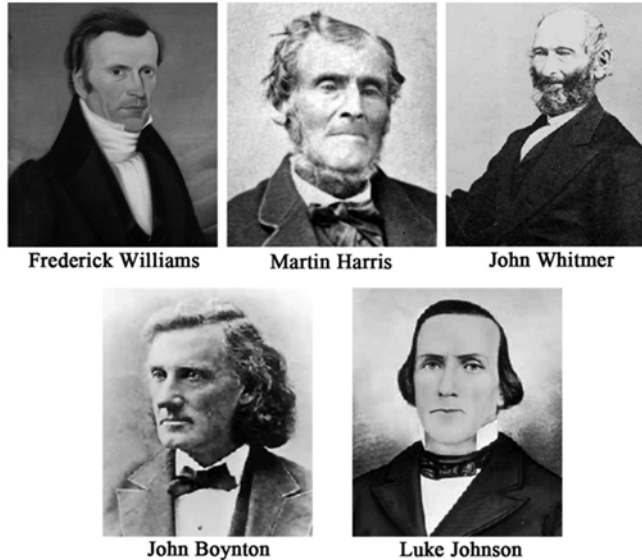
A few years later—and to keep things religiously zesty—the Mormon “prophet” changed his First Vision narrative *yet again* by removing the visiting angel and golden plates and putting them in a separate tale (details are in Chapter 4). However, by early 1838 Smith needed to make himself appear to have been selected, not in a dream or a vision of heaven or via an angel, but *in persona* by no less than God the Father *and* Jesus Christ to be *the* mortal through whom Christianity would be re-established. Why did Smith fabricate an even more spectacular First Vision story in early 1838? The next section provides the answer.

### **Necessity is the mother of invention**

*An Insider's View of Mormon Origins* includes key information, as follows, about the weakening Latter-day Saint movement less than a decade after Smith launched it:

Neither Joseph nor anyone else prior to 1838 referred to the [First] vision as the source of his authority to act as God's agent of the Restoration. Ironically, it is during a later time of persecution in 1838, when some church leaders begin doubting his mission as a prophet, that it becomes important to connect his prophetic call to this vision.<sup>39</sup>

A leadership crisis began in Kirtland [in Ohio] on 7 November 1837. Frederick G. Williams, a counselor in the First Presidency, left the church. During the last week of December 1837, Martin Harris, one of the three witnesses [of the *Book of Mormon*], was excommunicated. On 10 March 1838, John Whitmer, one of the eight witnesses to the Book of Mormon, was excommunicated. On 25 March, Martin Harris told a public meeting that none of the witnesses had physically seen or handled the [gold] plates, that they had not seen the plates with their “natural eyes.” His testimony triggered a discussion led by Warren Parrish. As a result, Apostles John F. Boynton, Luke Johnson, and other church members “renounced the Book of Mormon.”<sup>40</sup>



Palmer also explained in his illuminating book:

Within a month of Harris’ comments, three of the apostles no longer believed in the Book of Mormon and two more were out of favor with the church. All three witnesses to the Book of Mormon and three of the eight [witnesses] had defected. The entire Whitmer clan had left the church. All this must have caused considerable anxiety and cognitive dissonance within the community.<sup>41</sup>

Fearing the possible unraveling of the church, Joseph Smith took to re[-]establishing his authority. During this week of 7-13 April [1838], he contemplated rewriting his history. On April 26, he renamed the church. The next day he started dictating the new first vision narrative. He began by attacking those who were circulating unsavory

“reports” regarding “the rise and progress of the Church,” then told a revised and more impressive version of his epiphany. He announced that his initial calling had not come from an angel in 1823, as he had said for over a decade, but from God the Father and Jesus Christ in 1820. This earlier date established his mission independent of the troubling questions and former witnesses associated with the Book of Mormon. Like the 1834-35 priesthood restoration recitals, the first vision version of April 1838 added significant material that bolstered his authority during a time of crisis.<sup>42</sup>

### **“Zion” in Missouri and the “abuser of men”**

What led up to the “time of crisis” that caused Smith to decide in April 1838 to create his authority-boosting First Vision whopper involving the “actual being from the unseen world” and the two heavenly “Personages”? The answer derives from Mormon historical events dating back to April 1829 and one of Joseph’s “revelations” in which he convinced himself that “the Lord” told him “to bring forth and establish the cause of Zion.”<sup>43</sup>

In October 2008, LDS apostle Todd Christofferson told church members during General Conference that “Zion is both a place and a people” and the name of an ancient “City of Holiness” that “endured for some 365 years.”<sup>44</sup> He also said that God levitated the entire community and “received it up into his own bosom,” and “[u]nder the direction of the Prophet Joseph Smith, early members of the Church attempted to establish the center place of Zion in Missouri.”<sup>45</sup> Where in the state, exactly? Jackson County in the northwestern sector. Lds.org explains further:

In June of 1831, while the Church was growing strong in Kirtland, the Lord directed the Prophet and other Church leaders to travel to Missouri. There He would reveal to them “the land of [their] inheritance” (see Doctrine and Covenants 52:3-5, 42-43). During June and July 1831, the Prophet and others traveled the nearly 900 miles from Kirtland to Jackson County, Missouri, which was on the western fringe of American settlement. Shortly after he arrived, the Prophet received a revelation from the Lord stating that “the land of Missouri... is the land which I have appointed and consecrated for the gathering of the saints. Wherefore, this is the land of promise, and the place for the city of Zion... The place which is now called Independence is the center place; and a spot for the temple is lying westward” (D&C 57:1-3).<sup>46</sup>

Apparently, “the Lord” was not politically savvy because in “the land of Missouri” in and around Independence there were non-Mormon settlers who had no intention of leaving and did not want to be disturbed by Latter-day Saints carrying out Smith’s “prophetic” vision to establish “Zion” in their part

of the state. The Mormon leader's grandiose scheme included building "a future New Jerusalem," quoting Christofferson, in Jackson County, "where Christ shall reign as 'King of Zion'...for the space of a thousand years."<sup>47</sup>

Friction between the established residents, which a June 1831 "revelation" penned by Smith called "enemies," and Latter-day Saint migrants to Missouri increased in the early 1830s.<sup>48</sup> Mob violence against the Mormons erupted and in 1833 church members were evicted from the state without being compensated for their properties. The following year, Smith led a paramilitary expedition called Zion's Camp from Kirtland to Clay County (north of Jackson County) to regain members' lands, but the mission failed ignominiously. Wikipedia, the popular online encyclopedia, explains what happened:

Smith and his volunteers left Kirtland on May 4, 1834. By June 4, they had marched across Indiana and Illinois, reaching the Mississippi River, which they crossed, entering Missouri. They crossed most of the state by the end of June, and news of their approach caused some alarm among non-Mormons in Jackson and Clay Counties [on the west side of the state].

Attempts to negotiate a return of the Latter Day Saints to Jackson County proved fruitless, but Smith decided to disband Zion's Camp rather than attempt to "redeem Zion" by force. Many members of the camp believed they should fight and criticized Smith. Much of the camp subsequently became ill with cholera. The two-thousand-mile march failed in its objective. Fourteen participants died.<sup>49</sup>

After returning to the hub of his Latter-day Saint movement in Kirtland, Smith wrote in his journal:

I was met with a catalogue of charges [by church members] as black as the author of lies himself [i.e., Satan]; and the cry was Tyrant – Pope – King – Usurper – Abuser of men... False Prophet – Prophesying lies in the name of the Lord – Taking consecrated monies – and every other lie to fill up the catalogue.<sup>50</sup>

Smith had lost substantial support in his movement due to the Zion's Camp fiasco and needed to fortify that which remained. A new, "true" foundational story—a First Vision tale more impressive than his previous narratives—was required following his return to Ohio in mid-1834.<sup>51</sup>

### **Family feuding**

In her book about Smith's life, Brodie explained that after the Zion's Camp debacle, the relationship between him and one of his brothers, William, who was an apostle, soured and eventually came to blows. "The fight shocked



the church,” the historian wrote, adding, “[t]he faithful shook their heads in despair that Joseph should be so cursed in his own family, and mournfully revived the gossip about another battle that had occurred earlier that same summer.”<sup>52</sup> The other “battle” had been between Smith and his brother-in-law, Calvin Stoddard, the latter calling the former a “damned false prophet” and being knocked to the ground by Mormonism’s enraged founder.<sup>53</sup> News of the strife in the “royal” Latter-day Saint family, as it were, likely further diluted members’ confidence in Smith.

This discussion about Mormons’ fading support for the “prophet of the Restoration” would be incomplete without mentioning that Joseph had “prophesied” that Zion in Missouri would be redeemed on September 11, 1836. The day came and went and nothing significant happened, even more proof to concerned church members that Smith was out of favor with God.<sup>54</sup>

By early 1838, the Latter-day Saint movement was in serious trouble, not only because of the Zion’s Camp fiasco of a few years earlier and the church leadership crisis of 1837, but also due to a financial boom-and-bust venture set in motion by Smith and exacerbated by his illegal actions. Following the debacle, which will be explained presently, he created his First Vision narrative of 1838 to prop up his sagging authority, thereby managing to rescue his religious movement. But not before getting back into the business of searching for buried riches.

#### **A “vast treasure” in Massachusetts**

Brodie explained in *No Man Knows My History* that between 1831 and 1836, Smith wracked up \$40,000 in debts, the equivalent of \$953,200 today, plus “there was the sum of \$13,000 still owing on the [Latter-day Saint] temple” in Kirtland.<sup>55</sup> Because the Mormon leader had grave problems covering his financial obligations, “the desire for money in gold and silver became almost an obsession with him,” the UCLA historian noted, adding:

With the need so critical, he [Smith] began to lend a serious ear to a story that had appeared in the *Painesville Telegraph* concerning a vast treasure buried beneath an old house in Salem, Massachusetts. Salem was the magic city of Joseph’s childhood, the place where he had first tasted the exciting world outside his spare Vermont village. The lure of the old port swept over him now and helped to crystallize his impulse to try his luck at trying to find the buried gold.<sup>56</sup>

But “Prophet” Smith was thirty years old and Mormons expected him to behave like a responsible religious leader, not a buffoon going off on some harebrained adventure to find a fantasized “vast treasure buried beneath an old house” hundreds of miles away from Kirtland. Nevertheless, Joseph convinced himself that “the Lord” would reveal the location of the tantalizing, mysterious fortune and decided to embark on the journey. Inconveniently, however, he

was broke and needed financial support, so he lied to his brother, Hyrum, as well as Mormon leaders Cowdery and Rigdon, telling them that Jesus wanted them all to go to Salem to proselytize. Only after their arrival did he disclose the true nature of his mission. Smith misled them further by saying that he had received a communication from God that there was “much treasure in this city [Salem]” and “I [‘the Lord’] will give this city into your hands, that you shall have power over it, insomuch that they shall not discover your secret parts; and its wealth pertaining to gold and silver shall be yours.”<sup>57</sup>

Despite Smith’s “singleness of purpose,” quoting Brodie, “[s]ometime in September [1836] he returned to Kirtland, as barren of treasure as he had ever been. The true nature of the trip could no longer be kept secret, and his followers shook their heads in sorrow and disbelief...[but] Joseph made no apology for this indiscretion.”<sup>58</sup>

Apparently not concerned that God had failed to reveal the location of the “gold and silver” in Salem, a reality contrary to the “revelation” that Smith claimed to have received, the mired-in-debt Mormon leader soon concocted another financial scheme purportedly “revealed” by “the Lord”: establish a bank.

### **The “audible voice” and the Kirtland fraud**

To Smith’s way of thinking, setting up a bank in Kirtland would not only resolve his debt woes—“by the beguilingly simple expedient of stamping out new notes,” explained Brodie<sup>59</sup>—it would meet the financial needs of Mormon converts settling in that part of Ohio. Thanks to the influx of members, monies and goods flowed into the coffers and storehouse of the church, which had enough cash to buy a significant amount of Kirtland real estate. A belief that a railway line would be built near or through the community fueled speculative land-buying. “Within Kirtland itself lots jumped from \$50 to \$2,000,” says *No Man Knows My History*, “and surrounding farms from \$10 and \$15 an acre to \$150.”<sup>60</sup>

By early 1837, the value of the Mormon Church’s properties had increased to an estimated \$60,000, the equivalent today of about \$1.43 million. However, the organization also had debts and needed liquidity to repay them, so creating a bank would allow the church to use its real estate as collateral in exchange for cash loans from the Latter-day Saint financial institution.

But a bank needed depositors and operating capital to get started, so how could Smith fool people to support an enterprise that would benefit him as Mormonism’s debt-ridden “prophet”? Nineteenth-century apostle Wilford Woodruff unwittingly provided the answer:

I also he[a]rd 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 [the “bank”]. 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.<sup>61</sup>

Hearing an “audible voice” in a room in which there is only one person is a psychiatric disorder called an auditory hallucination.<sup>62</sup> Information about its connection to schizophrenia and religious delusion, another manifestation of mental illness, is presented later in this chapter.

The financial organization set up by Smith “with his brethren,” quoting *No Man Knows My History*, in November 1836 was called the Kirtland Safety Society Bank Company.<sup>63</sup> However, two months later it was renamed the Kirtland Safety Society Anti-Banking Company.<sup>64</sup> Digital copies of currency issued by both organizations—without government approval—are online.<sup>65</sup> Not surprisingly, papers filed by Smith and Mormon supporters of his imprudent financial venture misleadingly declared a capital stock of \$4 million, which would be worth about \$95.3 million today.<sup>66</sup>

Mormon apostle Orson Hyde was dispatched to Columbus to request a bank charter from the Ohio legislature. However, he returned to Kirtland in January 1837 empty-handed because lawmakers had refused all applications for charters except one during 1836/7 due to problems throughout the United States associated with wildcat banking, the creation of dubious paper money at the state level by private enterprises, and speculative land-buying.<sup>67</sup> Without a positive government response, Cowdery was sent to Philadelphia to acquire custom-made plates to be used to print currency. Soon after his return to Kirtland, Safety Society personnel began producing and issuing paper money despite the fact that state officials had rejected the Mormon bank application.

Although lacking government authorization, Smith and his associates allowed the word “BANK” to be printed on the bills, and as cashier Smith signed them knowing full well that the Safety Society was not a financial institution approved by the state.<sup>68</sup> For him, Ohio law did not matter because God had “revealed” to him that the venture was to be established. He was not the last Mormon “prophet” to break the law because he had convinced himself that he was doing “the will of the Lord” (see Chapter 9 for more information).

#### **“Beautiful paper money”**

To instil confidence that the Kirtland “bank” was financially sound, potential depositors were shown strong boxes, each marked “\$1,000,” with their lids opened to display bright, fifty-cent silver coins.<sup>69</sup> Brodie explained that “[a]nyone suspicious of the bank’s stability was allowed to lift and count the boxes.”<sup>70</sup> Eyewitness C. G. Webb observed:

The effect of those boxes was like magic. They created general confidence in the solidity of the bank, and that beautiful paper money went like hotcakes. For about a month it was the best money in the country.<sup>71</sup>

Magic is about illusion; a skilled magician does the impossible, or so it seems to the audience. Likewise, trickery was used to create “general confidence” in the Mormon “bank.” How? Brodie explained that underneath the top layers of coins were “sand, lead, old iron, stone, and combustibles.”<sup>72</sup> Potential depositors and customers were deceived by the heavy cash containers, and given Smith’s unscrupulous character it is not unreasonable to think that he masterminded the fraud. *No Man Knows My History* says that Warren Parrish, Smith’s secretary and Kirtland Safety Society Anti-Banking Company cashier after Joseph resigned from the post (he fled to Missouri as his legal troubles mounted), revealed the following:

I have been astonished to hear him [Joseph Smith] declare that we had \$60,000 in specie [precious metal currency] in our vaults and \$600,000 at our command, when we had not to exceed \$6,000 and could not command any more; also that we had but about ten thousand dollars of our bills in circulation when he, as cashier of that institution, knew that there was at least \$150,000.<sup>73</sup>

In other words, the Mormon “prophet of the Restoration” lied so people would believe the paper currency issued by the Kirtland Safety Society was worth several times more than its actual value.

#### **Not the “slightest chance” of succeeding**

In his 1957 Ph.D. dissertation, Robert Kent Fielding at Indiana University wrote that “there was never the slightest chance that the Kirtland Safety Society Anti-Banking Company could succeed.”<sup>74</sup> What was the problem? The proposed capitalization of the Mormon “bank” vastly exceeded its backers’ financial resources, as Fielding explained in detail:

The Safety Society proposed no modest project befitting its relative worth and ability to pay. Its organizers launched, instead, a gigantic company capitalized at four million dollars, when the entire capitalization of all the banks in the state of Ohio was only nine and one third million. Such presumption could not have escaped the notice of bankers who would have been led to examine its capital structure more closely...according to the articles of incorporation capital stock was to be paid in by subscription but that the amount of payments were left to the discretion of the company managers. Furthermore, total issuance of notes was not prescribed, nor was the relation of notes to capital and assets. The members, to be sure, pledged themselves to redeem the notes and bound themselves individually by their agreement under the penal sum of one hundred thousand dollars. But there was no transfer of property deeds, no power of attorney, no legal pains and penalties. To a banker, the articles fairly shouted: “this is a wildcat, beware!”<sup>75</sup>

### **Run on the “bank”**

By early 1837, news reports about crooked banks and bogus currencies in the United States as well as President Andrew Jackson’s *Specie Circular* (Coinage Act) had taken their toll on the Kirtland Safety Society Anti-Banking Company, and its currency bubble imploded. Critically for the dishonest Mormon enterprise, general confidence in paper money weakened after Jackson issued an executive order in July 1836 that required payment for government land in gold or silver.

*No Man Knows My History* says that merchants in Ohio and New York refused Kirtland Safety Society cash notes when Mormons tried to pay for goods, and Smith’s followers found they could not exchange their much-devalued paper money for other currency bills. “No bank anywhere would touch them,”<sup>76</sup> wrote Brodie, who also explained:

Joseph [Smith] redeemed a good number [of the notes] before he realized that the run on the bank was about to ruin him... Everybody possessing Kirtland bank bills now tried desperately to get rid of them. By February 1[, 1837] they were selling for twelve and one half cents on the dollar. Smith [“Cash.”] and Rigdon [“Pres.”] resigned, and F. G. Williams and Warren Parrish took over the offices of president and cashier in a final effort to salvage something from the wreckage.<sup>77</sup>

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The legend of Joseph’s prophecy that some day the bank notes would be as good as gold never died down. Years later [Mormon Church president] Brigham Young collected some of the gold dust that was coming into Salt Lake City from the gold fields of California, manufactured a supply of coins, and ordered that the pack of Kirtland bills he had carried west with him be issued on par with the gold. Joseph thus found at least one man who could make his prophecies come true.<sup>78</sup>

### **More legal woes**

In March 1837, Smith was found guilty by a court of having operated an illegal bank and fined one thousand dollars plus costs. Rigdon, Smith’s second counselor in the church’s First Presidency and president of the Kirtland Safety Society, was also punished with a fine of the same amount. Not surprisingly, the LDS Church does not tell its members the troubling truth about the Kirtland “bank” fiasco, which would not have happened if Joseph had not acted on a “voice” in his head that he erroneously believed was God speaking to him.

Between June 1837 and April 1839, thirteen lawsuits were brought against Smith for liabilities totaling nearly \$25,000 (about \$600,000 today). He was arrested seven times in four months and church members put up \$38,428 in bail—equal, currently, to a sum of \$917,200—to secure his release.<sup>79</sup> One wonders how much his flight from the law in Ohio in early 1838 cost them in

terms of forfeited bail deposits. Eventually, six of the suits were settled out of court and the remaining seven plaintiffs either won against Smith by court judgment or default. At one point, the Latter-day Saint leader listed his debts to nineteen creditors, which totaled \$33,418.08 (nearly \$800,000 today).<sup>80</sup>

When Smith spoke to Latter-day Saints during the church's conference in April 1837, who got the blame for the Kirtland crisis? "Large contracts have been entered into for lands on all sides where our enemies have signed away their rights," the disingenuous Mormon leader told his audience, adding:

We are indebted to them, but our brethren abroad have only to come with their money, take these contracts, relieve their brethren from the pecuniary embarrassments under which they now labor, and procure for themselves a peaceable place of rest among us.<sup>81</sup>

### **Failure to take responsibility**

In the mind of fraudster Joseph Smith, the Kirtland Safety Society disaster was not his fault, not even partly. Instead of being forthright with Latter-day Saints and telling them the unvarnished facts—"We entered into large contracts for lands and have experienced significant financial losses as a result of our actions," or something similar—he used the blame-deflecting passive voice ("Large contracts have been entered into for lands...") and included in the same sentence the phrase "our enemies" to mentally distract Mormons from the fact that he, the church's senior leader, had yet again badly erred.

Not surprisingly, Smith did not accept responsibility as Safety Society cashier for allowing money notes to be printed and circulated without government authorization, or misleading people about the amount of cash reserves and currency in circulation of the "bank" that he was instrumental in establishing and operating. With other speculating church members, Mormonism's founder got financially burned during the Panic of 1837, which was why he wanted "angel" investors to "relieve their brethren from the pecuniary embarrassments." Chief among the financially-troubled "brethren" was Smith, the church's senior "prophet."<sup>82</sup>

Like other cons throughout history, the Safety Society fraud worked for a time, and then fell apart. The Zion's Camp debacle and failed treasure-hunting excursion to Salem were strikes one and two against Smith in the minds of many Latter-day Saints. The "bank" disaster was the third major blow, which triggered the then-unprecedented exodus of people from the Mormon Church. Crucially, leaving Smith's unethical movement spared many people the severe suffering experienced by church members who either remained in the dysfunctional organization or joined after 1837 (thousands died crossing the American plains in the trek to Utah between 1847 and 1869).<sup>83</sup>

It is noteworthy how often the invisible "Lord" wanted what Smith desired, including the dubious "bank" in Kirtland. Church leaders and members might balk at doing what Joseph the man desired, but who was going to say "No" to the resurrected, omnipotent Son of God, Christianity's judge of who spends eternity in heaven or hell? Smith had learned from the late 1820s

onward how to portray himself as God's messenger when he wanted to do something controversial, stupid, or criminal. As a practiced scammer, he was adept at manipulating people who trusted too readily. Unfortunately, such persons joined his religious movement by the thousands during his lifetime and by the millions after his death.

### **A bipolar “prophet”?**

Religious fanatics are often convinced that God speaks to them because they experience auditory hallucinations.<sup>84</sup> While Smith was never clinically diagnosed because psychiatry was not an established medical science during his lifetime, psychiatrist Dr. Jess Groesbeck has argued that many aspects of his behavior were typical of someone who is bipolar/manic-depressive.<sup>85</sup> The creator of the Latter-day Saint movement was likely genetically predisposed to the condition.<sup>86</sup> Still, his many falsehoods and manipulations were inexcusable.

An article in the Winter 1993 issue of the liberal LDS periodical *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* said that psychiatrists Harold Kaplan and Benjamin Sadock wrote in their *Comprehensive Textbook of Psychiatry IV* that people who experience psychological mania often have “increased self-esteem to the point of grandiosity” during their manic phase.<sup>87</sup> Smith's delusions of grandeur are a matter of record. For example, in 1843 he replied, as follows, to a letter that he had received from one James Arlington Bennett, a New York lawyer and writer, expressing his opinion about getting involved in politics in Illinois where Bennett had property:

Shall I stoop from the sublime authority of Almighty God, to be handled as a monkey's cat-paw, and pettify [debase] myself into a clown to act the farce of political demagoguery? No – verily no! I combat the errors of ages; I meet the violence of mobs; I cope with illegal proceedings from executive authority; I cut the gordian knot of powers, and I solve mathematical problems of universities, with truth – diamond truth; and God is my “right hand man.”<sup>88</sup>

### **The “King of the Kingdom of God” outdid Jesus?**

While addressing an audience in Nauvoo during the spring of 1844, Smith, who was not only the Mormon Church's president and senior “prophet,” but also the city's mayor and militia commander, uttered these words:

Come on[,] ye prosecutors! ye false swearers! All hell, boil over! Ye burning mountains, roll down your lava! [F]or I will come out on the top at last. I have more to boast of than ever any man had. I am the only man that has ever been able to keep a whole church together since the days of [Biblical] Adam. A large majority of the whole have stood by me. Neither Paul, John, Peter, nor Jesus ever did it.<sup>89</sup>

Brodie explained in *No Man Knows My History* that by late 1843, Smith “had become a law unto himself,” and:

For many years Joseph had talked about building the Kingdom of God upon earth, and with his increasing success the idea seems to have been subtly transformed from a mere symbol to a thing of substance. As he came more and more to look upon Nauvoo as an autonomous state, the Kingdom of God assumed an unmistakably temporal nature. Finally, in the spring of 1844, Joseph began to organize a government to rule over what he hoped would eventually be a sovereign Mormon state. On March 11 he began selecting with the utmost secrecy a council of fifty “princes” to form what one of them described as “the highest court on earth.” Few secrets in Mormon history have been better kept than the activities of this council, but it is clear that one of their first acts was to ordain and crown Joseph as King of the Kingdom of God.<sup>90</sup>

Grandiosity and delusion were indeed major aspects of Smith’s psychology, as evidenced by the many needless dramas he created. Psychiatric doctors Kaplan and Sadock noted in their clinical book that during the manic phase, the increased activity of bipolar persons “often takes the form of sexual promiscuity, political involvement, and religious concern... Delusions and hallucinations are not unusual... It is quite common for the person to communicate with God and to have it revealed that he or she has a special purpose or mission [so they have convinced themselves]. Patients frequently describe themselves as an ‘organ’ of God through whom God speaks to the world.”<sup>91</sup> Chapter 9 details Smith’s sexual promiscuity; Brodie described his political involvement in her book:

At the same time that Joseph was laying plans for a western exodus he was becoming actively involved in national politics. For four years he had tenaciously badgered Congress for redress for the Missouri persecutions. Now utterly cynical, he knew that he could win neither retribution for past suffering nor security for a future western colony until Congress could be made to see that the Mormons were a political force to be reckoned with. This he intended to prove in the 1844 presidential election.

He therefore wrote to all the leading presidential candidates and asked them bluntly what they would do to win justice for his people. When their replies were noncommittal or negative, he decided to enter the lists himself. “Send every man in the city who is able to speak in public throughout the land to electioneer and make stump speeches,” he ordered. “Advocate the ‘Mormon’ religion, purity of elections, and call upon the people to stand by the law and put down mobocracy... Tell the people we have had Whig and Democrat Presidents long enough; we want a [Latter-day Saint] President of the United States.”<sup>92</sup>



Mormonism's failed treasure-seeker and "infamous impostor" who was certain that he had "more to boast of than ever any man," including the Bible's Jesus Christ, had set his sights on the White House.

### **The masterful Mormon storyteller**

Throughout history, many creative individuals, including visual artists, authors, musicians, singers, and comedians, have had bipolar disorder.<sup>93</sup> While Smith was unsuccessful as a hunter of buried riches, translator of Egyptian hieroglyphs, paramilitary expeditionary leader, and financial institution officer, he was adept at one thing: creating and recounting stories. His mother, Lucy, wrote the following about her son in her 1853 book, *Biographical Sketches of Joseph Smith, the Prophet, and His Progenitors for Many Generations*:

During our evening conversations, Joseph would occasionally give us some of the most amusing recitals that could be imagined. He would describe the ancient inhabitants of this continent, their dress, mode of travelings, and the animals upon which they rode; their cities, their buildings, with every particular; their mode of warfare; and also their religious worship. This he would do with as much ease, seemingly, as if he had spent his whole life among them.<sup>94</sup>

The significance of Smith's ability to invent "amusing recitals" about "the ancient inhabitants of this continent"—North America—will become apparent in the next chapter. This one ends with the following observation: Were it not for Smith's talent to fabricate tales, including seemingly spiritual ones, and use them to persuade gullible people to join his movement, the misleading, multi-billion-dollar Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints would not have been part of history, particularly that of the United States, during the past eighteen-plus decades.

**Chapter 4**  
**The Book of Mormon - Part I**  
**Holding Up the Latter-day Saint Belief Arch**

**I told the brethren that the Book of Mormon was the most correct of any book on earth, and the keystone of our religion.** – Joseph Smith, Jr., *Book of Mormon* “Author and Proprietor.”

**A keystone is the central stone in an arch. It holds all the other stones in place, and if removed, the arch crumbles.** – Ezra Benson, LDS apostle and the thirteenth church president, speaking to Latter-day Saints about the *Book of Mormon* in General Conference in October 1986.

**The Society has never used the Book of Mormon to locate archaeological sites, and we do not believe that any of the places named in the Book of Mormon can be placed geographically by the evidence of archaeology. So far as we know there is no archaeological evidence to verify the history of early peoples of the Western Hemisphere as presented in the Book of Mormon.** – National Geographic Society statement in 1990.

**If anyone is foolish enough or misled enough to reject 531 pages of a heretofore unknown text [the Book of Mormon] teeming with literary and Semitic complexity without honestly attempting to account for the origin of those pages...if that is the case, then such a person, elect [i.e., chosen by God to be a Latter-day Saint] or otherwise, has been deceived.** – Mormon apostle Jeffrey Holland, speaking to church members in General Conference in October 2009.

If the “whole strength” of Latter-day Saints’ faith depends “on the validity of that [First] vision,” again quoting former church president Gordon Hinckley, then the “keystone” that holds up the “arch” of the LDS religion is the *Book of Mormon*, as Hinckley’s predecessor, Ezra Benson, told church members a generation ago.<sup>1</sup> Although the volume’s first edition in 1830 identified Smith as the “Author and Proprietor,”<sup>2</sup> he always maintained, and the LDS Church has insisted since his death, that he did not write the book. Rather, he said—and the church has taught for many decades—that he “translated” Egyptian hieroglyphs<sup>3</sup> engraved on ancient American golden plates.<sup>4</sup>

Smith claimed that the metal sheaves were deposited about fourteen centuries before his birth in a stone box buried in a hill not far from the Palmyra farm where his parents and their children lived. How very convenient for the treasure-hunting “Glass Looker” of upstate New York that the aged plates had not been concealed in the scorching southwestern United States, freezing Canadian North, vast Amazonian rainforest, or elsewhere in the Americas, but within easy walking distance of the home where he lived as a youth!

According to Smith and the Latter-day Saint Church, the *Book of Mormon* spans some twenty-six centuries of ancient New World history, from “about 2200 B.C.” to the early fifth century A.D. (C.E.), as noted in the previous chapter.<sup>5</sup> In a letter dated March 1, 1842, Mormonism’s reputed “translator” of “reformed Egyptian characters” provided details, as follows, about his “most correct of any book on earth” to John Wentworth, editor and proprietor of the *Chicago Democrat* newspaper:

In this important and interesting book the history of ancient America is unfolded, from its first settlement by a colony that came from the Tower of Babel at the confusion of languages to the beginning of the fifth century of the Christian era. We are informed by these records [i.e., the gold plates] that America in ancient times has been inhabited by two distinct races of people. The first were called Jaredites and came directly from the Tower of Babel. The second race came directly from the city of Jerusalem about six hundred years before Christ. They were principally Israelites of the descendants of [the Old Testament’s] Joseph. The Jaredites were destroyed about the time that the Israelites came from Jerusalem [circa 600 B.C.], who succeeded them in the inheritance of the country. The principal nation of the second race fell in battle towards the close of the fourth century [A.D.]. The remnant are the Indians that now inhabit this country [i.e., the United States].<sup>6</sup>

Information about the “two distinct races of people” that inhabited “America in ancient times,” according to Mormonism’s master storyteller, is presented in this chapter and the next one. Not only did Smith provide his overview of “the history of ancient America” in his correspondence to Wentworth, he also described the ancient metal sheaves that he claimed to have received from the floating angelic visitor Nephi (a.k.a. Moroni):

These records were engraven on plates which had the appearance of gold. 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. The characters on the unsealed part were small, and beautifully engraved. The whole book exhibited many marks of antiquity in its construction and much skill in the art of engraving.<sup>7</sup>

Concerning what Smith wrote to Wentworth, why would ancient Americans of Israelite ancestry write “Egyptian characters” and not Hebrew, the language of their ancestors from Jerusalem, as described in the *Book of Mormon*.<sup>8</sup> Smith never provided a cogent explanation and the LDS Church’s leadership since his death has likewise failed. The next chapter contains

information about the problematic issue of linguistics in relation to Mormonism's "keystone."

### **More conflicting stories**

Before discussing the first race (Jaredites) and the second race (ancient Israelites), and how American Indians descended from a small group of seafaring Jews, according to Smith, the *Book of Mormon*, and the Latter-day Saint Church, a brief review of how Mormonism's founder obtained the "ancient records" is in order. As is the case with the First Vision, there are various stories to choose from:

*Story #1: Obtain the "gold book" and put it in a tree.*

The reader will recall Chase's 1833 affidavit, which said that "a spirit had appeared to Joseph... in a vision, and informed him that in a certain place there was a record on plates of gold." Dressed in black "and riding a black horse with a switch tail," the young occult enthusiast rode to "the place where was deposited this manuscript" and demanded "the book in a certain name." According to the account, the plates were "in a stone box, unsealed, and so near the top of the ground that he could see one end of it." Smith extracted the "book of gold" and set it down "to place back the top stone," but "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." Smith then "saw in the box something like [a] toad, which soon assumed the appearance of a man, and struck him on the side of his head." Not entirely dissuaded by the supernatural amphibian protector of the plates, Smith eventually obtained the "gold book." Chase explained further:

In the fore part of September, (I believe,) 1827, the Prophet [Joseph Smith] requested [of] 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 [Emma], repaired [went] 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 [500-660 feet] 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 [the peep/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.<sup>9</sup>

*Story #2: Use a peep/seer stone and retrieve the gold plates from a secret cave.*

In *An Insider’s View of Mormon Origins*, Palmer explained that Smith told Henry Harris, a family acquaintance in the 1820s who later testified in court in Ohio about the Latter-day Saint leader, that Joseph “looked in his stone” to find the “place of deposit” of the gold plates.<sup>10</sup> Smith’s close church associate, Martin Harris, confirmed that it “was by means of this stone he first discovered these plates.”<sup>11</sup> Tangentially, Smith’s mother related in 1842:

The angel of the Lord appeared to him [Joseph, her son] fifteen years since [i.e., in 1827], and shewed [showed] him the cave where the original golden plates of the book of Mormon were deposited. He shewed him also the Urim and Thummim...[and the] golden breastplate.<sup>12</sup>

The LDS Church has historical materials that confirm what Lucy said about the cave.<sup>13</sup> For example, the *Journal of Discourses*, “a compilation of sermons and other materials from the early years of the Church,” includes text from a sermon delivered by Smith’s successor, Brigham Young, who told Latter-day Saints in June 1877 about a secret, mystical cave in a hill called Cumorah near Palmyra.<sup>14</sup> The seventy-six year-old church president informed his Latter-day Saint audience that the cave was supernaturally illuminated and contained “a large table,” “a pile of plates as much as two feet high,” and “more plates than probably many wagon loads.”<sup>15</sup> As is the case with other bizarre aspects of Mormonism, the LDS Church has not informed its members for several decades about the purportedly magical cave so as not to disturb their “faith” in the current version of sanitized Mormon history.

*Story #3: Meet an angel annually for a few years and finally get the plates.*

The reader likely remembers that in Smith’s 1838 story about his early life and the genesis of Mormonism he said that the “messenger” floating beside his bed told him about “a book deposited, written upon gold plates.” He also claimed:

While he [the angelic “messenger”] was conversing with me about the plates, the vision was opened to my mind that I could see the place where the plates were deposited, and that so clearly and distinctly that I knew the place again when I visited it.<sup>16</sup>

According to his written account, later that day Smith went to the site where the angel Nephi—later called Moroni—had told him the plates were buried and “owing to the distinctness of the vision which I had had concerning it, I knew the place the instant that I arrived there.”<sup>17</sup> Joseph provided additional information:

Convenient to the village of Manchester, Ontario county, New York, stands a hill of considerable size, and the most elevated of any in the neighborhood. On the west side of this hill, not far from the top, under a stone of considerable size, lay the plates, deposited in a stone box. This stone was thick and rounding in the middle on the upper side, and thinner towards the edges, so that the middle part of it was visible above the ground, but the edge all around was covered with earth.

Having removed the earth, I obtained a lever, which I got fixed under the edge of the stone, and with a little exertion raised it up. I looked in, and there indeed did I behold the plates, the Urim and Thummim, and the breastplate, as stated by the messenger [Nephi/Moroni]. The box in which they lay was formed by laying stones together in some kind of cement. In the bottom of the box were laid two stones crossways of the box, and on these stones lay the plates and the other things with them.

I made an attempt to take them out, but was forbidden by the messenger, and was again informed that the time for bringing them forth had not yet arrived, neither would it, until four years from that time; but he told me that I should come to that place precisely in one year from that time, and that he would there meet with me, and that I should continue to do so until the time should come for obtaining the plates.<sup>18</sup>

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At length the time arrived for obtaining the plates, the Urim and Thummim, and the breastplate. On the twenty-second day of September, one thousand eight hundred and twenty-seven, having gone as usual at the end of another year to the place where they were deposited, the same heavenly messenger delivered them up to me with this charge: that I should be responsible for them; that if I should let them go carelessly, or through any neglect of mine, I should be cut off; but that if I would use all my endeavors to preserve them, until he, the messenger, should call for them, they should be protected.<sup>19</sup>



C.C.A. Christensen's painting of Joseph Smith getting the "book of gold"

The LDS Church has on its main website an audio-video presentation titled *The Angel Moroni and the Gold Plates (1823–1827)*.<sup>20</sup> It shows the "messenger" who supposedly met with Smith in his bedroom and outdoors, the angel Nephi/Moroni from whom Mormonism's founder said he obtained the "book of gold." Notably, each Latter-day Saint temple is crowned with a gold-plated statue of the angel blowing a long trumpet. Millions of Latter-day Saints and countless investigators worldwide have been taught Story #3 as though it was historical.

### **The disappearing golden plates**

If Smith had indeed acquired ancient records of American origin, all he had to do to prove his extraordinary claim was show them to people investigating his religion, including church ministers, members of his community, writer Peter Bauder, scientists, and other interested parties. Doing so would have greatly strengthened their confidence that the Latter-day Saint leader was telling the truth, while silencing his critics. Church members and non-members alike would have been able to see and touch the plates, and scientific experts could have examined the engraved "reformed Egyptian characters." Physical evidence supporting Smith's claims about the "keystone" of Mormonism would have been impossible to dismiss. Moreover, his contribution to the then-budding scientific field of pre-Columbian archeology would have been remarkable.

Not surprisingly, the Latter-day Saint leader failed to produce even a single metallic sheaf for objective scrutiny. Joseph Smith did not even permit his wife, Emma, who had labored for "hour after hour" as a *Book of Mormon* scribe, to see whatever was "wrapped in a small linen table cloth" that he said were the plates.<sup>21</sup> The "prophet of the Restoration" was hiding something from his spouse, a troubling aspect of his behavior that worsened during the 1830s and early 1840s as he pursued teenage girls and women and practiced polygamy in secret.<sup>22</sup>

On one of its webpages, the LDS Church says that "Joseph Smith returned the plates to Moroni" after he finished "translating" the "ancient records."<sup>23</sup> In

other words, the Latter-day Saint organization asserts that a levitating, extra-terrestrial being of flesh and bones but not blood whose name initially was Nephi, but was later called Moroni for some unknown reason, took back the sole physical evidence of the *Book of Mormon*—the “plates which had the appearance of gold”—from Smith, a convicted swindler, and magically disappeared. Did Nephi/Moroni supernaturally transport the golden sheaves back to the Celestial Kingdom near the star Kolob? Not according to church president Brigham Young, who told Latter-day Saints in 1877:

I lived right in the country where the plates were found from which the Book of Mormon was translated, and I know a great many things pertaining to that country...I tell these things to you, and I have a motive for doing so. I want to carry them to the ears of my brethren and sisters, and to the children also, that they may grow to an understanding of some things that seem to be entirely hidden from the human family. Oliver Cowdery went with the Prophet Joseph when he deposited these plates... When Joseph got the plates, the angel instructed him to carry them back to the hill Cumorah, which he did... [W]hen Joseph and Oliver went there, the hill opened, and they walked into a cave, in which there was a large and spacious room. He says he did not think, at the time, whether they had the light of the sun or artificial light; but that it was just as light as day. They laid the plates on a table; it was a large table that stood in the room.<sup>24</sup>

When will the location of the mystical cave be revealed and the “wagon loads” of ancient plates be translated, according to Mormonism? During the Millennium, the one-thousand-year period after the Biblical Armageddon that will culminate in the return of Jesus Christ to “reign personally upon the earth.”<sup>25</sup> Perhaps the resurrected Smith will return to this planet, retrieve his peep/seer stone(s), stovepipe hat, and Urim and Thummim contraption, and “translate” again.

### **The “first race”**

Concerning Smith’s letter to Wentworth, Mormonism’s founder wrote that the gold plates revealed that “America in ancient times” was “inhabited by two distinct races of people. The first were called Jaredites and came directly from the Tower of Babel.” Most people have never heard of Jaredites. Who were they, according to the Latter-day Saint religion? An article in the LDS Church’s November 2011 *Ensign* explained:

This group [Jaredites] left the Tower of Babel and arrived in the Americas about 2200 B.C. They flourished until about 600 B.C., when wars destroyed everyone but Coriantumr [a *Book of Mormon* character].<sup>26</sup>



Wikipedia says the “Tower of Babel forms the focus of a story told in the Book of Genesis of the Bible” centered on “a united humanity” that settled in “the land of Shinar.”<sup>27</sup> Another Wiki article states that Shinar “is a biblical geographical locale of uncertain boundaries in Mesopotamia” and is mentioned “eight times in the Hebrew Bible, in which it refers to Babylonia.”<sup>28</sup> Archeologists regard the area as corresponding to present-day central and southern Iraq.

### **Submersible barges (without the “windows” option)**

How did a small group—about two dozen persons<sup>29</sup>—from Mesopotamia more than four thousand years ago manage to reach the Americas, according to the *Book of Mormon*? First, they travelled through the wilderness<sup>30</sup> in the Middle East, then traversed oceans in submersible barges.<sup>31</sup> Notably, the primitive submarines lacked any integral locomotive force (e.g., a propeller on the aft end of each barge that could be turned by the occupants via an internal mechanism). How did the seacraft move? Mormonism’s “keystone” explains:

And it came to pass that the Lord God caused that there should be a furious wind blow upon the face of the waters, towards the promised land [America]; and thus they [the Jaredites in their barges] were tossed upon the waves of the sea before the wind.

And it came to pass that they were many times buried in the depths of the sea, because of the mountain waves which broke upon them, and also the great and terrible tempests which were caused by the fierceness of the wind.

And it came to pass that when they were buried in the deep there was no water that could hurt them, their vessels being tight like unto a dish, and also they were tight like unto the ark of Noah; therefore when they were encompassed about by many waters they did cry unto the Lord, and he did bring them forth again upon the top of the waters.

And it came to pass that the wind did never cease to blow towards the promised land while they were upon the waters; and thus they were driven forth before the wind.<sup>32</sup>

The *Book of Mormon* also states that the Jaredite passengers took provisions with them<sup>33</sup> as well as flocks and herds<sup>34</sup>, birds, fish, and honey bees.<sup>35</sup> To reinforce in the minds of Latter-day Saints that the Jaredites were real and made the arduous voyage of thousands of miles with several creatures in their “tight” barges, the LDS Church has a related online audio-video presentation with color drawings.<sup>36</sup>

Mormonism’s key scriptural volume says that the premortal Jesus—a.k.a. Jehovah<sup>37</sup>, creator of “many worlds”<sup>38</sup>—told the leader of the Jaredites “ye

cannot have windows [in the hulls of the submersible vessels], for they will be dashed in pieces; neither shall ye take fire with you, for ye shall not go by the light of fire.”<sup>39</sup> Apparently, omniscient “God Almighty” was not interested in revealing to the Jaredite barge-builders how to create glass of sufficient strength to withstand the great pressure of being plunged into “the depths of the sea” like “a whale,” quoting the *Book of Mormon*.<sup>40</sup> The LDS scriptural volume says, however, that “the Lord”—the not-yet-incarnated Jesus—*was* willing to reach out of the mystical ether with his spirit-finger and touch sixteen stones, magically energizing them so they would illuminate the interior of the barges “buried in the depths of the sea.”<sup>41</sup>

How long did it take the Jaredites to travel to the Americas from Mesopotamia, according to the *Book of Mormon*? An unspecified period in the wilderness plus “three hundred and forty and four days upon [and under] the water.”<sup>42</sup> After more than eleven months crossing seas and oceans, the Jaredites—assuming momentarily that they existed—were surely dehydrated, nauseous, frazzled, and *very* relieved to exit their sealed vessels and escape the powerful stench and cacophony of noise from their jostled and stressed animals and insects. Their imagined cruise could rightly be described as hellish.

### **Centuries of kingdoms in ancient America?**

No doubt, the reader is keen to learn what happened to the Jaredites, per the *Book of Mormon*, during sixteen centuries of development and expansion in ancient America after completing their exhausting journey from the Old World. The LDS Church has summarized their history, as described in Mormonism’s “important and interesting book”:

The people praise the Lord for his goodness—Orihah is appointed king over them—Jared and his brother die.

Orihah reigns in righteousness—Amid usurpation and strife, the rival kingdoms of Shule and Cohor are set up—Prophets condemn the wickedness and idolatry of the people, who then repent.

There is strife and contention over the kingdom—Akish forms an oath-bound secret combination to slay the king—Secret combinations are of the devil and result in the destruction of nations—Modern Gentiles are warned against the secret combination that will seek to overthrow the freedom of all lands, nations, and countries.

The kingdom passes from one to another by descent, intrigue, and murder—Emer saw the Son of Righteousness [premortal Jesus]—Many prophets cry repentance—A famine and poisonous serpents plague the people.

One king succeeds another—Some of the kings are righteous; others are wicked—When righteousness prevails, the people are blessed and prospered by the Lord [i.e., unborn Jesus].

Wars, dissensions, and wickedness dominate Jaredite life—Prophets predict the utter destruction of the Jaredites unless they repent—The people reject the words of the prophets.

The prophet Ether exhorts the people to believe in God—Moroni [the ancient American compiler of Jaredite history, according to the *Book of Mormon*] recounts the wonders and marvels done by faith—Faith enabled the brother of Jared to see [the premortal] Christ—The Lord gives men weakness that they may be humble—The brother of Jared moved Mount Zerin by faith—Faith, hope, and charity are essential to salvation—Moroni saw Jesus face to face [in the Americas, about four centuries after Christ's death].

Ether speaks of a New Jerusalem to be built in America by the seed [progeny] of [Biblical] Joseph—He prophesies, is cast out, writes the Jaredite history, and foretells the destruction of the Jaredites—War rages over all the land.

The iniquity of the people brings a curse upon the land—Coriantumr engages in warfare against Gilead, then Lib, and then Shiz—Blood and carnage cover the land.

Millions of the Jaredites are slain in battle—Shiz and Coriantumr assemble all the people to mortal combat—The Spirit of the Lord ceases to strive with them—The Jaredite nation is utterly destroyed—Only Coriantumr remains.<sup>43</sup>

Unfortunately for the LDS Church and its members, there is no evidence that ancient Mesopotamians traveled to the Americas and established kingdoms in the Western Hemisphere. Despite “[m]illions of the Jaredites” purportedly living in the ancient New World, there has never been any trace of them, which makes one wonder why Mormons waste their time talking about them as if they were real.

### **The Smithsonian Institution speaks out**

Latter-day Saints have always been eager for scientific experts to confirm what the *Book of Mormon* describes—and consistently been disappointed. For example, in 1996 the Department of Anthropology at the National Museum of Natural History in Washington, D.C. published the following points in a statement:

The Smithsonian Institution has never used the Book of Mormon in any way as a scientific guide. Smithsonian archeologists see no direct connection between the archeology of the New World and the subject matter of the book.

The physical type of the American Indian is basically Mongoloid, being most closely related to that of the peoples of eastern, central, and northeastern Asia. Archeological evidence indicates that the ancestors of the present Indians came into the New World – probably over a land bridge known to have existed in the Bering Strait region during the last Ice Age – in a continuing series of small migrations beginning from about 25,000 to 30,000 years ago.

Present evidence indicates that the first people to reach this continent from the East were the Norsemen who briefly visited the northeastern part of North America around A.D. 1000 and then settled in Greenland. There is nothing to show that they reached Mexico or Central America [regarded by Latter-day Saints as territory inhabited by *Book of Mormon* peoples].

One of the main lines of evidence supporting the scientific finding that contacts with Old World civilizations if indeed they occurred at all, were of very little significance for the development of American Indian civilizations, is the fact that none of the principal Old World domesticated food plants or animals (except the dog [which the *Book of Mormon* does not mention]) occurred in the New World in pre-Columbian times. American Indians had no wheat, barley, oats, millet, rice, cattle, pigs, chickens, horses, donkeys, [or] camels before 1492. (Camels and horses were in the Americas, along with the bison, mammoth, and mastodon, but all these animals became extinct around 10,000 B.C. at the time when the early big game hunters spread across the Americas.)

Iron, steel, glass, and silk were not used in the New World before 1492 (except for occasional use of unsmelted meteoric iron). Native copper was worked in various locations in pre-Columbian times, but true metallurgy was limited to southern Mexico and the Andean region, where its occurrence in late prehistoric times involved gold, silver, copper, and their alloys, but not iron.

There is a possibility that the spread of cultural traits across the Pacific to Mesoamerica and the northwestern coast of South

America began several hundred years before the Christian era. However, any such inter-hemispheric contacts appear to have been the results of accidental voyages originating in eastern and southern Asia. It is by no means certain that even such contacts occurred; certainly there were no contacts with the ancient Egyptians, Hebrews, or other peoples of Western Asia and the Near East.

No reputable Egyptologist or other specialist on Old World archeology, and no expert on New World prehistory, has discovered or confirmed any relationship between archeological remains in Mexico and archeological remains in Egypt.

Reports of findings of ancient Egyptian, Hebrew, and other Old World writings in the New World in pre-Columbian contexts have frequently appeared in newspapers, magazines, and sensational books. None of these claims has stood up to examination by reputable scholars. No inscriptions using Old World forms of writing have been shown to have occurred in any part of the Americas before 1492 except for a few Norse rune stones which have been found in Greenland.<sup>44</sup>

### **Millions of Jaredites slain in ancient America?**

To review, Smith told Wentworth in his March 1842 letter that the “Jaredites were destroyed about the time that the Israelites came from Jerusalem, who succeeded them in the inheritance of the country [ancient America]” and “[t]he second race [‘the Israelites’] came directly from the city of Jerusalem about six hundred years before Christ.” The LDS Church’s summary for the fifteenth chapter of a section of the *Book of Mormon* called the Book of Ether says: “Millions of the Jaredites are slain in battle...The Jaredite nation is utterly destroyed.”<sup>45</sup> How long did the Jaredites and their enemies prepare for war, according to the Latter-day Saint volume? Two verses in Ether 15 provide the answer:

Wherefore, they were for the space of four years gathering together the people, that they might get all who were upon the face of the land, and that they might receive all the strength which it was possible that they could receive.

And it came to pass that when they were all gathered together, every one to the army which he would, with their wives and their children—both men, women and children being armed with weapons of war, having shields, and breastplates, and head-plates, and being clothed after the manner of war—they did march forth

one against another to battle; and they fought all that day, and conquered not.<sup>46</sup>

By comparison, combat during the Second World War involving huge armed forces lasted less than six years and, notably, did not include female or child soldiers on the battlefield. Continuing with the Book of Ether, the second verse of Chapter 15 says:

He [Coriantumr] saw that there had been slain by the sword already nearly two millions of his people, and he began to sorrow in his heart; yea, there had been slain two millions of mighty men, and also their wives and their children.<sup>47</sup>

Two million “mighty men” plus their family members could easily result in a death toll of six to eight million people, or more, making the supposed Jaredite slaughter one of the worst annihilations in human history. By comparison, five to nine million persons were killed during the Russian Civil War and Foreign Intervention in the early twentieth century.<sup>48</sup> Casualties of the American Civil War have been estimated as high as 970,000, including 350,000 from disease.<sup>49</sup> With so many Jaredite dead, there should be an abundance of archeological evidence of their existence and violent demise. Unfortunately for the LDS Church and its members, none exists.

### **The Hill Ramah/Cumorah**

Where did combat involving millions of men, women and children occur, according to Ether 15? The *Book of Mormon* says:

And it came to pass that the army of Coriantumr did pitch their tents by the hill Ramah; and it was that same hill where my [Moroni's] father Mormon did hide up the records [golden plates] unto the Lord, which were sacred.

And it came to pass that they did gather together all the people upon all the face of the land, who had not been slain, save it was Ether [the ancient American prophet-writer who witnessed and wrote about the Jaredite slaughter, according to Mormonism's “keystone”].

And it came to pass that Ether did behold all the doings of the people; and he beheld that the people who were for Coriantumr were gathered together to the army of Coriantumr; and the people who were for Shiz were gathered together to the army of Shiz.<sup>50</sup>

The LDS Church's Introduction of the *Book of Mormon* provides more information:

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.<sup>51</sup>

To clarify, in Coriantumr's time—about twenty-six centuries ago, according to the Latter-day Saint timeline—"Ramah" was the name of an important hill in ancient America. However, roughly a millennia later, as the *Book of Mormon* draws to a close, the same terrain elevation is called "Cumorah." Since the nineteenth century, Ramah/Cumorah has played a significant role in Mormonism, being mentioned in church sermons, articles, lessons, films, and other productions.<sup>52</sup> For example, LDS apostle Marion Romney told Latter-day Saints during his General Conference sermon in October 1975:

In the western part of the state of New York near Palmyra is a prominent hill known as the "hill Cumorah"...as I stood on the crest of that hill admiring with awe the breathtaking panorama which stretched out before me on every hand, my mind reverted to the events which occurred in that vicinity some twenty-five centuries ago—events which brought to an end the great Jaredite nation.

You who are acquainted with the Book of Mormon will recall that during the final campaign of the fratricidal war between the armies led by Shiz and those led by Coriantumr "nearly two millions" of Coriantumr's people had been slain by the sword; "two millions of mighty men, and also their wives and their children."<sup>53</sup>

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As the conflict intensified, all the people who had not been slain—men "with their wives and their children" (Ether 15:15)—gathered about that hill Cumorah[/Ramah].

Thus perished at the foot of Cumorah the remnant of the once mighty Jaredite nation, of whom the Lord had said, "There shall be none greater...upon all the face of the earth."

As I contemplated this tragic scene from the crest of Cumorah [/Ramah] and viewed the beautiful land of the Restoration [i.e., Mormonism] as it appears today, I cried in my soul, "How could it have happened?"<sup>54</sup>

It is a shame that Romney, who died in 1988, had been so "programmed" by the LDS Church to not think of a much better question: What evidence, if any, has confirmed the purported history of the *Book of Mormon*, including the existence of Jaredites in ancient America? If he had done his homework, the Latter-day Saint leader would have discovered that the answer was none.

### **The Hill Cumorah Pageant**

Smith's story about receiving engraved gold plates from an "angel of God" (Nephi/Moroni) on the hill Cumorah (Ramah) is so integral to Mormonism that during the past three generations, the LDS Church has put on a pageant at the site depicting stories in Mormonism's "keystone."<sup>55</sup> A July 2011 *Los Angeles Times* report, "A grand display of Mormon faith," provided information about the annual outdoor production involving seven hundred "bearded, bewigged and bejeweled volunteers on a massive, seven-tier outdoor stage."<sup>56</sup> For "more than an hour," they enact *Book of Mormon* stories, which include "explosions, waterfalls, fiery deaths and a Christ in glowing white robes who floats to stage from a heavenly height." The *Times* piece, which is online, also says:

The annual extravaganza, which began in 1937, is overseen by the missionary department of the church headquarters in Salt Lake City. The actors fan out into the audience before and after the show with pamphlets and copies of the Book of Mormon, eager to talk about their faith.

The stage is set into the hillside -- the hill is called Cumorah -- exactly where Smith claimed to have found the metal tablets written in what he called "reformed Egyptian" in the 1820s that he translated into the Book of Mormon and used to found the faith.

"We believe it's an ancient book of scriptures that God spoke to prophets in ancient America just like he did in the Bible in the Holy Land. God used Joseph Smith as his frontman to make that happen," said [Brent] Hanson, the artistic director.

The complete lack of scientific evidence supporting the *Book of Mormon*, including its stories about "the once mighty Jaredite nation," means that Smith was not only not God's "frontman," he repeatedly lied about the golden plates and his touted "translation" of them.

### **Where are the bones?**

Returning to the topic of the Jaredites, if millions of them indeed "perished at the foot of [the hill] Cumorah," again quoting LDS apostle Romney, and as described in the *Book of Mormon*, hundreds of millions of human bones would be deposited in the vicinity of the land elevation near Palmyra, New York (note: there are 206 bones in the adult body and children have more). How many Jaredite bones have been found since 1830? None, not even a fragment.

Also troubling for Latter-day Saints is the persistent non-existence of Jaredite clothes, cookingware, tools, weapons, and other items. Other battlefields,



including ancient ones, have yielded their secrets, but when it comes to a combat zone in the northeastern United States where millions of Jaredites supposedly fought and were killed, there is no proof of their LDS-imagined lives.

### **Urim and Thummim problem**

Before leaving the topic of the Jaredites, there are two important, related questions to consider:

1. How did Moroni—the last one in the *Book of Mormon*—abridge “the writings of Ether”—the account of the Jaredites, according to the LDS Church<sup>57</sup>—when their language would have been a derivation of the tongue spoken in ancient Mesopotamia, Neo-Sumerian, which was unknown to him?<sup>58</sup>
2. One of the final chapters of the *Book of Mormon* says that “if our plates had been sufficiently large we should have written in Hebrew.”<sup>59</sup> Instead, “reformed Egyptian” was used, according to Smith. How did Moroni and his father, Mormon, both of whom knew the Jewish language, according to the Latter-day Saint “keystone,” convert their words into the “Egyptian characters” that Mormonism’s creator said were on the gold plates?

Using our imagination and assuming for a moment that Moroni and Mormon existed and the *Book of Mormon* indeed describes “the history of ancient America,” per Smith’s 1842 letter to Wentworth, the answer to both questions is—as the reader may have guessed—the purportedly magical “seer stones.” To review, Mormonism’s founder wrote the following about his young adult years:

He [Nephi/Moroni] said there was a book deposited, written upon gold plates, giving an account of the former inhabitants of this continent, and the source from whence they sprang... Also, that there were two stones in silver bows—and these stones, fastened to a breastplate, constituted what is called the Urim and Thummim—deposited with the plates; and the possession and use of these stones were what constituted “seers” in ancient or former times; and that God had prepared them for the purpose of translating the book.

Who put the “two stones” (“seers”), silver bows, breastplate, and golden plates in the stone box set into the “hill of considerable size” (Ramah/Cumorah), according to the LDS religion? The last Moroni of the *Book of Mormon*. Apparently, he and other ancient American “prophets” used the mystical Urim and Thummim equipment that Smith said was in the box to “translate” Neo-Sumerian and convert Hebrew into “reformed Egyptian.” Why did they not simply write in their own language and, centuries later, Smith use

his peep/seer stone in his hat to view “the interpretation in English,” again quoting the July 1993 *Ensign* article by Mormon apostle Russell Nelson? Again, Latter-day Saint “prophets” have never provided a cogent answer.

### **Urim and Thummim not used for translating**

Despite what Smith wrote and the LDS Church and its leaders and instructors have taught since the nineteenth century about the Urim and Thummim, the Bible indicates that both were used by Jewish priests to determine innocence or guilt,<sup>60</sup> not supernaturally “translate” languages.<sup>61</sup> The *New American Standard Bible* says:

You shall put in the breastpiece of judgment the Urim and the Thummim, and they shall be over Aaron’s heart when he goes in before the LORD; and Aaron shall carry the judgment of the sons of Israel over his heart before the LORD continually.<sup>62</sup>

The *Encyclopedia Biblica* of 1899 said the Urim and Thummim were “small flat objects, perhaps tablets of wood or bone” carried on the inside of the breastplate in a square pouch next to the high priest’s breast.<sup>63</sup> There is no indication in any version of the Bible or Hebrew materials that mystical stones were to be attached to bows, and they in turn connected to a breastplate worn by a priest or other person. Smith’s fertile imagination created a fictitious “translation” device that has been believed by Latter-day Saints to be real.

While the Bible mentions the Urim and Thummim only once—in Exodus 28—conspicuously, the *Book of Mormon* never does. Mormonism’s “key-stone” *does* mention “a stone, which shall shine forth in darkness,”<sup>64</sup> “a large stone...with engravings on it,”<sup>65</sup> and “interpreter” stones given to the “brother of Jared” by the premortal Jesus.<sup>66</sup> Another part of the *Book of Mormon*, the Book of Mosiah, says:

And now he [Mosiah, another ancient American character] translated them by the means of those two stones which were fastened into the two rims of a bow.

Now these things were prepared from the beginning, and were handed down from generation to generation, for the purpose of interpreting languages;

And they have been kept and preserved by the hand of the Lord, that he should discover to every creature who should possess the land [i.e., the Americas] the iniquities and abominations of his people;

And whosoever has these things is called seer, after the manner of old times.

Now after Mosiah had finished translating these records, behold, it gave an account of the people who were destroyed, from the time that they were destroyed back to the building of the great tower [before the Jaredites left Mesopotamia], at the time the Lord confounded the language of the people and they were scattered abroad upon the face of all the earth, yea, and even from that time back until the creation of [Biblical] Adam.<sup>67</sup>

It is noteworthy that the *Book of Mormon* does not mention Mosiah or anyone else in the pre-Columbian New World using a helmet or other head-piece in conjunction with a mystical stone (or a pair of them) “for the purpose of interpreting languages.” Where Smith ever got the idea of placing a small rock in his hat and “drawing it closely around his face to exclude the light” so that “in the darkness the spiritual light would shine” along with a supernatural “piece of something resembling parchment” on which each ancient character magically appeared, “and under it was the interpretation in English,” he never said. We do know, however, that he had a rich imagination and no qualms about passing off his outrageous tales as historical realities.

### **The “second race”**

Returning to Smith’s letter to newspaperman Wentworth, the Latter-day Saint leader wrote in March 1842:

The second race came directly from the city of Jerusalem about six hundred years before Christ. They were principally Israelites of the descendants of Joseph... The principal nation of the second race fell in battle towards the close of the fourth century. The remnant are the Indians that now inhabit this country.

According to Mormonism, the “principal nation” is the lighter-skinned Nephite group of Hebrew ancestry, while the ancestors of American Indians—and all indigenous peoples of the Western Hemisphere as well as natives on islands in the Pacific—are called Lamanites, who also descended from Jews nearly twenty-six centuries ago. The Latter-day Saint Church has the following text about the darker-skinned group (Lamanites/indigenous Americans) on its main website:

Elder Mark E. Petersen, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, wrote: “As the ancient Israelites suffered a dispersion which sprinkled them among all the nations, so the descendants of Laman and Lemuel [two sons of the founding Jewish father—Lehi—of the ‘principal nation’] were sifted over the vast areas of the western hemisphere. *They are found from pole to pole.*”

*Many* migratory groups came to the Americas, but none was as important as the three mentioned in the Book of Mormon [Jaredites, Israelites-Nephites and Israelites-Lamanites]. The blood of these people [Israelites-Lamanites] flows in the veins of the Blackfoot and the Blood Indians of Alberta, Canada; in the Navajo and the Apache of the American Southwest; the Inca of western South America; the Aztec of Mexico; the Maya of Guatemala; and in other native American groups in the Western Hemisphere and the Pacific islands.

These choice native people recognize the truth of the Book of Mormon, which was recorded for them by their own ancestors.<sup>68</sup>

According to Mormonism's reputedly ancient American scripture "translated" by Smith, the "second race" began with a troubled Israelite patriarch called Lehi and his wife as well as their sons and daughters-in-law. The *Book of Mormon* says the small group departed Jerusalem "in 600 B.C."<sup>69</sup> and subsequently spent eight years in the wilderness before reaching navigable water.<sup>70</sup> Lds.org says that the aging Hebrew father:

[S]olemnly led his family from Jerusalem, truded southward to the Red Sea, and moved periodically down the Red Sea coast until the group turned inland and crossed through "much affliction" before coming to a coastal area they said was bountiful.

Readers [of the *Book of Mormon*] have contemplated that historic journey—where Lehi's party stopped, where they built their ship, and where they landed in the western hemisphere, the land promised to Lehi.<sup>71</sup>

Considering that the imagined Lehi and his followers had no experience in constructing ocean-going vessels, how did they—Jewish versions of Arab Bedouins, essentially—know how to build a ship? The *Book of Mormon* says "the Lord" (premortal Jesus) showed one of Lehi's sons, the first Nephi mentioned in the volume, how to construct the large vessel.<sup>72</sup> Later, the Israelite group prepared for their transoceanic journey, and arrived in the Americas between "591–589 B.C.," according to the LDS Church.<sup>73</sup>

How did people who purportedly lived in landlocked Jerusalem manage to master in a very short period the operation of a sail-rigged ship and navigate it across vast oceans, where they encountered storms, as the *Book of Mormon* indicates and an online LDS Church production depicts?<sup>74</sup> Again, no Mormon leader or instructor has provided a convincing answer.

### **The remnant: Native Americans**

Mormonism contains many strange concepts, but none more so than the Latter-day Saint "truth" that Native Americans and natives on Pacific islands<sup>75</sup>

descended from some Jews that “came directly from the city of Jerusalem about six hundred years before Christ,” re-quoting Smith. How did American Indians, Eskimos/Inuit, Hawaiians, Polynesians, and other indigenous peoples of the Western Hemisphere and the Pacific descend from a small cluster of itinerant Hebrews? According to the LDS “keystone,” “the Lord God” (Jesus waiting for his turn to incarnate on earth) cursed two of Lehi’s sons, Laman and Lemuel, and their family members with dark skin.<sup>76</sup> Mormonism has asserted since 1830 that they became the founding fathers of a new race—the Lamanites—who were the ancestors of Native Americans and indigenous peoples of most of the vast Pacific region.

Why did the Latter-day Saint intelligence-spirit Jesus/Jehovah curse some Jews with dark skin pigment? Because they were rebellious, according to the *Book of Mormon*, and so that their progeny “might not be enticing”<sup>77</sup> to the light-skinned offspring of the obedient Hebrew sons and their wives who traveled to the Western Hemisphere on the ship built by the first Nephi, who had lived in Jerusalem.

#### **“Dark,” “loathsome,” “filthy,” “bloodthirsty” and “idolatrous” natives**

Mormonism’s “most correct of any book on earth” says that the wayward Israelite sons and their families and descendants in the New World—Lamanites/early Native Americans—“dwindled in [Jewish] unbelief”<sup>78</sup> and became a “loathsome, and a filthy people, full of idleness and all manner of abominations.”<sup>79</sup> The *Book of Mormon* also calls them a “blood-thirsty people, full of idolatry and filthiness”<sup>80</sup> as well as:

[A] wild and a hardened and a ferocious people; a people who delighted in murdering the [light-skinned] Nephites, and robbing and plundering them; and their hearts were set upon riches, or upon gold and silver, and precious stones; yet they sought to obtain these things by murdering and plundering, that they might not labor for them with their own hands.

Thus they were a very indolent people, many of whom did worship idols, and the curse of God [i.e., dark skin] had fallen upon them because of the traditions of their fathers.<sup>81</sup>

As is the case with many other Mormon “truths,” the LDS concept of *Book of Mormon* Lamanites departing the Americas in seaworthy craft, reaching the Hawaiian Islands, Polynesia, Micronesia, Melanesia, and even New Zealand (see the church’s online map of the extraordinary range of their envisaged voyages<sup>82</sup>), and establishing communities along the way does not square with the other Mormon “fact” that the ancestors of Native Americans were “very indolent.” To build, provision, and launch the vessels alone would have been an enormous undertaking. Notably, Great Britain’s mighty Royal Navy did not successfully explore the Pacific until the latter eighteenth century,

several centuries *after* the Lamanites settled the vast region, according to the Latter-day Saint Church. If the *Book of Mormon* is indeed correct and Mormon teachings have been right, what ancient American Indians accomplished was nothing less than spectacular, the pre-Columbian equivalent of the United States' feat of putting men on the moon between 1969 and 1972.

### **Mormon Indians to become “white and delightsome”**

The *Book of Mormon* says that prior to the rebellious Israelites being cursed with dark skin by premortal Jesus, they had been “white, and exceedingly fair and delightsome,” like the other Hebrews.<sup>83</sup> Since the 1830s, Latter-day Saints have been indoctrinated to believe that Native Americans would spiritually benefit from hearing about Mormonism and joining the LDS Church. For example, the organization says in its summary for a *Book of Mormon* chapter—the thirtieth of 2 Nephi—that “[m]any Lamanites and Jews will believe the word and become delightsome.”<sup>84</sup> Regarding the future of Native Americans, the *Book of Mormon* states:

And then shall the remnant of our seed [Native Americans, Polynesians, etc.] know concerning us, how that we came out from Jerusalem, and that they are descendants of the Jews.

And the gospel of Jesus Christ [i.e., Mormonism] shall be declared among them; wherefore, they shall be restored unto the knowledge of their fathers, and also to the knowledge of Jesus Christ, which was had among their fathers.

And then shall they rejoice; for they shall know that it is a blessing unto them from the hand of God; and their scales of darkness shall begin to fall from their eyes; and many generations shall not pass away among them, save they shall be a pure and a delightsome people.<sup>85</sup>

Strangely, the 1830 edition of the “true” *Book of Mormon* said the natives would become “a white and a delightsome people.”<sup>86</sup> It was later changed to the text quoted above because American Indians as well as natives on Pacific islands had joined the LDS Church and participated as faithful members, but their skin color had not magically lightened. Apparently, Mormonism’s Jesus did not know how to reverse his centuries-old curse.

Five generations after Smith’s “most correct of any book on earth” was first published, LDS apostle Spencer Kimball told Latter-day Saints:

I saw a striking contrast in the progress of the Indian people today... The day of the Lamanites is nigh. For years they have been growing delightsome, and they are now becoming white and delightsome, as they were promised. In this picture of the twenty Lamanite missionaries, fifteen of the twenty were as light as Anglos, five were darker but

equally delightful. The children in the [church's] home placement program in Utah are often lighter than their brothers and sisters in the hogans on the reservation. At one meeting a father and mother and their sixteen year-old daughter we represent, the little member girl—sixteen—sitting between the dark father and mother, and it was evident she was several shades lighter than her parents—on the same reservation, in the same hogan, subject to the same sun and wind and weather... These young members of the Church are changing to whiteness and to delightsomeness.<sup>87</sup>

If the Latter-day Saint process of “changing to whiteness” continues, will future generations of Mormon natives become albinos? In the LDS religion, any notion, no matter how absurd, is “true” and “divine” if one of the church’s “prophets” has so said. Thankfully, the science of genetics has revealed that the color of children’s skin is a function of their racial heritage and not whether their parents or grandparents joined the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints or not.<sup>88</sup> Kimball “saw” what Mormonism had “programmed” his mind to “see.”

### **Another massive ancient American slaughter?**

The reader will recall that the LDS “keystone” says that millions of Jaredites were killed near the hill Cumorah/Ramah, the prominent land feature in upstate New York where Nephi/Moroni supposedly buried the gold plates. Assuming for a moment that the *Book of Mormon* is historically correct, at least thirty-six years before the last Moroni concealed the “ancient records” in the stone box in the hill, *another* massive slaughter took place. Where? The LDS Church explains online and in print:

The Nephites gather to the land of Cumorah for the final battles—Mormon hides the sacred records [golden plates] in the hill Cumorah—The Lamanites are victorious, and the Nephite nation is destroyed—Hundreds of thousands are slain with the sword. About A.D. 385.<sup>89</sup>

Curiously, part of the *Book of Mormon* is called the Book of Mormon. Chapter 6 of that section says that twenty-three groups of ten thousand Nephite warriors—230,000 light-skinned fighting men of Hebrew ancestry—were killed by the Lamanite/Native American army. Also, virtually all of the non-combatant Nephites led by Mormon “unto the land of Cumorah, by a hill which was called Cumorah” were slaughtered.<sup>90</sup> The chapter also says that the “flesh, and bones, and blood [of the slain Nephites] lay upon the face of the earth, being left by the hands of those [Lamanites] who slew them to molder upon the land, and to crumble and to return to their mother earth.”<sup>91</sup>

How many Nephites were supposedly killed in the Cumorah area near present-day Palmyra, New York? One million is not an unreasonable number

to imagine, based on the 230,000 warriors plus their families and relatives (the “Nephite nation”). It is also very unlikely that there were no Lamanite fatalities during the fighting, which would increase the number of dead in the battle zone. If the *Book of Mormon* story is correct, in the vicinity of the hill not far from the Smith family farm of the 1820s there should be in excess of two hundred million human bones fairly close to the earth’s surface. How many skeletons, individual bones or bone fragments and/or bits of clothing, weapons, or other items used by the *Book of Mormon’s* Nephites and Lamanites have been found near the Hill Cumorah? None. Have any been discovered in the surrounding area, “the land of Cumorah”? No. How about elsewhere in the Americas? Again, the answer is negative.

Is there *any* evidence *anywhere* in the Western Hemisphere of the peoples described in Mormonism’s “keystone,” any proof of their supposed communities, cultures, languages, religious beliefs and practices, calendar system, clothing, tools, animals, crops, etc.? No; supportive scientific findings have been conspicuously non-existent. Still, the LDS Church persists in teaching young people and adult members as well as thousands of unsuspecting potential converts to Mormonism each year that the volume is historical as part of the ongoing Latter-day Saint scam.



**Chapter 5**  
**The Book of Mormon - Part II**  
**More of the Unbelievable in Ancient America**

**Take away the Book of Mormon and the revelations, and where is our religion? We have none.** – Joseph Smith, Jr., speaking at a conference of church elders in 1834.

**Mormon archaeologists over the years have almost unanimously accepted the Book of Mormon as an accurate, historical account of the New World peoples between about 2,000 B.C. and A.D. 421. They believe that Smith could translate hieroglyphs, whether “Reformed Egyptian” or ancient American, and that his translation of the Book of Abraham is authentic...as far as I know there is not one professionally trained archaeologist, who is not a Mormon, who sees any scientific justification for believing the foregoing to be true.** – Professor Michael Coe, Yale University archaeologist and anthropologist, from an article he wrote in 1973 for the liberal Mormon magazine, *Dialogue*.

**All men have heard of the Mormon Bible [the Book of Mormon], but few except the “elect” have seen it, or, at least, taken the trouble to read it. I brought away a copy from Salt Lake [City]. The book is a curiosity to me, it is such a pretentious affair, and yet so slow, so sleepy; such an insipid mess of inspiration... The Mormon Bible is rather stupid and tiresome to read, but there is nothing vicious in its teachings. Its code of morals is unobjectionable -- it is “smouched” from the New Testament and no credit given.** – American author Mark Twain from his 1872 book *Roughing It*.

**[T]wenty-five thousand words of the Book of Mormon are taken directly from the Old Testament... Of the three hundred and fifty “names” in the book, more than one hundred come straight from the Bible and a hundred more are as near stolen as makes no difference... The words “and it came to pass” can be found at least two thousand times, which does admittedly have a soporific effect.** – from *God Is Not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything* (published in 2007) by British-American author, essayist, journalist, and broadcaster Christopher Hitchens.

Like the previous chapter, this one discusses several facts that prove that the *Book of Mormon* is not a translation of “Egyptian characters” on ancient American gold plates, as Joseph Smith claimed and the organization he founded, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, has taught for generations, but rather a work of fiction. In the following pages, the reader will

learn that the highest levels of LDS patriarchal leadership were informed nearly a century ago—by a prominent church officer, no less—that scientific evidence had severely undermined Smith’s assertions and church teachings about Mormonism’s “most correct of any book on earth.”

Despite the abundant proof that the *Book of Mormon* is a sham, Latter-day Saint leaders since the nineteenth century have used their ecclesiastical power to ensure that the “keystone” of the LDS religion has been promoted as a “true” compilation of ancient American history. Why the institutional deception? Significantly, to expand the lucrative fraud of Mormonism. Since 1830, millions of people have been misled by the Mormon organization about its foundational book and indoctrinated to pay the church considerable sums of money throughout their lives (details are in Chapter 12).

### ***Book of Mormon* problems known for generations**

In the early 1920s, LDS General Authority and assistant church historian B. H. Roberts was given a letter from a Mr. Couch of Washington, D.C. His correspondence listed, as follows, five problems with the *Book of Mormon* (there are many more):

The “Mormon” tradition states that the American Indians were the descendants of the Lamanites. The time allowed from the first landing of Lehi and his followers in America to the present is about 2700 years. Philologic studies have divided the Indian languages into five distinct linguistic stocks which show very little relationship [to each other]. It does not appear that this diversity in tongues could obtain [happen] if the Indians were the descendants of a people who possessed as highly developed a language as the ancient Hebrew [as the *Book of Mormon* describes], but indicates that the division of the Indians into separate stocks occurred long before their language was developed beyond the most primitive kind of articulations. Again[,] the time allowed from the landing of Lehi is much too short to account for the observed diversity.

The Book of Mormon states that when the followers of Lehi reached North America they found, among other animals, the horse here. Historical and paeleontological data shows that the horse was not in America at that time, nor did it arrive for 20 centuries afterward.

Nephi is stated to have had a bow of steel which he broke shortly after he had left Jerusalem, some 600 years B.C. There is no record that I know of which allows the Jews the knowledge of steel at such a period.

Reference is frequently made in the Book of Mormon to “swords and cimeters.” The use of the word cimenter does not occur in other

literature before the rise of the Mohammedan power and apparently that peculiar weapon was not developed until long after the Christian era. It does not therefore appear likely that the Nephites or Lamanites possessed either the weapon or the term.

Reference is also made to the possession by the Nephites of an abundance of silk. As silk was not known in America at that time the question arises, where did they obtain the silk?<sup>1</sup>

Roberts was unable to satisfactorily respond to Couch's astute observations and questions, particularly after reading scientific volumes about the pre-Columbian Americas and comparing the presented facts with the contents of Mormonism's "keystone." In his 1922 written work, *Book of Mormon Difficulties*, the Latter-day Saint General Authority mentioned that one of the volumes he reviewed was *The American Indian, An Introduction to the Anthropology of the New World* by Dr. Clark Wissler, anthropologist and curator of anthropology of the American Museum of Natural History in New York City. Wissler's book, which was first published in 1917, said that Native American languages "are totally different from all others."<sup>2</sup> He also explained:

The discovery of New World origins is not merely a problem in culture. Language is also a reliable index to origin. So far, no evidence has come to hand that would identify a single New World language with an Old World stock. In fact, the only language found in both America and Asia is the speech of the Eskimo, represented in Asia by a small group of villages on the extreme coast of Siberia. This exception may be ignored in this instance. Then, though there is a great diversity of language within the New World itself, we have a right to expect that if colonies were planted here by an Old World culture [e.g., Hebrew], such colonization would have grafted-in Old World tongues. Yet, so far, there is no trace of such intrusion.<sup>3</sup>

Further study of the diverse dialects of Native Americans since the 1920s has supported the conclusion of experts in the early twentieth century that no single Old World language was the original source of their forms of verbal communication. However, the supposedly historical *Book of Mormon* describes various groups—Ammonites, Amulonites, Anti-Nephi-Lehies, Lamanites, Mulekites, Nephites, Zoramites, etc.—in the Americas descending from a small number of Jews who left Jerusalem about 600 B.C. and sailed to the Western Hemisphere, arriving some twenty-six centuries ago.

There are dozens of distinct language families in the New World as well as many language isolates and unclassified tongues, and proposals have been made to group them into higher-level families, namely, Eskimo-Aleut, Na-Dene, and Amerind.<sup>4</sup> In the context of the *Book of Mormon*, conspicuously missing from native languages are traces of—or linguistic bridges to—"reformed Egyptian" and "altered Hebrew" (explained later in this chapter).

### ***Book of Mormon anachronisms***

Roberts noted not only the problematic—for Latter-day Saints—Native American linguistic issues in the purportedly “true” *Book of Mormon*, but also several anachronisms in Mormonism’s “keystone.” The volume’s many incongruities, including the five pointed out by Couch, include:

- Domesticated oxen<sup>5</sup>, cattle<sup>6</sup>, horses<sup>7</sup>, asses (donkeys)<sup>8</sup>, swine<sup>9</sup>, goats<sup>10</sup>, and sheep<sup>11</sup>;
- Elephants<sup>12</sup>;
- Chariots<sup>13</sup>, cimeters<sup>14</sup> and ships<sup>15</sup>;
- Ancient Israelites who knew how to create and work with steel<sup>16</sup> and construct swords<sup>17</sup> made of the alloy;
- Ancient Americans of Hebrew ancestry who worked expertly with iron, copper and brass<sup>18</sup>;
- Many cities<sup>19</sup> and buildings constructed with cement<sup>20</sup>;
- Silk and fine linens<sup>21</sup>;
- Figs<sup>22</sup>, wheat<sup>23</sup> and barley<sup>24</sup>;
- A monetary system involving gold and silver coins<sup>25</sup>;
- People who practiced Judaism<sup>26</sup> and worshiped in synagogues<sup>27</sup>;
- A seven-day week ending with a Jewish day of worship<sup>28</sup> (a Sabbath<sup>29</sup>); and
- Societies led by kings.<sup>30</sup>

As Professor Coe observed in 1973, no non-Mormon researcher with expertise in pre-Columbian cultures has supported Smith’s claims or the LDS Church’s teachings about the *Book of Mormon*. The many anachronisms in the “most correct” Latter-day Saint volume are primarily why.

### **French in ancient America?**

Believing momentarily that what Smith asserted, the *Book of Mormon* states, and the LDS Church has taught for generations have all been correct, the last Moroni mentioned in Mormonism’s “keystone” wrote:

And now, behold, we [ancient Americans] have written this record according to our knowledge, in the characters which are called among us the reformed Egyptian, being handed down and altered by us, according to our manner of speech.

And if our plates had been sufficiently large we should have written in Hebrew; but the Hebrew hath been altered by us also; and if we could have written in Hebrew, behold, ye would have had no imperfection in our record.

But the Lord knoweth the things which we have written, and also that none other people knoweth our language; and because that none other

people knoweth our language, therefore he hath prepared means [“seer stones”] for the interpretation thereof.<sup>31</sup>

The Latter-day Saint Church says Moroni wrote these words “[a]bout A.D. 401–21.”<sup>32</sup> Not surprisingly, there has been no evidence in the Americas of “altered” Hebrew or “reformed Egyptian”—or French. Why mention that prominent European language in relation to the LDS scriptural volume? Because the final verse of the seventh chapter of the Book of Jacob in the *Book of Mormon* says:

To the reader I [Jacob, an ancient American prophet/character of Jewish ancestry] bid farewell, hoping that many of my brethren may read my words. Brethren, adieu.<sup>33</sup>

The Mormon Church says that Jacob wrote these words sometime between 544 and 421 B.C., more than twenty-four centuries ago.<sup>34</sup> The roots of French are Latin, Gaulish, and Old Low Frankish, languages in Europe that did not take root and evolve until centuries after the supposed death of Jacob.

Did the “piece of something resembling parchment” that purportedly appeared in Smith’s hat, generating ancient characters in “spiritual light” as well as their “interpretation in English,” malfunction and incorrectly translate a “reformed Egyptian” hieroglyph or “altered Hebrew” word into French? According to the LDS Church, such an error would have been impossible because the *Book of Mormon* was “translated by the gift and power of God,” a claim repeatedly made by Latter-day Saint leaders. Expanding on the seer-stone-hat-parchment quote in Nelson’s July 1993 *Ensign* article (mentioned in Chapter 1), the LDS apostle said that Smith’s use of his small rock in conjunction with his head covering was a “miraculous method of translation.”<sup>35</sup>

Who was probably aware of “adieu,” a French word known in many parts of North America by the early 1800s due to the language’s pre-eminence in diplomatic circles, the proximity of New York State to French-speaking Lower Canada (on the north side of the St. Lawrence River), France’s help to American forces during the Revolutionary War (1775–1783), and French terms in books and other writings available in New York libraries? Joseph Smith. For some strange reason, he decided to include the suave-sounding non-English word in his *Book of Mormon* manuscript, thereby undermining his claim that he had “translated” ancient American plates produced more than a millennia before French was developed.

### ***Studies of the Book of Mormon: “Very grave” difficulties***

Returning to Roberts’ investigation of Mormonism’s “keystone,” in the early 1980s his written findings were compiled and published in a book titled *Studies of the Book of Mormon*. In one of the chapters, “Book of Mormon Difficulties: A Study,” editor Brigham Madsen explained the dilemma encountered by the LDS General Authority and historian six decades earlier:

B. H. Roberts was not satisfied with his brief answers to the five questions propounded by Mr. Couch; he prepared a much more detailed analysis of the Book of Mormon, of 141 typed pages, which he submitted to [LDS Church] President Heber J. Grant and [his] Counsellors, the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and his own Council of Seventy in January 1922. This examination, compiled in the rather short period of about three months, from October 1921 to January 1922, raised so many questions for Roberts that he decided to seek help from Heber J. Grant, the Prophet, seer, and revelator of the Church, and from his brethren in the presiding councils. As the correspondence indicates, Roberts was not satisfied with what he conceived to be a rather superficial reaction to his report during the first two days of meeting with the First Presidency and the Twelve Apostles, although some of his colleagues were evidently quite shaken by his disclosures. When a third meeting with President Grant plus some evening sessions with a select few of the apostles were also unsatisfactory, Roberts then embarked upon a rather prolonged study and a new approach to a possible explanation of the origin of the Book of Mormon, comparing it with Ethan Smith's *View of the Hebrews*.<sup>36</sup>

The literary work by Ethan Smith (no relation to Mormonism's founder) was first published in 1823 and will be discussed later in this chapter. In his "141 typed pages," the perturbed Roberts wrote the following to Grant and other Latter-day Saint General Authorities:

At the close of this review of the status of knowledge derived from works of [scientific] authority on the subjects of domestic animals in America, iron and steel, the wheel, cimeters, and silk, we are again confronted with the question, as in the case of the difficulties about languages, what are to be our answers to the questions asked on these subjects[?]<sup>37</sup>

Shall we boldly acknowledge the difficulties in the case, confess that the evidences and conclusions of the authorities are against us, but notwithstanding all that, we take our position on the Book of Mormon and place its revealed truths against the declarations of men, however learned, and await the vindication of the revealed truth? Is there any other course than this? And yet the difficulties to this position are very grave. What will be the effect upon our youth of such a confession of inability to give a more reasonable answer to the questions submitted, and the awaiting of proof for final vindication? Will not the hoped[-]for proof deferred indeed make the heart sick? Is there any way to escape these difficulties?<sup>38</sup>

Of course, there has never been "any way" for the LDS Church "to escape these difficulties" due to the complete absence of "evidences and conclusions of the authorities" supporting Smith's claims about the *Book of Mormon* and

provably wrong Latter-day Saint teachings about the volume. By 1922, facts about the ancient New World discovered by archeologists and other experts had substantially undermined Mormonism's scriptural foundation. The rational part of Roberts' mind struggled to accept this faith-ruining reality, but Mormon "programming" operating in his psyche would not (he remained a senior church leader until his death in September 1933).

To acknowledge that the *Book of Mormon* was not what Smith had claimed or the church had taught for nearly four generations would have mentally pushed Roberts toward a monumental and life-changing conclusion: Mormonism was a fraud and he had wasted more than half a century believing it and working to support the unethical organization that had expanded the Latter-day Saint scam beyond Utah to the rest of the United States and other countries. Roberts had the intelligence to figure out that the LDS religion was bogus, but, tragically, not the courage to do so and free himself from it.

### **"Institutional priorities" overshadow "integrity"**

Signature Books, which published the 1992 edition of *Studies of the Book of Mormon*, says on its website that B. H.'s "manuscript was so poorly received by fellow church leaders that it was left to Roberts alone to decide whether he had overlooked some important piece of the puzzle or whether the Mormon scripture's claims were, in fact, illegitimate. Clearly for most of his colleagues, institutional priorities overshadowed epistemological integrity."<sup>39</sup> It is noteworthy that in the early 1920s, one such priority—a key one for the LDS Church—was taking millions of dollars each year from Latter-day Saints.

The text on Signature Books' website summarizes the core problem of the church and its leadership since Smith concocted Mormonism: a lack of integrity. To what? The truth, first and foremost. It is bad enough that the LDS organization has systematically misled more than fifteen million people about Smith, the *Book of Mormon*, and Latter-day Saint history, but to indoctrinate naïve and psychologically vulnerable individuals from childhood onward to hand over at least one-tenth of their earnings, money gifts, and other forms of financial increase has been reprehensible. A fundamental corruption has permeated the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints since its founding more than eighteen decades ago, leading to systematic institutional dishonesty.

### **Jesus visited the Americas?**

The LDS religion contains many preposterous concepts, but none more so than the *Book of Mormon* "truth" about Jesus visiting the Americas nearly two thousand years ago. The Latter-day Saint Church states in the volume's Introduction:

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.<sup>40</sup>

Mormonism's key book of scripture states that Jesus dropped in—literally—on ancient New World inhabitants. The church provides the following summary of the supposed event:

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.

In the darkness, the voice of Christ proclaims the destruction of many people and cities for their wickedness—He also proclaims his divinity, announces that the law of Moses is fulfilled, and invites men to come unto him and be saved. About A.D. 34.

There is silence in the land for many hours—The voice of Christ promises to gather his people as a hen gathers her chickens—The more righteous part of the people have been preserved. About A.D. 34–35.

The Father testifies of his Beloved Son—Christ appears and proclaims his atonement—The people feel the wound marks in his hands and feet and side—They cry Hosanna—He sets forth the mode and manner of baptism—The spirit of contention is of the devil—Christ's doctrine is that men should believe and be baptized and receive the Holy Ghost. About A.D. 34.<sup>41</sup>

As is the case with *Book of Mormon* peoples—Jaredites, Nephites, Lamanites, etc.—previously mentioned, there is no evidence that Jesus visited the Western Hemisphere. Nevertheless, to bolster Latter-day Saints' belief that he did come to the New World, the LDS Church has produced cartoons and other productions in addition to its Hill Cumorah Pageant, all depicting Christianity's founder interacting with pre-Columbian Americans, Indian and fair-skinned.<sup>42</sup>

### **Christ's extended stay in Mexico?**

By early 1830, Smith had become so adept at crafting stories designed to engender "faith" that he wrote—"translated," according to the LDS Church—the following in the eleventh chapter of the Book of Third Nephi in the *Book of Mormon*:

And it came to pass, as they [Nephites] understood [a powerful, disembodied voice from the sky] they cast their eyes up again towards heaven; and behold, they saw a Man descending out of heaven; and he was clothed in a white robe; and he came down and stood in the midst of them; and the eyes of the whole multitude were turned upon him, and they durst [did] not open their mouths, even one



to another, and wist [knew] not what it meant, for they thought it was an angel that had appeared unto them.<sup>43</sup>

How long did Jesus stay in the Americas, according to Smith's "most correct" book? Weeks, if not months, apparently, because the LDS Church says in one of its chapter summaries that he spoke to the Nephites "[a]bout A.D. 34–35," the latter number being the year after his imagined arrival.<sup>44</sup> Where did the founder of Christianity supposedly visit? The *Book of Mormon* says "the land of Bountiful," which many Latter-day Saints believe was somewhere in Central America, and southeastern Mexico, in particular.<sup>45</sup>

Considering that there were, according to Mormonism's "keystone" and the LDS Church, "tempests, earthquakes, fires, whirlwinds, and physical upheavals" in the region during the hours leading up to Jesus' visit, there should be geological evidence as well as Native American oral accounts passed from one generation to the next—and possibly indigenous visual art—supporting the *Book of Mormon* story of Jesus' extraordinary appearance and prolonged stay. Is there any such proof, if only involving the earth's upper crust that geologists would recognize? By now, the reader will surely not be surprised to learn that the answer is negative.

### **Text "borrowed" from the Bible**

While Smith repeatedly tried to convince people that his *Book of Mormon* contained "the history of ancient America," he never divulged the truth about his literary work, including the fact that it contained plagiarisms from the Bible and other volumes. Mark Twain, a pen name for Samuel Langhorne Clemens, wrote the following about Smith's tendency to "smouch" (plagiarize) from Christianity's key volume in his published work, *Roughing It*:

The book [of Mormon] seems to be merely a prosy detail of imaginary history, with the Old Testament for a model; followed by a tedious plagiarism of the New Testament. The author labored to give his words and phrases the quaint, old-fashioned sound and structure of our King James's translation of the Scriptures; and the result is a mongrel — half modern glibness, and half ancient simplicity and gravity. The latter is awkward and constrained; the former natural, but grotesque by the contrast. Whenever he found his speech growing too modern -- which was about every sentence or two -- he ladled in a few such Scriptural phrases as "exceeding sore," "and it came to pass," etc., and made things satisfactory again. "And it came to pass" was his pet. If he had left that out, his Bible would have been only a pamphlet.<sup>46</sup>

In his April 2007 *Slate* article, "Mormonism: A Racket Becomes a Religion," essayist and author Christopher Hitchens noted that Smith plagiarized several Biblical verses in the *Book of Mormon*.<sup>47</sup> How many? More than

two hundred from the Old and New Testaments were copied verbatim and another 207 verses were altered to one degree or another and used in the Latter-day Saint volume.<sup>48</sup>

Not only did Smith “smouch” from Christianity’s most important written work, he did the same in relation to two popular American books of his day (details are presented later). Worse, he also made twenty significant errors in his *Book of Mormon*.<sup>49</sup> Competent swindlers ensure that their scam is difficult, if not impossible, to detect. However, Mormonism’s fabricator was not so alert; Joseph failed to pay attention to important facts that have exposed his religious swindle involving his “most correct of any book on earth.”

### ***View of the Hebrews and the Book of Mormon***

In 1823, seven years before the first edition of the *Book of Mormon*, a literary work titled *View of the Hebrews* was published in Poultney, Vermont.<sup>50</sup> One of the principal ideas in the book was that American Indians descended from Hebrews—the Ten Lost Tribes, specifically<sup>51</sup>—who were synonymous with ancient Israelites, and by the Roman era, Jews in general.<sup>52</sup> An expanded version of *View of the Hebrews* was published in 1825.<sup>53</sup>

The book was written by Ethan Smith, a New England Congregationalist clergyman, who lived and pastored in Poultney at the church attended by the family of Oliver Cowdery, Smith’s close friend and priesthood subordinate. It is not unreasonable to think that Oliver was aware of the pastor’s volume and told Joseph about it. Did the family of Mormonism’s creator possess a copy of *View of the Hebrews*? B. H. Roberts thought there was a “great probability” that they did.<sup>54</sup> Palmer wrote that Ethan’s book “was written, published, and widely distributed in New England and New York where the Smith family lived, two editions rapidly selling out.”<sup>55</sup>

During his childhood in Vermont, Smith lived not far from Poultney. Five pages in Brodie’s book about his life and seven pages in Palmer’s volume about the origins of the Latter-day Saint movement discuss *View of the Hebrews*, and are recommended to the reader. The close similarities between the non-historical *Book of Mormon* and Ethan Smith’s work of fiction are listed below. The many parallels, which troubled Roberts, have been warning signs since 1830 that Mormonism’s “keystone” is not what Smith and the LDS Church’s leadership since his death have asserted. Crucially, in both volumes:

1. Native Americans (Indians) are of Israelite origin and their ancestral language is Hebrew.
2. The future gathering of Israel and restoration of the Biblical Ten Lost Tribes is discussed.
3. There are extensive quotations from the Bible’s Book of Isaiah.
4. The destruction of ancient Jerusalem and the scattering of Israel are mentioned.
5. A promise is made that a great Gentile nation (the United States) will arise and occupy America.

6. An appeal is made to the Gentiles to nurture scattered Israelites who come to America.
7. Peopling the New World is the result of a group traveling from the Old World.
8. The Western Hemisphere was devoid of people prior to the arrival of the migrants.
9. There is a religious motive for the migration.
10. After arriving in the Americas, the travelers split into two groups.
11. One of the groups remains civilized while the other becomes uncivilized.
12. The civilized group has a written language, is skilled in metal-working, and knows about navigation.
13. There are lengthy wars between the groups and the civilized is eventually destroyed by the uncivilized.
14. A “lost book” is buried (in the *Book of Mormon*, it consists of gold plates, while in *View of the Hebrews*, “yellow leaves”—sheaves—comprise the volume).
15. There are extensive military fortifications with “watch towers.”
16. The gospel is preached in the ancient New World, and idolatry and human sacrifice are practiced.
17. Generosity to the poor and needy is extolled and pride condemned.
18. Polygamy is forbidden (in the *Book of Mormon*, the practice is characterized as a “whoredom” and a “grosser crime,” and the ancient American character, Jacob, tells Nephite men that God commands that they have only “one wife” and “concubines he [each man] shall have none”<sup>56</sup>).
19. At some point during the then-future, the descendants of the Indians (Lamanites in the *Book of Mormon*) will learn of and read the ancient writings.
20. New World inhabitants effect a change of government from monarchical rule to a republic.
21. A high-ranking government leader possesses civil and religious power.
22. Opposites (e.g., good/bad) are presented as integral to existence.

### **The *Book of Mormon* and two plagiarized volumes of American history**

Not only did *Book of Mormon* “Author” Smith “smouch” Biblical verses and purloin *View of the Hebrews* ideas, there is also considerable evidence that he “borrowed” text and concepts from the following books during his creation of Mormonism’s “keystone”:

1. David Ramsay’s *History of the American Revolution*, which was first published in three volumes in 1789 (they have since been made available online<sup>57</sup>). Ramsay was a friend to and the biographer of George Washington, the famous American general and first president of the United States.

2. Mercy Otis Warren’s multi-volume *History of the Rise, Progress, and Termination of the American Revolution* (three volumes are also available on the Internet<sup>58</sup>), which was initially published in 1805, the year of Joseph Smith’s birth.

Table 1 contains quotations from Ramsay’s book and the *Book of Mormon*; Table 2 has quotes from Warren’s work and Mormonism’s “keystone.” Credit for this information, which is online, goes to researcher Tom Donofrio of Phoenix, Arizona, whom I met at a conference in 2005 in Salt Lake City.<sup>59</sup>

**Table 1**

	<i>History of the American Revolution</i>	<i>Book of Mormon</i>
1	standard of general liberty (2:64) standard of liberty (3:26)	standard of liberty (Alma 62:4)
2	planted the standard of loyalty (2:295)	planted the standard of liberty (Alma 46:36)
3	flock to their standard (2:115)	flock unto his standard (Alma 62:5)
4	the blessings of liberty (1:366)	the blessings of liberty (Alma 46:13)
5	liberties, property, wives and children (2:119)	Their liberty, their lands, their wives, and their children (Alma 48:10)
6	a free government (3:8)	a free government (Alma 46:35)
7	the cause of liberty (3:67)	the cause of liberty (Alma 51:17)
8	the cause of American liberty (1:9)	the cause of our liberty (Alma 58:12)
9	in the cause of their country (1:411)	in the cause of their country (Alma 56:11)
10	the justice of the cause (2:101) the justice of their cause (2:102) a just cause (3:168)	the justice of the cause (Alma 46:29) a just cause (Alma 55:1)
11	died in the cause of liberty (2:9) honorable men who died in defence of her [their country’s] rights and dignity (3:312)	died in the cause of their country (Alma 56:11)
12	defended the cause of liberty (1:255) in defence of liberty (2:vii)	in the defence of your liberty (3 Nephi 3:2)
13	spirit of freedom (1:337)	spirit of freedom (Alma 60:25)
14	rights and privileges (1:152)	rights and privileges (Mosiah 29:32)
15	to maintain their rights and privileges (2:80)	to maintain their rights and the privileges (Alma 51:6)
16	their rights and liberties (2:80)	their rights and their liberties (Alma 43:26)
17	safety and welfare (2:243)	welfare and safety (Alma 48:12)

18	determined on death or victory (2:221)	determined to conquer in this place or die (Alma 56:17)
19	appealing to that Being (1:418)	calling upon that Being (Mormon 5:2)
20	their Creator (1:34, 75, 240; 2:158)	their Creator (Omni 1:7)
21	the great Jehovah (2:46)	the great Jehovah (Moroni 10:34)
22	virtuous freemen (2:251)	the name of freemen (Alma 51:6)
23	critical time (2:355) critical circumstances (2:298)	critical time (Alma 51:9) critical circumstances (Alma 57:16)
24	marching through the wilderness (2:56)	marching round about in the wilderness (Alma 43:24)
25	began their march (2:181) had begun his march (2:422) marched over (2:225)	began their march (3 Nephi 4:25) had begun his march (Alma 52:15) marched over (Alma 43:25)
26	places of security (2:195) place of retreat (1:132)	places of security (Alma 50:4) places of retreat (Alma 49:11)
27	cut off their retreat (2:69)	cut off the way of their retreat (3 Nephi 4:24)
28	his whole army (2:205)	his whole army (Helaman 1:20)
29	at the head of his army (2:397)	at the head of his army (Alma 49:10)
30	little army (2:53, 274, 424) little band (2:328)	little army (Alma 56:19) little band (Alma 57:6)
31	surrendered themselves prisoners of war (2:141)	surrendered themselves prisoners of war (Alma 57:14)
32	a council of war (2:205)	a council of war (Alma 52:19)
33	fought and bled (2:387)	fought and bled (Alma 60:9)
34	spilling the blood (2:99) drink his blood (2:48)	spill your blood (Alma 44:11) drink his blood (Alma 49:27)
35	scene of bloodshed (2:366)	scene of bloodshed (Alma 28:10)
36	awful crisis (2:29)	awful crisis (Alma 34:34)
37	among their slain (2:191, 192, 224)	among the number who were slain (Helaman 1:30)
38	in great numbers (1:144, 259; 2:219; 3:83) a vast number (2:73)	in great numbers (Alma 57:14) a vast number (Alma 56:10)
39	in so short a space (2:264; 3:244, 392)	in so short a space (Alma 56:50)
40	ways and means (2:240; 3: 256, 261, 340, 347)	ways and means (Mosiah 4:29)
41	precious metals (1:46; 2:17)	precious metals (Helaman 6:9)
42	supply of provisions (3:206, 384, 385)	supply of provisions (Alma 57:6)

43	did not molest them (2:263)	did not molest them (Mosiah 19:29)
44	took possession of (1:33, 38, 39, 143, 212, 218, 314, 361, 377; 2:10, 82, 85, 86, 119, 131, 139, 277, 300, 311, 316, 321, 402, 432, 435; 3:122, 219, 283, 324, 292, 380, 412) take command (2:260) take up arms (2:212, 233, 279, 360)	took possession of (Mosiah 23:29) took command (Alma 53:2) take up arms (Alma 2:10)
45	obliged to flee (2:300) were obliged to (1:62, 69, 109, 149, 161, 178, 404; 2:28, 31, 70, 81, 107, 172, 208, 308, 340, 383, 405, 408, 411, 419; 3:17, 95, 219, 229, 421)	obliged to flee (Alma 59:8) were obliged to (Alma 59:8)
46	the stratagem (2:214; ) a stratagem (1:193; 3:292) a dextrous stratagem (3:425)	by stratagem (Alma 52:10)
47	preparations for (1:149; 2:56, 76, 197, 220, 399; 3:177, 180, 203, 205, 323) preparations were made (1:199, 303, 356; 2:294, 359)	preparations for (Jarom 1:8) made preparations (Alma 24:20)
48	upwards of (1:6, 19, 149, 263, 299, 321, 404, 431; 2:17, 51, 106, 146, 178, 202, 214, 221, 246, 274, 299, 311, 313, 314, 321, 323, 333, 343, 373, 397, 404, 405, 413, 415, 420; 3:14, 21, 84, 124, 177, 191, 192, 193, 204, 215, 223, 225, 235, 248, 267, 280, 302, 321, 333, 338, 341, 347, 384, 387, 415, 426, 435, 439)	upwards of (Alma 57:14))
49	Moravian towns (2:315)	Morianon (Alma 50:25)
50	the town was also picketed in with strong picquets, and surrounded with a ditch, and a bank, near the height of a common parapet (2:417) formed of earth with a parapet and ditch (2:110) picketted with timber fifteen feet long (3:269, 421) erection of works (2:192) works were also thrown up on all sides of the town (2:318)	bank of the ditch (Alma 53:4) works of timbers built up to the height of a man (Alma 50:2) a frame of pickets built upon the timbers (Alma 50:3) works of pickets (Alma 50:4) the bank which had been thrown up (Alma 49:18)
51	threw down their arms (2:332)	threw down their weapons (Alma 52:38)
52	lay on their arms (2:435)	slept upon their swords (Ether 15:4)

53	<p>fallen into his hands (2:69)</p> <p>fallen into the hands of the enemy (3:250, 293)</p> <p>fallen into the hands of the officers (3:478)</p>	<p>fallen into the hands (Mosiah 1:14)</p>
54	<p>levelled with the dust (2:360)</p> <p>reduced to dust (3:98)</p>	<p>level them with the earth (Alma 51:17)</p>
55	<p>army had been reduced (2:245)</p> <p>army was reduced (3:82)</p>	<p>army had been reduced (Alma 56:10)</p>
56	<p>driving the French from Canada (1:171)</p> <p>driving the Americans before them (2:136)</p> <p>driving the British out of the country (2:301)</p> <p>driving their oppressors (2:322, 323)</p> <p>driving the first part of the militia (2:343)</p> <p>driving him out of South Carolina (2:400)</p> <p>driving them out of the valley (3:385)</p> <p>driving back their opponents (3:279)</p> <p>driving them to a greater distance from the frontier (3:225)</p> <p>driving the American troops (3:282)</p> <p>driving before them the militia (3:291)</p> <p>driving before him the few militia (3:299)</p> <p>driving the enemy opposed to him (3:358)</p>	<p>driving the Nephites before them (Alma 51:28)</p> <p>and drove him (Ether 13:29)</p> <p>they were driven back, or they drove them back (Mosiah 11:18)</p>
57	<p>attacking the rear of the English (1:283)</p> <p>pressed on their rear (2:7)</p> <p>The British were close on their rear and threatening them with destruction (2:70)</p> <p>harassed the rear of the British (2:179)</p> <p>attacking the enemy's rear (2:260)</p> <p>distressed the enemy's rear (2:262)</p> <p>attack their rear (2:274)</p> <p>harassed their rear (2:426)</p> <p>the enemy pushing hard upon their rear (3:232)</p>	<p>pressed upon their rear (Alma 52:36)</p> <p>they did harass them (Alma 51:32)</p> <p>both in their front and in their rear (3 Nephi 4:25)</p> <p>bring them up in the rear at the same time they were met in the front (Alma 56:23)</p>

58	to the left (2:140, 223) on the right (1:429; 2:118, 134, 185, 223, 261, 274, 318, 332, 400, 408, 417; 3:324, 373)	to the left (Alma 56:37) on the right (Alma 58:17)
59	The American army was stationed...on both sides of the North River (2:361)	the armies of Moroni...on both sides of the river (Alma 43:52)
60	by a secret way (2:52)	by a secret way (Helaman 2:11)
61	the narrow passage (2:106)	the narrow passage (Mormon 2:29)
62	neck of land (1:220, 403; 3:361)	neck of land (Alma 22:32)
63	a profound silence (2:20)	a profound silence (Alma 55:17)
64	hemmed in (2:62, 226)	hemmed in (Alma 22:33)
65	withdraw themselves (2:244)	withdraw themselves (3 Nephi 4:23)
66	direct course (2:259)	direct course (Alma 37:24)
67	armies which were coming against them (2:107)	his army coming against them (Alma 52:28)
68	commenced his attack (2:186) the commencement of (1:8, 9, 74, 193, 209, 217, 233, 238, 275, 298, 312; 2:iv, vi, 9, 10, 14, 41, 57, 98, 124, 151, 222, 298, 353, 432; 3:154, 201, 202, 240, 249, 250, 255, 277, 284, 295, 309, 316, 340, 347, 369, 378, 386, 393, 422, 428, 429, 431, 435, 444, 473, 485)	battle had commenced (Alma 56:49) the commencement of (1 Nephi 1:4)
69	accomplishing the designs (2:73)	accomplish his designs (Alma 47:16)
70	The active zeal of the industrious provincials completed lines of defence by the morning, which astonished the garrison (2:93)	the chief captains of the Lamanites were astonished exceedingly, because of the wisdom of the Nephites in preparing their places of security (Alma 49:5)
71	disappointments (1:111; 2:222, 300, 372) disappointed (1:63, 102, 105, 155, 401, 421; 2:115, 181, 221, 261, 265, 270, 328, 349, 387; 3:99, 138, 178, 223, 225, 232, 238, 242, 278, 368, 386) embarrassments (1:23, 43, 199, 233, 386; 2:41, 56, 70, 219, 229, 231, 289, 375, 377, 424; 3:139, 175, 435)	disappointment (Alma 49:4) disappointed (Alma 56:23) embarrassments (Alma 58:9)



**Table 2**

	<i>History of the Rise, Progress, and Termination of the American Revolution</i>	<i>Book of Mormon</i>
1	sets at defiance both human and divine laws (1:18) law set at defiance (1:145)	ye have set at defiance the commandments of God (Alma 5:18) set at defiance the law (3 Nephi 6:30)
2	a state of nature (1:19, 21, 87, 145, 227)	men that are in a state of nature (Alma 41:11)
3	a consciousness of their own guilt (1:198)	a consciousness of his own guilt (Alma 14:6)
4	to conquer or die in defence of their country (1:372)	to conquer in this place or die (Alma 56:17) defence of their country (Alma 51:20)
5	learn wisdom (3:336)	learn wisdom (2 Nephi 22:30)
6	tenderness of a parent (2:33)	tender parent (1 Nephi 8:37)
7	destruction was ripening (3:138)	ripening for destruction (Helaman 5:2)
8	multitudes flocked to the American standard (1:351)	thousands did flock unto his standard (Alma 62:5)
9	plant the British standard on our ramparts (2:182)	planted the standard of liberty (Alma 46:36)
10	that manly spirit of freedom (1:52)	a true spirit of freedom (Alma 60:25)
11	a free people (1:56, 59, 73, 113, 438; 3:77, 357) a free government (1:115; 3:82)	a free people (Alma 21:21) a free government (Alma 46:35)
12	the cause of liberty (1:41; 2:50; 3:92)	the cause of liberty (Alma 51:17)
13	voice of the people (1:31, 40, 106, 119; 3:424)	voice of the people (Alma 2:7)
14	minds of the people (1:83, 123, 157, 374, 424; 2:51; 3:318)	minds of the people (Alma 17:6)
15	their rights and privileges (1:83)	their rights and privileges (Alma 30:27)
16	the cause of freedom (2:330)	the cause of freedom (Alma 46:35)
17	cause of his country (1:307) the cause of their country (1:57) the rights of their country (1:143) the freedom of their country (3:418)	cause of his country (Alma 62:1) the cause of their country (Alma 56:11) the rights of their country (3 Nephi 6:30) the freedom of their country (Alma 59:13)

18	the rights for which our ancestors contended (3:332)	for this cause were the Nephites contending...to defend...their rights (Alma 43:47)
19	the welfare of their country (1:235)	and welfare of my country (Alma 60:36)
20	the justice of their cause (2:64) the justice of the cause (2:73)	the justice of the cause (Alma 46:29)
21	to take up arms in defence of their rights (1:164)	to take up arms in defence of their country (Alma 51:20)
22	deprive them of rights (2:212) to maintain their rights (2:222)	deprive them of their rights (Alma 2:4) to maintain their rights (Alma 51:6)
23	welfare and happiness (3:341, 359)	welfare and happiness (Helaman 12:2)
24	every man might (3:302)	every man might (Mosiah 29:34)
25	stand or fall (1:190)	stand or fall (Alma 41:7)
26	freemen (1:321, 418)	freemen (Alma 51:6)
27	class of men (1:362; 3:224, 229, 371, 386) ranks and classes (2:27)	class of people (Alma 32:2) divided into classes (4 Nephi 1:26)
28	high birth (2:30)	high birth (Alma 51:8)
29	to be supported by the labor of the poor, or the taxation (3:295)	supported in their laziness...by the taxes (Mosiah 11:6)
30	the powers of the earth (3:154)	the powers of the earth (3 Nephi 28:39)
31	the God of nature (1:136)	The God of nature (1 Nephi 19:12)
32	the great Jehovah (1:207) great spirit (1:295; 2:379; 3:50)	the great Jehovah (Moroni 10:34) Great Spirit (Alma 18:2)
33	neck of land (1:218)	neck of land (Alma 22:32)
34	narrow passage (1:266)	narrow passage (Mormon 2:29)
35	Moravian town (2:125)	Morianton (Alma 50:25)
36	the art of war (2:95)	the arts of war (Ether 13:16)
37	council of war (2:85, 401, 406; 3:13)	a council of war (Alma 52:19)
38	to carry their point (2:88)	not gain the point (Alma 46:29)
39	a full detail of their proceedings (1:65)	an account of their proceedings (Mosiah 28:9)
40	supplies of provisions (1:263, 384; 2:182)	supplies of provisions (Alma 55:34)
41	fallen into his hands (2:3) the prisoners who fell into his hands (1:350)	fallen into his hands (Alma 53:11) the prisoners who fell into his hands (Alma 52:8)

42	surrendered themselves prisoners of war (3:442)	surrendered themselves prisoners of war (Alma 57:14)
43	his whole army (2:152)	his whole army (Helaman 1:20)
44	part of his army (1:355)	with a part of his army (Alma 56:33)
45	at their head (1:64)	at their head (Alma 48:7)
46	thus reduced (1:322)	been reduced (Alma 56:10)
47	led captive (2:51)	led captive (Alma 40:13)
48	threw down their arms (2:317) laying down their arms at the feet of the victorious Washington (3:23) and laying them at the feet of the conqueror (2:39)	threw down their weapons (Alma 52:38) threw down their weapons of war at the feet of Moroni (Alma 52:38) and cast them at the feet of the Nephites (Alma 55:23)
49	lay on their arms through the night (2:23)	when the night came they slept upon their swords (Ether 15:20)
50	to strengthen the hands of general Arnold (2:360)	strengthen the hand of the Nephites (Alma 2:18)
51	the warm altercations between them (2:374) A warm, but short action (1:382)	a warm contention (Alma 50:26) a warm dispute (Alma 51:4)
52	British troops had yet met with no check (2:309)	did arrive in season to check them (Alma 57:18)
53	to harass their march (2:93)	did harass them (Alma 51:32)
54	were obliged to retreat in great confusion (1:382) were obliged to fly (1:186) fled in confusion (2:102)	were obliged to flee before them (Alma 59:8) fled in much confusion (Alma 52:28)
55	prepare to meet him (1:291)	they did prepare to meet them (Alma 2:12)
56	make an attack (2:x, 94, 219, 321)	make an attack (Alma 56:22)
57	entrenchments to be thrown up (1:192)	bank which had been thrown up (Alma 49:18)
58	chief commander (1:318)	chief commander (Alma 46:11)
59	to fall on the rear of the British (1:336) in the rear (2:129, 372)	to fall upon them in their rear (Alma 56:23) in the rear (Alma 56:23)
60	cut off their retreat (1:186) their retreat cut off (1:269)	cut off the way of their retreat (3 Nephi 4:24)
61	concealed himself in a wood, with fifteen hundred men (1:374)	part of the army of Moroni was concealed (Alma 43:34)
62	surrounded on all sides (2:172)	surrounded them on every side (Mosiah 21:5)

63	After two days wandering in the wilderness (2:8)	after many days' wandering in the wilderness (Mosiah 9:4)
64	took possession of the town (2:142) in possession of the first city in the union (1:378)	took possession of the city (Alma 51:23) in possession of the city of Zarahemla (Helaman 1:22)
65	general Montgomery...embarrassed with bad roads...and the murmur of his little army (1:263, 264)	our embarrassments (Alma 58:9) my little army (Alma 56:33) we do not desire to murmur (Alma 58:35) were this all we had suffered we would not murmur (Alma 60:4)
66	repeated disappointment (1:178; 2:266)	he met with a disappointment (Alma 51:31)
67	Dissensions ran high among the inhabitants (1:376)	dissensions among the people (Alma 51:16)
68	they determined to maintain (1:310)	they were determined to maintain (Alma 56:26)
69	unshaken firmness (1:306)	firmness unshaken (Mormon 9:28)
70	death and destruction (3:136)	death and destruction (Alma 28:14)
71	an ignominious death (3:216)	an ignominious death (Alma 1:15)
72	fought and bled (3:282)	fought and bled (Alma 60:9)
73	delight in blood (1:250)	delight in blood (Mosiah 11:19)
74	spilling human blood (1:139, 140, 153)	spill your blood (Alma 44:11) blood was spilt (Alma 57:9)
75	having received a dangerous wound (1:268) received a dangerous wound (2:69)	having received a wound (Mosiah 20:13)
76	watery grave (1:398; 3:148)	watery grave (1 Nephi 18:18)
77	dead and dreary (3:247)	dark and dreary (1 Nephi 8:4)
78	perished in the wilderness (3:313)	perished in the wilderness (1 Nephi 5:2)
79	robbed...and plundered (1:180, 368)	rob and plunder (Mosiah 10:17)
80	Among the slain (1:220, 327)	among the number who were slain (Helaman 1:30)
81	suffered much loss (3:116) great loss (2:20, 230)	suffered much loss (Alma 25:6) great loss (Alma 57:23)
82	inexpressible (1:123, 222, 253, 266; 3:28, 174, 220, 244)	inexpressible (Alma 36:14)
83	ferocious nations (1:208)	wicked and ferocious (Alma 47:36)
84	a monster (3:372)	awful monster (2 Nephi 9:10)

85	havoc (1:386; 2:52, 179, 238, 278, 290, 292, 352; 3:27, 234, 329, 330)	havoc (Helaman 11:27)
86	to glut the ambition of a weak individual (3:433)	we do not glut ourselves upon the labors of this people (Alma 30:32)
87	work of retaliation (2:188) work of carnage (3:154)	the work of death (Alma 43:37)
88	scenes of carnage (3:3) awful day of carnage (3:134)	scene of blood and carnage (Mormon 5:8)
89	In conformity to their religious principles, these Moravians patiently submitted to their hard fate, without attempting to destroy their murderers. Upwards of ninety of this pacific set were killed by men, who while they called themselves Christians, were infinitely more deserving of the name of savages than those whom they inhumanely murdered. (2:195) they, without resistance, suffered themselves to be bound and inhumanely butchered (2:125)	Now there was not one soul among all the people who had been converted unto the Lord that would take up arms against their brethren; nay, they would not even make any preparations for war (Alma 24:6)  they suffered themselves to be slain (Alma 27:3)
90	neither the pen of the historian, or the imagination of the poet, can fully describe (2:227)	impossible for the tongue to describe, or for man to write (Mormon 4:11)
91	passions whetted by revenge (2:115) But in this war, they seemed to have lost those generous feelings of compassion to the vanquished foe (2:111) suffered themselves to be governed either by vindictive passions, or their feelings of resentment (2:326)	For so exceedingly do they anger that it seemeth me that they have no fear of death; and they have lost their love, one towards another; and they thirst after blood and revenge continually (Moroni 9:5)
92	They waited long, amidst penury, hunger, and cold, for the necessary supplies (1:389)	we were about to perish for the want of food (Alma 58:7)
93	they were treated with as little mercy (2:316)	They are without order and without mercy (Moroni 9:18)
94	war among themselves (3:351)	war among themselves (1 Nephi 22:13)
95	impede their progress (2:93)	impede the progress (Alma 60:30)
96	the intrigues of the governmental faction (1:157)	the intrigues of the Lamanites (Alma 55:27)
97	combinations (1:140, 167; 3:183, 279, 292, 295, 301, 329, 345, 372, 431) combine for the destruction of America (1:157)	combinations (2 Nephi 9:9) they did combine against the people of the Lord (3 Nephi 6:29)

98	contrary to the laws of (3:316)	contrary to the laws of (Helaman 6:23)
99	while the Ganges and the Indus were reddened with the blood, and covered with the slaughtered bodies of men (2:224)	the river Sidon, throwing the bodies of the Lamanites who had been slain into the waters (Alma 2:34) who had been slain upon the bank of the river Sidon were cast into the waters (Alma 3:3)
100	Quoting a letter from a British officer in India: "The carnage was great; we trampled thick on the dead bodies that were strewed in the way" (3:241)	scene of bloodshed and carnage, that the whole face of the land was covered with the bodies of the dead (Ether 14:21) leaving the bodies of both men, women, and children strewed upon the face of the land (Ether 14:22)
101	a neighboring garrison, where a number of women and children had repaired for safety, and setting fire to both, they enjoyed the infernal pleasure of seeing them perish promiscuously in the flames (2:114)	the women and children who were consuming in the fire (Alma 14:10)
102	he compelled them...to take arms in case of an attack, against their brethren (1:243)	he commanded them that they should take up arms against their brethren (Alma 2:10)
103	precious metals (2:287)	precious metals (Helaman 6:9)
104	by my own industry (1:253)	by the hand of my industry (Alma 10:4)
105	the fruits of their labors (3:456)	the fruits of their labors (Alma 40:26)
106	the more fertile (3:264)	the more fertile (1 Nephi 16:16)
107	elegant buildings (2:220; 3:263, 435)	elegant and spacious buildings (Mosiah 11:8)
108	not far distant (1:32, 284; 2:7, 250)	not far distant (Alma 7:7)
109	the reader 1:25; 2:266; 3:267)	to the reader (Jacob 7:27)
110	we shall see (1:381, 441; 2:141, 272, 293)	we shall see (Alma 51:10)
111	future generations (3: 267, 326, 361, 423) some future day (2:160; 3: 269, 363, 394) future period (1:164; 2:126, 352; 3:369, 381)	future generations (Alma 37:19) some future day (Moroni 1:4) future period (1 Nephi 7:13)

112	in so short a time (1:296) space of time (1:395)	in so short a space of time (Alma 56:50)
113	the commencement of (2:153) the progress of (2:306)	the commencement of (Alma 51:1) the progress of (Alma 60:30)
114	at this critical conjuncture (2:3) the critical moment (3:19, 20) era was truly critical (1:376)	this was a critical time (Alma 51:9) critical circumstances (Alma 57:16)
115	awful transition (2:265) dangerous crisis (1:48; 3:424)	awful situation (Mosiah 2:40) awful crisis (Alma 34:34)
116	to shrink (1:366; 3:192)	to shrink (Alma 43:48)
117	In these circumstances (3:239)	in these circumstances (Alma 55:23)
118	genius to take advantage (3:281)	prospered according to his genius (Alma 30:17)
119	alarming (1:6, 43, 50, 54, 78, 146, 149, 182, 230, 237, 249, 361, 366, 393; 2:205, 211, 215, 233, 281, 328, 367; 3:45, 76, 184, 271, 274, 290, 293, 342, 348, 355, 356, 368, 380)	this was alarming (Alma 2:3)
120	he bade adieu (1:241) the French commander bade adieu (2:179) final adieu (3:458)	Brethren, adieu (Jacob 7:27)

**Native American DNA: undermining the *Book of Mormon* further**

Not only is there a glaring absence of archeological and linguistic evidence supporting the *Book of Mormon*, and a comparison of the “most correct” LDS volume with the Bible as well as Ramsay’s and Warren’s volumes of American history has revealed extensive plagiarizing on Joseph Smith’s part, during the past generation genetic research involving Native Americans has also totally discredited the Latter-day Saint “keystone.” In his 2004 book, *Losing a Lost Tribe: Native Americans, DNA, and the Mormon Church*, Dr. Simon Southerton, a geneticist with Australia’s Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization and a former Latter-day Saint, wrote:

The real power of DNA [genetic] lineage analysis is revealed when it is used to study human populations. If sufficient numbers of individuals are sampled from a population, the DNA lineages from a group collectively reveal a great deal of information about the ancestry of the population. The maternal and paternal DNA genealogies of Native Americans provide information of remarkable clarity and enable New

World pedigrees to be constructed that span many thousands of years. In agreement with anthropological and archeological research, the molecular pedigrees of Native Americans cluster on the Asian branch of the human family tree.<sup>60</sup>

### **The “Asian branch”**

How did Asians—not Israelites, according to the genetic record—arrive in the Western Hemisphere and begin the “cluster” of Native Americans on the “human family tree” long ago? During the past few decades, science reports, news articles, and educational television programs have answered this intriguing question. For example, a *National Geographic* report in February 2008 said:

Human settlement of the New World occurred in three separate stages and involved a 20,000-year layover on the land bridge that once connected Asia to the Americas, scientists say.

The trip was also a much larger affair than previously thought, involving about 4,500 individuals instead of the hundred or fewer previously estimated to have made the journey.

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The researchers compared differences in the DNA sequences of modern Native American and Asian populations.

“By looking at the kinds and frequencies of these mutations in modern populations, we can get an idea of when the mutations arose and how many people were around to carry them,” said study co-author Michael Miyamoto[, a medical doctor and researcher].

According to the new theory, humans heading east after leaving Asia about 40,000 years ago were blocked by two huge glaciers that met at present-day Alaska. With no way forward, the humans settled on the land bridge, called Beringia, that connected Asia and North America.

There they remained for 20,000 years. Beringia was cold and harsh, comparable to winters in modern-day Siberia. Small populations of mammoth, bison, caribou, and other animals provided sustenance for the migrants.

Over time descendants developed a unique culture—one that was different from the original migrants’ way of life in Asia but which contained seeds of the new cultures that would eventually appear throughout the Americas.



Then about 15,000 years ago the world warmed and a path through the glaciers opened up. After generations of perhaps imagining what lands might lie beyond the impassable walls of ice, the people living in Beringia moved east into North America.

One of the virtues of the new theory is that it is testable, said David Meltzer, an archaeologist at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas...

Rising seas submerged much of Beringia about 10,000 years ago.<sup>61</sup>

How did “the land bridge that once connected Asia to the Americas” appear? A *ScienceNOW* article published in April 2012 provided the answer:

As the ice sheets that covered North America and northern Eurasia snatched up more and more of Earth’s water [during the last Ice Age], [the] global sea level dropped to about 50 meters lower than it is today. That exposed a broad strip of land that connected what is today Alaska and Siberia. Ancient animals used the land bridge, which measured as much as 1500 kilometers wide in spots, to roam back and forth between Asia and North America, and many researchers have proposed that early humans used the dry land as a route to the New World.<sup>62</sup>

The most recent North American glaciation occurred during the latter part of the Wisconsin Stage 13,000 to 26,000 years ago, when ice sheets were more than a mile thick!<sup>63</sup>

### **Pre-Clovis Paleo-Indians**

In 1999, the Smithsonian Institution published an article about ancient Native Americans (Paleo-Indians); the following are excerpts:

Recent discoveries in New World archaeology along with new scientific methods for analyzing data have led to new ideas regarding the origin of the first peoples of the Americas and their time of arrival.

The traditional theory held that the first Americans crossed the land bridge from Siberia to Alaska around 11,500 years ago and followed an “ice-free corridor” between two large Canadian ice sheets (the Laurentide and Cordilleran) to reach unglaciated lands to the south. These first inhabitants, whose archaeological sites are scattered across North and South America, were called the Clovis people, named after

the town in New Mexico where their fluted spear points used for hunting mammoth were first found in 1932.

There is now convincing evidence of human habitation sites that date earlier than the Clovis culture including sites located in South America. Monte Verde, a well-studied site located along a river near southern central Chile, dates 12,500 years ago. This site contains the buried remnants of dwellings, stone tools including large bifacial projectile points, and preserved medicinal and edible plants. How did people manage to settle this far south at such an early date? A coastal migration route is now gaining more acceptance...

Emerging evidence suggests that people with boats moved along the Pacific coast into Alaska and northwestern Canada and eventually south to Peru and Chile by 12,500 years ago—and perhaps much earlier. Archaeological evidence in Australia, Melanesia, and Japan indicate boats were in use as far back as 25,000 to 40,000 years ago. Sea routes would have provided abundant food resources and easier and faster movement than land routes. Many coastal areas were unglaciated at this time, providing opportunities for landfall along the way. Several early sites along the coast of Canada, California, Peru, Ecuador, and Chile date between 10,000 and 12,000 years ago.

Evidence for diverse migrations into the New World also comes from Mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) research on living American Indian populations. These studies have consistently shown similarities between American Indians and recent populations in Asia and Siberia, but also unique American characteristics, which the very early crania have also shown. Evidence for only four mtDNA lineages, characterizing over 95 percent of all modern American Indian populations, may suggest a limited number of founding groups migrating from Asia into the New World.

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Studies of the native languages of the Americas have shown them to be extremely diverse, representing nearly two hundred distinct families, some consisting of a single isolated language. Further research is expected to reduce this number, but the degree of diversity is thought to have required tens of millennia to develop through a combination of immigration into the New World and diversification through the accumulation of normal linguistic changes through time. Claims that these languages descend from only three (or even fewer) separate linguistic stocks at a time depth of only a dozen millennia are regarded by most specialists as extremely unlikely. Newer proposals have explored deep structural affinities among American Indian languages with circum-Pacific Old World languages.<sup>64</sup>

The *National Geographic* report, Smithsonian Institution article, and other published scientific findings are very significant because they indicate that the ancestors of Native Americans came from northeast Asia and not ancient Israel, and the Asians arrived in the Western Hemisphere thousands of years before the start of the *Book of Mormon*. Why is that fact also important? Because the LDS scriptural volume says in the first chapter of 2 Nephi:

And behold, it is wisdom that this land [the Western Hemisphere] should be kept as yet from the knowledge of other nations; for behold, many nations would overrun the land, that there would be no place for an inheritance.<sup>65</sup>

Scientists have discovered much evidence in the Americas that has proven that Mormonism's "keystone" is not what Smith claimed and the LDS Church has indoctrinated millions of people to believe since the 1830s. Scores of facts have exposed the *Book of Mormon* as an early-nineteenth-century fictional literary work, not compiled and "translated" ancient New World history. Indirectly, scientific research has also revealed that Smith repeatedly lied about his religion's foundational volume of scripture and his involvement in its creation. Contrary to Latter-day Saint teachings, there was no angel Nephi (a.k.a. Moroni) or stone box buried in the Hill Cumorah containing ancient golden plates, a breastplate, silver bows, or "interpreters" ("seer stones").

### **The con man is conned**

The story of Joseph Smith and his Mormon religion would be incomplete without recounting another "faith"-deflating episode of Latter-day Saint history that the LDS Church does not mention to its members or investigators: the Kinderhook Plates deception. In April 1843, one Robert Wiley and other diggers were excavating an Indian burial mound near Kinderhook, Illinois when they encountered six small, bell-shaped pieces of brass engraved with strange characters. The buried objects were subsequently taken to the Mormon "prophet" to see if he could translate them. According to the church's official history, Smith declared the following about the unusual plates:

I have translated a portion of them, and find they contain the history of the person with whom they were found. He was a descendant of Ham, through the loins of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and that he received his kingdom from the Ruler of heaven and earth.<sup>66</sup>

A month before Smith was killed, the *Warsaw Signal*, a newspaper in western Illinois, reported that the Latter-day Saint leader was "busy in translating them [the Kinderhook Plates]. The new work...will be nothing more nor less than a sequel to the Book of Mormon."<sup>67</sup> In 1909, LDS General Authority B. H. Roberts stated that the unearthed objects "bear important

testimony to the fact that the ancient Americans did engrave records on metallic plates.”<sup>68</sup> Eleven years later, the Chicago Historical Society (later called the Chicago History Museum) acquired one of the brass plates.

In its September 1962 *Improvement Era* magazine, the LDS Church published an article by Welby Ricks, BYU Archaeological Society president, who declared the plates to be genuine. Ricks, a Latter-day Saint, proudly announced that Smith “stands as a true prophet and translator of ancient records by divine means and all the world is invited to investigate the truth which has sprung out of the earth not only of the Kinderhook plates, but of the Book of Mormon as well.”<sup>69</sup>

Nearly two decades later, the church’s August 1981 *Ensign* magazine quoted a letter by Mormon apostle Parley P. Pratt, who wrote the following to a friend in May 1843:

Six plates having the appearance of Brass have lately been dug out of the mound by a gentleman in Pike Co.[,] Illinois. They are small and filled with engravings in Egyptian language and contain the genealogy of one of the ancient Jaredite[s] back to Ham[, ] the son of Noah.<sup>70</sup>

The brass plates were, in fact, forgeries created in 1843 to expose Smith as a charlatan. One of the conspirators who worked with Wiley on the con, Wilbur Fugate, admitted to it in his 1879 letter addressed to a Mr. James T. Cobb. The following are excerpts from his correspondence:

I received your letter in regard to those plates, and will say in answer that they are a HUMBBUG, gotten up by Robert Wiley, Bridge Whitton and myself. Whitton is dead. I do not know whether Wiley is or not. None of the nine persons who signed the certificate knew the secret, except Wiley and I. We read in Pratt’s prophecy that “Truth is yet to spring up out of the earth.” We concluded to prove the prophecy by way of a joke. We soon made our plans and executed them, Bridge Whitton cut them (the plates)...Wiley and I made the hieroglyphics by making impressions on beeswax and filling them with acid and putting it on the plates. When they were finished we put them together with rust made of nitric acid, old iron and lead, and bound them with a piece of hoop iron, covering them completely with the rust. Our plans worked admirably. A certain Sunday was appointed for digging. The night before, Wiley went to the Mound where he had previously dug to the depth of about eight feet, there being a flat rock that sounded hollow beneath, and put them under it. On the following morning quite a number of citizens were there to assist in the search, there being two Mormon elders present (Marsh and Sharp). The rock was soon removed, but some time elapsed before the plates were discovered. I finally picked them up and exclaimed, “A piece of pot metal!”...

Dr. Harris examined them and said they had hieroglyphics on them. He took acid and removed the rust and they were soon out on exhibition. Under this rock [that] was dome-like in appearance, about three feet in diameter, there were a few bones in the last stage of decomposition, also a few pieces of pottery and charcoal...

Sharp, the Mormon Elder, leaped and shouted for joy and said, Satan had appeared to him and told him not to go (to the diggings), it was a hoax of Fugate and Wiley's, -- but at a later hour the Lord appeared and told him to go, [because] the treasure was there.

The Mormons wanted to take the plates to Joe Smith, but we refused to let them go. Some time afterward a man assuming the name of Savage, of Quincy, borrowed the plates of Wiley to show to his literary friends there, and took them to Joe Smith. The same identical plates were returned to Wiley, who gave them to Professor McDowell, of St. Louis, for his Museum.

#### W. FUGATE<sup>71</sup>

In 1980, Professor D. Lynn Johnson of Northwestern University's Department of Materials Science and Engineering examined the Chicago History Museum's Kinderhook brass plate. Using microscopy and scanning instruments, he determined that the thin, shaped metal was of a composition and cutting tolerances consistent with blacksmith shops of the early-to-mid-1800s. He also discovered traces of nitrogen in the engravings and determined that they had indeed been made with nitric acid, as described by Fugate in his 1879 letter. A digital version of a photograph of the plate examined by Prof. Johnson is online as are facsimiles made by Mormon apostles John Taylor and Wilford Woodruff of the etchings.<sup>72</sup>

Unlike suckered converts to Mormonism, Smith was not out of pocket due to the "HUMBUG" of Wiley, Fugate, and their associate, Bridge Whitten. Their clever hoax provided additional proof that Smith no more possessed a spiritual "power of discernment" than he had a God-given ability to translate "reformed Egyptian characters" on ancient American golden plates, or hieroglyphs on papyri from Egypt that he acquired in 1835.

#### **The demolished Mormon "keystone"**

The Kinderhook Plates deception, anthropological work involving Native Americans done by researchers, B. H. Roberts' writings about *Book of Mormon* anachronisms and other problems, plagiarisms in the LDS volume of scripture, and many other facts have effectively destroyed Mormonism's "keystone" in terms of it being a compiled "history of ancient America," as Smith duplicitously asserted. During the past generation, the science of genetics alone has

exposed the *Book of Mormon* as the work of a “smouching” fabulist who laced tales of fictitious pre-Columbian Americans of Mesopotamian and Israelite ancestry with Christian concepts such as sin, forgiveness, and baptism. A resurrected, visiting Jesus was added to the literary mix to further Christian-ize the Latter-day Saint volume. Who created the *Book of Mormon*? Using scribes, Joseph Smith, the practiced deceiver and talented storyteller, fits the profile.

Ironically, the “most correct of any book on earth” has undergone in excess of 3,900 changes since 1830 to set right its many mistakes and make it more readable.<sup>73</sup> How disheartening for Latter-day Saints, given that the volume supposedly was the product of a “miraculous method of translation,” again quoting Mormon apostle Russell Nelson! Apparently, God made thousands of errors via the “seer stone” and mystical, parchment-like apparition in Smith’s hat, mere inches from his face.

### **Another “revelation” from Smith’s peep/seer stone**

The final section of this chapter involves another strange episode of Mormon history that the LDS Church does not disclose to potential converts or its members: Joseph Smith sending two of his church associates to Canada in 1830 to sell the *Book of Mormon* copyright. Doing so was evidence of how important the supposed “second witness of Jesus Christ” truly was to the Latter-day Saint movement’s founder. David Whitmer, one of Smith’s associates and ecclesiastical subordinates, wrote about the situation:

When the Book of Mormon was in the hands of the printer, more money was needed to finish the printing of it. We were waiting on Martin Harris who was doing his best to sell a part of his farm, in order to raise the necessary funds. After a time Hyrum Smith and others began to get impatient, thinking that Martin Harris was too slow and under transgression for not selling his land at once, even if at a great sacrifice. Brother Hyrum thought they should not wait any longer on Martin Harris, and that the money should be raised in some other way. Brother Hyrum was vexed with Brother Martin, and thought they should get the money by some means outside of him, and not let him have anything to do with the publication of the Book, or receiving any of the profits thereof if any profits should accrue...

Brother Hyrum said it had been suggested to him that some of the brethren might go to Toronto[,] Canada, and sell the copy-right of the Book of Mormon for considerable money: and he persuaded Joseph to inquire of the Lord about it. Joseph concluded to do so. He had not yet given up the stone. Joseph looked into the hat in which he placed the stone, and received a revelation that some of the brethren should go to Toronto, Canada, and that they would sell the copy-right of the Book of Mormon. Hiram Page and Oliver Cowdery went to Toronto

on this mission, but they failed entirely to sell the copy-right, returning without any money. Joseph was at my father's house when they returned. I was there also, and am an eye witness to these facts...

Well, we were all in great trouble, and we asked Joseph how it was that he had received a revelation from the Lord for some brethren to go to Toronto and sell the copy-right, and the brethren had utterly failed in their undertaking. Joseph did not know how it was, so he enquired of the Lord about it, and behold the following revelation came through the stone: "Some revelations are of God: some revelations are of man: and some revelations are of the devil." So we see that the revelation to go to Toronto and sell the copy-right was not of God, but was of the devil or the heart of man.<sup>74</sup>

Smith was convinced that selling the *Book of Mormon* copyright would fetch as much as \$8,000, "a handsome sum," quoting Page.<sup>75</sup> Not surprisingly, instead of accepting responsibility for sending Hiram and Oliver to Toronto on a fruitless mission, Mormonism's "Glass Looker" provided his naïve followers with a fault-deflecting "answer" as to why the trip failed.

Interestingly, if Page and Cowdery had been successful in Canada the crucial "keystone" of the Latter-day Saint religion might have ended up being appropriately re-named and sold as *The Book of Mormon – A Novel*.

Chapter 6  
Premortal Existence, the Swede's Three Heavens, and Wicked  
Outer Darkness

**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.**

**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 with our Father in heaven.**

**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. – Joseph Smith, Jr. speaking to Latter-day Saints in April 1844.**

A key reason why thousands of people joined Smith's religious movement during the 1830s and early 1840s was that he formulated and taught theologically novel and bold ideas and had the audacity to assert that they were divine in origin. For example, nearly three months before his death in June 1844 he gave an address at the funeral of a church elder named King Follett that



lasted two and a quarter hours. During his speech, Mormonism's charismatic creator expounded on seemingly spiritual topics, including what he believed was the fundamentally supernatural nature of physical reality, the character and essentiality of God, and Mormons' potential to become deities after death, a notion blasphemous to Christians and other religionists. His address is known in the LDS Church as the King Follett discourse.<sup>1</sup>

One of the more unusual ideas that had brewed in Smith's mind that he presented as spiritual truth during his funeral talk was that individual intelligence—a person's faculty of understanding—had always existed. According to his unorthodox religious philosophy, "intelligences" are more elementary than "spirits" and could not be created or destroyed. This chapter begins with a discussion about the Mormon concept of mystical, disembodied entities and continues with information about other unusual Latter-day Saint ideas. This material will help the reader comprehend why roughly half of surveyed Americans thought that Latter-day Saints had "weird beliefs," again quoting Mormon apostle Dallin Oaks during his speech at the Harvard Law School in early 2010 (mentioned in Chapter 2).

### **Immortal intelligences**

The Book of Abraham—part of a "translation" of ancient Egyptian papyri by Joseph Smith, according to him and the Mormon Church since his death—in the LDS *Pearl of Great Price* contains the following verses about eternal "intelligences":

If two things exist, and there be one above the other, there shall be greater things above them; therefore Kolob is the greatest of all the Kokaubeam [the universe's stars] that thou [Abraham, a prominent Biblical patriarch] hast seen, because it is nearest unto me [Mormonism's Jesus, communicating as Jehovah, an unborn intelligence-spirit].

Now, if there be two things, one above the other, and the moon be above the earth, then it may be that a planet or a star may exist above it; and there is nothing that the Lord thy God shall take in his heart to do but what he will do it.

Howbeit that he made the greater star; as, also, if there be two spirits, and one shall be more intelligent than the other, yet these two spirits, notwithstanding one is more intelligent than the other, have no beginning; they existed before, they shall have no end, they shall exist after, for they are gnolaum, or eternal.

And the Lord said unto me [Abraham]: These two facts do exist, that there are two spirits, one being more intelligent than the other; there

shall be another more intelligent than they; I am the Lord thy God, I am more intelligent than they all.<sup>2</sup>

I [premortal Jesus/Jehovah] dwell in the midst of them all [intelligences]; I now, therefore, have come down unto thee [Abraham on earth] to declare unto thee the works which my [spirit] hands have made, wherein my wisdom excelleth them all, for I rule in the heavens above, and in the earth beneath, in all wisdom and prudence, over all the intelligences thine eyes have seen from the beginning; I came down in the beginning in the midst of all the intelligences thou hast seen.

Now the Lord had shown unto me, Abraham, the intelligences that were organized before the world was; and among all these there were many of the noble and great ones;

And God saw these souls that they were good, and he stood in the midst of them, and he said: These I will make my rulers; for he stood among those that were spirits, and he saw that they were good; and he said unto me: Abraham, thou art one of them; thou wast chosen before thou wast born.<sup>3</sup>

To summarize, Mormonism includes the following concepts:

1. Every person who has lived or will live, was, is, and forever will be an intelligence, fundamentally.
2. Because they are “gnolaum, or eternal,” intelligences cannot be created or destroyed.
3. Through some mysterious act of spiritual procreation (celestial sex?), Heavenly Father and his wives created tens of billions of spirit children eons ago. Each was an eternal intelligence mystically fused to a pro-created spirit body, which has an appearance similar to each person's physical body.
4. Spirits of humans and non-human life forms animate their physical bodies.
5. Abraham and other “noble and great” leaders (e.g., certain Biblical religious characters, Joseph Smith, other Mormon “prophets”) were chosen by God before they were born for their respective “missions” on earth as incarnated intelligences-spirits.

Notably, Smith's assertion that he translated “ancient Records that have fallen into our hands from the catacombs of Egypt”—“the writings of Abraham while he was in Egypt, called the Book of Abraham, written by his own hand, upon papyrus”<sup>4</sup>—was shown in the 1960s to be a lie. The ancient, hieroglyphical material was in fact common Egyptian funerary text dating to the first century B.C., more than two millennia after the Old Testament patriarch is thought to have lived.<sup>5</sup>

Returning to the Latter-day Saint concept of intelligences-spirits—“noble and great” ones plus less impressive beings without physical bodies—the reader might be wondering where we all existed before incarnating on this planet, according to Mormonism. The answer is the “pre-mortal existence,” or “pre-earth life.” The following diagram of the LDS “Plan of Salvation” shows representations of the fantastical abode before our birth as well as other Mormon-imagined states of existence throughout eternity:



Each of these aspects of the Latter-day Saint religion will now be explained.

### The premortal existence

LDS material says that the premortal existence was “our life before we were born on this earth.”<sup>6</sup> In that Mormon state of consciousness/being, “we lived in the presence of our Heavenly Father as His spirit children. We did not have physical bodies.”<sup>7</sup> Mormonism’s also includes the following notions:

We [as intelligences-spirits] wanted to prove our worthiness [as mortals] to become like our Heavenly Father, and we were anxious to receive a physical body and to enter a time of [obedience] testing.

So[,] Heavenly Father called a great council. We went to a meeting of the spirit children of God. All the noble and great ones who would live on the earth were there—future prophets, Apostles, presidents, mothers and fathers, and all those who would come to earth in the last days to teach the gospel [i.e., Mormonism] to the people of the world.<sup>8</sup>

How many “spirit children” attended Mormonism’s premortal “great council”? More than 170 billion, which vastly exceeds the world’s current population of 7.3 billion. According to LDS doctrine, attendees consisted of:

1. All the intelligences-spirits who would incarnate on earth. According to Carl Haub, a senior visiting scholar at the Population Reference Bureau in Washington, D.C., there were about 108 billion people from the dawn of human history to 2011.<sup>9</sup> Add to that number eight billion humans between 2012 and 2100, according to a 2011 United Nations report,<sup>10</sup> plus unknown billions of people after 2100, assuming that humankind does not destroy itself this century or some cataclysmic event such as a large asteroid impact does not extinguish all human life.
2. The LDS Church's reckoning of "one-third of the host of heaven" who were not permitted by God to incarnate because they were not in favor of the "great plan of happiness" presented at the council, and rebelled.<sup>11</sup>

### **Satan, our spirit brother?**

Latter-day Saint theology includes the outlandish—and offensive to many people—concept that all humans are related to Satan/the Devil. Material on lds.org explains this Mormon "truth":

In harmony with the plan of happiness, the premortal Jesus Christ [Jehovah], the Firstborn Son of the Father in the spirit, covenanted to be the Savior... Those who followed Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ were permitted to come to the earth to experience mortality and progress toward eternal life. Lucifer, another spirit son of God, rebelled against the plan and "sought to destroy the agency of man"... He became Satan, and he and his followers were cast out of heaven and denied the privileges of receiving a physical body and experiencing mortality.<sup>12</sup>

LDS General Authorities have called Lucifer/Satan "the father of lies and lust," "the great Deceiver," "the very author and perpetrator of deceit," and the intelligence-spirit who "in effect would invite us to join him in his snipe hunt, to fill our bags with excitement, fun, popularity, and the so-called 'good life.'"<sup>13</sup> (A snipe is a type of wading bird in the family *Scolopacidae* with crypsis plumage and a long, slender bill.)

Mormonism blames Lucifer/Satan/the Devil for a lot of trouble and unhappiness, including persuading many billions of intelligences-spirits to rebel against the religion's version of God during the mysterious pre-earth life. How many unborn beings allegedly allied themselves with "the great Deceiver"? Latter-day Saint apostle Joseph Wirthlin explained in 1993:

One-third of the host of heaven followed Lucifer, separating themselves from the presence of God and from the two-thirds who followed the Son of God [Jesus/Jehovah]... This division has persisted throughout the history of mankind and will continue until the day of judgment when Jesus comes again in His glory.<sup>14</sup>

If Mormon theology is correct, in excess of fifty-seven billion intelligences-spirits “followed Lucifer.” What happened to them during the premortal existence? Wirthlin’s apostolic colleague, David Haight, told church members in October 1986:

When Satan was cast down to earth with his innumerable hosts, he became “the father of all lies, to deceive and to blind men, and to lead them captive.”<sup>15</sup>

Four and a half years earlier, apostle Bruce McConkie reminded Latter-day Saints that “one-third of the hosts of heaven were cast down to earth by the power of the priesthood.”<sup>16</sup> Lucifer/Satan/the Devil has always been the ultimate bad guy in Mormonism. For example, in 2010 LDS apostle Russell Ballard said in his General Conference sermon, which was darkly titled “O That Cunning Plan of the Evil One”:

Right from the very beginning in the great Council in Heaven, Satan “sought to destroy the agency of man, which I, the Lord God, had given him.”

The battle over man’s God-given agency continues today. Satan and his minions have their lures all around us, hoping that we will falter and take his flies so he can reel us in with counterfeit means.

Satan knows how to exploit and ensnare us with artificial substances and behaviors of temporary pleasure.<sup>17</sup>

Ballard’s list of “flies” used by “Satan and his minions” to “reel us in” includes drinking alcoholic beverages, taking prescription drugs such as painkillers or tranquilizers, playing video games, and texting.

### **Spiritual combat**

Information in this book about the Latter-day Saint concept of a premortal existence would be incomplete without mentioning two more key aspects of Mormonism:

1. The war in heaven.
2. Intelligences-spirits being born to certain parents and in certain nations according to their “valiancy” in the pre-earth life.

Latter-day Saint theology includes the notion that a colossal supernatural war occurred eons ago, a mystical conflict that nobody remembers. On lds.org, there are more than 178 instances of “war in heaven,” an indication of how seriously Mormons regard the envisaged battle. The LDS Church’s summary for the twelfth chapter of the Book of Revelation in the Bible says:

John [one of the original Christian apostles] sees the imminent apostasy of the Church—He also sees the War in Heaven in the beginning when Satan was cast out—He sees the continuation of that war on earth.<sup>18</sup>

LDS apostle Quentin Cook told church members in October 2009:

The War in Heaven was fought after Satan said that he would force everyone to obey his ideas. That was rejected [by “two-thirds” of “the host of heaven”]. As a result, we have our moral agency and the freedom to choose our course in this life.<sup>19</sup>

What kind of mystical weaponry was used during the so-called “War in Heaven”? Lightning coming out of the spirit-fingertips of premortal combatants, similar to the blue bolts of plasma energy from the hands of the fictitious Emperor Palpatine in *Star Wars*? No LDS leader has provided an answer, not even Mormonism’s masterful fabricator of captivating tales, Joseph Smith.

### **Premortal “valiancy”**

As mentioned in the second chapter, the LDS religion stipulates that “obedience is the first law of heaven,” a concept regarded by Latter-day Saints as a core “truth” applicable not only during the premortal existence, but also later on earth. Church members have been taught that being born in a country where the Mormon organization operates, particularly the United States, and having stalwart LDS parents—and not being black—have all been blessings from God. For what? Their pre-earth zeal for Heavenly Father’s “great plan of happiness” and their performance during the unique-to-Mormonism “War in Heaven.” According to the religion, the most valiant intelligences-spirits were “blessed” by being born into homes of faithful Latter-day Saints, while those who were less zealous ended up incarnating as “a Chinese...or a person of any other dark race,” quoting LDS apostle Mark Petersen. In August 1954, he told church instructors at a conference:

Is there reason then why the type of birth we receive in this life is not a reflection of our worthiness or lack of it in the pre-existent life?...can we account in any other way for the birth of some of the children of God in darkest Africa, or in flood-ridden China, or among the starving hordes of India, while some of the rest of us are born here in the United States? We cannot escape the conclusion that because of [our] performance in our pre-existence some of us are born as Chinese, some as Japanese, some as Latter-day Saints. These are rewards and punishments, fully in harmony with His [God’s] established policy in dealing with sinners and saints, rewarding all according to their deeds...

Let us consider the great mercy of God for a moment. A Chinese, born in China with a dark skin, and with all the handicaps of that race seems to have little opportunity. But think of the mercy of God to Chinese people who are willing to accept the gospel [Mormonism]. In spite of whatever they might have done in the pre-existence to justify being born over there as Chinamen, if they now, in this life, accept the gospel and live it the rest of their lives they can have the Priesthood, go to the [LDS] temple and receive endowments and sealings [Latter-day Saint rituals], and that means they can have exaltation. Isn't the mercy of God marvelous?

Think of the Negro, cursed as to the priesthood... This Negro, who, in the pre-existence lived the type of life which justified the Lord in sending him to the earth in the lineage of Cain with a black skin, and possibly being born in darkest Africa—if that Negro is willing when he hears the gospel to accept it, he may have many of the blessings of the gospel. In spite of all he did in the pre-existent life, the Lord is willing, if the Negro accepts the gospel with real, sincere faith, and is really converted, to give him the blessings of baptism [in the LDS Church] and the gift of the Holy Ghost. If that Negro is faithful all his days, he can and will enter the celestial kingdom. He will go there as a servant, but he will get celestial glory.<sup>20</sup>

The next chapter contains more information about Mormon doctrines and teachings relative to blacks.

### **Foreordination**

Mormonism includes the idea that “[i]n the premortal spirit world, God appointed certain spirits to fulfill specific missions during their mortal lives. This is called foreordination... The doctrine of foreordination applies to all members of the Church.”<sup>21</sup> As a result of being indoctrinated in this concept, Latter-day Saints interpret major aspects of their lives—church membership, doing missionary work in a particular country, being married in a Mormon temple, having children and raising them in the LDS religion, performing certain church functions, and more—as “foreordained.” A related church lesson informs the instructor that their purpose is:

To help class members understand the doctrine of foreordination and their own responsibility to help build up the kingdom of God [the LDS Church] and bring souls to [Mormonism's version of Jesus] Christ.<sup>22</sup>

The lesson also tells the teacher to “[e]xplain that in 1918, President Joseph F. Smith saw some of these ‘noble and great ones’ in a vision of the [premortal] spirit world.”<sup>23</sup> Notably, fourteen years earlier, this same senior

Mormon leader—the church's sixth president—appeared before a U.S. Senate investigative committee, where he was confronted about his violations of state law (see Chapter 10 for details).

In the late twentieth century, church president Ezra Benson told teenage and young adult Latter-day Saints:

God has held you in reserve [in the pre-earth life] to make your appearance in the final days before the second coming of the Lord. Some individuals will fall away; but the kingdom of God will remain intact to welcome the return of its head—even Jesus Christ. While our generation will be comparable in wickedness to the days of Noah, when the Lord cleansed the earth by flood, there is a major difference this time. It is that God has saved for the final inning some of His strongest [premortal spirit] children, who will help bear off the kingdom triumphantly.<sup>24</sup>

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Each day the forces of evil and the forces of good enlist new recruits. Each day we personally make many decisions showing the cause we support. The final outcome is certain—the forces of righteousness will win. But what remains to be seen is where each of us personally, now and in the future, will stand in this battle—and how tall we will stand. Will we be true to our last days and fulfill our foreordained missions?<sup>25</sup>

### **The Veil of Forgetfulness**

Why can't anyone recall the premortal existence, their life before being "born on this earth," according to LDS theology, with Mormonism's waiting-to-incarnate Jehovah/Jesus as well as tens of billions of other intelligences-spirits? A "veil of forgetfulness" supernaturally covering our minds is the convenient Latter-day Saint answer. In April 2012, Mormon Church president Thomas Monson mentioned the fantastical cognitive curtain during his General Conference sermon:

How grateful we should be that a wise Creator fashioned an earth and placed us here, with a veil of forgetfulness of our previous existence so that we might experience a time of testing, an opportunity to prove ourselves in order to qualify for all that God has prepared for us to receive.<sup>26</sup>

What is the "all" that the supreme Mormon deity "has prepared for mortals to receive"? After death, "exaltation" in the Celestial Kingdom near Kolob, meaning godliness forever, including "eternal increase." Explained another way, according to LDS doctrine "exalted" Mormon husbands will each use their Melchizedek "priesthood power" to manufacture and manage a universe, and with their resurrected goddess wives, will create tens of billions



of spirit children, just like Elohim/Heavenly Father did eons ago. Dead people who convert to Mormonism while in “spirit prison,” a concept elaborated on later, and remain faithful to the religion can also become deities.

**“Mortal probation”**

The LDS Church teaches that the time of incarnated intelligences-spirits on earth—their “mortal probation”—is a “brief period, just a short span linking the eternity past with the eternity future. Yet it [is] a period of tremendous importance... This life is the most vital period in our eternal existence.”<sup>27</sup> What do people have to do while alive to qualify for “celestial glory” after death, according to Mormonism? The following:

1. Convert to the LDS religion, regardless of one’s current spiritual belief system, if any.
2. Be baptized and confirmed (i.e., receive “the gift of the Holy Ghost”) as a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.
3. Regularly attend Mormon religious services (weekly) and conferences (at least four times per year) as well as meetings (weekly, monthly, etc.) associated with assigned church work (known as “callings”).
4. Regularly pay “tithes and offerings” to the LDS Church. In the multi-billion-dollar organization, “tithing” means one-tenth of all money gifts, allowance for children, inheritances, and sources of income (e.g., wages, salary, positive returns on investment(s), pension(s), profits from selling crops, produce and/or livestock if one has an agricultural business). Offerings are payments on top of tithing to various church funds (e.g., Book of Mormon, missionary, humanitarian).
5. Participate in an annual “tithing settlement” meeting with the local senior priesthood leader (bishop or branch president) to declare whether one pays a “full tithe” or not. Members who have not paid tithing are told to make up for missed payments and pay diligently in the future, even if there is not enough money to cover basic household expenses. The LDS Church has a welfare system, but Latter-day Saints have been instructed to use it only as a last resort. They are to first obtain money from people they know, particularly family members and relatives, before seeking assistance from the church, and are required to do assigned work if they use the organization’s welfare system.
6. Read LDS scriptures—the *Book of Mormon*, *Doctrine and Covenants*, and *Pearl of Great Price*—regularly (daily is the church’s teaching, rotating between the volumes). Members are also instructed to read the Bible, weekly church lessons, and monthly official Latter-day Saint periodicals.

7. Regularly pray (morning and evening individually and as a family, and before each meal, at the beginning and end of each religious service, during conferences and meetings, etc.).
8. Participate in fasting, which means abstaining once a month from food and drink for twenty-four hours, unless health reasons preclude full compliance. Also, Latter-day Saints who have committed serious “sins,” such as fantasizing about sex, masturbating, necking on a date, or “worse” are to “fast” during the requisite, guilt-ridden repentance process, which involves spending many hours pleading in prayer to Mormonism’s invisible Heavenly Father for his forgiveness.
9. Accept one or more callings and fulfill all associated responsibilities, which can and does place heavy demands on Mormons’ time. While the LDS Church does not financially compensate lay members for their church work, its “prophets, seers, and revelators” reportedly receive \$1 million each to take care of their financial concerns.<sup>28</sup> Rank-and-file Latter-day Saints are not allowed to know what the church’s senior patriarchal leaders pay themselves out of the organization’s funds.
10. Participate in church-sanctioned projects such as laboring on local church farms and cleaning chapels and temples (again, without being paid).
11. Assist other members (e.g., with moving, yardwork) and visit them in their homes monthly to share church messages and inquire about their well-being, why they were not at church (if applicable), and other aspects of their lives.
12. Participate in weekly Family Home Evening lessons and activities. An article by church president Gordon Hinckley in March 2003 said: “[The Lord] expects us to have family home evening—one night a week to gather our children together and teach them the gospel [Mormonism].”<sup>29</sup>
13. Comply with the Word of Wisdom, the church’s health code that prohibits drinking alcoholic beverages and coffee and tea, smoking or chewing tobacco, and using marijuana and other recreational drugs. This aspect of Mormonism also includes not consuming cola sodas and caffeinated high-energy drinks.
14. Comply in thought, word, and deed with the LDS Church’s strict code of sexual conduct, i.e., always be “morally clean” and “sexually pure.” Mormons are not to think sexy thoughts, flirt, use sexual innuendo in conversations, listen to or tell racy jokes, read erotica, view porn (even soft-core material is considered “spiritually filthy”), or otherwise explore and express their sexuality in any unauthorized and “unholy” way. Physical intimacy in marriage is acceptable and encouraged, particularly

for procreation. LDS apostle McConkie wrote (italicized text is his): “*Sex immorality is made up of offenses against God of all kinds and degrees. All are evil and damning in their nature, with some, however, being much more so than others. Virtue may be lost by degrees; and chastity may be destroyed a step at a time.* Immodesty, necking, and petting, themselves a form of sex immorality, frequently lead to much grosser offenses. Every degree and type of lewdness, lasciviousness, and licentiousness; of concupiscence, prostitution, and whoredoms; of sodomy, onanism [ejaculation outside a woman’s vagina], and homosexuality; of masturbation, incontinence, and perversion; of rape, seduction, and infidelity; of adultery, fornication, and uncleanness – all these things, as well as many others, are condemned by divine edict and are among Lucifer’s chief means of leading souls to hell.”<sup>30</sup>

15. Participate in annual “worthiness” interviews with church leaders, who inquire about members’ support for the organization’s senior priesthood leadership in Utah, “moral cleanliness,” tithing, non-involvement with “apostates” (former Mormons), and other areas of obedience.
16. Go as often as possible to an LDS temple (several are in operation or being built worldwide – see Chapter 10 for details) and participate in the ritualistic ceremonies (called “ordinances”) performed inside for oneself during the first visit and subsequently for people who have died. Details about Mormon temple concepts and activities are also in Chapter 10.
17. Conduct genealogical research in relation to one’s ancestors going back at least four generations and submit their names and personal information (e.g., date and place of birth, marriage, and death) to the LDS Church so that vicarious rituals can be performed in Mormon temples by living Latter-day Saints on behalf of the deceased (the practice is called “work for the dead”<sup>31</sup>).
18. Children raised in Mormonism are to participate in the church’s four-year Seminary program during their high school years. In many communities, compliance involves nearly an hour of religious indoctrination each morning before school, Monday to Friday; otherwise, weekly Seminary classes are held. If extracurricular activities (e.g., sporting activities, band practices, school clubs) interfere with Seminary, Mormon youth are to not participate in them, focusing on LDS weekly religious studies instead.
19. Young Mormon males are to work and save money so they can perform a two-year, unpaid proselyting mission for the church upon reaching eighteen years of age. Full-time missionary work for females and retired couples is optional.

20. Do everything that “the Brethren”—the fifteen apostles who comprise the Mormon Church’s senior leadership—particularly the organization’s president, say is the “will of the Lord.”<sup>32</sup> This has included having polygamous spouses, participating in acts of simulated violence during the main temple ceremony called the “endowment,” and discriminating against black Latter-day Saints in accordance with church policies.
21. Obey all of God’s commandments, which Mormon “prophets,” starting with Joseph Smith, have defined, and “endure to the end”<sup>33</sup> as obedient, sacrificing, and uncomplaining church members.

### **Become “perfect” and earn “exaltation”**

To experience “celestial glory” forever with Mormonism’s Heavenly Father, Jesus Christ and other resurrected beings such as Joseph Smith, Latter-day Saints have been taught that they need to be “perfect” in terms of their compliance with church teachings and “the words of the prophets.” Receiving “exaltation”—spending eternity with the LDS version of God—requires each member to undergo a process of “spiritual purification.”<sup>34</sup> Why? Mormonism stipulates that “no unclean thing should enter the temple,” “no unclean thing can inherit the kingdom of God,” and “no unclean thing can exist in the presence of God.”<sup>35</sup> The Mormon Church also teaches that “exaltation,” which is mentioned more than 2,440 times on lds.org, is “the highest state of happiness and glory in the celestial kingdom.”<sup>36</sup> Smith’s related “revelations” included the following concepts:

They [obedient Latter-day Saint men ordained with the Melchizedek priesthood] are gods, even the sons of God—wherefore, all things are theirs (D&C 76:58–59).

The Saints shall receive their inheritance [in the Celestial Kingdom near Kolob] and be made equal with him [“the Lord”] (D&C 88:107).

These angels did not abide my [God’s] law [of “celestial marriage”]; therefore, they remain separately and singly, without exaltation (D&C 132:17).

Men and women must marry according to God’s law [i.e., “celestial marriage”] in order to gain exaltation (D&C 132:19–20).

Strait is the gate and narrow the way that leadeth unto the exaltation (D&C 132:22–23).

[Biblical patriarchs] Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob have entered into their exaltation (D&C 132:29, 37).

I [Jesus Christ, with a “celestialized” body] seal upon you [mortal Joseph Smith] your exaltation (D&C 132:49).<sup>37</sup>

Not surprisingly, the pressure on Mormons to be not only “perfect,” but busily engaged in “the work of the Lord,” as stipulated by the LDS Church, has caused many Latter-day Saints to feel very stressed and anxious (some have had nervous breakdowns as a result). A friend of mine raised in Mormonism from age six onward described it as feeling like he was always under a “celestial microscope” and having to perform in front of “God’s video camera.” Like millions of people “programmed” by the tension-causing LDS religion, he was indoctrinated from an early age to believe that the invisible Mormon deities were constantly watching him and judging his performance to see if his obedience was good enough. Chapter 11 explains the psychologically harmful effects of Mormonism on younger children as well as teenagers and adults.

### **More than one kind of death**

According to the Latter-day Saint religion, there are two types of death: physical and spiritual. The Mormon Church says on its main website: “Physical death is the separation of the spirit from the mortal body. The Fall of Adam brought physical death into the world... Because of the Atonement and Resurrection of Jesus Christ, all mankind will be resurrected and redeemed from physical death.”<sup>38</sup> The “Fall of Adam” pertains to an Old Testament story about Adam and Eve, the first humans, according to the Bible, and their non-compliance with an instruction from Mormonism’s Jehovah/premortal Jesus, as explained on lds.org:

Because Adam and Eve transgressed this command and partook of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil [in the Biblical Garden of Eden], they were cast out from the presence of the Lord... In other words, they experienced spiritual death. They also became mortal—subject to physical death. This spiritual and physical death is called the Fall.<sup>39</sup>

The Latter-day Saint Church defines spiritual death as “[s]eparation from God and his influences; to die as to things pertaining to righteousness.”<sup>40</sup> It teaches that physical death is the separation of body and spirit and “[e]ach person suffers only one physical death...once we are resurrected, our bodies can die no more.”<sup>41</sup> As an aside, the concept of reincarnation is wrong, according to Mormonism.

### **The spirit world**

The Latter-day Saint religion maintains that after physical death, a person’s spirit, including her/his intelligence, goes to the “spirit world,” a type of metaphysical dimension or realm “between death and resurrection.”<sup>42</sup> Where is the spirit world? “Latter-day prophets have said that the spirits of

those who have died are not far from us,” states the LDS Church’s *Gospel Principles* manual. As well, “President Brigham Young taught that the post-mortal spirit world is on the earth, around us.”<sup>43</sup> If Young was correct, there are at least 1,739 spirits per square mile (671 per square kilometer) over the earth’s exposed land.

The spirit world is, according to LDS doctrine, divided into two zones: paradise and spirit prison. The *Book of Mormon* says that obedient members “rest from earthly care and sorrow” in the former.<sup>44</sup> Only righteous Latter-day Saints and disembodied persons who convert to Mormonism in spirit prison and accept proxy rituals done for them by living Mormons in LDS temples get to enjoy paradise.<sup>45</sup> The spirits of all other dead people—members of other churches, people who rejected Mormonism during mortality, Latter-day Saints who did not fully comply with church tenets and strictures, atheists and agnostics, etc.—are sent to spirit prison. The image of a vast, supernatural concentration camp comes to mind. What are conditions like there? Very unpleasant for some spirits, apparently, because lds.org says:

Also in the spirit prison are those who rejected the gospel after it was preached to them either on earth or in the spirit prison. These spirits suffer in a condition known as hell.<sup>46</sup>

What happens in Mormonism’s post-mortality jail? Spirits are taught the Latter-day Saint religion and given the chance to accept it. Transitioning to God’s presence requires not only full acceptance of “the gospel,” but also completion of “work for the dead” for each individual in one or more LDS temples.

### **Resurrection**

The Mormon Church teaches that “all people will be resurrected and saved from physical death... Resurrection is the reuniting of the spirit with the body in an immortal state, no longer subject to disease or death.”<sup>47</sup> In 1981, senior Mormon apostle Ezra Benson told Latter-day Saint children via the church’s *Friend* magazine:

I want to bear my testimony to you, my young brothers and sisters, that I know that because Jesus lives today with a perfected body of flesh and bones we too will live the same way.<sup>48</sup>

If LDS doctrine is correct, through some sort of supernatural process decayed, burned, pulverized, or maggot-consumed flesh will be “celestialized” and magically attached to skeletons. But what about bodies that have been cremated and scattered? The Latter-day Saint Church has not provided a reasoned answer. Also according to Mormonism, each person’s immortal intelligence and God-created spirit will be mystically reintegrated into their “perfected body” and everyone will live forever. The church’s *Gospel Principles* manual explains further:

After Jesus Christ rose from the dead, other righteous people who had died were also resurrected. They appeared in Jerusalem and also on the American continent... This was the beginning of the First Resurrection. Some people have been resurrected since then. Those who already have been resurrected and those who will be resurrected at the time of His coming will all inherit the glory of the celestial kingdom.<sup>49</sup>

An article in the January 1997 *Ensign* said that the “first resurrection of mankind began with Christ and extends until the end of the Millennium.”<sup>50</sup> In October 1984, Mormon apostle Russell Nelson told Latter-day Saints during General Conference:

Rewards result from the righteous use of the spiritual power belonging to the priesthood! And they are so great that they are almost beyond human comprehension. To those couples who bear and share that priesthood worthily and remain faithful to the law of the everlasting covenant of eternal marriage, enduring the congested years and trials of diapers and dishes, crowded kitchen and thin pocketbook, service [unpaid work] in the Church, education and the burning of the midnight oil, the Lord makes this promise: “Ye shall come forth in the first resurrection;...and shall inherit thrones, kingdoms, principalities, and powers, dominions,...[and there] shall be a fulness and a continuation of the seeds [spiritual offspring] forever and ever.”<sup>51</sup>

In other words, obedient Mormons who sacrifice greatly, even everything, if required, for the LDS Church and remain faithful to its concepts as well as eagerly participate in its rituals and do assigned work in the organization will “come forth in the first resurrection.” What did Nelson mean by “inherit thrones, kingdoms, principalities, and powers, dominions” and “a continuation of the seeds”? Achieve exaltation and attain godhood after death.

Mormonism also includes a concept that there will be a “second” or “last resurrection,” as described in the *Gospel Principles* manual:

After the resurrection of those who will inherit celestial glory [which is limited to “righteous” Latter-day Saints and enthusiastic converts to Mormonism in spirit prison], another group will be resurrected: those who will receive a terrestrial glory [e.g., less-committed Latter-day Saints and good non-Mormons who do not join the LDS Church]. When all these people have been resurrected, the First Resurrection will be completed.

The wicked who are living at the time of the Second Coming of the Lord will be destroyed in the flesh [i.e., killed]. They, along with the

wicked who are already dead, will have to wait until the last resurrection.<sup>52</sup>

### **Joseph Smith: resurrection gatekeeper and “certificate” provider**

In 1854, Mormon Church president Brigham Young told Latter-day Saints:

How are you going to get your resurrection? You will get it by the President of the resurrection pertaining to this generation, and that is Joseph Smith Jun. Hear it all ye ends of the earth; if ever you enter into the kingdom of God it is because Joseph Smith let you go there. This will apply to Jews and Gentiles, to the bond, and the free; to friends and foes; no man or woman in this generation will get a resurrection and be crowned [as a god or goddess], without Joseph Smith saying so. The man who was martyred in Carthage Jail, State of Illinois, holds the keys of life and death to this generation. He is the President of the resurrection in this dispensation.

From the day that the Priesthood was taken from the earth to the winding-up scene of all things, every man and woman must have the certificate of Joseph Smith, junior, as a passport to their entrance into the mansion where God and Christ are -- I with you and you with me. I cannot go there without his [Smith's] consent. He holds the keys of that kingdom for the last dispensation - the keys to rule in the spirit-world; and he rules there triumphantly, for he gained full power and a glorious victory over the power of Satan while he was yet in the flesh, and was a martyr to his religion and to the name of Christ, which gives him a most perfect victory in the spirit-world. He reigns there as supreme a being in his sphere, capacity, and calling, as God does in heaven. Many will exclaim – “Oh, that is very disagreeable! It is preposterous! We cannot bear the thought!” But it is true.<sup>53</sup>

According to Mormonism, “this dispensation” is the period of human history from the appearance of the “two Personages” in the woods to young Joseph Smith in the spring of 1820, per his First Vision story of 1838, to the day when Jesus returns to the earth in “power and glory.” Young’s other statement about “the day that the Priesthood was taken from the earth” refers to the Great Apostasy, which was explained in Chapter 2.

### **The Final Judgment**

The LDS Church teaches that “the day will come when we will stand before God and be judged,”<sup>54</sup> a final reckoning that will supposedly include a meticulous review of all our “thoughts, words, and actions.”<sup>55</sup> Latter-day Saint indoctrination material also states:



The Prophet Joseph Smith said that the dead will be judged out of records kept on earth. We will also be judged out of the “book of life,” which is kept in heaven.<sup>56</sup>

In reality, every day is a day of judgment. We speak, think, and act according to celestial, terrestrial, or telestial law.<sup>57</sup>

What is celestial law? Unwavering obedience to Mormonism. While terrestrial law is not as demanding as celestial law, its rewards are far less, according to Latter-day Saint doctrine. For example, resurrected mortals going to the terrestrial kingdom will not be permitted by the LDS religion's Heavenly Father to live with their resurrected family members and relatives, unlike Mormons who obey celestial law. Telestial law applies to liars, adulterers, and criminals—the “unrighteous” and “wicked.” Contradictorily, Mormonism's “exalted” Joseph Smith in the Celestial Kingdom was a liar (as explained) and an adulterer (see Chapter 9 for details).

### **Lots of judges – and Smith's return**

Many Christians believe that God will judge them after death for how they conducted themselves during mortality and send them to heaven or hell, accordingly. The *Book of Mormon* states that “the twelve apostles of the Lamb [Jesus Christ]...are they who shall judge the twelve tribes of Israel.”<sup>58</sup> The dozen tribes are represented in LDS temples as twelve oxen statues.<sup>59</sup> The fifth volume of the Latter-day Saint *Journal of Discourses* indicates that Mormon apostle Parley Pratt said:

He [Joseph Smith] will continue holding those keys [of the priesthood] through all eternity, and will stand—yes, again in the flesh upon this Earth, as the head of the Latter-day Saints, under Jesus Christ, and under Peter, James and John. He will hold the keys to judge the generation to whom he was sent, and will judge my brethren that preside over me; and will judge me, together with the Apostles ordained by the word of the Lord through him and under his administration. When this is done, those Apostles will judge this generation and the Latter-day Saints; and they will judge them with that judgment which Jesus Christ will give unto them; and they will have the same spirit and the same mind as Jesus Christ, and their judgment will be His judgment, for they will be one...

Brother Brigham [Young], who now presides over us, will hold the keys under Brother Joseph [Smith]; and he and his brethren, who hold the keys with him, or under his direction, will judge the people; for they will hold those keys to all eternity, worlds without end. By those keys they will have to judge this generation; and Peter, James, and John will hold the keys to preside over, and judge, and direct Brother

Joseph to all eternity; and Jesus Christ will hold the keys over them and over us, under His Father.<sup>60</sup>

To clarify, Mormonism maintains that various Latter-day Saint “prophets,” ancient Christian apostles, and Jesus Christ will participate in the Final Judgment of humanity. No Catholic popes, Orthodox Church bishops, Anglican Archbishops of Canterbury, Baptist World Alliance presidents, Jewish rabbis, Muslim imams, or other religious leaders will be involved.

### **“Kingdoms of glory” and “outer darkness”**

The Mormon Church teaches that depending on a person’s thoughts and behaviour during mortality and the extent to which they have repented of their “sins,” after the Final Judgment they will be sent by God to one of three supernatural “kingdoms,” or to the ultra-nasty “outer darkness.” Lds.org provides details:

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 [to Mormonism], expressed by our obedience to the Lord’s commandments [as defined by the LDS Church]...

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 [i.e., full compliance with Mormon Church teachings and requirements] and constancy of purpose [as a Latter-day Saint].

The celestial kingdom is the place prepared for those who have “received the testimony of Jesus” [i.e., converted to Mormonism] 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”.... To inherit this gift, we must receive the ordinances of salvation [LDS baptism and confirmation and the Mormon temple “endowment,” in particular], keep the commandments, and repent of our sins [as defined by the Latter-day Saint Church].

Those who inherit terrestrial glory will “receive of the presence of the Son [Jesus], 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”... Generally speaking, individuals in the terrestrial kingdom will be honorable people “who were blinded by the craftiness of men”... This group will include members of the

Church who were “not valiant in the testimony of Jesus” [i.e., they were less-than-zealous members]... It will also include those who rejected the opportunity to receive the gospel [Mormonism] in mortality but who later received it in the post-mortal spirit world...

Telestial glory will be reserved for individuals who “received not the gospel of Christ, neither the testimony of Jesus” [i.e., people who did not become Mormons]... These individuals will receive their glory after being redeemed from spirit prison, which is sometimes called hell...

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”... 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 [as defined by Mormonism].”<sup>61</sup>

The August 2010 issue of the LDS Church’s *Liahona* magazine said that “[w]icked people who fought against Jesus Christ and denied the Holy Ghost will be sent to a place called “outer darkness.”<sup>62</sup> The *Book of Mormon* provides additional information:

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 [body]—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.<sup>63</sup>

### **More influence from Swedenborg and the occult**

About seven decades before Smith started his religious movement, Swedenborg wrote and had published a book in Latin titled *De Caelo et Ejus Mirabilibus et de inferno, ex Auditibus et Visis*. The English translation was *Heaven and its Wonders and Hell From Things Heard and Seen*, and the volume detailed what happens (supposedly) after people die. When creating his religion, Smith “smouched” ideas from Swedenborg’s book as well as concepts from other spiritualists, as explained by historian Dr. Quinn in *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View*:

Aside from a thirteenth-century German manuscript written by a female mystic, before 1830 occult writers were the only public advocates of three heavens [a trio of post-mortality “kingdoms”]. In

publications in England since 1784 (and in the United States since 1812), Emanuel Swedenborg insisted: “There are three heavens,” described as “intirely [sic] distinct from each other.” Often regarded as a devotee of the occult (see below), this Swedish mystic called the highest heaven “the celestial kingdom,” and stated that the inhabitants of the three heavens corresponded to the sun, moon, and stars. In presenting that cosmology, Sibly’s *Occult Sciences* [published in 1814] stated: “There are three degrees in man corresponding to the three heavens.” This was part of his twenty-page summary of Swedenborg’s teachings about “spirits and departed souls of men,” and about heaven and hell.

By Joseph Smith’s own statement, he was acquainted with those views. Summaries of Swedenborg’s teachings were in a front-page article of 1808 at nearby Canandaigua and in a book owned by Smith’s hometown library since 1817. Nine miles from the Smith farm, in 1826 the Canandaigua newspaper also advertised Swedenborg’s *Treatise Concerning Heaven and Hell* for sale. The bookstore offered Swedenborg’s publications for as little as 37 cents... Smith knew Swedenborg’s writings about “the celestial kingdom” well enough to criticize them. Since Sibly was clearly the source for inscriptions on the Smith family’s magic parchments, he is a likely source for Joseph Smith’s knowledge of Swedenborg’s “view of the world to come.”<sup>64</sup>

Although Smith knew about Swedenborg’s “three heavens” concept before 1832, he disingenuously claimed in February of that year to have had a “vision” in which he learned about the afterlife from “the Lord.” Not surprisingly, his text did not mention the Swedish mystic or Sibly’s influential book. The following is an excerpt from the LDS scripture in question—Section 76 of the *Doctrine and Covenants*—written by Mormonism’s founder:

Upon my return from [the] Amherst conference, I resumed the translation of the Scriptures. From sundry revelations which had been received, it was apparent that many important points touching the salvation of man had been taken from the Bible, or lost before it was compiled. It appeared self-evident from what truths were left, that if God rewarded every one according to the deeds done in the body the term ‘Heaven,’ as intended for the [Latter-day] Saints’ eternal home, must include more kingdoms than one.<sup>65</sup>

During his “vision” of February 16, 1832 in Hiram, Ohio (*D&C* 76), Smith apparently saw people on other planets because he wrote about “worlds” created by Jesus Christ “and the inhabitants thereof,” namely, “begotten sons and daughters unto God.”<sup>66</sup> It is a great shame that Mormonism’s stone-gazing leader did not ask “the Lord” for the space coordinates of the

inhabited celestial bodies and provide that extraordinary information to astronomers. Doing so would have revolutionized humanity's understanding of the cosmos.

In early 1832, the Mormon religion was in its infancy and, apparently, not unorthodox enough for Smith. For starters, it lacked polygamy, a set of highly controversial doctrines, teachings, and practices that he later initiated and kept secret from the church's membership for years (see Chapter 9 for details). The historical evidence points to Smith wanting Mormonism to become even more distinct than other religions. From 1832 to 1844, he added strange concepts and rituals to his movement, and because church canon was augmented with his imaginative "translations," Mormonism's founding "prophet" set the stage for many decades of racism in the "restored" church of Jesus Christ prior to being shot and killed.

Chapter 7  
Cain's Cursed Seed, Sacred Little Factories, and the Bedeviled  
Missouri River

**[W]e will summons the First Presidency, the Twelve, the High Council, the Bishopric, and all the Elders of Israel...[and] declare that it is right to mingle our seed [offspring] with the black race of Cain [Negroes], that they shall come in with us and be partakers with us of all the blessings God has given to us. On that very day and hour [that] we should do so, the Priesthood is taken from this [Mormon] Church and Kingdom and God leaves us to our fate. The moment we consent to mingle with the seed of Cain, the Church must go to destruction -- we should receive the curse which has been placed upon the seed of Cain, and never more be numbered with the children of Adam who are heirs to the Priesthood until that curse be removed. – Brigham Young, Joseph Smith's successor as the senior Latter-day Saint leader, speaking to the legislature as Utah Territory governor in February 1852.**

**We must not intermarry with the Negro. Why? If I were to marry a Negro woman and have children by her, my children would all be cursed as to the Priesthood. Do I want my children to be cursed as to the priesthood? If there is one drop of Negro blood in my children, as I have read to you, they receive the curse. There isn't any argument, therefore, as to inter-marriage with the Negro, is there? There are 50 million Negroes in the United States. If they were to achieve complete absorption with the white race, think what they would do. With 50 million Negroes inter-married with us, where would the Priesthood be? Who could hold it, in all America? Think what that would do to the work of the Church? – Mormon apostle Mark Petersen speaking to Mormon instructors in 1954.**

Since 1830, there has been no aspect of Mormonism more unenlightened than its bigoted doctrines and teachings about people of black African (Negro) ancestry and demeaning policies relative to them. Starting in the mid-nineteenth century and continuing until June 1978, the LDS Church, which was supposedly directed via “revelations” by God’s loving son, Jesus Christ, systematically discriminated against blacks. The organization also failed to demonstrate moral leadership in relation to slavery, societal bigotry (e.g., segregation in the United States), and the abusive apartheid policies of the South African government during most of the twentieth century.

By the time the Mormon Church’s patriarchal leadership finally relented in 1978 to the very public and embarrassing pressure directed at the predominantly Caucasian organization because of its racism against blacks, it was too late to

impress the world. However, there was one group who were awed by the change: credulous Latter-day Saints, who erroneously believed that “the Brethren” had always known and implemented “the will of the Lord.” In fact, five generations of LDS “prophets, seers, and revelators” and their priesthood subordinates had been on the wrong side of history.

### **Institutionalized bigotry**

The creation and institutionalization of anti-black doctrines, teachings, and policies by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is a study in Mormon weirdness and ego, to be sure. The organization not only formulated and entrenched racist “spiritual” concepts about Negroes, it prohibited black members (many were in Brazil) from the following:

- Being ordained to the priesthood and holding ecclesiastical offices;
- Organizing and leading church meetings;
- Teaching Sunday School and other LDS classes;
- Preparing, blessing, and passing the weekly sacrament;
- Blessing, baptizing, and confirming children, relatives, friends, and converts to Mormonism;
- Ordaining males to the priesthood; and
- Going to Mormon temples and participating in the “ordinances” (rituals) performed there, including “baptisms for the dead,” the “endowment,” “eternal marriage,” and family “sealings” (i.e., one generation of Latter-day Saints being “spiritually” linked by the “power of the priesthood” to their ancestors and progeny, according to LDS doctrine).

While the Mormon Church discriminated against Negroes for many decades, members of “the black race of Cain,” again quoting church president Young, *were* taught, along with non-Negro members, to pay “tithes and offerings.” It was very convenient for the increasingly wealthy LDS organization that Mormonism’s God was not prejudiced when it came to funneling monies from misled members into church coffers. Just because “the seed of Cain” were treated worse than disempowered Latter-day Saint females, as far as the all-white “Brethren” were concerned there was no good reason for the church to not take at least one-tenth of black members’ earnings, money gifts, and other financial increases.

### **The genesis of Mormon prejudice against blacks**

The Latter-day Saint idea that Cain, a Biblical character described in the Book of Genesis, was cursed by God and had dark-skinned offspring (“the black race”) dates back to the infancy of Smith’s movement. *Old Testament Revision I* written by him (dated June 1, 1830), the seventh chapter of the Book of Moses (also written by Smith in 1830) in the *Pearl of Great Price*, as well as the LDS Church’s official history for 1838 to 1856 (volume A-1) all

state that “the seed of Cain were black.”<sup>1</sup> In the latter twentieth century, church apostle Bruce McConkie explained the following Latter-day Saint “truths” in his encyclopedic volume, *Mormon Doctrine*:

Though he was a rebel and an associate of Lucifer in the pre-existence, and though he was a liar from the beginning whose name was *Perdition*, *Cain* managed to obtain the privilege of mortal birth.

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As a result of his rebellion, Cain was cursed with a dark skin; he became the father of the Negroes, and those spirits who are not worthy to receive the priesthood are born through his lineage. He became the first mortal to be cursed as a son of perdition. As a result of his mortal birth he is assured of a tangible body of flesh and bones in eternity, a fact which will enable him to rule over Satan.<sup>2</sup>

What was Cain’s “rebellion”? According to the Bible, “Abel [Cain’s brother] kept flocks, and Cain worked the soil.”<sup>3</sup> The former gave “fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock” as sacrifices to God while the latter “brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the Lord.”<sup>4</sup> Genesis also says that “[t]he Lord looked with favor on Abel and his offering, but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor. So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast.”<sup>5</sup> The Old Testament deity, Jehovah—Mormonism’s premortal Jesus—was apparently a meat lover and not a vegetarian.

The Biblical story says that Cain became jealous of his brother and killed him, thus becoming humanity’s first murderer. God confronted him about his violent crime and told Cain that “[w]hen you work the ground, it will no longer yield its crops for you. You will be a restless wanderer on the earth.”<sup>6</sup> In reply, “Cain said to the Lord, ‘My punishment is more than I can bear. Today you are driving me from the land, and I will be hidden from your presence; I will be a restless wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me.’”<sup>7</sup> To prevent that from happening, Jehovah/unborn Jesus “put a mark on Cain so that no one who found him would kill him.”<sup>8</sup>

For decades, the LDS Church maintained that not only was Cain “cursed” by “the Lord” with dark skin (the “mark”), he was also incapable of dying physically because of the divine malediction. Consequently, Latter-day Saints have believed that Cain has wandered the earth for millennia, and at some point he became Bigfoot (a.k.a. Sasquatch), the large, dark, ape-like creature that has been rumoured to exist in North America’s Pacific Northwest.

### **The Egyptian connection, and Ham preserves “the curse”**

To complicate matters, the LDS concept that blacks descended from “cursed” Cain has, not surprisingly for Smith’s religion, a connection to Egypt. The previous chapter mentioned that in 1835, Mormonism’s founder acquired some ancient Egyptian hieroglyphical papyri, which he claimed to “translate.”



To review, Smith said they were “writings of Abraham while he was in Egypt, called the Book of Abraham, written by his own hand.”

The twenty-third verse in the first chapter of the Book of Abraham says that the “land of Egypt” was “first discovered by a woman, who was the daughter of Ham, and the daughter of Egyptus, which in the Chaldean signifies Egypt.”<sup>9</sup> The next verse says:

When this woman discovered the land [of Egypt] it was under water, who afterward settled her sons in it; and thus, from Ham, sprang that race which preserved the curse [dark skin] in the land.<sup>10</sup>

An *Ensign* article, “Early Families of the Earth,” lists “EGYPTUS...the wife of Ham and a descendant of Cain” and “Egyptus...the daughter of Ham and Egyptus and the mother of the first Pharaoh in Egypt.”<sup>11</sup> While no reputable Egyptologist supports this Mormon “truth,” there are hundreds of references on lds.org to Cain, Egyptus, and the imagined history of the Old Testament’s Abraham in Egypt, per Smith’s “translation.”

Who was Ham? The ninth chapter of Genesis says that “[t]he sons of Noah who came out of the ark were Shem, Ham and Japheth.”<sup>12</sup> The “ark” refers to the large boat built by the Biblical character Noah and filled with his family members and two of every kind of animal, according to the Genesis myth. The story says that they escaped the Great Flood while the rest of humanity was destroyed.

The Mormon Church’s online dictionary states that Ham was not only a “Son of Noah,” he was “cursed” with dark skin and “his descendants” included “the dark-skinned race of eastern Africa and southern Arabia...the Egyptians... the Libyans...[and] the inhabitants of Palestine before the arrival of the Semitic races.”<sup>13</sup> Also, one of the church’s instruction manuals states that Joseph Smith said that “quite a respectable number of negroes” were “descendants of Ham.”<sup>14</sup>

### **“Cursed,” ordained Mormon men**

Contradictorily, during Smith’s time as the founding Mormon “prophet” various black men *were* ordained to the priesthood, despite being supposedly “cursed” with dark skin. They included “Black Pete,” who joined the Latter-day Saint movement in Kirtland in early 1831, Elijah Abel in 1832, Joseph T. Ball in the mid-1830s (he also presided over the Boston Branch from 1844 to 1845), and Walker Lewis in 1843. After Smith’s death in 1844, William McCary, a Negro, was ordained in Nauvoo in 1846 by LDS apostle Orson Hyde. Two of Elijah Abel’s descendants were also ordained elders and two other black men, Samuel Chambers and Edward Leggroan, became deacons in the young Latter-day Saint Church.<sup>15</sup>

Concerning temple “ordinances,” Abel participated in the Mormon washing and anointing ritual, and he and Ball did at least two baptisms for the dead in Nauvoo. In that city, there were twenty-two black members between 1839 and

1843. Unfortunately, racism expanded significantly in Jesus' "restored" church from the mid-1800s onward.

**"A blackness came upon the children"**

Between June 1830 and February 1831, Smith wrote text that was later titled the Book of Moses and made part of the *Pearl of Great Price*. The LDS Church says the work was part of his "translation of the Bible."<sup>16</sup> In the seventh chapter of the Book of Moses readers learn about a character called Enoch, whom Latter-day Saints believe was real. Assuming briefly that he lived, he must have been some sort of a wizard because the church says in its chapter summary that "Enoch teaches, leads the people, and moves mountains."<sup>17</sup> The chapter also says that Enoch saw "all the inhabitants of the earth," including "the giants of the land,"<sup>18</sup> as well as the following:

For behold, the Lord shall curse the land with much heat, and the barrenness thereof shall go forth forever; and there was a blackness [dark skin] [that] came upon all the children of Canaan, that they were despised among all people.<sup>19</sup>

Enoch also beheld [in his vision] the residue of the people which were the sons of Adam; and they were a mixture of all the seed [descendants] of Adam save it was the seed of Cain, for the seed of Cain were black, and had not place among them.<sup>20</sup>

The online *Encyclopedia Britannica* explanation about Canaan says that it was an area "variously defined in historical and biblical literature, but always centred on Palestine. Its original pre-Israelite inhabitants were called Canaanites. The names Canaan and Canaanite occur in cuneiform, Egyptian, and Phoenician writings from about the 15th century bc as well as in the Old Testament. In these sources, 'Canaan' refers sometimes to an area encompassing all of Palestine and Syria, sometimes only to the land west of the Jordan River, and sometimes just to a strip of coastal land from Acre (Akko) northward."<sup>21</sup>

According to the tenth chapter of Genesis, there was a man named Canaan who was a son of the previously-mentioned Ham.<sup>22</sup> If Smith's Book of Moses is correct, Canaan's descendants, who apparently lived in a region also called Canaan just beyond the east end of the Mediterranean Sea, had children who, because they were related to Ham, offended Mormonism's Jehovah/premortal Jesus, who turned them into Negroes. And Latter-day Saints are puzzled that non-Mormons think the LDS religion is weird!

**Brigham Young: "We must believe in slavery"**

Despite what "translator" Smith wrote in the Book of Moses about the skin pigment-"cursed" children of Canaan, he was relatively liberal about blacks, as evidenced by the fact that he permitted a number of them to be ordained to the

priesthood and participate in temple rituals. However, his successor, Brigham Young, who also purportedly received “revelations” from the compassionate Jesus Christ, was a racist of the first order. It was under him that Mormon anti-black doctrines, teachings, and policies became institutionalized. Shamefully, Young had no qualms about the enslavement of Negroes: on January 23, 1852 he told the Utah Legislature to legalize forced servitude because “we must believe in slavery.”<sup>23</sup> About two weeks later, he announced the church’s policy of denying the priesthood to blacks, whom he called “the children of old Cain.” He also declared that “any man having even one drop of the seed of Cain in him cannot hold the priesthood.”<sup>24</sup> In 1855, Young said:

You must not think, from what I say, that I am opposed to slavery. No! The negro is damned, and is to serve his master till God chooses to remove the curse of Ham.<sup>25</sup>

Later, Young called slavery a “divine institution,” one that would not “be abolished until the curse pronounced upon Ham shall have been removed from his descendants.” He also said during the American Civil War in October 1863:

Ham will continue to be servant of servants, as the Lord decreed, until the curse is removed. Will the present struggle free the slave? No; but they are now wasting away the black race by thousands.

Treat the slaves kindly and let them live, for Ham must be the servant of servants until the curse is removed. Can you destroy the decrees of the Almighty? You cannot. Yet our Christian brethren think that they are going to overthrow the sentence of the Almighty upon the seed of Ham [Negroes]. They cannot do that, though they may kill them by thousands and tens of thousands [during the Civil War, fighting for the Union against the southern Confederate forces].<sup>26</sup>

Despite possessing God’s priesthood power and authority, according to Mormon doctrine, Young was evidently not much of a “seer and revelator.” How so? During the Civil War—on January 1, 1863, to be exact—President Abraham Lincoln issued an executive order proclaiming the freedom of slaves in ten rebellious states. Crucially, the Emancipation Proclamation freed more than three million blacks in forced servitude. Slavery was later abolished by the Thirteenth Amendment, which was passed by the Senate in April 1864 and the House of Representatives in January 1865.

Young remained Latter-day Saint Church president until his death in August 1877 (there is evidence that somebody, perhaps one of his many wives, poisoned him with arsenic<sup>27</sup>). He never publicly acknowledged that he had been dead wrong about the “present struggle”—the Civil War—not freeing “the seed” of Ham and his ancestor, “cursed” Cain.

### **Cain, “the father of an inferior race”**

During the twentieth century, LDS Church president Joseph Fielding Smith explained the Mormon doctrine about blacks in his book, *The Way to Perfection*, which was published by church-owned Deseret Books:

Not only was Cain called upon to suffer, but because of his wickedness he became the father of an inferior race. A curse was placed upon him and that curse has been continued through his lineage and must do so while time endures. Millions of souls have come into this world cursed with a black skin and have been denied the privilege of [the] Priesthood and the fulness of the blessings of the Gospel [Mormonism]. These are the descendants of Cain. Moreover[,] they have been made to feel their inferiority and have been separated from the rest of mankind from the beginning...

But what a contrast! The [light-skinned] sons of Seth, Enoch and Noah honored by the blessings and rights of [the] Priesthood!... And the [dark-skinned] sons of Cain, denied the priesthood; not privileged to receive the covenants of glory in the kingdom of God!...we will also hope that blessings may eventually be given to our Negro brethren, for they are our brethren—children of God—notwithstanding their black covering emblematical of eternal darkness.<sup>28</sup>

### **Blacks were less “valiant” than non-Negroes before birth?**

For generations, Mormons were indoctrinated in the Latter-day Saint “truth” that Negroes had been punished with dark skin due to their lack of enthusiasm in terms of supporting God’s “great plan of happiness” in the premortal existence. LDS apostle McConkie wrote that “those who were less valiant in [the] pre-existence and who thereby had certain spiritual restrictions imposed upon them during mortality are known to us as the Negroes. Such spirits are sent to earth through the lineage of Cain, the mark put upon him for his rebellion against God and his murder of Abel being a black skin.”<sup>29</sup> McConkie, who was considered a “spiritual giant” in the Latter-day Saint Church, also wrote:

Negroes in this life are denied the Priesthood; under no circumstances can they hold this delegation of authority from the Almighty (Abraham 1:20-27). The gospel message of salvation is not carried affirmatively to them... Negroes are not equal with other races where the receipt of certain spiritual blessings are concerned, particularly the priesthood and the temple blessings that flow there from, but this inequality is not of man’s origin. It is the Lord’s doing and is based on his eternal laws of justice, and grows out of the lack of Spiritual valiance of those concerned in their first estate [i.e., “pre-earth life”].<sup>30</sup>

Certainly the caste systems in communist countries and in India, for instance, are man[-]made and are not based on true principles. However, in a broad sense, caste systems have their root and origin in the gospel [Mormonism] itself, and when they operate according to the divine decree, the resultant restrictions and segregation are right and proper and have the approval of the Lord. To illustrate: Cain, Ham, and the whole negro race have been cursed with a black skin, the mark of Cain, so they can be identified as a caste apart, a people with whom the other descendants of Adam [the rest of humanity] should not intermarry.<sup>31</sup>

During the summer of 1954, LDS apostle Mark Petersen addressed BYU's religion teachers at their convention in Provo, Utah. The transcript of his speech, titled "Race Problems—As They Affect The Church," is online; the following are excerpts:

The discussion on civil rights...has blinded the thinking of some of our own people [Latter-day Saints]... We who teach in the Church certainly must have our feet on the ground and not be led astray by the philosophies of men.

I think I have read enough to give you an idea of what the negro is after. He is not just seeking the opportunity of sitting down in a cafe where white people eat...it appears that the negro seeks absorption with the white race. He will not be satisfied until he achieves it by intermarriage. That is his objective and we must face it. We must not allow our feeling to carry us away, nor must we feel so sorry for negroes that we will open our arms and embrace them with everything we have. Remember the little statement that we used to say about sin, "First we pity, then endure, then embrace"...

Now let's talk segregation again for a few moments. Was segregation a wrong principle? When the Lord chose the nations to which the spirits were to come, determining that some would be Japanese and some would be Chinese and some Negroes and some Americans, He engaged in an act of segregation... When he told Enoch not to preach the gospel to the descendants of Cain who were black, the Lord engaged in segregation. When He cursed the descendants of Cain as to the Priesthood, He engaged in segregation.

Who placed the Negroes originally in darkest Africa? Was it some man, or was it God? And when He placed them there, He segregated them... The Lord segregated the people both as to blood and place of residence. At least in the cases of the Lamanites and the Negroes we have the definite word of the Lord Himself that He placed a dark skin upon them as a curse—as a punishment and as a sign to all others. He

forbade intermarriage with them under threat of extension of the curse... And he certainly segregated the descendants of Cain when He cursed the Negro as to the Priesthood, and drew an absolute line. You may even say He dropped an Iron curtain there.

Now we are generous with the negro. We are willing that the Negro have the highest kind of education. I would be willing to let every Negro drive a Cadillac if they could afford it. I would be willing that they have all the advantages they can get out of life in the world. But let them enjoy these things among themselves. I think the Lord segregated the Negro and who is man to change that segregation? It reminds me of the scripture on marriage, "what God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." Only here we have the reverse of the thing—what God hath separated, let not man bring together again.

What is our advice with respect to intermarriage with Chinese, Japanese, Hawaiians and so on? I will tell you what advice I give personally. If a boy or girl comes to me claiming to be in love with a Chinese or Japanese or a Hawaiian or a person of any other dark race, I do my best to talk them out of it. I tell them that I think that Hawaiians should marry Hawaiians, the Japanese ought to marry the Japanese, and the Chinese ought to marry Chinese, and the Caucasians should marry Caucasians, just exactly as I tell them that Latter-day Saints ought to marry Latter-day Saints. And I'm glad to quote the 7th chapter of Deuteronomy to them on that. I teach against inter-marriage of all kinds.<sup>32</sup>

#### **"One of the few uncracked fortresses of discrimination"**

On August 27, 1967, the *Los Angeles Times* published a report, "Race Discrimination Becoming Hot Issue in Mormon Church," that said:

The deeply rooted Mormon attitude apparently discriminating against Negroes because of their race is becoming a burning issue in that church—and beyond the church... The increasing heat of racial pressure in the country has brought it into focus as one of the few uncracked fortresses of discrimination.<sup>33</sup>

Why did Mormon priesthood leaders, particularly apostles and other General Authorities, stubbornly cling to bigoted LDS concepts about blacks from the mid-nineteenth century to the latter 1970s, while millions of non-Mormons in the United States and other countries realized that a prejudiced attitude toward people of Negro ancestry was unenlightened and hurtful? Latter-day Saint ego is the answer, the fervent, emotion-driven belief that church doctrines and teachings, including those pertaining to "the seed of Cain," were correct because they had been "restored" via Mormon "prophets."

Conspicuously, early Christianity never included such racism; indeed, the New Testament indicates that Peter, the leading apostle after Jesus' death, said: "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favouritism."<sup>34</sup>

### **Jettisoning LDS "truths" about blacks**

While non-Mormons diligently labored during the 1800s to end slavery, segregation in the United States in the twentieth century, and the racist apartheid policy of the white South African government from 1948 to 1990, the Latter-day Saint Church persisted in its bigotry for five generations. In the 1970s, the organization's senior patriarchal leadership finally realized that perpetuating the status quo was counterproductive because of two main reasons:

1. The lack of indigenous priesthood leaders in Brazil and other countries with citizens whose ancestors were black slaves. About four million Negroes were kidnapped from Africa and transported in slave ships to work on Brazilian plantations alone. The church's racist dogma and policies made administering congregations of black Latter-day Saints quite problematic.
2. Public criticisms about the church's unenlightened doctrines, teachings, and policies relative to Negroes had undermined the missionary effort and recruitment of new members/"tithe"-payers.

Having *finally* realized—better very late than never—that the church's bigotry against blacks was unwise, the LDS First Presidency announced on June 8, 1978 that the organization would no longer practice ecclesiastical, doctrinal, and ritual discrimination based on race. The leadership even claimed that the change was the result of a "revelation," and an announcement was made via the church's *Deseret News* periodical that "all of our brethren who are worthy may receive the priesthood."<sup>35</sup>

Apparently, the LDS version of Jesus Christ, the purported head of "the only true and living church," had let go of his millennia-old bigotry directed at mortals with a "black covering," and flip-flopped. But, the "true" *Book of Mormon* said that he was "the same yesterday, today, and forever." So, how could an eternally-consistent Latter-day Saint deity who had segregated blacks from non-Negroes via his "divine decree," again quoting apostle McConkie, have contradicted himself in 1978 by jettisoning his "caste" system in his "restored" church? Clearly, he could not have (assuming that all of the described Mormon concepts were "spiritually" legitimate).

In December 2013, after black South African political leader Nelson Mandela died, the Mormon Church issued an online statement titled "Race and the Priesthood" that said:

In 1852, President Brigham Young publicly announced that men of black African descent could no longer be ordained to the priesthood, though thereafter blacks continued to join the Church through baptism

and receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost. Following the death of Brigham Young, subsequent Church presidents restricted blacks from receiving the temple endowment or being married in the temple. Over time, Church leaders and members advanced many theories to explain the priesthood and temple restrictions. None of these explanations is accepted today as the official doctrine of the Church.<sup>36</sup>

Not surprisingly, the official LDS statement was disingenuous. How so? It was not mere “theories” championed by “Church leaders and members” about blacks that had resulted in more than a dozen decades of institutionalized prejudice against Negroes. On the contrary, it was, according to Mormonism, God’s “revealed” will as part of the “restoration of the Gospel.” Indeed, the church’s First Presidency issued a statement in December 1969 that said: “Our living prophet, President David O. McKay, has said, ‘The seeming discrimination by the [LDS] Church toward the Negro is not something which originated with man; but goes back into the beginning with God.’”<sup>37</sup>

In truth, Christianity’s deity had nothing to do with the Latter-day Saint Church’s racism against blacks. To briefly review, it began with Smith and his December 1830 Old Testament “translation” (his Book of Moses) and expanded significantly under his successor, Young. Unfortunately, generations of “brainwashed” LDS “prophets” and other leaders as well as many lay members were certain that “the Lord” wanted the church to discriminate against Negroes. The psychological power of Mormonism to impede reason and enlightenment has indeed been formidable.

### **The non-virgin Virgin Mary**

Since the nineteenth century, there have been various LDS doctrines that have troubled non-Mormons aside from those about blacks. For example, in the past polygamy was widely regarded as immoral in Western countries, and in American states where Smith and other Mormons secretly practiced “spiritual wifery” it was illegal (see Chapter 9 for more information). Another offensive—to Christians, in particular—aspect of Mormonism has been the concept that flesh-and-bones Heavenly Father had sex with one of his spiritual daughters, Mary, who had incarnated on earth some two thousand years ago, causing her to become pregnant with Jesus. Senior Latter-day Saint “prophet” Brigham Young taught:

The birth of our Savior [Jesus Christ] was as natural as are the births of our children; it was the result of natural action [i.e., sexual intercourse]. He partook of flesh and blood--was begotten of his father, as we were of our fathers.<sup>38</sup>

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When the Virgin Mary conceived the child Jesus, the Father had begotten [sired] him in his own likeness. He [Jesus] was not begotten by the Holy Ghost [contrary to what the Bible and *Book of Mormon*



stated]. And who is the Father? He is the first of the human family [Biblical Adam]; and when he (Christ) took a tabernacle [a physical body], it was begotten by his Father in Heaven, after the same manner as the tabernacles [bodies] of Cain, Abel, and the rest of the sons and daughters of Adam and Eve. Jesus, our elder brother, was begotten in the flesh by the same character that was in the garden of Eden [Adam], and who is our Father in Heaven.<sup>39</sup>

The Mormon Adam-God doctrine will be discussed in a moment. Twentieth-century LDS apostle and church president Joseph Fielding Smith supported Young's teaching about God the Father getting Mary pregnant, as follows:

The Holy Ghost is the messenger of the Father and the Son. Mortal beings could not endure the presence of the Father without the Spirit overshadowing them, and that was the mission of the Holy Ghost, but not to beget [sire] the Son of God, that was the [sexual] business of the father. Jesus Christ is the Only Begotten Son of God the Father in the flesh, and in holding to this doctrine President Brigham Young is in perfect accord with the teachings in the Bible.<sup>40</sup>

Notably, the Bible and its "translated" version by Joseph Smith say nothing about Adam being "the Father" of Jesus Christ and engaging in "natural action"—sex—with Mary, one of his billions of spirit daughters. Moreover, the LDS Church regards incest as an act of wickedness next to murder. Also problematic is the fact that in Mormon temples, Latter-day Saints learn that Elohim (Heavenly Father) ordered Jehovah (intelligence-spirit Jesus) and Michael the Archangel (premortal Adam) to create the earth and everything on it (see Chapter 10 for details). But if Adam was "the Father," how could he be another being in the pre-existence, carrying out orders that had come from himself? Premortal schizophrenia is one possible answer; clones in alternate "spiritual" dimensions in contact with each other is another.

Before leaving the Latter-day Saint "truth" about "the Father" (Biblical Adam) and Mary being impregnated by him, it should be pointed out that there has been confusion on the part of Mormon "prophets" on the subject of what happened to Jesus' mortal mother (he also had a "Heavenly Mother," according to LDS doctrine). For example, apostle McConkie wrote in *Mormon Doctrine*:

Our Lord is the only mortal person ever born to a *virgin*, because he is the only person who ever had an immortal Father. Mary, his [physical] mother, "was carried away in the Spirit" (1 Ne. 11:31-21), was "overshadowed" by the Holy Ghost, and the conception which took place "by the power of the Holy Ghost" resulted in the bringing forth of the literal and personal Son of God the Father... Christ is not only the Son of the Holy Ghost, but of the Father... Modernistic

teachings denying the *virgin birth* are utterly and completely apostate and false.<sup>41</sup>

However, the LDS *Journal of Discourses* states that church president Brigham Young told Latter-day Saints: “Now remember from this time forth, and for ever, that Jesus Christ was not begotten by the Holy Ghost.”<sup>42</sup> Young was later doctrinally supported by senior apostle and church president Joseph Fielding Smith, who elaborated about the Holy Ghost *not* being involved in creating Jesus, as noted. But, the *Book of Mormon* states:

And behold, he [Jesus] shall be born of Mary, at Jerusalem which is the land of our forefathers, she being a virgin, a precious and chosen vessel, who shall be overshadowed and conceive by the power of the Holy Ghost, and bring forth a son, yea, even the Son of God.<sup>43</sup>

So, which Latter-day Saint teaching is correct? Mary got pregnant because she was impregnated by her resurrected, flesh-and-bones father—Adam, apparently—or she remained a virgin, but somehow magically conceived “by the power of the Holy Ghost”? The answer depends on which LDS “prophet” one believes (if any). That is the problem with subscribing to the ideas of men who have convinced themselves that they know God’s will and speak for a deity. By not scrutinizing what they say, any notion of theirs, no matter how absurd, is regarded as correct by unquestioning followers. The result in the Mormon Church since the 1830s has been many ludicrous concepts conveniently labelled as “mysteries of God.” Who can possibly comprehend them? No rational person, to be sure.

#### **Latter-day Saint sex dogma**

There is a lot of irrationality and dysfunction in Mormonism and none more so than in relation to human sexuality. Latter-day Saints have been indoctrinated to believe that they must not think about sex (God is apparently offended by “impure thoughts”), read titillating literature, view nudity (in movies, on websites, etc.), or engage in any sexually-arousing romantic activities until they are married. Even then, all forms of sexual expression—monogamous and male-female only—is to be “holy.”

As long as Mormons are single, they are not to explore their sexuality in any way, not even in their imagination, or through physical self-stimulation (called “self abuse”). If they are homosexual or bisexual, they are forbidden to act—or even think about acting—on what former church president Gordon Hinckley said in his October 1998 General Conference sermon were “certain inclinations.”<sup>44</sup> He told church members that people had inquired “about our position on those who consider themselves [to be] so-called gays and lesbians” and added:

We want to help these people, to strengthen them, to assist them with their problems and to help them with their difficulties. But we cannot stand idle if they indulge in immoral activity, if they try to uphold and defend and live in a so-called same-sex marriage situation.<sup>45</sup>

Regardless of sexual orientation, total obedience to what the Mormon Church calls the “law of chastity” is required. Hinckley warned that non-compliance to the “moral standards of the Church” would result in members being subjected to “the discipline of the Church.” The organization’s most draconian punishment is excommunication, which puts a member’s “spiritual redemption” in danger, according to LDS doctrine. Mormonism stresses that unless “sinners,” including those who have behaved in a “morally unclean” manner, repent and obey church teachings, they will suffer in this life and forever after death.

In April 1997, Hinckley told Latter-day Saints that “we cannot indulge in impure thoughts, words, and acts and have the Spirit of the Lord with us.”<sup>46</sup> Mormonism asserts that if a member does not have “the Lord’s spirit,” Satan can take control of the individual. Notably, lds.org contains more than four thousand instances of “Satan,” in excess of 2,580 “devil” references, and six hundred-plus for “Lucifer.”

Assuming that Hinckley was correct about “impure thoughts, words, and acts” blocking “the Spirit of the Lord,” one wonders about Joseph Smith’s “worthiness” as he watched pretty teenager Fanny Alger working in his and his wife’s home, which led to his extramarital relationship with the girl and increasingly difficult-to-hide “celestial consequences” of their union.<sup>47</sup>

#### **“The Gods went down to organize man in their own image”**

Mormon theology not only includes the strange concept that tens of billions of male and female spirits were created during a universally-forgotten mystical existence eons ago, but God made everyone heterosexual before their incarnation. Apostle Packer attempted to reinforce this “truth” in Latter-day Saints’ minds during his October 2010 General Conference address:

The Gods went down to organize man in their own image, in the image of the Gods to form they him, male and female to form they them.

And the Gods said: We will bless them. And...we will cause them to be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it.

This commandment has never been rescinded... Some [people] suppose that they were preset and cannot overcome what they feel are inborn tendencies toward the impure and the unnatural [i.e., same-sex attraction]. Not so! Why would our Heavenly Father do that to anyone? Remember, he is our Father.<sup>48</sup>

Packer's thinking was demonstrably flawed. How so? To briefly review, LDS doctrine maintains that God the Father (Elohim) created the earth and all lifeforms on our planet through the "priesthood power" possessed by himself and premortal Jesus (Jehovah) and the Old Testament's Adam before he was born (a.k.a. Michael the Archangel). However, biologists and other researchers have observed homosexual behavior in many animal species<sup>49</sup> as well as hermaphrodite creatures engaging in sex.<sup>50</sup> Why would God create non-heterosexual fruit flies, lizards, snakes, penguins, monkeys, sheep, bison, and other animals, but not gay or bi-sexual *homo sapiens* (humans)? The conservative, orthodox Mormon perspective, which Packer has championed for decades, makes no sense in light of observed and reported facts.

**The "little factory" – don't "tamper" with it!**

So prudish and bizarre have LDS attitudes about the human body and sex been that Packer could not bring himself to write the word "penis" in his *To Young Men Only* (Law of Chastity) booklet. The weird Mormon publication was distributed to adolescent male members in the late 1970s and described their sexual organ as follows:

This little factory moves quietly into operation as a normal and expected pattern of growth and begins to produce the lifegiving substance [semen]. It will do so perhaps as long as you live. It works very slowly. That is the way it should be. For the most part, unless you tamper with it, you will hardly be aware that it is working at all.

As you move closer to manhood, this little factory will sometimes produce an oversupply of this substance. The Lord has provided a way for that to be released. It will happen without any help or without any resistance from you. Perhaps, one night you will have a dream. In the course of it the release valve that controls the factory will open and release all that is excess.

The factory and automatic release work on their own schedule. The Lord intended it to be that way. It is to regulate itself. This will not happen very often. You may go a longer period of time, and there will be no need for this to occur. When it does, you should not feel guilty. It is the nature of young manhood and is part of becoming a man.

There is, however, something you should not do. Sometimes a young man does not understand. Perhaps he is encouraged by unwise or unworthy companions to tamper with that factory. He might fondle himself and open that release valve. This you shouldn't do, for if you do that, the little factory will speed up. You will then be tempted again and again to release it. You can quickly be subjected to a habit, one that is not worthy, one that will leave you feeling depressed and feeling

guilty. Resist that temptation. Do not be guilty of tampering or playing with this sacred power of creation. Keep it in reserve for the time when it can be righteously employed [during sex with one's Mormon wife].<sup>51</sup>

Interestingly, a male fertility website says that “ejaculation every two or three days leads to optimal semen specimens,” which would support the view that masturbation and/or sexual intercourse a few times weekly is beneficial from a procreation standpoint (higher semen count is better in terms of fertilizing a woman's egg).<sup>52</sup>

Procreation is *very* important to the LDS Church, which has always sought to increase its tithing membership, including children age seven and younger who are not yet baptized as members. During the Latter-day Saint temple marriage ceremony (“sealing”), each couple is told to “multiply and replenish the earth,” which has been interpreted as having as many children as possible.<sup>53</sup> Notably, Mormon-heavy Utah has consistently ranked at the top of the list of U.S. states in terms of childbirths per woman.<sup>54</sup>

### **LDS “worthiness” interviews and “courts of love”**

For generations, the Mormon Church's patriarchal leadership has been obsessed about human sexual behavior and discovering and rooting out “impure” romantic conduct by its members. The obsession is evidenced by more than 1,060 references to “immorality” on lds.org, 685 for “sex,” and 630 instances of “immoral.” “Morally clean” and “sexual purity” are mentioned at least 389 and 122 times, respectively.

Inappropriately, Mormon teenagers are subjected to annual “worthiness” interviews—neither parent is present—and young LDS males are often asked point-blank by the local bishop or branch president if they masturbate and look at online porn. Teenage Latter-day Saints with a boyfriend or girlfriend and young adult Mormons who are dating or engaged are routinely questioned to see if they are obeying Mormonism's Law of Chastity. Older adult members are also quizzed about their compliance to the church's teachings about sex and “moral cleanliness.”

Sexual guilt is widespread among Latter-day Saints, particularly during their adolescence and young adulthood, because of the psychologically wounding effects of church indoctrination and conditioning. Allegedly “sinful” Mormons have broken down and “confessed” to priesthood leaders about engaging in “immoral” behavior, including masturbation, necking, fondling, etc. Details are elicited from the shame-ridden member in the initial interview with a bishop or branch president, and often later in a church disciplinary hearing ironically referred to as a “court of love.”

If premarital sex or adultery has occurred and the member has been “endowed” in a Mormon temple (see Chapter 10), excommunication is the standard punishment. Even if subjected to the lesser-but-also-humiliating penalty of being disfellowshipped, Mormons in the local area, if not regionally, soon learn that the “sinner” is forbidden from participating in church classes, other

than sitting in the room and saying nothing. Many Latter-day Saints are gossipers, so word about the disciplined member invariably spreads.

### **“Sexual sins” are “destroying the world”**

Irrational Mormon beliefs and teachings about human sexuality have been around for many decades. For example, in the early twentieth century senior apostle Joseph F. Smith said:

[W]e desire with holy zeal to emphasize the enormity of sexual sins. Though often regarded as insignificant by those not knowing the will of God, they are in his eyes an abomination; and if we [Mormons] are to remain his favored people, they must be shunned as the gates of hell. The evil results of these sins are so patent in vice, crime, misery and disease that it would appear that all, young and old, must perceive and sense them. They are destroying the world. If we are to be preserved we must abhor them, shun them, not practice the least of them, for they weaken and enervate, they kill man spiritually, they make him unfit for the company of the righteous and the presence of God.<sup>55</sup>

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Sexual union is lawful in wedlock, and if participated in with right intent is honorable and sanctifying. But without the bonds of marriage, sexual indulgence is a debasing sin, abominable in the sight of Deity.<sup>56</sup>

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We hold that sexual sin is second only to the shedding of innocent blood in the category of personal crimes; and that the adulterer shall have no part in the exaltation of the blessed.<sup>57</sup>

Despite Smith's apparent moral indignation, he was guilty of “sexual sins.” Appearing before a Senate committee in 1904, he confessed under oath to illegally living with five women and having children by them.<sup>58</sup> According to Mormon doctrine, such behavior made him, the president of the Latter-day Saint Church, an adulterer, a damnable “sinner” second only to murderers in terms of “personal crimes” who “shall have no part in the exaltation of the blessed.”

Also under federal questioning, LDS apostles John Henry Smith and Charles Penrose and other Mormon men subordinate to Joseph F. Smith acknowledged they had not complied with Utah's law prohibiting cohabitation. “[T]hey confessed that they were living in polygamy in violation of their pledges to the nation and the terms of their amnesty,” reported Senator Frank Cannon, “...against the laws and the constitution of the state, and contrary to the ‘revelation of God’ by which the doctrine of polygamy had been withdrawn from practice in the Church!”<sup>59</sup>

### **Satan controls “cursed” waters**

Mormonism asserts that Satan not only spends his time tempting mortals to commit “sins”—sexual and other—he also controls bodies of water. This

ridiculous belief is why LDS missionaries—soldiers in “the army of the Lord,” supposedly—are not allowed to swim. According to nonsensical Latter-day Saint thinking, the Devil targets “Elders” and “Sisters”—proselyting missionaries—because they are God’s troops in the “war” for souls that apostle Russell Nelson wrote in an *Ensign* article “began before the world was and will continue...upon the earth.”<sup>60</sup>

The Mormon superstition that Satan has power over oceans, seas, lakes, etc. is based on LDS scripture dating back to the summer of 1831 when “Elder William W. Phelps, in a daylight vision, saw the destroyer riding in power upon the face of the waters.”<sup>61</sup> Which watercourse? The Missouri River, according to the church’s summary for Section 61 of the *Doctrine and Covenants*. Mormon “prophets” have not clarified whether the Devil was astride some kind of hellish, supernatural SeaDoo, engaged in “wicked” waterskiing or boating, or commanding some sort of demoniac vessel. In print and online, the LDS Church does state:

The Lord has decreed many destructions upon the waters;

The waters were cursed by [the New Testament apostle] John, and the destroyer [Satan] rides upon their face;

Some [LDS priesthood holders] have power to command the waters.<sup>62</sup>

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And now I [Jesus Christ] give unto you [Joseph Smith] a commandment that what I say unto one I say unto all, that you shall forewarn your brethren concerning these waters [the Missouri River], that they come not in journeying upon them, lest their faith fail and they are caught in snares;

I, the Lord, have decreed, and the destroyer [Satan] rideth upon the face thereof, and I revoke not the decree.<sup>63</sup>

Why would Mormonism’s omnipotent Jesus allow his arch-nemesis and disgraced spirit brother, Lucifer (a.k.a. Satan) to ride upon the Missouri River “in power”? Not surprisingly, the LDS Church’s patriarchal leadership has never provided a rational answer. Perhaps the Devil slipped under the Celestial “radar” and was waiting for the ghost of pirate Captain Kidd to show up before embarking on some nefarious project together!

### **The devious “destroyer”**

Lucifer/Satan/the Devil/the Adversary is very prominent in Mormonism: on lds.org there are in excess of 7,800 references to the various names of the imagined and feared male intelligence-spirit. Apparently, he is quite powerful because a church lesson says:

Satan can imitate 'gifts of the Spirit'....

How can we discern between the true gifts of the Spirit and Satan's imitations?

Satan can imitate the gifts of tongues, prophecy, visions, healings, and other miracles...Satan wants us to believe in his false prophets, false healers, and false miracle workers. They may appear to be so real to us that the only way to know is to ask God for the gift of discernment. The devil himself can appear as an angel of light...

Satan wants to blind us to the truth and keep us from seeking the true gifts of the Spirit. Mediums, astrologers, fortune tellers, and sorcerers are inspired by Satan even if they claim to follow God. Their works are abominable to the Lord... We should avoid all associations with the powers of Satan.<sup>64</sup>

According to Mormonism, Tarot cards, Ouija boards, and other objects associated with the occult, are forbidden by God because they work via "the powers of Satan." However, if the Latter-day Saint religion is correct, Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ had no problem with Joseph Smith using an "egg-shaped, brown rock" as a peep/seer stone and his hat—stovepipe or other design—as "translation" aids. It would seem that certain aspects of occultism have bothered the LDS deities, while others have not. To believing Mormons, it all makes 'sense' somehow.



## Chapter 8

### Blood Atonement, the Celestialized Earth, and America on the Brink

**[W]hat people heard about the Mormons as they gossiped over the back fence or sat in the barbershop was often twisted and shaped to appeal to the popular appetite for the lurid and sensational: secret rites, priestly orders, blood atonement, polygamy, and white slavery.”** – Excerpt from an article by Latter-day Saint authors Neal Lambert and Richard Cracroft about “Gentile” beliefs about Mormonism. Their piece was published in the LDS Church’s March 1972 *Ensign* magazine.

**President Brigham Young said, “When it [the earth] becomes celestialized, it will be like the sun, and be prepared for the habitation of the [Latter-day] saints, and be brought back into the presence of the Father and the Son, it will not then be an opaque body as it now is, but it will be like the stars of the firmament, full of light and glory; it will be a body of light... This earth, when it becomes purified and sanctified, or celestialized, will become like a sea of glass; and a person, by looking into it, can know things past, present, and to come; though none but celestialized beings can enjoy this privilege. They will look into the earth, and the things they desire to know will be exhibited to them, the same as the face is seen by looking into a mirror.”** – From “Section 130 Items of Instruction” of the Mormon Church’s *Doctrine and Covenants Students Manual* (published in 2002).

**When we speak of nationalism, or culture, there is in reality only one nation or one culture: the nation of God and the [Mormon] gospel culture, a vast amalgam of all the positive aspects of our cultures, histories, customs, and languages. The building of the kingdom of God [the Latter-day Saint Church] is such an amalgam, and is the only place where these different values may and can coexist.** – LDS First Quorum of the Seventy member Charles Didier responding to a question, “What should be the place of national feelings among Church members?,” published in the June 1976 *Ensign* a few weeks before the United States’ bicentennial celebration.

In Chapter 2, I wrote that Mormon apostle Dallin Oaks said to Harvard Law School faculty and students in early 2010 that approximately half of the people surveyed about Mormonism thought that Latter-day Saints had “weird beliefs.” While the information presented in the past seven chapters has amply shown why many of Mormons’ notions have indeed been bizarre, there is more LDS weirdness to be covered. Indeed, after Joseph Smith was killed in June 1844 the movement that he had created and led for a decade and a half became even

more un-Christian in terms of its doctrines, teachings, and policies. Our examination of Mormon nonsense continues.

### **Blood Atonement**

One of the darkest aspects of Mormonism has been the doctrine and practice of blood atonement, the killing of “sinful” Latter-day Saints for the “welfare” of their “souls” as well as various non-members, according to LDS dogma. The genesis of blood atonement began with a concept of vengeance in the Latter-day Saint movement in the early 1830s as Mormons experienced hostility from people unsympathetic to their religious beliefs and practices. On February 24, 1834, Joseph Smith claimed to have received another “revelation” from Jesus Christ, which subsequently became LDS scripture. It said:

[I]nasmuch as mine enemies come against you [Mormons] to drive you from my goodly land [Jackson County, Missouri], which I have consecrated to be the land of Zion, even from your own lands after these testimonies, which ye have brought before me against them, ye shall curse them;

And whomsoever ye curse, I will curse, and ye shall avenge me of mine enemies.<sup>1</sup>

Apparently, Mormonism’s Jesus was looking for a fight. However, Smith’s “revelation” contradicted the Christian admonishment in the twelfth chapter of the Book of Romans in the New Testament: “Bless them which persecute you; bless, and curse not.”<sup>2</sup> It would seem that after watching human affairs from heaven, “the Lord” had become fed up with his idea about turning the other cheek, per Matthew 5:39 in the New Testament, and decided to authorize Mormons to strike back.

About half a decade after Jesus’ supposed message to Smith, Latter-day Saint Reed Peck wrote that “Brother” Joseph told him that he had a vision in which the ancient Christian apostle Peter revealed that he had killed his traitorous colleague, Judas Iscariot. Peck penned the following:

He [Joseph Smith] talked of dissenters [in the Latter-day Saint Church] and cited us to the case of Judas, saying that Peter told him in a conversation a few days ago that himself hung Judas for betraying Christ.<sup>3</sup>

If true, the leading Christian apostle was a vengeance-seeking murderer, a concept particularly repugnant to Roman Catholics and Orthodox Christians because they believe there is an unbroken line of religious authority from pious Peter down through the centuries to each pope and bishop, respectively.

Like polygamy, for a number of years the Latter-day Saint doctrine of blood atonement was kept secret from rank-and-file Mormons by the church’s

senior priesthood leadership. However, after adherents to Mormonism settled in Utah starting in July 1847 the dark doctrine was taught openly. For example, in December 1857 Mormon apostle Heber Kimball, a First Presidency member, told church members gathered in Salt Lake City:

Judas lost that saving principle, and they took him and killed him. It is said in the Bible that his bowels gushed out; but they actually kicked him until his bowels came out... Judas was like salt that had lost its saving principles—good for nothing but to be cast out and trodden under foot of men... It is so with you, ye Elders of Israel, when you forfeit your covenants [i.e., Mormon oaths]... I know the day is right at hand when men will forfeit their Priesthood and turn against us and against the covenants they have made, and they will be destroyed as Judas was.<sup>4</sup>

Originally, Mormon apostle Brigham Young was not keen on blood atonement, but after he assumed control of the presidency of the Latter-day Saint Church in 1847, he became a strong proponent of the sinister, “restored” doctrine. The *Journal of Discourses* says that he told church members in the autumn of 1856:

There are sins that men commit for which they cannot receive forgiveness in this world, or in that which is to come, and if they had their eyes open to see their true condition, they would be perfectly willing to have their blood spilt upon the ground, that the smoke thereof might ascend to heaven as an offering for their sins; and the smoking incense would atone for their sins, whereas, if such is not the case, they will stick to them and remain upon them in the spirit world.

I know, when you hear my brethren [Mormon priesthood leaders] telling about cutting people off from the earth [i.e., killing them], that you consider it is strong doctrine, but it is to save them, not to destroy them... I know 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 thereof might ascend to God as an offering to appease the wrath that is kindled against them, and that the law might have its course. I will say further; I have had men come to me and offer their lives to atone for their sins.

It is true that the blood of the Son of God was shed for sins through the fall [of Biblical Adam and Eve] and those committed by men, yet men can commit sins which it can never remit. As it was in ancient days, so it is in our day... There are sins that can be atoned for by an offering upon an altar, as in ancient days, and there are sins that the blood of a lamb, of a calf, or of turtle doves, cannot remit, but they

must be atoned for by the blood of the man. That is the reason why men talk to you as they do from this stand; they understand the doctrine [of blood atonement] and throw out a few words about it. You have been taught that doctrine, but you do not understand it.<sup>5</sup>

The *Journal of Discourses* also states that one of Young's First Presidency counselors, apostle Jedediah Grant, sermonized in 1856 about blood atonement:

Some have received the Priesthood and a knowledge of the things of God, and still they dishonor the cause of truth [i.e., Mormonism], commit adultery, and every other abomination beneath the heavens... they will seek unto wizards that peep...get drunk and wallow in the mire and filth, and yet they call themselves Saints...there are men and women that I would advise to go to the President [of the church, being Brigham Young] immediately, and ask him to appoint a committee to attend to their case; and then let a place be selected, and let that committee shed their blood.

We have those amongst us that are full of all manner of abominations, those who need to have their blood shed, for water [used for baptism] will not do, their sins are of too deep a dye.

You may think that I am not teaching you Bible doctrine, but what says the [ancient Christian] apostle Paul? I would ask how many covenant breakers there are in this city and in this kingdom. 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.<sup>6</sup>

More than a century later, in his 856-page volume *Mormon Doctrine*, LDS apostle Bruce McConkie quoted church president Joseph Fielding Smith (emphasis in italics was McConkie's):

Man may commit certain grievous sins—*according to his light and knowledge*—that will place him beyond the reach of the atoning blood of Christ. If then he would be saved, he must make sacrifice of his own life to atone—so far as in his power lies—for that sin, for the blood of Christ alone under certain circumstances will not avail... 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...their only hope is to have their own blood shed to atone, as far as possible, in their behalf.<sup>7</sup>

Was the doctrine of blood atonement put into practice? Yes. In the mid-twentieth century, Gustive Larson, professor of church history at Brigham Young University, acknowledged that it happened:

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 [in Utah] 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 meaning of the doctrine and the emotional extremes of the [Latter-day Saint] Reformation.<sup>8</sup>

In addition to incest and dabbling in the occult, offenses punishable by blood atonement—by having one's throat cut—included “immorality” (e.g., pre-marital sex, adultery, gay sex), stealing, using God's name in vain (profanity), refusing to convert to Mormonism, marrying a black, breaking one's church covenants, apostatizing from the LDS Church, lying, counterfeiting, and condemning Joseph Smith and/or approving of his violent end. Mormon polygamist, bishop, and LDS Council of Fifty member John Lee wrote in his *Confessions* book:

[T]he sinful member was to be slain for the remission of his sins, it being taught by the leaders and believed by the people that the right thing to do with a sinner who did not repent and obey the Council, was to take the life of the offending party, and thus save his everlasting soul. This was called “Blood Atonement”...

The most deadly sin among the people was adultery, and many men were killed in Utah for that crime.<sup>9</sup>

And what about the future? Will blood atonement be practiced again? Creepily, in his section in *Mormon Doctrine* on the lethal aspect of the Latter-day Saint religion, apostle McConkie wrote that “this doctrine [blood atonement] can only be practiced in its fulness in a day when the civil and ecclesiastical laws are administered in the same hands.”<sup>10</sup>

In the LDS belief system, that time is coming. Mormonism contends that after the return of Jesus Christ, he will establish his “dominion” worldwide, and the Mormon Church and its obedient priesthood holders will be at the center of a global theocratic government (more information about this topic is provided later in this chapter).

### **The Second Coming**

The Second Coming—the return of Jesus Christ—to our planet from the Celestial Kingdom near Kolob is a key aspect of Mormonism. Lds.org says:

When the Savior comes again, He will come in power and glory to claim the earth as His kingdom. His Second Coming will mark the beginning of the Millennium.

The Second Coming will be a fearful, mournful time for the wicked, but it will be a day of peace for the righteous.<sup>11</sup>

In April 2011, Mormon apostle Neil Andersen told church members during General Conference:

Those awaiting the Savior's coming will "look for [Him]." And He has promised, "I will come"! The righteous will see Him "in the clouds of heaven, clothed with power and great glory." "An angel shall sound his trumpet, and the saints...from the four quarters of the earth" will "be caught up to meet him." Those "that have slept," meaning those worthy Saints who have died, "shall [also] come forth to meet [Him]."<sup>12</sup>

Mormonism maintains that the decomposed bodies of Latter-day Saints—cremation has long been discouraged by LDS patriarchal leaders—will be supernaturally re-energized and levitate up through the earth's atmosphere to meet the descending Jesus Christ. Hopefully, the Mormon Church will provide the Federal Aviation Administration, Pentagon, Department of Homeland Security, and other government organizations in the United States as well as their counterparts in other countries with advance warning before the levitation *en masse* begins.

The imagined return of Jesus from the Celestial Kingdom is so important to Latter-day Saints that there are in excess of 1,600 references to it on lds.org. Members have been told by Mormon General Authorities to help "build the kingdom of God [the church] and prepare the world for the Second Coming of the Savior."<sup>13</sup> In September 1988, senior apostle and church president Ezra Benson told Latter-day Saints via his *Ensign* article:

In all ages prophets have looked down through the corridors of time to our day. Billions of the deceased and those yet to be born have their eyes on us. Make no mistake about it—this is a marked generation. There has never been more expected of the faithful in such a short period of time than there is of us. Never before on the face of this earth have the forces of evil and the forces of good been so well organized. Now is the great day of the devil's power. But now is also the great day of the Lord's power, with the greatest number of [Mormon] priesthood holders on the earth.

Each day the forces of evil and the forces of good enlist new recruits. Each day we personally make many decisions showing the cause we support. The final outcome is certain—the forces of righteousness

will win. But what remains to be seen is where each of us personally, now and in the future, will stand in this battle—and how tall we will stand. Will we be true to our last days and fulfill our foreordained missions?<sup>14</sup>

Twenty-three years later, LDS Church president Thomas Monson reminded Mormons of what Benson had said, adding:

For nearly six thousand years, God has held you in reserve [in the premortal existence] to make your appearance [on earth] in the final days before the second coming of the Lord. Some individuals will fall away, but the kingdom of God will remain intact to welcome the return of its Head—even Jesus Christ.<sup>15</sup>

The forty-fourth chapter of the LDS *Gospel Principles* indoctrination manual states:

When Jesus Christ comes again to the earth, He will do the following things:

1. *He will cleanse the earth.* When Jesus comes again, He will come in power and great glory. At that time the wicked will be destroyed. All things that are corrupt [as defined by Mormonism] will be burned, and the earth will be cleansed by fire...
2. *He will judge His people.* When Jesus comes again, He will judge the nations and will divide the righteous from the wicked [based on Mormon criteria]...
3. *He will usher in the Millennium.* The Millennium is the thousand-year period when Jesus will reign on the earth. The righteous will be caught up to meet Jesus at His coming... His coming will begin the millennial reign.

President Brigham Young said:

In the Millennium, when the Kingdom of God is established on the earth in power, glory and perfection, and the reign of wickedness that has so long prevailed is subdued, the Saints of God will have the privilege of building their temples, and of entering into them, becoming, as it were, pillars in the temples of God...and they will officiate for their dead. Then we will see our [deceased] friends come up [out of the ground where they were buried], and perhaps some that we have been acquainted with here... And we will have revelations to know our forefathers clear back to Father Adam and Mother Eve, and we will enter into the temples of God and officiate for them.

4. *He will complete the First Resurrection.* Those who have obtained the privilege of coming forth in the resurrection of the just will rise from their graves. They will be caught up to meet the Savior as He comes down from heaven.

After Jesus Christ rose from the dead, other righteous people who had died were also resurrected. They appeared in Jerusalem and also on the American continent... This was the beginning of the First Resurrection. Some people have been resurrected since then. Those who already have been resurrected and those who will be resurrected at the time of His coming will all inherit the glory of the celestial kingdom...

All of the remaining dead [i.e., those who were “unrighteous” during mortality] will rise to meet God. They will either inherit the celestial kingdom or be cast into outer darkness with Satan...

5. *He will take His rightful place as King of heaven and earth.* When Jesus comes, He will establish His government on the earth. The [LDS] Church will become part of that kingdom. He will rule all the people of the earth in peace for 1,000 years.<sup>16</sup>

When do Mormons believe “the Lord” will “come in power and great glory”? LDS apostle Robert Hales told them in April 1994: “The second coming of Jesus Christ is nigh at hand, as the signs of the Second Coming are being fulfilled this very day.”<sup>17</sup>

On lds.org, there are in excess of two hundred recorded talks, lessons, church magazine articles, and other materials that reinforce the Mormon concept that the return of Christianity’s Son of God is “nigh at hand” (i.e., soon). A decade after Hales delivered his sermon, Oaks reiterated the LDS doctrine about the Second Coming during a session of General Conference:

Four matters are indisputable to Latter-day Saints: (1) The Savior will return to the earth in power and great glory to reign personally during a millennium of righteousness and peace. (2) At the time of His coming there will be a destruction of the wicked and a resurrection of the righteous. (3) No one knows the time of His coming, but (4) the faithful are taught to study the signs of it and to be prepared for it. I wish to speak about the fourth of these great realities: the signs of the Second Coming and what we should do to prepare for it.<sup>18</sup>

In an attempt to prove to church members that Jesus’ return could be at any moment, Oaks listed various phenomena—some imagined, others real—as “signs” of Christ’s imminent re-appearance:

1. The fulness of the gospel (Mormonism) is “restored and preached” worldwide.



2. “False Christs and false prophets” arise and deceive many people.
3. There are “wars and rumors of wars, with nation rising against nation.”
4. There are “earthquakes in divers places” and “famine and pestilence.”
5. There is “an overflowing scourge, a desolating sickness covering the land.”
6. “Iniquity” spreads throughout the world.
7. “The whole earth [is] in commotion.”
8. “Men’s hearts” fail them.

### **Body piercings and short skirts are Second Coming “signs”**

Oaks also said in his sermon that “pagan piercing of body parts,” “self-serving pleasure pursuits,” and “revealing attire” are proof that Jesus will soon make his history-altering trip from Mormonism’s heaven.<sup>19</sup> According to the LDS religion, God strongly disapproves of “tattoos and similar things which deface your body,”<sup>20</sup> women wearing skirts hemmed above the knee, and female clothing that exposes cleavage (any amount), including “bikinis and other immodest types of swimwear.”<sup>21</sup> Activities supposedly forbidden by the Latter-day Saint gods Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ include going topless (Mormon males are permitted to remove their tops, but only when swimming or bathing), nudism, and doing anything with one’s scantily-clad or naked body for a living (e.g., lingerie or nude modeling, stripping, prostitution). Natives wearing few, if any, body coverings and having multiple piercings and tattoos as well as indigenous women walking around with their breasts exposed must really bother the prudish Latter-day Saint deities!

Mormonism specifies that “the Kingdom of God” will be “established on the earth in power” after Jesus supernaturally returns to this planet. In accordance with this LDS doctrine, skimpy swimwear, strapless dresses, “immodest” skirts, lingerie fashion shows, passionate kissing—or “worse”—by unmarried persons, provocative dancing, and all other “unholy” expressions of human sexuality and creativity will be forbidden. “Sacred” sex between married couples will be permitted, of course, and Latter-day Saints “sealed” in temples will continue to be told to “multiply and replenish the earth.”

Let us briefly assume that Mormon doctrines are correct and Jesus Christ miraculously returns. In that case, LDS moral “cleanliness” standards, including the one about males not “tampering” with their “little factory,” would undoubtedly be instituted worldwide. However, enforcing such strictures would be problematic, to say the least. Would resurrected “sexual purity” officers suddenly appear in bedrooms, infraction booklet and crystal pen in hand to write tickets? And would the very rich Latter-day Saint Church process disobedience fines, taking a cut as an “administration fee” and boosting its multi-billion-dollar annual revenue even higher? Mormon “prophets” have not said, but one can easily imagine the LDS organization having already created a related business plan.

Another consideration: Because Latter-day Saints do not smoke or drink alcoholic beverages, coffee, tea, or cola drinks due to the Word of Wisdom, it is very likely that a millennia-long prohibition on booze and other “Gentile”

substances would be put into effect. In that case, there would be one thousand years of drinking water, milk, soya- and rice-based beverages, fruit juices, non-caffeinated sodas, alcohol-free beer, and herbal teas. At the end of the Millennium, people might be healthier, but they would also likely be grumpy.

**The “elect” need to “recognize the signs”**

“Lesson 46: Jesus Christ Will Come Again” in an LDS Church manual used to indoctrinate children instructs the teacher to:

Explain that Jesus wants the members of his church, or the elect [Latter-day Saints], to recognize the signs preceding his coming so they will not be deceived and will be prepared to meet him.

Emphasize that we must always listen to the living prophet [the church’s president] and follow what he tells us to do to avoid being deceived.

Bring newspapers or periodicals and let the children find articles that show the desolations that are happening in the world.

Sing or read the words to “Follow the Prophet”...

Bear testimony [to the children] that those who obey the commandments and live righteously [as defined by Mormonism] can look forward to the second coming of Jesus Christ with joy and gladness. Encourage the children to be ever watchful for the signs of Jesus’ second coming and be spiritually prepared for this glorious event.<sup>22</sup>

Two of the nine verses of “Follow the Prophet” (#110 in the LDS *Children’s Songbook*) are:

Adam was a prophet, first one that we know;  
In a place called Eden, he helped things to grow.  
Adam served the Lord, by following his ways;  
We are his descendants, in the latter days.

Now we have a world, where people are confused;  
If you don’t believe it; go and watch the news.  
We can get direction, all along our way;  
If we heed the prophets--follow what they say.

The words of the chorus (sung after each verse) are:

Follow the prophet, follow the prophet,  
Follow the prophet; don’t go astray.

Follow the prophet, follow the prophet,  
Follow the prophet; he knows the way.<sup>23</sup>

For generations, “Follow the Prophet” and other Latter-day Saint songs as well as lessons, magazine articles, audio-visual materials, and other productions have been used to “program” children to obey Mormon priesthood leaders. One of the LDS Church manuals used to “brainwash” psychologically vulnerable kids—starting at age three—to do what the organization’s president says is God’s will contains not just one or two, but five lessons about obeying church patriarchal authority.

Importantly, mental health professionals have warned that cults use repetition to reinforce their disempowering and mind-numbing concepts. Also disturbing is the fact that on lds.org there are in excess of five hundred instances of “follow the prophet” and more than sixty of “follow the brethren.” By the time children raised in Mormonism become young adults, they have typically been subjected to more than 4,500 hours of LDS “programming,” a systematic abuse of their psyches that began when they were toddlers.<sup>24</sup>

### **“We may be living in the most peaceful time”: non-Mormons**

Not only have Latter-day Saint teachings about “signs” preceding the imagined return of Jesus Christ, blood atonement, Satan controlling bodies of water, sexual “sins” destroying the world, and other Mormon “truths” been nonsensical, LDS concepts about “the last days” have been as well. In his April 2004 General Conference sermon, Oaks said that “[w]ars and rumors of wars, with nation rising against nation” was one of the “signs of the Second Coming.” War has been part of human affairs for at least five thousand years, and attacking other people to steal what they possess has been going on for at least twelve millennia.<sup>25</sup> Interestingly, war and other violent human activities are in decline, as explained in two books published in 2011: *The Better Angels of Our Nature* by Steven Pinker, and *Winning the War on War: The Decline of Armed Conflict Worldwide* by Joshua Goldstein. The publishers’ descriptions are as follows:

*The Better Angels of Our Nature*: Faced with the ceaseless stream of news about war, crime, and terrorism, one could easily think we live in the most violent age ever seen. Yet as *New York Times* bestselling author Steven Pinker shows in this startling and engaging new work, just the opposite is true: violence has been diminishing for millennia and we may be living in the most peaceful time in our species’ existence. For most of history, war, slavery, infanticide, child abuse, assassinations, pogroms, gruesome punishments, deadly quarrels, and genocide were ordinary features of life. But today, Pinker shows (with the help of more than a hundred graphs and maps) all these forms of violence have dwindled and are widely condemned.<sup>26</sup>

*Winning the War on War: The Decline of Armed Conflict Worldwide:*  
An award-winning expert on international affairs and military history reveals the astounding truth about war: Peacekeeping is working.

Read the newspapers, and you'll be convinced war is worse than it's ever been: more civilian deaths, more rapes, more armed conflicts all around the world. But as leading scholar and writer Joshua Goldstein shows in this vivid, dramatic book, the reality is just the opposite. We are in the midst of a general decline in armed conflict that is truly extraordinary in human history...

Goldstein has compiled evidence ranging from the histories of UN peacekeeping missions to the latest Swedish data on armed conflicts. He tells the stories of peacekeeping failures such as Bosnia and Rwanda, but also the less heralded success stories such as Mozambique and El Salvador. In this "boots on the ground" account, Goldstein shows why global peacekeeping efforts are working -- how large-scale looting, sexual assault, and genocidal atrocities are being stopped -- and how we can continue winning the war on war.<sup>27</sup>

### **Creating and reinforcing fear, Mormon-style**

Oaks' fear-mongering involving his list of supposed "signs of the Second Coming" was typical of the Latter-day Saint leadership's unenlightened behavior dating back to the 1830s. Causing millions of people, including children and teenagers, through systematic LDS indoctrination to be afraid of the non-Mormon world, negative events such as natural disasters, and an unknown future has been foundational to Mormonism since Smith created the psychologically harmful religion seven generations ago.

History has demonstrated time and again that fearful individuals are far more susceptible to manipulation than those grounded in reason; hence, the regular use of fear in the Latter-day Saint Church. Oaks should have scrutinized his beliefs about "the signs of the Second Coming" decades ago and rejected Mormonism's fearful nonsense instead of wasting part of his life promulgating it. Lamentably, his lack of critical thinking has been at the individual level characteristic of the dysfunctional Latter-day Saint mindset worldwide.

Because of global news coverage, people learn about natural and man-made disasters and other disturbing events within minutes, not weeks, months, years, or never, as was the case centuries ago. For example, the only reason why Europeans in the late sixteenth century learned of the earthquake in China's Shaanxi Province in 1556 A.D. (C.E.) that killed an estimated 830,000 people was because they read about it in a book published thirteen years after the calamity. Specifically, *A Treatise of China* was penned by Gaspar da Cruz, a widely-traveled Portuguese Dominican friar, who heard about the quake during his trip to Asia.<sup>28</sup> Typical for someone indoctrinated in Catholicism centuries ago, da Cruz regarded the disaster as probable divine punishment for Chinese

“sins,” and erroneously believed that a comet that appeared in February 1569 was a “sign” from God foretelling other catastrophes as well as the birth of the Antichrist.

In the context of Mormonism, information readily accessed via television, radio, newspapers, websites, and other media about tragic situations around the globe does not mean that an unorthodox Jewish teacher—Jesus of Nazareth—who died about two millennia ago is returning to earth from his imagined home “on a globe like a sea of glass and fire” somewhere in the Latter-day Saint cosmos. Unfortunately, throughout history many religious people have processed information about phenomena through the mental filter of their particular—and flawed—“spiritual” belief system, whether Catholic (da Cruz), Mormon (Oaks), or other.

### **The Millennium**

The concept of the Millennium deserves closer examination because it is integral to Latter-day Saint thinking about human history. Indeed, the LDS Church says on its main website:

When we speak of “the Millennium,” we refer to the 1,000 years following the Savior’s Second Coming... During the Millennium, “Christ will reign personally upon the earth”...

The Millennium will be a time of righteousness [as defined by Mormonism] and peace on the earth. The Lord has revealed that “in that day the enmity of man, and the enmity of beasts, yea, the enmity of all flesh, shall cease”... Satan will be “bound, that he shall have no place in the hearts of the children of men”...

During the Millennium, all people on the earth will be good and just, but many will not have received the fulness of the gospel [Mormonism]. Consequently, members of the Church will participate in missionary work.

Members of the Church will also participate in temple work during the Millennium. The [Latter-day] Saints will continue to build temples and receive ordinances in behalf of their kindred dead. Guided by revelation, they will prepare records of their ancestors all the way back to Adam and Eve.

Complete righteousness and peace will continue until the end of the 1,000 years, when Satan “shall be loosed for a little season, that he may gather together his armies.” The armies of Satan will fight against the hosts of heaven, who will be led by Michael, or Adam. Satan and his followers will be defeated and cast out forever.<sup>29</sup>

This online Latter-day Saint text describes a fantasy, including the bit about “the enmity of man, and the enmity of beasts...shall cease” during the Millennium. According to Mormonism, people will stop quarrelling and warring, and non-human creatures will cease killing each other. While the former would be a welcome change, the latter would be highly impractical because much of the food chain depends on creatures attacking and ingesting other insects, fish, mammals, birds, reptiles, etc. An *ABC News* report in January 2013 said that feral and domestic cats alone “are responsible for the deaths of 1.4 to 3.7 billion birds and 6.9 to 20.7 billion mammals every year, according to research conducted by the Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.”<sup>30</sup>

There are about 8.7 million species, many of them predatory, across the earth. To believe that the “enmity of beasts” would suddenly end because Mormonism’s Jesus traveled through space to rule our planet for one thousand years is absurd. Regarding the fate of humans, the LDS Church teaches:

Because of the destruction of the wicked at the Savior’s Second Coming, only righteous people will live on the earth at the beginning of the Millennium. They will be those who have lived virtuous and honest lives. These people will inherit either the terrestrial or celestial kingdom.

During the Millennium, mortals will still live on earth, and they will continue to have children as we do now... Joseph Smith said that immortal beings will frequently visit the earth. These resurrected beings will help with the government and other work.

People will still have their agency, and for a time many will be free to continue with their religions and ideas. Eventually everyone will confess that [Mormonism’s] Jesus Christ is the Savior.

During the Millennium, Jesus will “reign personally upon the earth”... Joseph Smith explained that Jesus will “reign over the Saints and come down [from the Celestial Kingdom near Kolob] and instruct”...

Resurrected beings will help us [Latter-day Saints] correct the mistakes we have made in doing research concerning our dead ancestors. They will also help us find the information we need to complete our [genealogical] records.

The gospel [Mormonism] will be taught with great power to all people.

In what ways will life during the Millennium be different from life on the earth now? The Prophet Joseph Smith taught that during the Millennium, “the earth will be renewed [supernaturally transformed] and receive its paradisiacal glory”...

During the Millennium, there will be no war. People will live in peace and harmony together. Things that have been used for war will be turned to useful purposes.

[LDS Church] President John Taylor taught: “The Lord will be king over all the earth, and all mankind literally under his sovereignty, and every nation under the heavens will have to acknowledge his authority, and bow to his scepter. Those who serve him in righteousness will have communications with God, and with Jesus; will have the ministering of angels, and will know the past, the present, and the future; and other people, who may not yield full obedience to his laws, nor be fully instructed in his covenants [i.e., Latter-day Saint oaths], will, nevertheless, have to yield full obedience to his government. For it will be the reign of God upon the earth, and he will enforce his laws, and command that obedience from the nations of the world which is legitimately his right.”

During the Millennium, there will be no death as we know it. When people have lived to an old age, they will not die and be buried. Instead, they will be changed from their mortal condition to an immortal condition in “the twinkling of an eye.”

Some truths have not been revealed to us. All things will be revealed during the Millennium.

What will be the final destiny of the earth? At the end of the 1,000 years, Satan will be set free for a short time. Some people will turn away from Heavenly Father. Satan will gather his armies, and Michael (Adam) will gather the hosts of heaven. In this great struggle, Satan and his followers will be cast out forever. The earth will be changed into a celestial kingdom.<sup>31</sup>

Assuming momentarily that the Millennium happens as Mormonism contends, it is very unlikely that the governments of Muslim, Hindu, and other non-Christian nations will acknowledge Jesus’ “authority.” In the minds of their citizens, Christianity’s founder is inferior to Islam’s Allah, Hinduism’s Trimurti (Brahma, the creator; Vishnu, the maintainer or preserver; and Shiva, the destroyer or transformer), and the deities of other religions. How will Jesus convince “every nation under the heavens...to acknowledge his authority... [and] yield full obedience to his government”? Again, the LDS Church’s leadership has never provided a cogent answer.

Latter-day Saint ideas that “immortal beings will frequently visit the earth,” Jesus will “reign personally upon the earth,” dead humans will be magically re-animated and visit our planet to help Mormons with their genealogical research, and seniors will be made immortal in “the twinkling of an eye” are also ludicrous.

**“This earth will be made like unto crystal”; Mormons to get a “white stone”**

The reader will recall from Chapter 1 that members of the Smith family, particularly Mormonism’s founder, Joseph Jr., believed in the occult and used rocks that they had convinced themselves possessed one or more mystical powers. Consequently, supernatural stones have been integral to the Latter-day Saint religion since its creation, so much so that LDS scripture says:

This earth, in its sanctified and immortal state, will be made like unto crystal and will be a Urim and Thummim to the inhabitants who dwell thereon, whereby all things pertaining to an inferior kingdom, or all kingdoms of a lower order, will be manifest to those who dwell on it; and this earth will be Christ’s.

Then 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;

And a white stone is given to each of those [Mormons] who come into the celestial kingdom, whereon is a new name written, which no man knoweth save he that receiveth it. The new name is the key word.<sup>32</sup>

To summarize, Mormonism asserts that each faithful Latter-day Saint will get a small, magical rock after they die and enter God’s realm. On each “white stone” will be—according to LDS scripture—“a new name,” or “key word” (i.e., a password). The “new name” is significant because in a Mormon temple ceremony, each member receives one, either for themselves if experiencing the ritual for the first time, or for dead people during subsequent visits. Latter-day Saint doctrine maintains that after death, each Mormon will have to communicate their “new name” in order to pass by the angels that guard the way to the Celestial Kingdom, while correctly demonstrating the secret hand grasps and gestures and uttering the strange phrases they learned during mortality in Latter-day Saint temples (see Chapter 10 for more information).

Not surprisingly, the Mormon Church does not inform its members that each temple “new name,” which Latter-day Saints have been led to believe is God-given and unique to each individual, is in fact recycled and “revealed” to other members.

**America’s Constitution “on the brink of ruin”**

As an apocalyptic religion that is American in origin, Mormonism includes the dire idea that the United States will degenerate constitutionally and in other ways during “the last days” leading up to the return of Jesus Christ. The LDS Church provides the following related information online:



[D]ocuments show that Joseph Smith did prophesy a number of times that the United States and the Constitution would be imperiled and that the [Mormon] elders would have a hand in saving them. The first known record of the prophecy dates to July 19, 1840, in Nauvoo, when the prophet spoke about the redemption of Zion. Using Doctrine & Covenants 101 as a text, he said, “Even this nation will be on the verge of crumbling to pieces and tumbling to the ground and when the Constitution is on the brink of ruin this people will be the staff upon which the nation shall lean and they shall bear the Constitution away from the very verge of destruction.” (Joseph Smith Papers, LDS Church Historical Archives, Box 1, March 10, 1844.)

There are also other documents in Church History files that show that five different early Saints recorded some remarks by the Prophet Joseph Smith on this same prophecy, perhaps voiced by the Prophet a number of times in a number of ways after 1840. [Mormon apostle] Parley P. Pratt wrote in 1841 that the prophet said, “The [U.S.] government is fallen and needs redeeming. It is guilty of Blood and cannot stand as it now is but will come so near desolation as to hang as it were by a single hair!!!! Then the servants goes [sic] to the nations of the earth, and gathers the strength of the Lord’s house! A mighty army!!!!!! And this is the redemption of Zion when the saints shall have redeemed that government and reinstated it in all its purity and glory!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!” (George A. Smith Papers, Church Archives, Box 7, Folder 5, January 21, 1841.)

James Burgess related that the Prophet [Joseph Smith], while addressing the Nauvoo Legion several miles east of Nauvoo in May 1843, said that “the time would come when the constitution and government would hang by a brittle thread and would be ready to fall into other hands but this people the latter-day saints will step forth and save it.” (James Burgess Journal, 1818–1904, Church Archives, vol. 1.)

[Mormon apostle] Orson Hyde recalled that the Prophet [Joseph Smith] predicted that “the time would come that the Constitution and the country would be in danger of an overthrow and said he, if the constitution be saved at all, it will be by the Elders of this Church.” (JD [Journal of Discourses], 6:150.)

In a Pioneer Day celebration in Ogden in 1871, Eliza R. Snow said, “I heard the prophet [Brigham Young] say, ‘The time will come when the government of these United States will be so nearly overthrown through its corruption, that the Constitution will hang as it were by a single hair, and the Latter-day Saints—the Elders of Israel—will step forward to its rescue and save it.’” (Journal History, MSF 143 #28, July 24, 1871.)

[Mormon apostle] Jedediah M. Grant, during the dark days of threatened invasion of Utah by a federal army, referred to the Prophet's utterance as he addressed a Mormon Battalion gathering in Salt Lake City, February 6, 1855[:] "What did the Prophet Joseph say? When the Constitution shall be tottering we shall be the people to save it from the hand of the foe." (Deseret News Weekly, January 19, 1870.)

On various occasions, Joseph Smith referred to the Constitution, the country, and destiny of the nation; and there is clear evidence that he anticipated future peril. Furthermore, he pronounced the prophecy at various times and places. Perhaps he himself interchanged the simile "on the brink of ruin," "hang by a brittle thread," "hang by a single hair," etc., to describe the anticipated crisis. It is also clear that the redeemers or rescuers of the Constitution were to be either the Saints generally or priesthood officers specifically.

Since no particular time was given for fulfilling this prophecy, members of the Church have often wondered about its timing. The prophecy clearly indicates a single, identifiable episode yet to come.<sup>33</sup>

Mormon priesthood leaders have yet to elaborate on the "single, identifiable episode." The LDS Church possesses at least one of Smith's peep/seer stones, so perhaps the organization's president and senior "prophet, seer, and revelator," Thomas Monson, could put it in a hat à la Joseph Smith and supernaturally learn about the unidentified "future peril" for the benefit of his fellow Americans.

#### **"The kingdom of God means the government of God"**

There are more than 180 references on lds.org to the LDS Church being "the kingdom of God on the earth." The elitist organization says in one of its manuals used to indoctrinate adults:

The Church represents the introduction of the kingdom of God on the earth.

The kingdom of God means the government of God. That means, power, authority, rule, dominion, and a people to rule over. But that principle will not be fulfilled, cannot be entirely fulfilled, until, as we are told in the scriptures, the kingdoms of this world [i.e., nations]... become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ, and he will rule over them...and when unto him every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that he is Christ...to the glory of God, the Father. That time has not yet come, but there are certain principles associated therewith that have come; namely, the introduction of that kingdom [the LDS Church], and the introduction of that kingdom could only

be made by that Being [Mormonism's Jesus] who is the King and Ruler, and the Head of that government, first communicating his ideas, his principles, his laws, his government to the people. Otherwise we should not know what his laws were.

What is the first thing necessary for the establishment of his kingdom? It is to raise up a prophet [Joseph Smith, according to the LDS Church] and have him declare the will of God [including polygamy and other "restored" doctrines]; the next thing is to have a people yield obedience to the hand of the Lord through that prophet. If you cannot have these, you never can establish the kingdom of God upon the earth.

God was desirous of introducing his kingdom upon the earth, and he had, in the first place, to organize his church, to organize the people that he had scattered among the nations and to bring them together, that there might be one fold and one shepherd...and one Lord, one faith, and one baptism, and one God, who should be in all and through all...and by which all should be governed. To facilitate this object, he organized his holy priesthood as it existed in the heavens...

[T]he kingdom of God...will not be an aerial phantom, according to some visionaries, but a substantial reality. It will be established, as before said, on a literal earth, and will be composed of literal men, women, and children; of living saints who keep the commandments of God, and of resurrected bodies who shall actually come out of their graves, and live on the earth. The Lord will be king over all the earth, and all mankind literally under his sovereignty, and every nation under the heavens will have to acknowledge his authority, and bow to his scepter. Those who serve him in righteousness will have communications with God, and with Jesus; will have the ministering of angels, and will know the past, the present, and the future; and other people, who may not yield full obedience to his laws, nor be fully instructed in his covenants, will, nevertheless, have to yield full obedience to his government. For it will be the reign of God upon the earth, and he will enforce his laws, and command that obedience from the nations of the world which is legitimately his right.<sup>34</sup>

History has shown time and again that the main problem with kingdoms is their lack of democratic institutions; the concentration of political power has resulted in countless abuses and crimes over the centuries. It was Winston Churchill, Britain's prime minister during and after the Second World War, who said: "Democracy is the worst form of government, except for all those other forms that have been tried." The LDS Church envisions theocratic rule in which Mormon men ordained to the priesthood will fill key government roles, as explained in the organization's indoctrination material:

Thearchy or theocracy is government by the immediate direction of [Mormonism's] God through his ministers and representatives [LDS "prophets" and those below them in the hierarchal priesthood authority structure]. A state governed in this manner is called [a] theocracy. This was the original earthly government, Adam serving as the great presiding high priest through whom the laws of the Lord, both temporal and spiritual, were revealed and administered. This type of government apparently continued among the righteous portion of mankind from the days of Adam to Enoch and the taking of Zion [via supernatural levitation] to the Lord's bosom.

When Christ comes to reign personally on earth during the millennial era, a perfect theocratic government will prevail.<sup>35</sup>

"Perfect" for whom? Catholics? Evangelical Christians? Baptists? Anglicans? Jehovah Witnesses? Jews? Muslims? Hindus? Buddhists? Non-believers? Assuming momentarily that the LDS concepts of the Second Coming and Millennium are correct, the envisaged theocratic government centered on Mormon concepts would not be a political organization created by the people for the people. Latter-day Saint apostle Orson Pratt made this clear when he explained to church members (a paragraph break has been added for ease of reading):

The form of government given to man immediately after the creation was theocratical; that is, the Creator [God, as defined by Mormonism] became the great Lawgiver. He appointed the officers of that government, established his own authority, and arranged all things after his own order, which is eternal. He himself instituted the same form of government here in this creation that he established in other kingdoms, worlds, or creations [in the universe], so far as the capacities and circumstances of the [extraterrestrial] inhabitants would permit. Hence such a government might in reality be termed a theocracy, because God was the author of the laws, forms, and institution of the same.

After a period of time, men [on earth] departed from God, apostatized from the form of government instituted from heaven; and, still thinking that it was needful and necessary to have some kind of government, in order to control the people and keep them within due bounds of subjection, they concluded to form and establish governments of their own, according to the best judgment and wisdom they had. Hence the various nations, both before and after the [Biblical] flood, instituted governments according to human wisdom, some making choice of one form, and some of another; some giving the whole authority into the hands of a ruler, called a king, an emperor, or monarch; others reserving a portion of the power in the hands of

various individuals, termed nobles or princes; others leaving the form of government more or less in the hands of the people at large, something resembling a republic. But all these various forms instituted by man were entirely different in one particular from that instituted of God.

The Lord claims it as a right, in consequence of his wisdom and superior power, and in consequence of his having created men, to govern them; and if so, he claims the right of originating their laws and of dictating the form of government by which they shall be ruled. This is his right; and every man, when he seriously reflects on this subject, will be willing to acknowledge that God surely has more wisdom, power, and knowledge, in relation to the kind of government which would be best adapted to the human family, than those finite beings whom he has created; and if he has this superior wisdom, power, authority, and knowledge, we ought to give to him that right.

But mankind would not permit him to exercise the right which so justly belongs to him. They usurped the authority and denied the right of the Almighty to govern them, and thus originated all the forms of human governments which have existed upon this globe for the last six thousand years.<sup>36</sup>

To conclude this chapter, authoritarian Mormonism maintains that governments created by humans, including American democratic republicanism, are inferior to the imagined theocratic rule of the religion's Jesus of the Celestial Kingdom. What would happen to the United States and other democracies under such an all-encompassing Mormon political-religious system? Having suffered from the LDS Church's deceit and manipulations for years—decades, in many cases—former Latter-day Saints, for starters, do not want to find out.

**Chapter 9**  
**Mormon Polygamy: Joseph Smith's Infamous 'Legacy'**

**Tell Zina, I put it off and put it off till an angel with a drawn sword stood by me and told me if I did not establish that principle [polygamy] upon the earth I would lose my position [as "prophet"] and my life.** – Joseph Smith lying to twenty year-old Zina Huntington's brother about being forced by God via an armed angel to practice plural marriage after Zina had married Henry Jacobs. Smith claimed that "the Lord" had made it known to him that Zina was to be his spouse despite the fact she had a living husband.

**Just prior to my mother's death in 1882 she called me to her bedside and told me that her days were numbered and before she passed away from mortality she desired to tell me something which she had kept as an entire secret from me and from all others but which she now desired to communicate to me. She then told me that I was the daughter of the Prophet Joseph Smith.** – Josephine Lyon, whose mother, Sylvia, was married to Windsor Lyon when Smith made her his eighth wife in February 1842.

**He taught me this principle of plural marriage...but we called it celestial marriage, and he told me that this principle had been revealed to him but it was not generally known.** – Emily Partridge, on her nineteenth birthday in February 1843 when thirty-seven year-old Joseph Smith spoke with her about becoming his wife (his eighteenth).

**The Pr[o]phet again Came and at my house occupied the Same Room & Bed with my Sister that the month previous he had occupied with the Daughter of the Late Bishop Partridge.** – Benjamin Johnson, brother of Almera Johnson, whom Smith made his twenty-second wife in April 1843.

**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.** – Nineteen year-old Melissa Lott's recollection of the wedding vows she exchanged in September 1843 with Joseph Smith, who was eighteen years her senior and already had more than two dozen women and teenage girls as his illegal spouses.

**We are charged with advocating a plurality of wives...now this is as false as the many other ridiculous charges which are brought against us. No sect has a greater reverence for the laws of matrimony...we practice what we preach.** – Joseph Smith lying in a written statement after rumours of his practice of “spiritual wifery” had spread during the summer of 1842 throughout the Mormon community of Nauvoo, Illinois.

**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...all is not well, while whor[e]doms and all manner of abominations are practiced under the cloak of religion.** – *Nauvoo Expositor*, a newspaper in western Illinois that exposed Mormon polygamy to the public in June 1844.

According to polling done in 2011, nearly half of Americans associated Mormonism with polygamy. Typically called “plural marriage” by the LDS Church and its members today, and referred to as “spiritual wifery” and “celestial marriage” by Mormons in the 1800s, the unlawful, heart-breaking and disruptive lifestyle was secretly started by Joseph Smith within half a decade of the establishment of his religious movement. He and other Latter-day Saint priesthood leaders who became polygamists convinced themselves that having multiple wives was part of the “restoration of the gospel” set in motion by God, despite polygamy having never been part of Christianity.

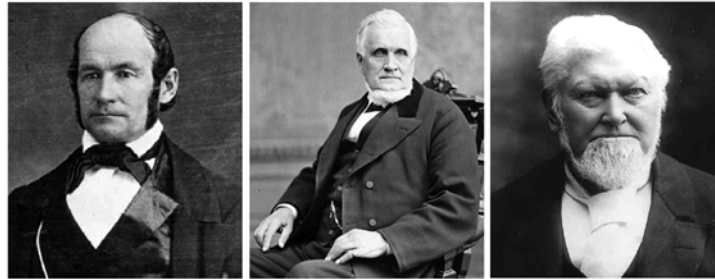
During the past ninety-plus years, Mormon doctrine pertaining to “celestial wives” and its illegal practice have been embraced by fundamentalist Latter-day Saints in Utah and other jurisdictions. Published diaries of females affected by LDS polygamy, news reports about the highly controversial aspect of Mormonism, and information provided by police forces and government officials have revealed that Mormon-style plural marriage has caused immense suffering since the 1830s. Historical facts about the much-criticized Latter-day Saint doctrine and practice are in the following scholarly volumes:

- *In Sacred Loneliness: The Plural Wives of Joseph Smith* by historian and author Todd Compton.<sup>1</sup> His 824-page book, which was first published in 1997, explains in great detail Smith’s practice of “spiritual wifery” with teenage girls and single and married women.
- *Mormon Polygamy: A History* by acclaimed researcher and author Richard Van Wagoner. His book was first published in 1989.
- *No Man Knows My History: The Life of Joseph Smith* by UCLA historian and biographer Fawn Brodie (mentioned in Chapter 1). Her book about Mormonism’s founder has been in print for more than six and a half decades.

### Many wives and children

Unlike Smith's laissez-faire compliance with his Word of Wisdom "revelation," he participated in polygamy with increasing zeal over approximately a decade as the president of the young Mormon Church. Compton's exhaustive research revealed that Smith had as his wives fifteen women who were not previously married, the spouses of eleven men, and seven adolescent girls, two of whom were just fourteen (some of Smith's brides were young enough to be his daughters).<sup>2</sup> There may have been other females unknown to historians whom the "prophet of the Restoration" made his spouses.

Mormon polygamy expanded significantly after Smith was killed in June 1844. Brigham Young, the second church president, had fifty-five wives—he divorced ten<sup>3</sup>—and fifty-six children. His and Smith's priesthood associate, apostle Heber Kimball, married forty-three women and had sixty-five offspring.<sup>4</sup> The third and fourth church presidents, John Taylor and Wilford Woodruff, had seven and five wives, respectively, and sixty-seven daughters and sons between them.<sup>5</sup> Other Latter-day Saint men had multiple spouses and considerable progeny.



Heber Kimball

John Taylor

Wilford Woodruff

### Fundamentalist Mormons and "ten virgins"

Because the Latter-day Saint doctrine of plural marriage has never been rescinded, since the early twentieth century many thousands of fundamentalist Mormons have believed that "the Lord" wants them to practice "the principle," despite polygamy being illegal in Utah and elsewhere.<sup>6</sup> Their unyielding position has been that Smith's polygamy "revelation" has remained in force and God has commanded that they obey it. They have been convinced that attaining "exaltation" has been partly dependent on their compliance with the "plurality of wives" doctrine and its "principles," quoting the Mormon Church's summary for Section 132 of the *Doctrine and Covenants*. Fundamentalist Latter-day Saints also believe that because plural marriage is divine in origin, it supersedes monogamous matrimonial unions, an idea that originated with Smith.

Reprehensibly, girls as young as twelve have been trafficked to satisfy the sexual appetite of fundamentalist Mormon men for virgins.<sup>7</sup> Smith's written polygamy "revelation," which is part of LDS scripture, mentions "ten virgins"



for each male desirous of wives in accordance with "the law of the priesthood."<sup>8</sup> Warren Jeffs, the deluded head of the fundamentalist Latter-day Saint cult who emulated Smith and other Mormon polygamist leaders, is serving a prison sentence in Texas of life plus twenty years for practicing "spiritual wifery" with underage girls.<sup>9</sup>

### **Hundreds of "Lost Boys"**

In addition to the many females who have suffered because of Latter-day Saint polygamy, several young men in Mormonism-based groups have as well. For example, in June 2005 an *ABC News* report, "Hundreds of 'Lost Boys' Expelled by Polygamist Community," said:

While representatives of the fundamentalist Mormons insist they're only kicking out people who violate their moral code, prosecutors and former members suspect the real motive may be polygamy -- an effort to reduce the competition for brides.

"These guys know that to continue to live polygamy -- and at the level it's gone to the last few years, with a few men having 10, 20, upwards of 70, 80 wives -- it's obvious that a number of boys have to go," said Dr. Dan Fischer, a former fundamentalist Mormon.

"In order to exist in a polygamist society you have to have more women to men, your ratio of women to men has to be greater," said Tom Sam Sneed, one of the many "Lost Boys" who have had to find new homes.<sup>10</sup>

A nephew of Warren Jeffs named Brent was one of the "Lost Boys" interviewed by *CBS News* in 2008. He explained that the polygamist Mormon leaders would "find little reasons to kick us out...to get these younger women."<sup>11</sup> Fathers of the teenage males have been told by the ruling priesthood leadership to drive their sons to the edge of town or another community and dump them on the streets. "These boys have nowhere to go," Brent noted. Having been raised in a cult and prohibited from forming relationships with people outside the closed, fundamentalist Latter-day Saint group, the lads have not been psychologically, socially, or educationally prepared for life away from the only community they have known since infancy.

### **"The plurality of wives"**

The polygamy "revelation" that Smith said he received from "the Lord"—the supposed "communication" from Jesus Christ became *D&C* 132—has been summarized by the Mormon Church as follows:

Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet, at Nauvoo, Illinois, recorded July 12, 1843, relating to the new and everlasting covenant, including the eternity of the marriage covenant and the principle of plural marriage. Although the revelation was recorded in 1843, evidence indicates that some of the principles involved in this revelation were known by the Prophet as early as 1831.<sup>12</sup>

Notably, for more than three decades prior to 2013 the church's summary for *D&C 132* was:

Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet, at Nauvoo, Illinois, recorded 12 July 1843, relating to the new and everlasting covenant, including the eternity of the marriage covenant, and also the plurality of wives (see *History of the Church*, 5:501-7). Although the revelation was recorded in 1843, it is evident from the historical records that the doctrines and principles involved in this revelation had been known by the Prophet since 1831.<sup>13</sup>

Conspicuously, Jesus and his apostles, as described in the New Testament, never had multiple wives or taught Christian disciples about the so-called "principle of plural marriage." It is perplexing that Bible-reading Smith thought that "restored" Christianity needed to include polygamy. Because the LDS Church condemns holding séances, Latter-day Saints are not likely to try to mystically contact the deceased "prophet of the Restoration" to ask for clarification about his motivation(s) for establishing "spiritual wifery" in his religious movement.

While Mormon plural marriage officially ended in 1890, it continued unofficially—and illegally—into the early twentieth century. Because the doctrine has never been removed from "the gospel," as mentioned, to this day LDS men can be "sealed" (married) for "time and eternity" to more than one woman in a Latter-day Saint temple after the first wife dies (in Mormonism's paradise, she faithfully awaits her mortal husband, who can date other women on earth as he wishes). Apostles Nelson and Oaks, for example, have been "sealed" to two women each, making them polygamists for eternity, per the "revelation" to Smith and the "law of the priesthood." Not surprisingly, in the patriarchal LDS Church "sealed" Mormon women are not allowed to marry again in the temple after their first husband dies.

### **Polygamy is essential for Mormons' salvation**

According to what Smith wrote on July 12, 1843, the polygamy "revelation" from Jesus Christ included the following communication:

Therefore, prepare thy heart to receive and obey the instructions which I ["the Lord"] am about to give unto you [Joseph Smith]; for all those who have this law ["the eternity of the marriage covenant," including "the plurality of wives"] revealed unto them must obey the same.

For behold, I reveal unto you a new and an everlasting covenant [“celestial marriage,” including plural marriage]; 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 [the Celestial Kingdom].<sup>14</sup>

If Smith is to be believed, Jesus, the founder of the Christian religion, declared that having more than one wife was a pre-requisite to entering the highest level of heaven after death. In other words, no polygamy, no eternal life; no “spiritual wifery,” no exaltation. This is why the “plurality of wives” is doctrinally still in effect in the LDS Church today. According to Mormonism, no mortal, including the church’s president, can unilaterally alter what “the Lord” has established or reinstated through a “revelation.” Doctrinal changes have to come from the resurrected, space-traveling Jewish teacher of nearly two millennia ago.

Another “truth” imparted to Latter-day Saints has been the notion that polygamy will be in effect throughout the Millennium. During Jesus’ thousand-year reign on this planet, plural marriage will again be part of Mormons’ lives. Not surprisingly, Latter-day Saint women and girls have never been enthusiastic supporters of the church’s “plurality of wives” doctrine. The writings of some members and news interviews with “sister wives” in Mormon polygamous groups have revealed that jealousy has been felt—understandably—by many of the women.

By introducing his polygamy doctrine and taking it past mere theory (doctrine), Smith unwisely disregarded female emotional “wiring.” In his day, most converts to Mormonism had grown up in Protestant societies that honored monogamous marriage and condemned “sinful,” non-monogamous relationships. Each wife wanted to feel special and cherished, the sole recipient of her husband’s devotion, which was impossible in LDS plural marriage arrangements.

The historical facts presented in the books by Compton, Van Wagoner, and Brodie reveal that Smith cared far less about the emotional needs of Mormon females than satisfying his desire to expand his harem of “wives and concubines,” quoting *D&C* 132. Asserting power and manipulating people as the Latter-day Saint “prophet” and experiencing sexual gratification with different partners were major aspects of his debauched thinking and behavior. What began as an extramarital affair between Smith and Fanny Alger, the teenage servant girl who worked in his home in the early 1830s, mushroomed by late 1843 into a power-and-sex addiction involving several females.

### **Establishing “power and dominance”**

In June 2011, Dr. Stanton Samenow, a clinical psychologist with a practice in Alexandria, Virginia, and the author of *Inside the Criminal Mind*, wrote an article for *Psychology Today* magazine that said:

The reality is that sex is only one of many arenas in which the criminal seeks to establish his power and dominance. The mental processes in pursuing a sex partner are similar to those involved in the commission of other crimes.<sup>15</sup>

The chief example of "other crimes" used by Dr. Samenow was bank robbery. He explained that a thief's thoughts about a heist and those of a sexual predator "are virtually identical although the 'target' is different. The offender fantasizes, schemes, and develops a modus operandi. There is excitement in every phase – before, during, and after the act."<sup>16</sup> Mormonism's founding "prophet" got his "thrills" by lying to and manipulating women and teenage girls, and abusing his ecclesiastical authority by pressuring them to give in to his unwanted advances.

Dr. Samenow, who has served as a consultant and expert witness for the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Federal Bureau of Prisons, and the U.S. Office of Probation, wrote that one offender told him: "I don't care if she's deaf, dumb, and blind. All I want is her body."<sup>17</sup> The unnamed rapist explained that "it was not the sex that was so important; it was the conquest."<sup>18</sup> In Smith's case, the process of conquering Mormon females certainly provided him with "excitement in every phase," as did psychologically breaking some of his priesthood subordinates to his infamous polygamy concept and illicit practice. More information about these troubling aspects of Latter-day Saint history is presented later in this chapter.

### **Mormon gods are polygamists**

Latter-day Saint theology includes the notion that God has multiple wives (mentioned in Chapter 6), which is how tens of billions of spirit children were created during the premortal existence.<sup>19</sup> Since Smith's time as the founding "prophet," a key aspect of Mormonism has been "eternal progression," which, to review, for LDS males means becoming a god after death and overseeing the creation and management of a cosmos, as the ruling Elohim/Heavenly Father has done.<sup>20</sup> Church president Brigham Young said in August 1866 that "[t]he only men who become Gods, even the Sons of God, are those who enter into polygamy."<sup>21</sup> It is noteworthy that not a single Latter-day Saint "prophet, seer, and revelator" has refuted Young's teaching during the past 148-plus years. In April 1977, President Spencer Kimball told Latter-day Saints in General Conference:

We remember the numerous scriptures which, concentrated in a single line, were said by a former prophet, Lorenzo Snow [another high-ranking Mormon polygamist]: "As man is, God once was; and as God is, man may become." This is a power available to us as we reach perfection and receive the experience and power to create [including spirit progeny with resurrected, "exalted" wives], to organize, to control native elements.<sup>22</sup>

In the twentieth century, senior LDS leader Joseph Fielding Smith, explained how crucial polygamy was in terms of Mormons' spiritual redemption:

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 [Latter-day] 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 [wife]. 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 [plural marriage] 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...

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 ["spiritual wifery"] 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.<sup>23</sup>

### **Smith's angel-with-the-sword lie**

The bit about "an angel of God, with a drawn sword" threatening "the Prophet himself...with destruction" if he did not "enter into the practice of that principle" (polygamy) is an LDS myth that began with Mormonism's founder lying to women and adolescent girls that he desired. Some women, like Mary Rollins Lightner, who was married, fell for Smith's fabrication; others did not. The fact that Joseph was able to convince dozens of females to abandon their Christian morality and agree to become his wives speaks volumes about his ability to manipulate females. His fervent belief that God was okay with married Mormon men, starting with himself, targeting sexually inexperienced females is explained in Section 132 of the *Doctrine and Covenants*:

And again, as pertaining to the law of the priesthood—if any man espouse a virgin, and desire to espouse another, and the first [wife] 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 for they are given unto him; for 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 [polygamy] law, he cannot commit adultery, for they belong to him, and they are given unto him; therefore is he justified.<sup>24</sup>

How convenient for randy Joseph Smith, the husband of Mormonism's First Lady, as it were, Emma, as well as for other married LDS male leaders, that the religion's version of Jesus Christ authorized their unions with "ten virgins" each! It is noteworthy that one of the "principles" of Latter-day Saint polygamy, as explained in the quoted *D&C* 132 verse, was that Mormon men were to restrict their pursuit of females to "virgins...vowed to no other man." In other words, they were "divinely" authorized to go after only girls and women who were not betrothed or married, and were virgins. However, during the past generation, naïve Latter-day Saints have been profoundly shocked to learn that Smith repeatedly disobeyed "the Lord" and targeted the wives—vowed non-virgins—of several of his priesthood subordinates. According to church doctrine, doing so made him, the highest-ranking priesthood leader as well as the "prophet of the Restoration," a serial adulterer.

To review, it was LDS Church president Joseph F. Smith who said that "sexual sins...kill [a] man spiritually, they make him unfit for the company of the righteous and the presence of God," and "sexual indulgence is a debasing sin, abominable in the sight of Deity." Latter-day Saint scripture—another "revelation" to Smith in February 1832, before he became a polygamist—said that liars and adulterers would spend eternity in the dreaded Telestial Kingdom (i.e., Mormon hell).<sup>25</sup>

### **Why wait twelve years, and why threaten Emma?**

If Smith and the LDS Church are correct, the former waited a dozen years, from 1831 until 1843, to write down Jesus' "revealed" words "relating to the new and everlasting covenant, including the eternity of the marriage covenant, and also the plurality of wives." What prompted Smith in July 1843 to finally record his polygamy "revelation"? The answer lies in key events of his life in the early 1840s as he approached middle age. Specifically, between April 1841 and July 1843 he ramped up his "spiritual wifery" practice, adding twenty women and seven girls to his harem, a new wife every few weeks, on average. Not surprisingly, Emma hated polygamy, so Joseph penned the following verses in the plural marriage "revelation" (*D&C* 132) that supposedly came from Christ:

And let mine handmaid, Emma Smith, receive all those [females] 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.

For I am the Lord thy God, and ye shall obey my voice; and I give unto my servant Joseph that he shall be made ruler over many things; for he hath been faithful over a few things, and from henceforth I will strengthen him.

And I command mine handmaid, Emma Smith, to abide and cleave unto my servant Joseph, and to none else. But if she will not abide this commandment she shall be destroyed, saith the Lord; for I am the Lord thy God, and will destroy her if she abide not in my [polygamy] law.<sup>26</sup>



Emma Smith

If Joseph's "revelation" was genuine, bizarrely, God's resurrected Son and Christianity's compassionate founder, threatened Emma Smith, the leader of the Mormon women's auxiliary, the Relief Society, not with a rebuke or punishment, but *destruction* if she did not do what her adulterous husband wanted in terms of his illegal practice of polygamy. Why didn't "the Lord" tell Joseph that *he* would be "destroyed" for disobeying the "doctrines and principles" of "celestial marriage" known to him since 1831, namely, obtaining consent from "the first" wife (Emma) before marrying "virgins," and staying away from women who were already vowed to their husbands? The LDS Church's "prophets" have never provided an answer. What is evident from historical documents is that Joseph wanted more females, but Emma was, understandably, fed up with his heart-breaking, troublesome "spiritual wifery" lifestyle.

Crucially, about two months before thirty-seven year-old Joseph Smith wrote his plural marriage "revelation," he made fourteen year-old Helen Mar Kimball his youngest-yet bride. Emma probably learned of the "discreet" union—she had found out about others—and gave her husband hell for it. By May 1843, when the Smith-Kimball union took place, Emma had endured

Joseph's extramarital affairs and deceptive behavior for about a decade. With the Mormon "prophet" marrying so young a girl, Emma likely decided that enough was enough and threatened to leave her philandering husband, possibly with their children. Her departure would have been extraordinarily embarrassing for Smith and likely have triggered a large exodus of members from his movement, decreasing his power significantly.

What could Joseph do to coerce Emma to stay in Nauvoo *and* continue his self-gratifying practice of polygamy? Concoct a "divine" communication in which the imagined and omnipotent "Lord thy God" would announce that Emma would be destroyed if she did not accept her husband's many wives, including young Helen and other girls, and remain with him. Apparently, Joseph's penned threat worked because Emma stayed in Nauvoo.

Typical of LDS patriarchal arrogance, neither Joseph Smith nor any subsequent "prophet" has apologized for the great harm caused by Mormon polygamy. Mainstream and fundamentalist Latter-day Saint leaders have been so "brainwashed" that they have not realized that there was no deity in the imaginary Celestial Kingdom "restoring" plural marriage through Smith. Like other men throughout history who had accumulated power, often through deception, Mormonism's founder wanted sexual variety and thought himself deserving of it. But Smith lived in Protestant America, not Arabia, Africa, or parts of Asia where polygamy was accepted in society and practiced by sheiks, tribal chiefs, or other rulers. He grew up and resided in the United States, a nation strongly influenced by Christianity and its teachings and values about monogamous marriage, which was protected legally while having more than one wife was unlawful and widely condemned.

To get what he wanted, Smith pretended to have a "revelation" from God about polygamy, including the sinister message to Emma. He made clear to his spouse of sixteen years that she had to accept his wives, no matter how young, which allowed him to continue to satisfy his desire for female variety, sexual and other. It is perplexing that Emma tolerated Joseph's ongoing adultery; perhaps she felt trapped in their marriage. If he had lived past June 1844 and continued to prey on Mormon girls and women, which was very likely based on his behavior since the early 1830s, might Emma have finally suffered the "destruction" that her polygamy-obsessed husband had written about in 1843? Given that other religious male leaders with bloated egos have killed family members or ordered their execution, conceivably, the answer is yes.

### **Smith's cunning strategies and tactics**

Joseph Smith used various ploys to gain access to females and make them his wives. At each encounter, the Mormon leader had the psychological advantage because:

1. The girls and women were raised in patriarchal societies (e.g., American, British) and conditioned to obey male authority.



2. Smith was regarded in the Latter-day Saint Church as the senior "prophet," God's chosen spokesman. According to Mormonism, not obeying the organization's president put one's "eternal salvation" in jeopardy.

Historical evidence reveals that Smith had no qualms about pressuring females to become his spouses. He used his "armed angel" lie more than once, which psychologically put responsibility for his continued mortality on the woman or girl he wanted to illegally wed and selfishly bed. Importantly, his angel-with-the-drawn-sword falsehood conflicted with Mormonism's key doctrine of agency, Heavenly Father's (Elohim's) "gift" to all his "spirit children" to freely choose. Smith's fable about a sword-wielding angel was designed to psychologically pressure Latter-day Saint females to agree to a polygamous relationship with him.

### **Isolate the young prey, then strike**

An examination of the strategies and tactics used by Joseph Smith to gain power over female Latter-day Saints reveals considerable cunning on his part, a characteristic not associated with a "prophet of God." There is not enough space in this book to review all of his manipulations that caused Mormon women and girls to suffer, so I will focus on two of his youngest victims: Lucy Walker and Helen Mar Kimball. *In Sacred Loneliness* has considerable information about them as well as other females targeted by Mormonism's conniving creator.

Compton wrote that in the spring of 1841, "Lucy and her family came to Nauvoo where Lucy, now fifteen, met Smith for the first time."<sup>27</sup> Tragically, weeks later Lucy's mother, Lydia, contracted the dreaded "chills and fever" (malaria caused by mosquitoes from Nauvoo's swamps).<sup>28</sup> Lydia never recovered and died in January 1842, leaving John, her husband, and their children devastated. Joseph was aware of Lydia's passing. How did the Mormon leader react? He told John:

If you remain here [in Nauvoo] Brother Walker, you will soon follow your wife [to the grave]. You must have a change of scene, a change of climate.<sup>29</sup>

Compton explained that while "Lucy describes her father's departure as something Smith recommended for his health, from other sources we know that John was sent on a two-year proselyting mission to the eastern states."<sup>30</sup> What happened to the Walker children while their father was gone? They were placed in Mormon homes, Lucy being "saved" for Smith's house. Then, tragedy hit the family again:

Soon after John left Nauvoo, Lydia [one of the Walker girls, who was named after her mother], age seven, was "stricken with brain fever"

[quoting Lucy's account]...in a few days Lydia "joined her dear mother in the spirit world and we were left more lonely than before [Lucy recorded]."31

The grief-stricken and vulnerable teenage girl would soon experience another major shock, which was also described by Compton:

Thus Joseph Smith had sent John Walker, the father, on a long mission while the family was still grieving for the mother, [and] had split up the siblings - separating the younger children from the older... At this point Smith proposed to fifteen or sixteen year-old Lucy, demanding that she marry him. In her extraordinary biography she wrote: "In the year 1842 President Joseph Smith sought an interview with me, and said, 'I have a message for you, I have been commanded of God to take another wife, and you are the woman.' My astonishment knew no bounds. This announcement was indeed a thunderbolt to me." [Younger] Helen Mar Kimball used almost the same language in describing her shock at learning of polygamy and receiving Smith's proposal. As often, Smith phrased the proposal as a direct commandment from God.<sup>32</sup>

Again, as in the case of Helen Mar and Sarah Ann Whitney [who was seventeen years old], Smith put the burden of a family's salvation on a teenager's willingness to accept him as a plural husband. Unlike those cases, however, here [with Lucy Walker] the prophet did not work through the father but approached the girl directly, after sending the father [away] on a mission.

"What have you to say?" Smith asked. "Nothing," Lucy replied, entirely at a loss. "How could I speak, or what could I say?"

She was nearly suicidal: "tempted and tortured beyond endurance until life was not desirable. Oh that the grave would kindly receive me that I might rest on the bosom of my dear mother." Lucy now felt intensely the absence of her parents... "No mother to council; no father near to tell me what to do, in this trying hour."<sup>33</sup>

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Smith saw that Lucy was unhappy and sought another interview with her in late April [1843]. He told her that the marriage would have to be secret, but that he would acknowledge her as his wife "beyond the Rocky Mountains"... To refuse him would bring damnation: "It is a command of God to you." Furthermore, there was a time limit: "I will give you untill to-morrow to decide this matter. If you reject this message the [spiritual] gate will be closed forever against you."<sup>34</sup>

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"I [Lucy] felt at this moment that I was called to place myself upon the altar a liveing Sacrafice, perhaps to brook the world in disgrace and incur the displeasure and contempt of my youthful companions; all my dreams of happiness blown to the four winds, this was too much, the thought was unbearable." Like Helen Mar at the age of fourteen, Lucy thought of her peer group and of the disaster that polygamy would bring to [her] teenage dreams.<sup>35</sup>

Vulnerable, still mourning the loss of her mother and younger sister, dependent on Smith's hospitality, and under intense pressure from him to secretly marry him, Lucy finally relented. But what about Emma? Had her approval of the union first been requested by her husband, as required by the "principles" related to the "plurality of wives" that he had known since 1831, according to the LDS Church? In other words, did Joseph do as "the Lord" had commanded, per the polygamy "revelation," and ask Emma if he could marry another teenage girl, who was, in Lucy's case, his junior by some twenty years? The Walker girl provided the answer in her writings: "Emma Smith was not present and she did not consent to the marriage; she did not know anything about it at all."<sup>36</sup> Why? *In Sacred Loneliness* explains what happened when the unlawful union took place: "Emma was in St. Louis buying supplies for the Nauvoo hotel."<sup>37</sup>

The Walker girl's polygamy trauma caused by Joseph Smith is part of the damning evidence that Mormonism's founding "prophet" targeted females, a reality that conflicts with generations of Latter-day Saint propaganda about him. To whitewash what he did, a myth has arisen in the LDS Church that none of his plural marriages involved sex. Historians have concluded otherwise, however, based on documents such as letters and diaries. In the case of Lucy, her nineteenth-century sense of decorum would not permit her, a pious woman, to write "Joseph Smith had his way with me when I was a teenager," or any words equally explicit. Nevertheless, she felt compelled to communicate, as best she could while maintaining her dignity, the nature of her relationship with him. Later in her life, she wrote:

It was not a love matter, so to speak, in our affairs, – at least on my part it was not, but simply the giving up of myself as a sacrifice.<sup>38</sup>

Sacrificing herself to Smith—sexually, as her words imply—was how Lucy justified in her mind the patriarchal abuse that she suffered but did not recognize. To see through the fog of Joseph's deceit and manipulation and comprehend what she had experienced since her father's departure from Nauvoo would have mentally taken her to the shocking conclusion that Smith, the church's highest-ranking priesthood leader and the reputed "prophet of the Lord," was in fact a scheming debaucher. But even if young Lucy had connected the evidence "dots" and come to that life-altering realization, with whom could she, an adolescent girl in the male-controlled Mormon community of Nauvoo, have shared it? What adults in the city of duped and indoctrinated

Latter-day Saints would have believed her and stepped in to protect her? Would her father, a missionary hundreds of miles away promoting Smith's religion, if she wrote to him? Would any of her siblings?

If Lucy publicly accused Joseph of abusing her, he would, of course, deny it, just as he had denied that polygamy was practiced by Mormon leaders, including himself. Where could the vulnerable teenage girl flee for safety? She would not have known and undoubtedly felt trapped, which is how Smith had wanted it from the start, as evidenced by the disturbing fact that he had sent her father, her sole parent and protector after Lydia's death, far away.

Typical for a sexual predator, Joseph Smith did not stop at Lucy Walker. He desired even younger flesh.

### **A Machiavellian plot**

When Smith's religious movement was in its infancy, Heber Kimball, a blacksmith and potter with a simple home on a few acres in upstate New York, listened to some Mormon missionaries preaching in his area and was baptized a member of the church they represented in mid-April 1832. His wife, Vilate, followed suit two weeks later. At the time, they had four children, including Helen, who was not yet four. The couple later had six sons.

Based on historical documents, including writings of Kimball family members, Compton concluded that Heber was "unsophisticated" and had a "childlike faith," while Vilate was "intelligent" and "cultured."<sup>39</sup> While pre-Mormonism Heber had been just another laborer in his community, by 1835 the Latter-day Saint zealot had completed proselyting missions for Smith's church and risen through the priesthood ranks to become an apostle. *In Sacred Loneliness* explains that "Heber would be the second most prominent church leader. The Kimballs thus became a general authority family. Though this assured them a place among the Latter-day Saint elite, Heber was often absent from his family [doing church work]."<sup>40</sup>

Unquestioning and naively obedient, Heber eventually became the First Counselor in the First Presidency, a very high-ranking church position. Concerning Vilate Kimball, her sense of importance in the Mormon community was also elevated as she performed her expected duties as the sacrificing, long-suffering, and supportive spouse and matriarch of a family "among the Latter-day Saint elite."

Smith certainly realized in 1842/3 that to enjoy young Helen as his latest sexual conquest, he would have to formulate and follow a strategy different from the one he was using with the older teenager, Lucy Walker. Why? Because her mother was dead, but Helen's was alive and in close proximity to her daughter on a daily basis. Smith would not be able to physically isolate the Kimball girl and psychologically wear her down, as he did with John Walker's vulnerable daughter. He could order Heber to leave Illinois and go on another mission, but Vilate would still be around, shielding her daughter from Smith's unwanted advances. A different, three-phase strategy was required to gain sexually gratifying access to the unsuspecting teenager.

*Phase I*

In early 1842, Smith told the God-fearing Kimball couple that "the Lord" had commanded that Vilate become his wife. Compton explained that as a result of this shocking communication:

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 self-mastered for the sacrifice, he led his darling wife to the Prophet's house and presented her to Joseph" [quoting Heber's biography by his grandson, Orson Whitney].<sup>41</sup>

The only way that "unsophisticated" Heber could fathom in his Christianity-influenced mind the morally repugnant act of giving his wife to Smith, a married man, was to perceive it—erroneously and tragically—as an Abrahamic-esque sacrifice. For readers not familiar with the Old Testament story, the patriarch Abraham was commanded by God to kill his only son, Isaac, as an act of supreme obedience to the pre-Judaism deity. The Biblical myth says that as Abraham was about to plunge a knife into his son's chest, an angel suddenly appeared and stopped him. Heber likely saw himself as a Latter-day Saint version of Abraham, a righteous man commanded by God—via Smith, conspicuously—to hand over his wife as a demonstration of his total submission to "the will of the Lord," a common expression in Mormonism.

Did Smith take Vilate, who had given birth to seven children at that point, as his latest plural wife? Despite what he had told the Kimballs and the terrible mental stress he had caused them to experience with his bogus plural marriage "message" from God, in the end he did not. He surprised the distraught couple—after they relented, of course—by conveniently informing them that "the Lord" no longer required the polygamous/polyandrous union. Compton explained that "[i]t had been a test, said Joseph, to see if Heber would give up everything he possessed."<sup>42</sup>

Why was Smith interested in probing apostle Kimball's obedience? Because he intended to manipulate and draw his priesthood subordinate with "childlike faith" much deeper into Mormon polygamy as the next phase of his scheme. To do so required Heber's mental resistance to "spiritual wifery" to be weakened and eventually overcome.

Smith had never wanted to marry Vilate; his target had always been young Helen. He needed to first create a psychological environment that would open the way for him to illegally marry the girl and then sexually take her. It was not enough to break her father to his "plurality of wives" doctrine. Unlike Lydia Walker, Vilate Kimball was alive and might intervene to protect her daughter, despite her previous record of subservience to Mormon patriarchal authority. To eliminate that possibility, Helen's mother—and father—had to be "turned" to plural marriage. As the months of 1842 passed, the

Kimball family remained oblivious to Smith's real agenda and what was to come involving them and "restored" polygamy in the "only true and living church."

*Phase II*

Smith could have simply approached Helen Kimball and lied to her, saying that "the Lord" had commanded her to marry him, but it is likely that the spirited teenager would have rejected him, a man old enough to be her father. Also, from church meetings she would have known that he was married to Emma and could have used that fact against him (by calling his attention to it in the hope that he would be shamed into backing off). Mormonism's cunning founder had likely calculated that if propositioned, the girl would go to her father for protection, and despite Heber's stellar record of obedience and many sacrifices for the church, in righteous anger he might have demanded that Smith leave his daughter alone.

There were too many unknowns involving the Kimballs; Smith needed to stack the deck in his favor. Psychologically "turning" Helen's parents to accept the supposedly God-sanctioned concept of plural marriage was a critical first step as far as Mormonism's master manipulator was concerned. Certainly from Joseph's perspective, ensnaring Heber in polygamy was crucial before closing in on the apostle's daughter. To that end, Smith told Kimball that God had commanded him to take a second wife; Compton's book provides relevant details:

At first Heber thought of marrying two elderly ladies, the sisters Pitkin, who would cause Vilate "little if any unhappiness" [due to their advanced years]. But Smith had already selected Heber's first plural wife, Sarah Peake Noon, a thirty year-old English convert who had left an allegedly abusive husband... Heber reluctantly agreed. Finally, to add to the trial, Joseph commanded to keep the plural marriage secret even from Vilate "for fear that she would not receive the principle."<sup>43</sup>

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Heber was understandably worried that Vilate would hear about the marriage from another source and balked at entering into polygamy under those conditions. Helen explained [much later in her life], "The Prophet told him the third time before he obeyed the command. This shows that the trial [of faith] must have been extraordinary, for he was a man who from the first had yielded implicit obedience to every requirement of the Prophet." According to Orson [Whitney], "Heber was told by Joseph 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 was thus hesitant and deeply troubled but

nevertheless [illegally] married Sarah Peak Noon in early 1842 without telling Vilate. However, this caused him to display "anxious and haggard looks"; he was sick, could not sleep, would wring his hands and weep like a child. Vilate was mystified.<sup>44</sup>

Having Heber marry the aged Pitkin sisters would not do, as far as Smith was concerned. He had to make sure that his duped priesthood subordinate was sexually up to his neck in polygamy quicksand, as it were, before he closed in on Helen. In 1842, apostle Heber was in his early forties and still quite capable of having sex with Noon (they would have four children).

Another critical point is that Smith was fundamentally responsible for Kimball's violation of the "revealed" polygamy "principle" that "the first [wife] give her consent." How? By commanding Heber "to keep the plural marriage secret even from Vilate 'for fear that she would not receive the principle.'" The Mormon Church's president was turning his apostolic lackey with "childlike faith" into an adulterer, like himself, but Kimball was too "unsophisticated" to realize that he was being played.

Critically, Smith knew how to psychologically corral Kimball into obeying him: threaten to end his apostleship, his greatness in Christ's "restored" church, his ego-inflating position "among the Latter-day Saint elite" and as head of a prominent "general authority family." For good measure, Joseph said that Heber's "exaltation"—his "celestial glory" and opportunity to be a god in the afterlife forever—would not happen if he refused to marry Noon. As a "damned" church member and former apostle, Kimball would suffer for eternity, according to Latter-day Saint doctrine. The "prophet of the Restoration" understood the coercive power of fear and used it to full effect on his fooled follower.

Tragically, Kimball never realized how skillfully he was manipulated by Smith. From the start of the proposed illicit marriage involving Joseph and Vilate, Heber should have told his ecclesiastical superior to go to hell, but he did not. Why? Like so many Latter-day Saints, he failed to think for himself and was too eager to obey and placate Mormon patriarchal authority. The male head of the Kimball household was biologically an adult, but psychologically he was immature—naïve, servile, and lacking in critical thinking. His wife and daughter suffered terribly as a result.

### *Phase III*

After Heber settled into his polygamous relationship with Noon, cunning Smith talked to him about creating a dynastic "golden link" involving "the houses of Heber and Joseph."<sup>45</sup> The arrangement would—supposedly—forever link Kimball and his family and progeny to Smith, who ranked just below Jesus Christ in Mormonism's priesthood pecking order. If glory-seeking polygamist Heber could convince his daughter to marry Smith, his status among the Latter-day Saint elite would be elevated even higher and divine

benefits would flow to the Kimball apostle and his posterity throughout eternity (so he naively believed).

Later in her life, Helen wrote about how she had learned of polygamy prior to May 1843, the month and year in which Smith had illegally married her, his youngest female victim to date:

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... 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.<sup>46</sup>

In his book, Compton explained what happened next:

Helen listened in disbelief and complete dismay. She wrote that, for her, this first interview [about polygamy] "had a similar effect to a sudden shock of a small earthquake."<sup>47</sup>

As Smith used Heber for his own ends, the Kimball apostle did the same in relation to his daughter. The following text written by Helen reveals her ignorance: she did not realize that her father was willing to sacrifice her happiness so that his Latter-day Saint ego could be inflated via the "sealing" (imagined spiritual union) of his "house" (family and future generations) to Mormonism's libidinous founder:

I knew that he [Heber] loved me too well to teach me anything that was not strictly pure, virtuous and exalting in its tendencies; and no one else could have influenced me at that time or brought me to accept of a doctrine ["the plurality of wives"] so utterly repugnant and so contrary to all of our former ideas and traditions.<sup>48</sup>

After polygamist Heber told unsuspecting Helen about plural marriage, he gave her just twenty-four hours to decide whether to be "sealed" to the much older Smith or not. It was a momentous choice for a girl in her early teens to make, particularly on such short notice and without being told the truth of what would happen to her, namely, that Joseph would have sex with her. Lamentably, she was not cautioned about how life-altering her choice would be if she opted to become Smith's plural wife (his latest). Compton explained what happened after Helen's father gave her just one day to make up her mind:

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.<sup>49</sup>

Again we see Smith's Machiavellian nature at work: becoming his plural wife would, he disingenuously told Helen, guarantee not only her "eternal salvation" but also her family's and that of her "kindred" (relatives). His pleasing words contradicted the LDS doctrine—"restored" through him, so he had claimed—that each individual was responsible for their conduct during mortality and answerable to God for the same. Smith misled the teenage girl, disgraceful behavior that her manipulated father never realized. However, by May 1843 Vilate Kimball probably had; Compton wrote:

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.<sup>50</sup>

Why would the heart of "intelligent" Vilate be "bleeding" (aching) at that point for her daughter? Because by May 1843 she had probably realized the awful truth about Smith, who had severely disrupted her marriage and family life with his "spiritual wifery" obsession. The smooth-talking Mormon "prophet" had pressured her husband to become a polygamist with a considerably younger woman and now Smith, a married man with children, wanted to marry Helen, who was twenty-three years his junior, young enough to be his child.

Why didn't Vilate speak up and tell Smith that there would be no union involving her daughter? Because of the terrible secret that she carried—and she knew that Smith knew she possessed it. What secret? Vilate, a married woman, had, just months earlier, been relented in terms of becoming Smith's plural wife, a fact that Helen did not know in May 1843. If Vilate had protested the marriage of her daughter, Smith could have said in front of the mother and daughter: "But dear Sister Vilate, it was just last year that *you* expressed *your* willingness to obey the word of the Lord and become my wife. Why are you now in opposition to that which is pleasing in the sight of God?" Such a disclosure would have deeply shocked Helen. Her pious, *married* mother had been willing to join with Joseph Smith, the leading "Prophet" who already had

a spouse (Emma) and children?? Vilate's humiliation would have been extreme, so she did not assert herself and stand in the way of Smith taking her daughter.

Like Heber, Vilate was played by the scheming creator of the Latter-day Saint religion. However, unlike her husband with "childlike faith," the Kimball woman was smart enough to figure out Smith's lustful goal in relation to her daughter. Tragically, she had been set up by the Mormon "prophet" to not intervene and protect her child. Vilate must have felt terrible.

Because naïve Helen trusted her father, who foolishly obeyed Smith, the Kimball girl believed that everything would turn out well. It did not. Her writings alluded to unwanted sex with Joseph: she later referred to herself as an "abused child" and wrote that she "hated polygamy in my heart."<sup>51</sup>

After succeeding in his cunning plot to have his way with young Helen, cruiser Smith moved on to target at least half a dozen other females during the last seven months of 1843 alone. Consequently, his neglected fourteen year-old Kimball pseudo-bride became depressed.<sup>52</sup> Notably, during the past six to seven generations many females trapped in Mormon polygamy have suffered from depression. Latter-day Saint plural marriage has grievously wounded their "souls," each woman's or girl's authentic self.

### **Seducing mothers "to keep them quiet," and Smith's "evil genius"**

Helen Mar Kimball, Lucy Walker, Fanny Alger, and twenty-nine other females were all victims of Smith's polygamy delusion. Sarah Pratt, wife of nineteenth-century Mormon apostle Orson Pratt, one of Smith's inner circle, gave a lot of information about the adulterous Latter-day Saint leader to researcher/writer Wilhelm Ritter von Wymetal (his pen name was W. Wyl):

Everybody knew in Nauvoo that the Partridge girls lived with Joseph a long time before he got his celebrated revelation about celestial marriage ["plural marriage"], dated July 12, 1843. The Partridge girls were very good-natured. After Joseph's death one was sealed to Brigham and the other to Apostle Amasa Lyman. Joseph's taste [for females] was of very large dimensions, he loved them old and young, pretty and homely. He sometimes seduced mothers to keep them quiet about his connection with their daughters.<sup>53</sup>

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The only 'wives' of Joseph that lived in the Mansion House were the Partridge girls. This is explained by the fact that they were the servants in the hotel kept by the prophet. But when Emma found out that Joseph went to their room, they had to leave the house.<sup>54</sup>

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I [Sarah] have told you [Wilhelm] that the prophet Joseph used to frequent houses of ill-fame [bordellos]. Mrs. White, a very pretty and attractive woman, once confessed to me that she made a business of it to be hospitable to the captains of the Mississippi steamboats. She

told me that Joseph had made her acquaintance very soon after his arrival in Nauvoo, and that he had visited her dozens of times. My husband (Orson Pratt) could not be induced to believe such things of his prophet. Seeing his obstinate incredulity, Mrs. White proposed to Mr. Pratt and myself to put us in a position where we could observe what was going on between herself and Joseph the prophet. We, however, declined this proposition.<sup>55</sup>

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When Joseph had made his dastardly attempt on me, I went to Mrs. Harris to unbosom my grief to her. To my utter astonishment, she said, laughing heartily: "How foolish you are! I don't see anything so horrible in it. Why, I AM HIS MISTRESS SINCE FOUR YEARS!"

Next door to my house was a house of bad reputation. One single woman lived there, not very attractive. She used to be visited by people from Carthage whenever they came to Nauvoo. Joseph used to come on horseback, ride up to the house and tie his horse to a tree, many of which stood before the house. Then he would enter the house of the woman from the back. I have seen him do this repeatedly.

Joseph Smith [III], the son of the prophet, and president of the re-organized Mormon church, paid me a visit, and I had a long talk with him. I saw that he was not inclined to believe the truth about his father, so I said to him: "You pretend to have revelations from the Lord. Why don't you ask the Lord to tell you what kind of a man your father really was?" He answered: "If my father had so many connections with women, where is the progeny?" I said to him: "Your father had mostly intercourse with married women [pregnancies could be attributed to each woman's husband], and as to single ones, Dr. Bennett was always on hand, when anything happened."

It was in this way that I became acquainted with Dr. John C. Bennett. When my husband went to England as a missionary, he got the promise from Joseph that I should receive provisions from the tithing-house. Shortly afterward Joseph made his propositions to me and they enraged me so that I refused to accept any help from the tithing-house or from the bishop. Having been always very clever and very busy with my needle, I began to take in sewing for the support of myself and children, and succeeded soon in making myself independent. When Bennett came to Nauvoo, Joseph brought him to my house, stating that Bennett wanted some sewing done, and that I should do it for the doctor. I assented and Bennett gave me a great deal of work to do. He knew that Joseph had his plans set on me; Joseph made no secret of them before Bennett, and went so far in his impudence as to make propositions to me in the presence of Bennett, his bosom friend.

Bennett, who was of a sarcastic turn of mind, used to come and tell me about Joseph to tease and irritate me. One day they came both, Joseph and Bennett, on horseback to my house. Bennett dismounted, Joseph remained outside. Bennett wanted me to return to him a book I had borrowed from him. It was a so-called doctor-book. I had a rapidly growing little family and wanted to inform myself about certain matters in regard to babies, etc., -- this explains my borrowing that book. While giving Bennett his book, I observed that he held something in the left sleeve of his coat. Bennett smiled and said: "Oh, a little job for Joseph; one of his women is in trouble." Saying this, he took the thing out of his left sleeve. It was a pretty long instrument of a kind I had never seen before. It seemed to be of steel and was crooked at one end.<sup>56</sup>

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You hear often that Joseph had no polygamous offspring. The reason of this is very simple. Abortion was practiced on a large scale in Nauvoo. Dr. John C. Bennett, the evil genius of Joseph, brought this abomination into a scientific system. He showed to my husband and me the instruments with which he used to "operate for Joseph." There was a house in Nauvoo, "right across the flat," about a mile and a half from the town, a kind of hospital. They sent the women there, when they showed signs of celestial consequences [e.g., missed periods, a swelling womb]. Abortion was practiced regularly in this house.<sup>57</sup>

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Bennett was the most intimate friend of Joseph for a time. He boarded with the prophet. He told me once that Joseph had been talking with him about his troubles with Emma, his wife. "He asked me," said Bennett, smilingly, "what he should do to get out of the trouble?" I said, "This is very simple. GET A REVELATION that polygamy is right, and all your troubles will be at an end."<sup>58</sup>



John Bennett

Using Bennett to perform abortions on females whom Smith had impregnated violated a key aspect of plural marriage, as Joseph's written "revelation"

of July 1843 stated and Latter-day Saint scripture since the nineteenth century has made clear:

[F]or they ["virgins"] are given unto him to multiply and replenish the earth [i.e., have children], according to my [Jesus Christ's] commandment, and to fulfil the promise which was given by my Father [Heavenly Father/Elohim] before the foundation of the world, and for their exaltation in the eternal worlds, that they may bear the souls of men; for herein is the work of my Father continued, that he may be glorified.<sup>59</sup>

In other words, according to the communication that Smith said had come from "the Lord" pertaining to "the new and everlasting covenant, including the eternity of the marriage covenant, and also the plurality of wives," God the Father wanted birthed babies—incarnated intelligences-spirits—not dead fetuses. Another important point is that Smith was familiar with the Bible and the Ten Commandments, which stipulated that "thou shalt not commit adultery" or "covet thy neighbour's wife" or "kill."<sup>60</sup> In light of these facts, why was Mormonism's "prophet" having sex with females who were "old and young, pretty and homely," getting some of them pregnant, and having his "bosom friend," Dr. Bennett, perform abortions to eliminate the "trouble" caused by the "prophet of the Restoration"? The LDS Church's leaders have never provided a believable answer.

It is not surprising that the propaganda-addicted Mormon Church avoids telling Latter-day Saints and investigators the alarming facts about "impudent" Smith and his "evil genius" chum, Dr. Bennett, the abortionist. If people knew the full truth about the leading LDS impregnator of single and married females, they would not join the church and countless members would leave the organization. Billions of tithing dollars would stop flowing into church accounts each year and the hollowed-out Latter-day Saint religious-corporate conglomerate would be forced to sell off many of its assets to pay its bills. Creating and disseminating misleading, "faith"-bolstering information about Smith has always been integral to maintaining the fraud of Mormonism.

### **Mormon polygamy exposed**

As Smith's ecclesiastical power increased during the 1830s and early 1840s, his practice of polygamy mushroomed, making it increasingly difficult to keep his illegal and offensive behavior secret. In the first decade of his religious movement, Joseph had just two "celestial wives": teenager Fanny Alger and Lucinda Harris, wife of George Harris. Then in 1841 alone, he married three women (two in their twenties and the other age thirty-one), including the spouses of two men. The following year, Smith went full-throttle in terms of expanding his harem: a girl seventeen years old and ten women, age twenty-three to fifty-three, including the spouses of half a dozen men. In

1843, Mormonism's founder enlarged his collection of illicit spouses further with eight girls, the wives of two men, and seven single women.

While Smith steadily added females to his "spiritual wifery" collection, he repeatedly lied about the Latter-day Saint doctrine and practice of polygamy. For example, in 1838 he responded to questions for the *Elder's Journal*, one of which was: "Do the Mormons believe in having more wives than one?" Smith responded dishonestly: "No, not at the same time."<sup>61</sup> Also, according to LDS Church history, on May 26, 1844 he emphatically denied in public the accusation that he practiced plural marriage. "What a thing it is for a man to be accused of committing adultery and having seven wives, when I can only find one," he said. "I am the same man, and as innocent as I was fourteen years ago; and I can prove them [his accusers] all perjurers."<sup>62</sup>

Contradictorily, after his "fourteen years ago" (in 1830) the 1835 and 1844 editions of the *Doctrine and Covenants* stated:

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.<sup>63</sup>

Despite what Smith had stated publicly and Latter-day Saint canon had indicated, rumors of polygamy secretly practiced by the church's priesthood leadership grew in the expanding Mormon community of Nauvoo. Smith's propositioning of single women was foolish enough—a number rebuffed him—but pursuing the wives of men in his religious movement was supremely stupid. One of the targeted women was Jane Law, wife of William Law, Smith's second counselor in the church's First Presidency! Van Wagoner explained in his book:

He [Joseph Smith] sought to marry wives of several living men, refusing to recognize their civil marriage. Despite the clause in the canonized 1835 Mormon marriage statement recognizing that "all legal contracts of marriage made before a person is baptized into this church, should be held sacred and fulfilled," Smith viewed as invalid those marriages not sealed by his blessing. As God's earthly agent, he believed he had been given powers that transcended civil law. Claiming sole responsibility for binding and unbinding marriages on earth and in heaven, he did not consider it necessary to obtain civil marriage licenses or divorce decrees. Whenever he deemed it appropriate he could release a woman from her earthly marriage and seal her to himself or another [Mormon man] with no stigma [in his mind] of adultery.<sup>64</sup>

In other words, Smith had convinced himself that his ecclesiastical position as founding "prophet" was superior to legal strictures created by governments. William Law was not similarly deluded, however. He was likely

aware of Illinois' anti-bigamy laws, and as an apostle in the Latter-day Saint movement he was certainly versed in the Bible and LDS scriptures, which said in the *Book of Mormon*:

For behold, thus saith the Lord: This people [the Nephites] 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.<sup>65</sup>

Incongruously, Joseph Smith, the published author of the *Book of Mormon*, wrote in his July 1843 polygamy "revelation":

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.<sup>66</sup>

While Mormonism's Jesus seems to have contradicted himself, what actually happened was that in July 1843, when Smith penned the supposed communication from "the Lord" about "the new and everlasting covenant, including...the plurality of wives," he forgot what he had written in the *Book of Mormon* more than thirteen years earlier. His failure to pay attention to details has created enormous problems for the LDS Church and its members during the past seven generations. Many disconcerting facts, including the conflicting scriptural verses about the "wives and concubines" of David and Solomon, two Old Testament Hebrew kings, have eroded Mormons' beliefs.

Returning to William Law, the Irish-born Canadian convert to Mormonism was probably aware of the religion's twelfth Article of Faith, which said: "We believe in being subject to kings, presidents, rulers, and magistrates, in obeying, honoring, and sustaining the law."<sup>67</sup> With his practice of polygamy, however, Smith had repeatedly demonstrated that he was hell-bent on having "wives and concubines" despite state legal systems that protected monogamous marriage and punished related violations, as indicated in the following text:

*Section 7 of the Ohio Session Laws during the 1830s*: "That if any married person, having a husband or wife living, shall marry any other person; every person so offending shall be deemed guilty of a high misdemeanor, and upon conviction thereof, shall be imprisoned in the penitentiary, and kept at hard labor, not exceeding seven nor less than three years."<sup>68</sup>

*Section 121 of the State of Illinois' anti-bigamy law during the period when Smith and other Mormons resided in Nauvoo (the latter 1830s to the mid-1840s): "Bigamy consists in the having of two wives or two husbands at one and the same time, knowing that the former husband or wife is still alive. If any person or persons within this State, being married, or who shall hereafter marry, do at any time marry any person or persons, the former husband or wife being alive, the person so offending shall, on conviction thereof, be punished by a fine, not exceeding one thousand dollars, and imprisoned in the penitentiary, not exceeding two years."*<sup>69</sup>

Law was shown Smith's written polygamy "revelation" in the fall of 1843 and immediately condemned it as "of the Devil."<sup>70</sup> His negative assessment intensified after Smith began pursuing his wife starting in November of that year. One of Smith's friends, Joseph Jackson, said that the Mormon "prophet" had told him that he had "used every argument in his power, to convince her [Jane Law] of the correctness of his [plural marriage] doctrine, but could not succeed."<sup>71</sup>

After Jane informed her husband that Smith had targeted her, William became angry. His wife's honor had been insulted by "Brother" Joseph and neither Laws wanted Smith thrusting his degrading and troublesome "spiritual wifery" practice into their lives. In January 1844, William told Smith to abandon polygamy, significantly because he recognized its corrosive effect on the Latter-day Saint Church, but the obstinate and deluded "prophet" refused to back down.

Because Law had shown some backbone and was against polygamy, unlike Heber Kimball and other Smith devotees, Joseph informed William that "he was excluded in the future from the Endowment Council," quoting Van Wagoner's book, and "he was dropping him from the First Presidency."<sup>72</sup> In other words, Smith wanted a "yes" man in his inner circle, not someone poking at his slumbering conscience, trying to awaken it.

By mid-April 1844, the Laws were excommunicated from the church, despite their years of hard work and sacrifices on behalf of Mormonism. The church's official position against plural marriage, per the *Doctrine and Covenants*, supported the Laws' anti-polygamy stance, but Smith was not interested in the views of principled and doctrinally correct subordinates. He wanted followers who would not give him a hard time about the "wives and concubines" aspect of his "celestial marriage" doctrine and practice, or remind him of its harmful effects on the Latter-day Saint community.

"Despite Smith's explicit denials of plural marriage," wrote Van Wagoner, "stories of 'spiritual wifery' had continued to spread [during 1842]... Reactions to the rumors varied. Most Saints, many with rigid New England Puritan backgrounds, found polygamy as distasteful as adultery... But others apparently accepted polygamy without reservation. The Quorum of Twelve Apostles, though not without exception, proved to be the main source of support from 1843 on."<sup>73</sup> Why? The majority of them had followed Smith's



example and become polygamists in secret; plural marriage afforded them sexual variety while their façade in the Mormon community as pious, monogamous leaders was maintained. However, rumours about Smith's written "communication" from "the Lord" about plural marriage expanded throughout the church, confusing members and dividing it "as had no other single event," explained Van Wagoner, who added:

Growing public awareness of the revelation in the summer of 1843 further polarized a church already divided into two camps – the handful of people secretly introduced to Joseph Smith's private polygamous teachings and the much larger faction that accepted at face value the public denunciations of the practice.<sup>74</sup>

Significantly, in early 1844 Hyrum Brown, a Mormon elder in Michigan, was excommunicated for "preaching polygamy and other false and corrupt doctrines," quoting the Latter-day Saint periodical *Times and Seasons*.<sup>75</sup> Smith could discreetly teach about desiring "virgins" and having "celestial wives" to high-ranking LDS men like Heber Kimball, who were likely to accept the concept and secretly become polygamists, but not Brown in public. Rank-and-file Mormons became increasingly confused about what, exactly, was going on relative to plural marriage, and "some church leaders were equally befuddled," Van Wagoner noted.

William Law and other disaffected Latter-day Saints decided to openly confront Smith's duplicity by revealing—in powerful language—what had secretly been going on in his movement for years. *Mormon Polygamy* sheds light on what happened:

The group issued a prospectus for an opposition newspaper, *The Nauvoo Expositor*, 10 May 1844. Nauvoo citizens were forewarned that the paper would advocate repeal of the Nauvoo Charter [which had made the community a virtual city-state<sup>76</sup>], foster religious tolerance and freedom of speech, censure gross moral imperfections, and oppose union of church and state in Nauvoo civil government [which had happened under Smith]. The publishers promised "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."<sup>77</sup>

#### **"The foul fiend who perpetrated the diabolical deed"**

The first—and only, as events would decide—edition of the *Nauvoo Expositor* was dated June 7, 1844. Fifteen hundred copies were produced and the full text is online.<sup>78</sup> The publication blasted Mormon polygamy, "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," wrote editor Sylvester Emmons. The following excerpt reveals how strongly Law and his associates felt about Smith's very controversial doctrine and practice (paragraph breaks have been inserted to make *The Expositor's* longer parts easier to read):

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 [Latter-day Saint] 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, far the noblest of their lives." [B]ut 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 replies, that we would all go to Hell together, and convert it into a heaven, by casting the Devil out; and says he, 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 if 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 whor[e]doms 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 [i.e., bullies], 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 and 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 [females], 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 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 [Biblical] Jacob, David, and others. . .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 [the females] 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 won; her heart is like some fortress that has been captured, sacked abandoned, and left desolate. With her, the desire of the heart has failed [because of polygamy] — the great charm of existence is at an end; she neglects all the cheerful exercises 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 pray [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 pr[e]ying 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 thunderbolt that could have smitten it with decay. But no one knows the cause except the foul fiend who perpetrated the diabolical deed.<sup>79</sup>

Clearly, Law and Smith's other critics involved in the *Nauvoo Expositor* publication pulled no punches about Mormon polygamy or the man—Joseph Smith—who had secretly instituted “spiritual wifery” in the Latter-day Saint movement. Also in the newspaper, Law and his associates sharply criticized Smith's theology about deities:

Among the many items of false doctrine that are taught [in] 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.<sup>80</sup>

#### “Audacious wretches”

“Nauvoo citizens were furious when the newspaper hit the streets,” wrote Van Wagoner. In a letter to Illinois Governor Thomas Ford, Joseph Smith, the city's mayor and commander of the Nauvoo Legion militia, called the publishers “audacious wretches.” The city council deliberated and Alderman George Harris expressed his view that the press should be demolished, and polygamist Hyrum Smith, another council member, agreed. The Nauvoo group declared *The Expositor* to be a “public nuisance” and Mayor Smith was “instructed to cause said printing establishment and papers to be removed without delay.”<sup>81</sup> Smith then ordered the city marshal to carry out the destruction of the newspaper and its printing equipment. The draconian measure violated the U.S. Constitution's First Amendment, which had guaranteed freedoms of speech and the press for more than half a century.

“The destruction of the press caused [an] uproar in surrounding non-Mormon communities,” Van Wagoner explained, and Smith and others were subsequently arrested due to their central roles in its elimination. Two weeks after *The Expositor* hit the streets, Governor Ford “sent a letter to the mayor and city council asking for statements from ‘well-informed and discreet persons, who will be capable of laying before me your version of the matter,’ and requesting that the council receive from him ‘such explanations and resolutions as may be determined on.’”<sup>82</sup>

Ford was not satisfied with Smith's reply: “Your conduct was a very gross outrage upon the laws and liberties of the people...[*The Expositor*] may have been full of libels, but this did not authorize you to destroy it,” he said in writing. Illinois' governor announced that he would “require you [Joseph Smith] and all persons in Nauvoo accused or sued to submit in all cases implicitly to the process of the courts and to interpose no obstacles to an arrest either by writ of habeas corpus or otherwise.”<sup>83</sup>

Smith informed Ford by letter that he intended to go to Washington, D.C. to plead his case with President John Tyler. Instead of following through on his communicated intention, he fled west across the Mississippi River with Hyrum on June 23rd. Emma subsequently sent some men from the church to convince her husband to return to Illinois and face the charges because Ford had promised their safety and a fair trial. Mormonism's founder wrote to the governor:

I now offer to come to you at Carthage [Illinois] on the morrow, as early as shall be convenient for your posse to escort us into headquarters...provided we can have a fair trial, not be abused nor have my witnesses abused, and have all things done in due form of law, without partiality, and you may depend on my honor without the show of a great armed force to produce excitement in the minds of the timid.<sup>84</sup>

Not surprisingly, Mormonism's convicted "disorderly person," the Latter-day Saint "bank" official in Kirtland who had committed fraud and fled Ohio with huge debts, the illegal polygamist in two states and violator of the First Amendment, now wanted the law applied "without partiality" in his case.

The Smith brothers did surrender themselves and were incarcerated in the Carthage Jail in the western part of Illinois. Joseph was also charged with treason for having declared martial law in Nauvoo. He and Hyrum were permitted visitors and allowed to stay in the upstairs bedroom of the jail in Carthage, a significant improvement over the facility's cell. More than once, Governor Ford came to the building and spoke with the Mormon "prophet."

On June 26, Joseph, who had told Ford that the governor could "depend on [his] honor," issued a secret written order to Major-General Jonathan Dunham of the Nauvoo Legion to attack the jail and liberate its Mormon prisoners. Of course, the LDS Church does not inform Latter-day Saints or potential converts of this troubling fact. Dunham ignored Smith's command because he knew that the assault would likely result in two bloodbaths: the first at the incarceration facility and the second when the Illinois militia laid siege to Nauvoo for insurrection following the Carthage assault.

The following day, several armed men with blackened faces besieged the jail. Pistols had previously been smuggled in and Joseph and Hyrum used them after the mob started firing. During the gunfight, Hyrum was shot in the face and killed. An assailant cried out to his comrades: "My arm is all shot to pieces by Old Joe, but I don't care! I've got revenge; I've shot Hyrum!"<sup>85</sup> "Got revenge" for what? Had his wife, sister, daughter or a female relative been pressured to participate in "spiritual wifery" and dishonored by the "prophet of the Restoration"? Had the attacker lost a family member during the fiasco of Zion's Camp led by "Pope" Joseph? Had the vocal shooter been in Kirtland and lost his savings in the illegal "bank" launched by Smith? We will probably never know what caused the assailant with the shot-up arm to seek revenge by shooting Hyrum, the brother of "Old Joe." Regardless, the remark is telling.

One wonders how many of the disguised men who went to Carthage Jail on June 27, 1844 intent on killing Joseph Smith had become his enemies because of his lies and abuses. While his murder and that of Hyrum, who unwisely went along with his brother's foolish ideas about polygamy and other controversial aspects of Mormonism, cannot be justified, they can be understood.

After the violent deaths of the Smith brothers, Mormon apostle and fellow polygamist John Taylor penned the following adulatory words about them, which became part of Latter-day Saint scripture:

Joseph Smith, the Prophet and Seer of the Lord, has done more, save Jesus only, for the salvation of men in this world, than any other man that ever lived in it. In the short space of twenty years, he has brought forth the Book of Mormon, which he translated by the gift and power of God, and has been the means of publishing it on two continents; has sent the fulness of the everlasting gospel, which it contained, to the four quarters of the earth; has brought forth the revelations and commandments which compose this book of Doctrine and Covenants, and many other wise documents and instructions for the benefit of the children of men; gathered many thousands of the Latter-day Saints, founded a great city, and left a fame and name that cannot be slain. He lived great, and he died great in the eyes of God and his people; and like most of the Lord's anointed in ancient times, has sealed his mission and his works with his own blood; and so has his brother Hyrum. In life they were not divided, and in death they were not separated!<sup>86</sup>

Later in her life, Helen Kimball reflected on her traumatic and life-altering polygamy experience with Joseph Smith and wrote these lines of poetry:

I thought through this life my time will be my own  
The step I now am taking's for eternity alone,  
No one need be the wiser, through time I shall be free,  
And as the past hath been the future still will be.  
To my guileless heart all free from worldly care  
And full of blissful hopes and youthful visions rare  
The world seemed bright the thret'ning clouds were kept  
From sight and all looked fair...

...but pitying angels wept.  
They saw my youthful friends grow shy and cold.  
And poisonous darts from sland'rous tongues were hurled,  
Untutor'd heart in thy gen'rous sacrafise,  
Thou did's't not weigh the cost nor know the bitter price;  
Thy happy dreams all o'er thou'st doom'd also to be  
Bar'd out from social scenes by this thy destiny,  
And o'er thy sad'nd mem'ries of sweet departed joys

Thy sicken'd heart will brood and imagine future woes,  
And like a fetter'd bird with wild and longing heart,  
Thou'lt daily pine for freedom and murmur at thy lot.<sup>87</sup>

Since the 1830s, many thousands of girls and women in the mainstream LDS Church and fundamentalist Mormon groups as well as hundreds of "Lost Boys" have paid "the bitter price" because of Latter-day Saint polygamy, arguably the most infamous aspect of Smith's religious scam. If there is a hell where God sends souls to be punished for the harm they caused during their mortal existence and to subsequent generations because of what they, as original offenders, set in motion, Mormonism's lying, law-breaking, and lecherous "Prophet and Seer" is surely rotting in it.



## Chapter 10

### Get Endowed and Sealed and Work in Mormon Temples for the Dead

**President Brigham Young said of the [temple] endowment [ceremony]: “Let me give you a definition in brief. Your endowment is, to receive all those ordinances [rites] 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.”** – An excerpt from “Come to the Temple,” an article by Mormon apostle Boyd Packer in the October 2007 edition of the Latter-day Saint Church’s *Ensign* magazine.

**The inspired erection and proper use of temples is one of the great evidences of the divinity of the Lord’s work... Where there are temples, with the spirit of revelation resting upon those who administer therein, there the Lord’s people will be found; where these are not, the Church and kingdom and the truth of heaven are not.** – An excerpt about Latter-day Saint temples from *Mormon Doctrine* by LDS apostle Bruce McConkie.

**You and each of you do covenant and promise that you will pray and never cease to pray to Almighty God to avenge the blood of the prophets [Joseph and Hyrum Smith] upon this nation, and that you will teach the same to your children and to your children’s children unto the third and fourth generation.** – Mormon oath of vengeance against the United States instituted in 1847 by Latter-day Saint Church president Brigham Young and sworn thereafter by thousands of members.

Since the nineteenth century, Mormonism has been known mostly for the *Book of Mormon*, polygamy, the stipulation that Latter-day Saints should not use tobacco products or drink alcoholic or caffeinated beverages, very conservative sexual morals, the Mormon Tabernacle Choir, and temples. Most of these subjects have been covered in previous chapters. The “MoTab,” a popular nickname for the 360-member choral group, is not a topic of relevance to this book. What happens inside Latter-day Saint temples is because the final stages of Mormon “brainwashing” occur within the restricted-access buildings.

The LDS Church would be far less wealthy today had it not been for Smith creating what Mormons call “temple worship.” Their religion stipulates that only members who pay a minimum of one-tenth of their earnings and other financial gains to the church are permitted to enter Latter-day Saint temples—and only in the structures can members receive “endowments” required to enter Mormon heaven after death. Without “the key words, the signs and tokens” supposedly

required to pass by “the angels who stand as sentinels” guarding the way to the Celestial Kingdom, no Latter-day Saint can live with God on the “great Urim and Thummim,” the “globe like a sea of glass and fire” near Kolob. Mormonism maintains that to not be “exalted” there after death is “eternal damnation.”

### **A global network of temples**

As of September 2014, there were 143 Mormon temples in operation worldwide, with fourteen under construction and thirteen more announced.<sup>1</sup> The LDS Church has spent billions of dollars on the edifices, which it says are “Houses of the Lord,” complete with manicured lawns and gardens.<sup>2</sup> Apparently, Mormonism’s Jesus likes luxury because temples are definitely high-end (photos and video clips are online<sup>3</sup>). Why do Mormons believe they need temples when they have already been baptized and confirmed members of “the only true and living Church,” again quoting apostle Dallin Oaks? Lds.org explains:

They [temples] are holy places of worship where individuals make sacred covenants with God. Because making covenants with God is such a solemn responsibility, individuals cannot enter the temple to receive their endowments [i.e., participate in key temple rituals] or be sealed in marriage for eternity until they have fully prepared themselves and been members of the Church for at least a year.<sup>4</sup>

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[I]f we are to live forever with our families in Heavenly Father’s presence, we must do all that the Savior commands us to do [as defined by the LDS Church]. This includes being baptized and confirmed [as Mormons] and receiving the ordinances of the temple.

As members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, we have each been baptized and confirmed by one having the proper priesthood authority. Each of us may also go to the temple to receive the saving priesthood ordinances performed there. But many of God’s children have not had these same opportunities. They lived at a time or place when the gospel [Mormonism] was not available to them.

Heavenly Father wants all of His children to return and live with Him. For those who died without baptism or the temple ordinances, He has provided a way for this to happen. He has asked us to perform ordinances for our ancestors [i.e., do “work for the dead”] in the temples.<sup>5</sup>

For more than a century and a half, the Mormon Church has concealed from Latter-day Saints details of temple “ordinances” (rituals) and “covenants” prior to their first visit. Why keep them in the dark about what has gone on inside the “holy places of worship”? Because in the edifices naked touching, simulated lethal violence, cultic chanting, and other disturbing activities have

taken place. Not surprisingly, the buildings have been designed and built in such a way that it is impossible to look inside to see what is going on. In Mormonism, temple secrecy has always been equated with “sacredness.”

### **Freemasonry and LDS temple “worship”**

Not only has the Latter-day Saint Church not informed Mormons about bizarre and troubling aspects of temple “worship,” it has also not told them that ceremonies and rites performed inside the buildings were derived from the Masonic movement, as explained in a Wikipedia article:

Mormon temple worship shares an extensive commonality of symbols, signs, vocabulary and clothing with Freemasonry, including robes, aprons, handshakes, ritualistic raising of the arms, etc. The interpretation of many of these symbols has been adapted to the Mormon narrative from their original meanings in Freemasonry. For example, whereas Masons exchange secret handshakes to identify fellow Freemasons, Mormonism teaches that these handshakes must be given to sentinel angels in order for Mormons to be admitted into the highest kingdom of heaven. Mormon temple garments also bear the Masonic symbols of the Square and Compass, although Mormons have imbued these symbols with religious meaning that exceeds the meaning of the symbols as intended by Freemasonry.<sup>6</sup>

Prominent Mormon leaders were Freemasons, as explained online:

The first five presidents of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints: Joseph Smith, Brigham Young, John Taylor, Wilford Woodruff, and Lorenzo Snow were all made freemasons in [the] Nauvoo Lodge.

Joseph Smith’s father, Joseph Smith, Sr. was raised [as a Freemason] on May 7, 1818 in [the] Ontario Lodge No. 23, Canandaigua, New York. His brother, Hyrum Smith, was a member of Mount Moriah Lodge No. 112, Palmyra, Ontario County, NY. And Brigham Young’s first counselor, Heber C. Kimball... is reported to have received the first three degrees of Freemasonry at Milnor as early as 1823.

On April 6, 1840, the present Grand Lodge of Illinois was formed by the Mormon patriarch, judge and general, James Adams. Grand Master Abraham Jonas issued a dispensation and instituted the lodge at Nauvoo on March 15, 1842.<sup>7</sup>

Smith’s “evil genius” buddy, abortionist John Bennett, was also a Freemason.<sup>8</sup> Why do these facts, particularly those pertaining to Mormonism’s founder, matter? Because not long after Smith was initiated into Freemasonry, he created the temple endowment ceremony based on Masonic rituals.<sup>9</sup> However, to generate faith in him and Mormonism, the LDS Church has

taught that “temple ordinances were restored [by ‘the Lord’] through the Prophet Joseph.”<sup>10</sup> The rituals have included:

1. *The Five Points of Fellowship*: This aspect of the endowment ceremony was part of Mormon “temple worship” for many decades until the LDS Church’s senior priesthood leadership ordered in early 1990 that it be removed.<sup>11</sup> Why? The very close and uncomfortable contact the ritual put members, particularly women, to a male stranger acting as Jesus Christ on the other side of the temple “veil,” a curtain with slits. The five “points” involved putting the inside of one’s right foot to the inside of the foot of “the Lord” actor, the inside of one’s knee to his, one’s chest close to his, the left hand on each other’s back, and one’s mouth to the other’s ear.
2. *First Token of the Aaronic Priesthood/First Degree*: During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, when Mormon initiates received the First Token of the Aaronic Priesthood they swore an oath similar to the promise made in the First Degree of the Masonic ritual: “We [Latter-day Saints] will not reveal any of the secrets of this, the first token of the Aaronic priesthood, with its accompanying name, sign or penalty. Should we do so, we agree that our throats be cut from ear to ear and our tongues torn out by their roots.” The Masonic oath stated: “I will...never reveal any part or parts, art or arts, point or points of the secret arts and mysteries of ancient Freemasonry...binding myself under no less penalty than to have my throat cut across, my tongue torn out by the roots.”
3. *Simulated throat-cutting*: Until April 1990, during the main temple “endowment” ceremony each Mormon gestured slicing his or her throat by moving their extended thumb across their neck to simulate the penalty of cutting “our throats...from ear to ear.” The Masonic ritual has been similar.
4. *Hand grasps*: Latter-day Saints who receive the First Token of the Aaronic Priesthood give a hand grip similar to that used by Freemasons in the First Degree of their ritual. As well, the Mormon grasp called “The Sign of the Nail” is similar to one given by Masonic Lodge members as part of their higher degree.
5. *Second Token of the Aaronic Priesthood/Second Degree*: The LDS oath of the Second Token of the Aaronic Priesthood has been similar to that taken in the second degree of Freemasonry. For many years, the Mormon oath was: “We and each of us do covenant and promise that we will not reveal the secrets of this, the Second Token of the Aaronic Priesthood, with its accompanying name, sign, grip or penalty. Should we do so, we agree to have our breasts cut open and our hearts and vitals torn from our bodies and given to the birds of the air and the beasts of the field.” The Masonic oath has included: “I...most solemnly and sincerely promise and swear... that I will not give the degree of a Fellow Craft Mason to any one of an inferior degree, nor to any other being in the known world...binding myself

under no less penalty than to have my left breast torn open and my heart and vitals taken from thence...to become a prey to the wild beasts of the field, and vulture of the air.”

6. *Ritual sign*: Mormon: “The sign is made by placing the left arm on the square at the level of the shoulder, placing the right hand across the chest with the thumb extended and then drawing it rapidly from left to right [a slicing motion] and dropping it to the side.” Masonic: “The sign is given by drawing your right hand flat, with the palm of it next to your breast, across your breast from the left to the right side with some quickness, and dropping it down by your side.”
7. *First Token of the Melchizedek Priesthood/Master Mason’s Degree*: The promise made by Latter-day Saints when receiving the First Token of the Melchizedek Priesthood resembles the oath given by Freemasons in the third or Master Mason’s Degree.
8. *Query-response at the veil*: The structured conversation at the slitted curtain in the LDS endowment ceremony is very similar to that of the Fellow Craft Mason when he is questioned concerning the “grip.”
9. *Passing through the veil*: In the Mormon ritual, the initiate cannot go through the veil until he or she has given certain signs and passwords to “the Lord” actor on the other side. In the Masonic Royal Arch Degree, curtain-like veils are also used, and the Principal Soujourner cannot enter the Third Veil except “by the words, sign, and word of exhortation of the Master of the Second Veil.”
10. *Chastity vow*: The Mormon and Masonic rituals include an oath against unauthorized sexual behavior.
11. *Changing attire*: Before going through their rituals, Latter-day Saints and Freemasons change from clothing worn outside to ceremonial attire.
12. *New name*: Mormons and Freemasons each receive a new name as part of their respective rites.
13. *Biblical Adam*: In the LDS endowment ceremony, a male actor represents Adam. The Masonic presentation includes a man portraying Adam in the Knight of the Sun degree.
14. *Square and compass*: Both Latter-day Saints and Freemasons consider the square and the compass to be important. Veils in LDS temples, Mormon garments (underwear), and Masonic rituals include depictions of a square and a measuring compass.

15. *Mallet and apron*: LDS and Masonic ceremonies include the use of a mallet as well as a special apron worn by each initiate.

**Mormon gods and goddesses, and the heterosexual “covenant of exaltation”**

Mormonism maintains that the chief objective of LDS temple “worship” is to provide the rites and concepts necessary for male and female Latter-day Saints to become gods and goddesses, respectively, after death. Mormon apostle Jeffrey Holland told husbands in General Conference in April 2007 to “think of yourself and of her [each man’s wife] as the god and goddess you both inherently are.”<sup>12</sup> Every LDS goddess is a Heavenly Mother, a spouse in the Celestial Kingdom, according to Mormonism, whose main responsibility is the co-creation and care of spirit children who will incarnate on planets created by each “exalted” Latter-day Saint husband-god via his wielded Melchizedek priesthood power.<sup>13</sup>

Again, it was Mormon Church president Brigham Young who said “the only men who become Gods, even the Sons of God, are those who enter into polygamy.” Lds.org has at least 119 “polygamy” references, 181 for “plural marriage,” and 306 instances of “celestial marriage.” Mormon apostle Russell Nelson, a polygamist as previously explained, wrote in late 2011 for the *Ensign* and *Liahona* magazines that “celestial marriage is the covenant of exaltation.” Decades earlier, church president Spencer Kimball told young Mormon males that they should keep themselves “free from the ugliness of the world and plan a celestial marriage in the temple of the Lord.”<sup>14</sup> In Mormonism, “the ugliness of the world” not only includes necking, petting, and pre-marital sex involving heterosexual couples, but also homosexual expressions of affection and same-sex love. Published in 2011, the LDS Church’s *Gospel Principles* manual states:

Since the beginning, marriage has been a law of the gospel. Marriages are intended to last forever, not just for our mortal lives.

Adam and Eve were married by God before there was any death in the world. They had an eternal marriage. They taught the law of eternal marriage to their children and their children’s children. As the years passed, wickedness entered the hearts of the people and the authority to perform this sacred ordinance was taken from the earth. Through the Restoration of the gospel [Mormonism], eternal marriage has been restored to earth.<sup>15</sup>

Since the nineteenth century, the LDS Church has taught that “eternal marriage” involves being “sealed” by priesthood authority in a Mormon temple and the “sealing” extends to a couple’s offspring “born under the covenant” (i.e., after the temple marriage). A sermon by apostle Robert Hales in 2005 explained that “what is sealed on earth is literally sealed in heaven—never to be broken if those [church members] being sealed remain faithful [to Mormonism] and endure to the end [of their ‘mortal probation’].”<sup>16</sup>

### **God was once a man; men can become Gods**

For generations, Mormon leaders taught that “[a]s man is, God once was; and as God is, man may become.”<sup>17</sup> In April 1977, LDS Church president Spencer Kimball told Latter-day Saints in General Conference (he quoted the *Journal of Discourses* in his sermon):

Let me mention one more thing. While we are in the mortal body we cannot “fashion kingdoms [or] organize matter, for [that is] beyond our capacity and calling, beyond this world. In the resurrection, [Mormon] men who have been faithful and diligent in all things in the flesh, [who] have kept their first and second estate [i.e., were ‘valiant’ during the premortal existence and obedient as church members during mortality], and [are] worthy to be crowned Gods, even the sons of God, will be ordained to organize matter. How much matter do you suppose there is between here and some of the fixed stars which we can see? Enough to frame many, very many millions of such earths as this, yet it is now so diffused, clear and pure, that we look through it and behold the stars. Yet the matter is there.”<sup>18</sup>

The reader will likely not be surprised to learn that the LDS “truth” about “clear and pure” matter between our planet and “the fixed stars” has not been heralded by scientists. Astronomers and other researchers have determined that outer space contains hydrogen and helium plasma as well as electromagnetic radiation, magnetic fields, and neutrinos.<sup>19</sup> Scientific research also suggests that the universe contains what astrophysicists call “dark matter” and “dark energy.” Where did the Mormon idea of “clear and pure” matter originate? In May 1843, Smith gave the following “instruction,” which became part of church canon:

There is no such thing as immaterial matter. All spirit is matter, but it is more fine or pure, and can only be discerned by purer eyes;

We cannot see it; but when our bodies are purified [as resurrected beings] we shall see that it is all matter.<sup>20</sup>

Of course, Smith was wrong. Extremely small matter *has* been viewed by humans—mostly non-Mormons—using sophisticated equipment such as electronic and atomic force microscopes. The transmission electron microscope, for example, has a magnification power of fifty million, making it possible to see things 1/3000th smaller than the diameter of a human hair.

### **The Elohim-Jehovah cosmos creation team**

One of the purported “truths” that Mormons learn in the temple endowment ceremony is that Elohim (Heavenly Father), Jehovah (the premortal Jesus), and Michael (the unborn Biblical Adam) created the cosmos, including the earth and its flora and fauna. The Latter-day Saint ceremony includes the

following dialogue for the first day (one Kolobian/Celestial Kingdom day, or a thousand earth years) of creation:

ELOHIM: Jehovah, Michael, see -- yonder is matter unorganized. Go ye down and organize it into a world like unto the worlds that we have heretofore formed. Call your labors the first day, and bring me word.

JEHOVAH: It shall be done, Elohim. Come, Michael, let us go down.

MICHAEL: We will go down, Jehovah.

JEHOVAH: Michael, see -- here is matter unorganized. We will organize it into a world like unto the worlds that we have heretofore formed. We will call our labors the first day, and return and report.

MICHAEL: We will return and report our labors of the first day, Jehovah.

JEHOVAH: Elohim, we have been down as thou hast commanded, and have organized a world like unto the worlds that we have heretofore formed; and we have called our labors the first day.

ELOHIM: It is well.<sup>21</sup>

On the second day—the second thousand-year-period, according to Mormonism—Elohim tells Jehovah and Michael to go down to the “world” (earth) again and gather the waters together to cause land to appear. They do so and report back to him. The same routine happens on the third day (light is divided from darkness), fourth and fifth days (vegetation and creatures are made), and sixth day (Adam and Eve are formed). God rests from his labors on the seventh day (i.e., the seventh period of one thousand years).

Contrary to Mormon doctrine, during the past few centuries scientists have discovered that the earth was not created in a mere six millennia but formed over billions of years through natural processes such as accretion from the solar nebula, asteroid and comet impacts, volcanic outgassing, tectonic plate shifts, and more.<sup>22</sup> Also, researchers have discovered that life on our planet slowly evolved through natural selection and as a result of the occasional catastrophe (e.g., large asteroid impacts) over some 3.8 billion years.<sup>23</sup>

To believe in Latter-day Saint creationism, as taught in Mormon temples and LDS classes, requires a mind conditioned to ignore many truths discovered and reported by geologists, biologists, and other scientists during the past five centuries. While science has greatly helped humanity comprehend the development and nature of the universe and terrestrial life, church members have typically disregarded scientific facts that have been incongruous with their beliefs. Mormon teachings in and outside of temples about the earth and life forms on our planet as well as the rest of the cosmos may be “faith”-bolstering for Latter-day Saints, but they are demonstrably wrong.



### **Premortal “Council of the Gods” and Adam, the incarnated polygamist deity**

Mormonism stands out from other Western religions in many ways, including its doctrine that the universe and everything in it were created not by God, as Christians and other religionists believe, but multiple deities. Text on lds.org explains:

The Creation is an integral part of Heavenly Father’s plan of salvation. It gives each of us the opportunity to come to the earth, where we receive a physical body and exercise our agency. In the premortal Council of the Gods, the following declaration was made: “We will go down, for there is space there, and we will take of these materials, and we will make an earth whereon these may dwell; and we will prove them herewith, to see if they will do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them” (Abraham 3:24-25).<sup>24</sup>

Mormon Church president Brigham Young taught that Adam, the Bible’s first man, was not only involved in the earth’s creation, he was God incarnate (explained in Chapter 7) and a polygamist *before* being born. Young told Latter-day Saints in April 1852:

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...the earth was organized by three distinct characters, namely, Eloheim [Heavenly Father], Yahovah [Jehovah, the premortal Jesus], and Michael [Adam/God], 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.<sup>25</sup>

Generations of Mormons have been indoctrinated in LDS temples to believe that “the Gods” created the earth and terrestrial life forms, a demonstrably false concept nevertheless described in Latter-day Saint scripture. For example, the LDS Church’s summary for the fourth chapter of the Book of Abraham says: “The Gods plan the creation of the earth and all life thereon—Their plans for the six days of creation are set forth.”<sup>26</sup> The chapter contains twenty-six verses that mention multiple deities making “the heavens and the earth.”<sup>27</sup> Also, the summary for the next chapter states: “The Gods finish Their planning of the creation of all things—They bring to pass the Creation according to Their plans—Adam names every living creature.”<sup>28</sup> Fourteen verses in Abraham 5 mention “the Gods.”<sup>29</sup>

### **One god in the Bible and Book of Mormon, but multiple LDS deities**

Smith believed only later in his life that faithful Mormon males would become gods after death. Oddly, he did not subscribe to this “eternal truth” for a number of years as the “prophet of the Restoration.” However, as thousands of people joined his religious movement and his ecclesiastical importance increased, the idea of becoming a deity after death appealed to his swelling ego. Problematically, however, as a reader of the Bible from his youth onward, Smith would have been aware of what two verses in the forty-fourth chapter of Isaiah in the Old Testament said:

Thus saith the Lord the King of Israel, and his redeemer the Lord of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God.<sup>30</sup>

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Fear ye not, neither be afraid: have not I [the Lord] told thee [Isaiah] from that time, and have declared it? ye are even my witnesses. Is there a God beside me? yea, there is no God; I know not any.<sup>31</sup>

Christianity is a monotheistic religion and the Bible contains more than one thousand references to “God” and “the Lord God,” including several in Isaiah. The concept of a single deity is also in the *Book of Mormon*. In one of its sections called the Book of Alma, a conversation involving two characters, Zeezrom and Amulek, a preacher, is described as follows:

And Zeezrom said unto him [Amulek]: Thou sayest there is a true and living God?

And Amulek said: Yea, there is a true and living God.

Now Zeezrom said: Is there more than one God?

And he [Amulek] answered, No.<sup>32</sup>

Despite the Biblical and *Book of Mormon* verses about just one god, later in his religious career Smith formulated the idea that obedient Latter-day Saint men would become deities after death, following the example of Heavenly Father/Elohim, who was once a man, according to LDS doctrine. The sixth volume of the official *History of the Church* as well as an article in the April 1971 *Ensign* quoted Mormonism’s founder as follows:

I will go back to the beginning before the world was, to show what kind of a being God is. What sort of a being was God in the beginning? Open your ears and hear, all ye ends of the earth, for I am going to prove it to you by the Bible, and to tell you the designs of God in relation to the human race, and why He interferes with the affairs of man.

God himself was once as we are now, and is an exalted man, and sits enthroned in yonder heavens! That is the great secret. If the veil were rent today, and the great God who holds this world in its orbit, and who upholds all worlds and all things by His power, was to make himself visible—I say, if you were to see him today, you would see him like a man in form—like yourselves in all the person, image, and very form as a man; for Adam was created in the very fashion, image and likeness of God, and received instruction from, and walked, talked and conversed with Him, as one man talks and communes with another.<sup>33</sup>

In the same speech, which Joseph Smith gave in April 1844, he also told church members:

[Y]ou 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, namely, by going from one small degree to another, and from a small capacity to a great one; from grace to grace, from exaltation to exaltation, until you attain to the resurrection of the dead, and are able to dwell in everlasting burnings, and to sit in glory, as do those who sit enthroned in everlasting power.<sup>34</sup>

Smith's ideas about multiple deities and righteous Mormon males becoming gods after death have been taught as "eternal truths" to countless Latter-day Saints in the Mormon temple endowment ceremony. To believers of monotheistic religions such as of Atenism, Babism, Caodaism, Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Sikhism, Tenrikyo, Vaishnavism, and Zoroastrianism, the LDS "truth" about more than one deity is blasphemy.

### **Christian apostles visited earth millennia before their birth?**

The LDS doctrine about "the Gods" creating the earth is further complicated by an element of Mormon temple worship that says Biblical Adam was visited by the not-yet-born Christian apostles-to-be Peter, James, and John. The Mormon endowment ceremony depicts them as intelligences-spirits acting as instructors millennia before they incarnated, and online text provides related information:

[Premortal] PETER [reporting to the unborn Jesus]: Jehovah, we have been down to the man Adam and his posterity, have placed the robe on the right shoulder, and have introduced them into the terrestrial world [the earth in a "paradisiacal" state, according to Mormonism]. We have put them under covenant to observe and keep the law of chastity. We have also given them the first token of the Melchizedek priesthood, or Sign of the Nail, with its accompanying name, sign, and penalty ["penalty" was removed in April 1990]. This is our report.

JEHOVAH [intelligence-spirit Jesus]: It is well, Peter, James, and John.

JEHOVAH [reports to Elohim]: Peter, James, and John have been down to the man Adam and his posterity, have placed the robe on the right shoulder, and have introduced them into the terrestrial world. They have also put them under covenant to observe and keep the law of chastity. They have given unto them the first token of the Melchizedek priesthood, or Sign of the Nail, with its accompanying name, sign, and penalty. This is their report. [Later condensed to: “Peter, James, and John have been down to Adam and Eve and their posterity and have done all that they were commanded to do.”]

ELOHIM: It is well. Jehovah, send down [the intelligences-spirits called] Peter, James, and John, and instruct them to give to the man Adam [later “Adam and Eve”] and his [later “their”] posterity in the terrestrial world the law of consecration, in connection with the law of the gospel [Mormonism] and the law of sacrifice, and to cause them to receive it by covenant; to give unto them the second token of the Melchizedek priesthood, the patriarchal grip, or Sure Sign of the Nail, with its accompanying sign; and to teach them the order of prayer and prepare them in all things to receive further instructions at the veil. Then have them report at the veil.

JEHOVAH: It shall be done, Elohim. Peter, James, and John, go down to the man Adam and his posterity [later “Adam and Eve...their posterity”] in the terrestrial world and give unto them the law of consecration, in connection with the law of the gospel and the law of sacrifice, and cause them to receive it by covenant. Give unto them the second token of the Melchizedek priesthood, the patriarchal grip, or Sure Sign of the Nail, with its accompanying sign. Teach them the order of prayer and prepare them in all things to receive further instructions at the veil. Then report at the veil.

[Unborn intelligence-spirit] PETER: It shall be done, Jehovah. Come, James and John, let us go down [to the earth].<sup>35</sup>

This dialogue has been a small portion of the main Mormon endowment ceremony, which is portrayed by actors on a film shown in all temples but two—Salt Lake City and Manti in Utah—where live acting takes place.<sup>36</sup> The ritual has repeatedly been changed since the 1830s, another historical reality that the LDS Church does not reveal to its members.<sup>37</sup> Why? The patriarchal leadership wants members to believe that Jesus Christ re-established the “holy,” “perfect” temple rituals via Smith, thus never requiring modifications.

### **LDS indoctrination about temples starts early**

The Mormon Church starts indoctrinating children about temples at a very young age: less than three years old. The Introduction section of Lesson 13 of the *Primary Nursery* manual, “My Family Can Be Together Forever,” says:

Heavenly Father has made it possible for family relationships to continue after this life. If family members are sealed in the temple and faithfully keep the commandments [as defined by Mormonism], they can be united as a family eternally and live in Heavenly Father's presence.<sup>38</sup>

LDS Church instructions in the manual to nursery teachers include:

Show a picture of a temple in your area... Tell the children that this is a picture of a temple... Ask them to repeat the word "temple" a few times. Have them pretend to be a beautiful temple by putting their hands together above their heads to make a temple spire.

Invite the children to stand. Sing or say the words to "I Love to See the Temple" (*Children's Songbook*, 95) and do the actions below. Invite the children to join you.

I love to see the temple. (*put fingertips together to form a spire*)  
I'm going there someday (*walk in place*)  
To feel the Holy Spirit, (*put hand over heart*)  
To listen and to pray. (*fold arms*)

Tell the children that the temple is the house of the Lord. Invite them to say, "House of the Lord." Emphasize that the temple is a very special place; because of the temple, our families can be together forever.

Sing or say the first two lines of the chorus of "Families Can Be Together Forever" (*Children's Songbook*, 188):

Families can be together forever  
Through heavenly Father's plan.

Invite the children to repeat these lines with you several times slowly.<sup>39</sup>

Mormon "brainwashing" about temples—and other LDS concepts—continues throughout young people's lives. For example, the stated objective of "Lesson 32: Preparing for the Temple Endowment" is: "Each young man will prepare to receive his temple endowment and prepare to make this experience beautiful and sacred."<sup>40</sup> Concepts presented in the lesson include:

The temple is a place where ceremonies pertaining to Godliness are presented.

Here [in the temples] the principles of the gospel [Mormonism] are reviewed and profound truths of the kingdom of God are unfolded.

The temple is a place of revelation.

Should the Lord [Jesus] visit the earth, he would come to his temple.

Until April 1990, the supposedly “beautiful and sacred” endowment ceremony included the following oath:

I (the Mormon’s name, or that of the dead person for whom proxy temple work was being done), covenant that I will never reveal the first token of the Aaronic priesthood, with its accompanying name, sign, and penalty. Rather than do so, I would suffer my life to be taken.<sup>41</sup>

During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, hundreds of thousands of Latter-day Saints uttered these disturbing words during temple visits. The psychological power of cultic Mormonism to smother rationality has indeed been formidable.

### **Naked “holy” touching in the temple**

Prior to going through the main endowment ceremony, Mormons participate in what is called the “washing and anointing” or “initiatory” ritual.<sup>42</sup> As with other temple activities, the secretive LDS Church has never provided details to members of what they will experience during the ceremony prior to their first visit. Richard Packham, a retired lawyer and former Latter-day Saint who was raised in Mormonism and lives in Oregon, has published the following information online:

#### **THE ENDOWMENT: THE WASHING AND ANOINTING**

Men and women undergo this part of the endowment in separate but identical areas. Male officiators perform the ritual for the men, and female officiators for the women. The ceremony is the same for members of each sex, with the exception of the ordination to the priesthood, mentioned below. Since women cannot hold the Mormon priesthood, that ordination is not performed for the women. The description here uses a male example.

Each participant (called a “patron”) goes to a locker room and completely disrobes, removing his street clothes and covering the body with a loose white poncho (called a “shield”), which is open on both sides. Taking a towel and a “sacred garment” (which will be discussed later), he proceeds to any one of a number of small booths, where temple workers (“officiators”) are waiting for the individual patrons. Male patrons who are proxies for dead men are first ordained to the Mormon priesthood on behalf of the dead man. The ordination is performed by two temple workers who lay their hands on the patron’s head and pronounce a short ordination formula. The patron enters the booth, and receives the washing, which consists of a token wetting of each part of the body by the officiator, reaching under-

neath the shield, accompanied by a set blessing to the effect that that body part will function properly. The head, eyes, nose, neck, shoulders, arms, loins, legs, feet, etc. are all washed and blessed. The two officiators then place their hands upon the head of the patron and with a short prayer “seal” the washing upon him, thus “cleansing” him from the “sins of this generation.”

The anointing follows immediately, and is identical with the washing, except that each body part is “anointed,” that is, touched with a small amount of olive oil. The anointing is also sealed upon him.

The officiators then clothe the patron in the “garment of the Holy Priesthood” which the patron has brought. This is a plain white undergarment [underpants with legs reaching almost to the top of the knees and a T-shirt] with four small symbolic marks sewn into it, at the right knee, the navel and each nipple. The patron is instructed that the garment represents the covering which God gave Adam and Eve to clothe their nakedness, and that the patron must wear such a garment at all times from then onward.

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At this point the patron is also given a “new name,” which will be used as a password later in the ceremony, and which he is told will also be needed at the entrance to heaven. The [recycled] name is usually a name of some character from the Bible or the Book of Mormon.

The patron then goes back to the locker, removes the poncho, and dresses for the communal part of the endowment in plain white clothing, with the garment underneath. For men: [white] trousers, belt, shirt, necktie, socks, and slippers or moccasins. For women: [white] long-sleeved dress, stockings, and slippers or moccasins.<sup>43</sup>

In June 2002, a former Latter-day Saint woman posted the following information about the “initiatory” for women on the Recovery from Mormonism (exmormon.org) message board:

You enter a small stall, and sit on a cold marble type slab. The female temple worker doing the washing and anointing stands behind and to the side of you and starts with the top of the head, the forehead, the eyes, nose, mouth, breast, bowels, legs, etc. She has a little spigot she gets water from that drips slowly. The oil is done in the same fashion. Nothing untoward, of a sexual nature is done, but it is just very, very ethically and culturally out of order. How anyone can equate that to something spiritual just amazes me.

I can still see the rows of tiny lockers where we completely undressed and donned the sheet tunic, carrying our long garments into the little cubical where the old lady awaited me.

I can still see, hear and feel and smell those old women [Mormon “officiators”]. They were like a grandma dressed in a white uniform, false teeth clacking, chewing a breath mint I could feel their breath and smell the aroma of the mints as she whispered in my ear reaching under the sheet with those warm, sweaty, damp hands sliding over here and over there, anointing me first with dabs of water from head to toe, then doing the same thing with oil. I can still hear the water trickling from the tiny spigot that she put her hands into to begin the anointing. I can still hear the sing-song monotone of her memorized washing and anointing dialogue.

Sometimes, I had to stifle a giggle as the old woman inadvertently tickled me and I squirmed. I tried to sit really, really still so she would not slide her wet, warm oily hand anywhere it ought not to be as her face was averted outside the sheet [the “shield”] and she could not see where she had her hands. Sometimes she slid her hands within inches of my breasts and pubic hair as she slid her hands around in her predetermined and well practiced path. I always hated it and I would shudder when she slide those warm, oily hands down my legs onto my feet. When she finished she would help me step into my underwear [a temple garment], while still wearing that sheet tunic, adjusting it properly and sending me out into the dressing area where dozens of other women were coming and going. I always had the feeling she wanted to kiss me, she was so pleased. I still shudder.<sup>44</sup>

In 2005, the LDS Church significantly altered the washing and anointing ritual by removing the naked touching. It was rumoured—and probably true—that a sexual misconduct lawsuit had been brought against the organization related to the intimate skin-to-skin contact that Mormons were never told about in advance or their permission sought by temple “officiators” doing the touching, as instructed by the church.

During the past generation, various sex abuse lawsuits have been filed against the Latter-day Saint Church, and reparations have cost the organization millions of dollars.<sup>45</sup> Getting rid of the “restored” naked touching component of the washing and anointing ritual was, fundamentally, a business decision. It is noteworthy that between the nineteenth century and early 2005, countless Mormons had been taught that the skin-to-skin contact was part of a “divine” ritual “restored” by “the Lord” through Joseph Smith.

If the naked touching was indeed “spiritually” necessary for Latter-day Saints over more than a century and a half as well as millions of deceased “souls” via LDS temple “work for the dead,” how could it suddenly be unnecessary? The *Book of Mormon* and *Doctrine and Covenants* repeatedly say that God is “the same yesterday, today, and forever,” so why would “the



Almighty” contradict himself by re-establishing temple naked touching via Smith and then, generations later, allow his church to eliminate it? Like so many other aspects of Mormonism, the temple change of 2005 made no sense – except from a financial risk-reduction/protection perspective.

### **Magical Mormon underwear**

Every Latter-day Saint who had been through the “washing and anointing” ritual leaves the cubicle wearing an odd-looking, two-piece under-garment after having been told:

Brother (Sister) \_\_\_\_\_, under proper authority, the garment placed upon you is now authorized [“for and in behalf of \_\_\_\_\_, who is dead,” if the ritual is for a deceased person], and is to be worn throughout your life. It represents the garment given to Adam when he was found naked in the garden of Eden and is called the garment of the holy priesthood.

Inasmuch as you do not defile it, but are true and faithful to your covenants, it will be a shield and a protection to you against the power of the destroyer [Satan/the Devil] until you have finished your work on the earth.<sup>46</sup>



Mormon temple garments

Latter-day Saints are told to always wear garments unless bathing, swimming (except missionaries, as explained), or having sex. They are supposed to wear them even when sleeping, on vacation, or working outside on a hot day. However, the LDS “truth” that the underwear provides supernatural physical protection is demonstrable nonsense. Garment-wearing missionaries have been killed,<sup>47</sup> including by gunfire,<sup>48</sup> and temple-attending Mormons dressed in the so-called “shield” under their street clothes have been badly injured—lethally, in some cases—in vehicle accidents and other calamities.

If LDS temple underwear has indeed been imbued with a magical, protective power, why then have “worthy” Mormons such as missionaries been shot and stabbed to death, died in car, airplane, or boat crashes, or perished in other deadly situations? Did the garments malfunction? Latter-day Saints have typically interpreted such life-ending situations as “the Lord” working in

“mysterious ways”<sup>49</sup> or “calling” church members “home” (i.e., back to the Celestial Kingdom). Anything to make “sense” out of the senseless.

### **The Mormon “law of consecration”**

In the temple endowment ceremony, Latter-day Saints swear an oath that they will obey “the law of consecration as contained in the book of Doctrine and Covenants, in connection with the law of the gospel and the law of sacrifice.”<sup>50</sup> Specifically, they promise to devote their “time, talents, and everything with which the Lord has blessed” them, or “may bless” them to the Mormon Church, “for the building up of the kingdom of God on the earth and for the establishment of Zion [the global LDS community].”<sup>51</sup> With their right arm positioned out to the side of their bodies and held at a right angle (the flattened hand is placed vertically and faces forward) and their heads bowed, in unison they say “yes” during the ceremony, signifying that they will obey.

The law of consecration is Mormonism’s version of communism, essentially, with the Latter-day Saint Church ultimately controlling people’s assets. The concept began with Smith, who had experienced poverty during his formative years, as explained in Chapter 1, and instead of working hard and becoming a farmer, carpenter, or other competent breadwinner, he “fled to safety to the sanctuary of pretended religion,” again quoting Dr. Benton. A church lesson used to indoctrinate children about the law of consecration says:

The Saints were to consecrate, or give, all of their property and possessions to the Church. The bishop [the leader of each local Mormon congregation] would be responsible for these consecrations.

The bishop would decide with the head of each family what property and possessions the family needed to work and live. The bishop would give these needed items to the family.

Families would work hard to provide for themselves using the things they were given. After they filled their own needs and wants, anything extra they had earned or created was to be given to the bishop to help the poor and strengthen the Church...

Early members of the Church lived the law of consecration for only a short while. Someday the Church will practice the law of consecration again, but today we as members are asked to live only part of the law. We are not asked to give all we have to the Church, but we are asked to pay tithing and fast offerings.<sup>52</sup>

In *Mormon Doctrine*, Latter-day Saint apostle Bruce McConkie explained that “[p]ractice of the law of consecration is inextricably intertwined with the development of the attributes of godliness in this life and the attainment of eternal life in the world to come.”<sup>53</sup> He listed the law’s principles:

1. Worldly riches should not be sought for. 2. Every man should esteem his brother as himself. 3. The Church should care for the temporal needs of those whom the Lord called into church service [e.g., “prophets” such as Joseph Smith]. 4. The worldly goods of the members, beyond family necessities, should be made available for the Lord’s work. 5. The Church should see that its poor were cared for.<sup>54</sup>

Regarding the fifth point, Mormonism’s senior patriarchal leadership has never explained why it is okay for the church to accumulate “worldly riches” (e.g., vast amounts of real estate, a priceless Rembrandt art collection<sup>55</sup>) and squirrel away and invest billions of dollars (see Chapter 12 for details) when there are Latter-day Saints living below the poverty line in industrialized and developing nations and grinding poverty in the Third World.

McConkie also wrote that the “law of consecration” will be put into effect during the Millennium:

That the full of law of consecration will yet again be practiced is well known. It is a celestial law. “And Zion cannot be built up unless it is upon the principles of the law of the celestial kingdom; otherwise I [‘the Lord’] cannot receive her unto myself.”<sup>56</sup>

Mormonism includes the bizarre idea that Jesus Christ will levitate the Latter-day Saint Zion collective in the future as he supposedly did with the mysterious City of Enoch and its inhabitants millennia ago when he was an intelligence-spirit.

### **Hitler, Holocaust victims, Pope John Paul II, and Gandhi might be Mormons**

While most LDS endowment rituals are done on behalf of deceased non-Mormons, all baptisms performed in Latter-day Saint temples are done for the dead. To explain further, individuals are baptized for their own “salvation” in Mormon meetinghouses/chapels, or if such a facility is not available, in a river, swimming pool, or other body of water.

Latter-day Saints have been baptized for all kinds of deceased persons supposedly waiting in spirit prison, including Nazi dictator and mass murderer Adolf Hitler, Jews who perished in the Holocaust during the Second World War (due to the Nazis’ genocidal “Final Solution”), Karol Józef Wojtyła (the Holy Roman Catholic Church’s Pope John Paul II), Stanley Ann Dunham (mother of U.S. President Barack Obama), and Mahatma Gandhi (twentieth-century political leader in India). A news report in early 2012 provided details about the LDS Church’s vicarious ordinances pertaining to the Hindu pioneer of Indian nationalism:

Hindus in the US have been shocked by reports of proxy baptism of Mahatma Gandhi by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (LDS) headquartered in Salt Lake City, Utah.

In a statement from Nevada, USA, Hindu statesman Rajan Zed said on Wednesday it was appalling to note that Gandhi had been reportedly baptized by proxy by [the] LDS [Church]. “It is insensitive and hurtful to the feelings of about one billion Hindus spread worldwide,” he said.

The matter came to light after Salt Lake City-based independent researcher Helen Radkey emailed Zed, also president of Universal Society of Hinduism, some pages from FamilySearch[.org], an LDS service that showed Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (Person Identifier LHTR-62Z; born 2 October 1869 in Porbandar and died 30 January 1948 in New Delhi) as baptized on 27 March 1996 at Salt Lake City Utah Temple.

The subsequent procedure of “Confirmation” of the baptism was completed 17 November 2007 at Sao Paulo Brazil Temple and “Initiatory” completed 4 February 2009 at Sao Paulo Brazil Temple. It also listed names of Gandhi’s siblings, parents and children.

Radkey said she looked up this record on February 16 but it had since disappeared and was no longer available in the database. Person Identifier LHTR-62Z pulled up as “Unknown Name.” It was unusual for a record to vanish, she added.

“After the recent news of posthumous baptizing of Jewish rights advocate Simon Wiesenthal’s parents, prominent Jewish victim Anne Frank (Diary of a Young Girl) and now Mahatma Gandhi reports, we are highly concerned and wonder how many of our ancestors had been baptized by [the] LDS [Church] without our will,” Zed said.<sup>57</sup>

Readers’ reactions to the news report were almost universally critical of the Mormon temple practice involving deceased individuals. For example, one person using the handle “Insanegupta” posted online: “What a mockery of Christianity. Have they run out of people who are alive and willing to accept the Mormon church that they have to run around baptising famous people posthumously? Ridiculous!”<sup>58</sup> Another, “Christian Häberli,” remarked: “A terrible sign of a lack of tolerance and understanding. Fortunately the Mahatma will not be affected by such acts of religious transgression. May his soul rest in peace.”<sup>59</sup> “Fnord” was blunt: “It’s all imaginary. Who cares if the stupid Mormons want to do some meaningless ritual? Let them have their pretendsies.”<sup>60</sup>

#### **“Holocaust Survivor Calls Out Romney Over Proxy Baptisms”**

In February 2012, *Slate* magazine published a report about proxy baptisms in Mormon temples:

Prominent Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel wants Mitt Romney [2012 Republican presidential candidate] to urge the Mormon church to abandon its practice of posthumously baptizing Jews, some of whom died in [Nazi] concentration camps during World War II.

In an interview with the Huffington Post, the Nobel Peace Prize-winning Wiesel said that Romney should speak to his own church and say they should stop the practice. "I think it's scandalous," he continued. "Not only objectionable, it's scandalous."

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints performs the proxy baptisms in order to "save" ancestors and others who weren't baptized in life or who were baptized "without proper authority" [meaning all persons not baptized by a priesthood-ordained LDS male]." Mormons can propose a proxy baptism after a person has died.

The practice came to light in 1994 when an Israeli genealogist researching her family found the name of her grandfather, a religious Jew who had been killed in the Holocaust, in the LDS database of posthumously baptized Mormons. With more digging, a whole slew of prominent names came to the surface, including Anne Frank, Albert Einstein and David Ben-Gurion, Israel's first prime minister.

The discovery produced outrage within the Jewish community, and negotiations between Mormon and Jewish leaders led to a 1995 agreement whereby the church would stop all posthumous baptisms of Jews, except for those who were direct ancestors of Mormons. After that arrangement fell apart, the two sides brokered another compromise in 2010 that specifically barred proxy baptisms for Holocaust survivors.

But Wiesel and others say that Mormons have not held up their end of the bargain, a claim that has been supported by a Salt Lake City researcher who says that she recently found the name of Wiesel and other Holocaust survivors in the LDS database (despite the fact that the eighty-three year-old is very much still alive).<sup>61</sup>

### **The Mormon oath of vengeance "upon this nation"**

Several news agencies have reported during the past decade about the Mormon practice of baptisms for the dead. Just over a century ago, the press in the United States covered another aspect of LDS temple worship: the oath of vengeance. What was it? In December 1847, senior apostle and acting church president Brigham Young ordered the temple endowment ceremony to be changed to include the following vow:

You and each of you [Mormons] do covenant and promise that you will pray and never cease to pray to Almighty God to avenge the blood of the prophets upon this nation, and that you will teach the same to your children and to your children's children unto the third and fourth generation.<sup>62</sup>

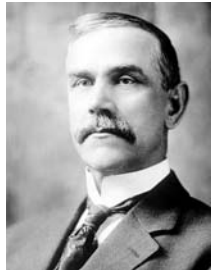
The “blood of the prophets” referred to the killings of Joseph and Hyrum Smith, and the “nation” that Mormons were supposed to pray and seek God’s vengeance upon was the United States. Not surprisingly, Mormon zealot and apostle Heber Kimball wrote in his journal in December 1845:

I have covenanted, and never will rest...until those men who killed Joseph & Hyrum have been wiped out of the earth.<sup>63</sup>

Homicide would be required to wipe men “out of the earth.” Did Kimball ever murder someone whom he thought had participated on the attack on the Carthage Jail in June 1844? There is no evidence that he did. With dozens of wives and children and significant church responsibilities, it is unlikely that he found the time to hunt down any of the men who killed the Smith brothers. After Kimball died in 1868, the Mormon oath of vengeance continued to be part of the “holy” temple endowment ritual for more than half a century.<sup>64</sup>

#### **Vengeance covenant and polygamy scrutinized by the Senate**

In January 1903, Reed Smoot, a manufacturer, banker, and LDS apostle from Utah, was elected to the U.S. Senate. A political battle about his eligibility to serve on Capitol Hill soon erupted and lasted four years, starting in February 1903, in part because senators had learned of and were disturbed by the Latter-day Saint oath of vengeance. How could an American who had sworn such an oath, which Smoot had done in the temple, possibly be bound in his mind and heart by his promise to “support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic” and to “bear true faith and allegiance” to nation’s most important political and legal document?<sup>65</sup> Several senators were convinced that such a conflict would undermine everything Smoot did as a legislator.



Senator Reed Smoot

In addition to concerned lawmakers, there were religious non-Mormons who opposed Smoot's senatorship due to the continued and illegal practice of Latter-day Saint polygamy. In her 2004 book, *The Politics of American Religious Identity: The Seating of Senator Reed Smoot, Mormon Apostle*, historian Dr. Kathleen Flake provided a summary of what happened:

Between 1903 and 1907, a broad coalition of American Protestant churches, acting directly through their ministers and indirectly through various reform agencies, sought to expel Utah's new senator on the grounds that his ecclesiastical position [as a Latter-day Saint apostle] made him a conspirator in the L.D.S. Church's continuing violation of the nation's antipolygamy laws. In the Smoot hearing, as in every other Mormon conflict of the previous century, the Protestants were the chief combatants...

Mormons did not, nor were they invited to, participate in the effort to reform American social institutions. Indeed, they were at best the objects of reform and at worst deemed incapable of reform. For nineteenth-century Americans, including church history scholar Phillip Schaff, there was an "irreconcilable antagonism of the American nationality with the pseudo-Christian polygamists, [and] deceitful, rapacious, and rebellious Mormonism." Though rightly stripped of its normative indictment, Schaff's finding in historic Mormonism an extraordinary degree of otherness remains the scholarly consensus. "The Mormons attracted attention as a useful counterimage," according to one modern analysis, "a glaring example of what America was not and should not be."

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Several factors contributed to the L.D.S. Church's bad reputation, and they are discussed in the chapters that follow. For now, the observation must suffice that aside from the fear they inspired by successfully dominating the mountain West as a political domain, the Latter-day Saints attracted the hostility that belongs to the foil, that dramatic persona whose very likeness exaggerates opposition to its difference. Organized in 1830 and rooted in New England restorationism and frontier utopianism, Mormonism had early and always attracted the negative attention of its fellow citizens, but no more so than when it claimed the right to restore Old Testament polygamy. Rumors of it contributed to the mob violence that chased Mormons from the Ohio Valley to the banks of the Mississippi and, finally, to the isolated Great Basin on the far side of the Rockies. By the middle of the nineteenth century, Americans were so aggravated by Latter-day Saint beliefs and practices that a sixth of the antebellum U.S. Army was stationed in the foothills overlooking Salt Lake City to police the Mormon kingdom. After the Civil War, a series of antipolygamy statutes criminalized the church's marital practices and sent more than a thousand of its members to federal prisons, as well as disincorporating their church and

confiscating its property. After several failed attempts, statehood was granted the Utah territory in 1896, largely based on the church's 1890 promise to abandon its unique marital practice. When the Smoot hearing showed that the Mormons had continued to practice polygamy, the national debate on Mormonism was reinvigorated and performed on the public stage of the U.S. Senate.

The four-year Senate proceeding created a 3,500-page record of testimony by 100 witnesses on every peculiarity of Mormonism, especially its polygamous family structure, ritual worship practices, "secret oaths," open canon, economic communalism, and theocratic politics. The public participated actively in the proceedings. In the Capitol, spectators lined the halls, waiting for limited seats in the committee room, and filled the galleries to hear floor debates. For those who could not see for themselves, journalists and cartoonists depicted each day's admission and outrage. At the height of the hearing some senators were receiving a thousand letters a day from angry constituents. What remains of these public petitions fills eleven feet of shelf space, the largest such collection in the National Archives.

Notwithstanding the news coverage dedicated to the trial, there was nothing new to report. Or more accurately, the only news was that the Mormons had not changed. After following the hearing for a year and a half, Illinois senator Shelby Cullom concluded, "Mormonism is the same menace to this country as it was from the beginning." Indeed, the basic facts of the case were so familiar that over the years they had been reduced to the label, "the Mormon Problem"...

America's problem with the Latter-day Saints was not simply or even primarily a matter of unlawful action, but of conflicting authority. The Latter-day Saints appealed to the law of their god, given through modern prophets, to justify their resistance to the law of the land.<sup>66</sup>

Having previously been determined by the Senate that a two-thirds majority was required to deny Smoot his seat, on February 20, 1907 seventy legislators voted on the matter. Four in ten—twenty-eight senators—voted against him, and the balance in favor. Smoot, who was not a polygamist, went on to serve five terms.

In 1904, Smoot's priesthood leader, Mormon Church president Joseph F. Smith, a nephew of Mormonism's founder, was called before the Senate committee to testify. Under oath, he admitted to practicing polygamy with five women despite the prohibition against it of the church he had led since October 1901! During the previous eleven years, he had been a polygamist apostle in violation of the twelfth Latter-day Saint Article of Faith about "obeying, honoring, and sustaining the law."





LDS Church president Joseph F. Smith (center, second row from the bottom) and his wives, progeny, and sons' wives

Smith believed that he was above the law of the land. As an indoctrinated, credulous church member and senior officer, he was convinced that he received “revelations” from the Mormon version of “the Lord.” By practicing polygamy, he was, in his mind, obeying God’s “celestial law,” which was “higher” than man-made legal strictures and protections. Such has been the power of Latter-day Saint “programming” to distort people’s thinking, a troubling psychological phenomenon covered in the next chapter.

Chapter 11  
The Psychological Effects of Cultic Mormonism:  
Reinforcing the LDS Fraud

**[C]ults...maintain intense allegiance through the arguments of their ideology, and through social and psychological pressures and practices that, intentionally or not, amount to conditioning techniques that constrict attention, limit personal relationships, and devalue reasoning.** – Margaret Singer, psychologist, cult expert, author, and guest lecturer of psychology at the University of California, Berkeley from 1964 to 1991.

**Coercion is the practice of forcing another party to act in an involuntary manner (whether through action or inaction) by use of threats or intimidation or some other form of pressure or force. In law, coercion is codified as the duress crime. Such actions are used as leverage, to force the victim to act in the desired way. Coercion may involve the actual infliction of physical pain/injury or psychological harm in order to enhance the credibility of a threat. The threat of further harm may lead to the cooperation or obedience of the person being coerced.** – Wikipedia article about coercion.

**In Mormonism, I see people who are saying things that really do not make sense. They are ignoring the big elephant in the room. They are doing things to enslave themselves to the LDS church, and they are telling themselves that it's the best thing. I see people in Mormonism make poor choices, justifying those poor choices to themselves and everybody else around them. I see young people rush in to [temple] marriages when divorce is not an option, and thus sentence themselves to a long, unhappy life. I see young people having children way before they are ready. And I see co-dependence between family members.**

**I cannot be with people [i.e., Latter-day Saints] who speak with absolute authority on subjects they are completely ignorant about, and sometimes completely wrong about. I heard talks [in church] on raising children, finances, marriage, gays, politics... and various subjects that are completely inconsistent with my life experience. I saw young people being told to breed as early and as often as possible.**

**I have to be honest with myself. I cannot give a talk to young people and tell them not to put off starting a family. I know the benefits of waiting. I cannot tell them to write a check for tithing when they can't pay their rent. I cannot tell them to have another child when they are receiving assistance to feed the children they**

**have. I can't be a party to all the self-deception. I cannot tell people to ignore everything they see and follow a group of old men [LDS "prophets"] who are completely out of touch with their followers.**

**I did not "lose" my testimony. I made a choice. I made a conscious decision to no longer be part of a system of self-deception, and deception of others on a mass scale. I stopped letting people tell me what to think and started learning how to think. I made a decision to leave the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. I didn't lose anything. But I did get back my dignity, my privacy, and my self-respect.** – "T-bone," a former Mormon, who posted this comment, "The myth of losing one's testimony," on the Recovery from Mormonism website on October 14, 2008.

Defrauding people has always been a psychological exercise, fundamentally. The objective of the swindler is to manipulate through dishonesty, to make one or more victims believe something that is not true and/or not believe one or more truths, and financially benefit from the deception. Throughout history, fraudsters have used different strategies and tactics to hoodwink their victims. In the case of white-collar criminal Bernie Madoff (mentioned in the Introduction), he targeted clientele with large sums to invest, particularly prominent charities, promising good, steady returns using what he told *Barron's* newspaper in 2001 was "a proprietary strategy."<sup>1</sup> "I can't go into it in great detail," he added.

The "great detail" of Madoff's "proprietary strategy" involved a small group of colluding employees who used a company computer to create fictitious financial trades. Madoff would determine a bogus "profit" for a client and a corrupt staff member would enter a false trade from a previous date followed by a phony closing trade that together generated what appeared on paper to be a nice, positive return on the investment. In fact, payouts were made using cash from newly duped clients—the classic Ponzi scheme. For several years, falsified reports from Bernard L. Madoff Investment Securities LLC kept customers happy and helped to expand the scam.

*CNN* reported in January 2009 that Madoff "continually enticed new investors through a veneer of exclusivity and respectability, and the absence of volatility."<sup>2</sup> Another financial publication, *The Daily Bell*, explained that the seemingly trustworthy money manager "moved in the wealthier circles of the power elite ranging from New York City to the West Coast and down to the Palm Beach area of Florida" and he "became Chairman of the Board of Directors of the NASD [National Association of Security Dealers] as well as their Board of Governors."<sup>3</sup>

Madoff's illusion of "respectability" was perfect until trader and financial analyst Harry Markopolos obtained data related to the claimed performance of Madoff Investment Securities and scrutinized the numbers relative to what had happened in the markets. His calculations revealed that the firm's "profits" were impossible. His investigative doggedness, attention to detail, and critical

thinking eventually prompted federal authorities to look into Madoff's enterprise, and in late 2008 they declared it to be multi-billion-dollar fraud.

Since 1830, many people who have been exposed to Mormonism have employed the same intellectual qualities that Markopolos possessed during their careful examination of the LDS Church and religion. As a result, many individuals, including hundreds of thousands of Latter-day Saints, have discovered that the foundation of so-called "restored" Christianity—Smith's religious movement—has been a mixture of some facts, many "faith"-instilling lies, and a lot of propaganda designed to mislead.

### **Systematic LDS deceit and psychological abuse**

Using misleading materials, creating pseudo-respectability, and employing "psychological pressures and practices," including threats, to coerce obedience and "constrict attention, limit personal relationships and devalue reasoning" have been prominent aspects of Mormonism since Smith launched his religious scam more than eighteen decades ago. Each of these points, and others related to them, will now be explained.

#### *"Faith"-promoting materials*

For generations, potential converts to the Latter-day Saint religion and Mormons of all ages have been systematically provided with—spoon-fed, metaphorically speaking—whitewash from the LDS Church. For well over a century, a steady stream of propaganda in the form of church tracts, lesson manuals, magazine articles, and other productions has steadily flowed from the organization's headquarters in Salt Lake City.

In early 1966, my mother, who knew little about Mormonism, met with two young, clean-cut Latter-day Saint missionaries—"Elders"—for the first time (they had been knocking on doors in our neighborhood). Their message about an omniscient and loving Heavenly Father, a caring Savior (the resurrected Jesus), and "restored" Christianity strongly appealed to her, an unhappily married and lonely woman who had been attracted to organized religion since her youth. Materials given to her by the Elders, lessons she took with them, and religious meetings and classes she attended at the local LDS chapel (meetinghouse) all portrayed Joseph Smith, the touted "prophet of the Restoration," in a very positive light. Crucially, my mother was not informed that he:

1. Had been an occult aficionado who scammed people as a "Glass Looker" before and after he started his religious movement.
2. Recounted and wrote conflicting First Vision stories.
3. Used a peep/seer stone and his hat to "translate" the *Book of Mormon*, which had many similarities to Ethan Smith's *View of the Hebrews*.
4. "Smouched" (plagiarized) Biblical verses and text from David Ramsay's *History of the American Revolution* and Mercy Otis Warren's *History of the Rise, Progress, and Termination of the American Revolution*.

5. Did not follow the “Word of Wisdom” health code “revelation” that he claimed to have received from “the Lord.”
6. Pressured several females, including married women and young teenage girls, to become his wives.
7. Violated state marriage laws and repeatedly committed adultery.
8. Used an abortionist to get rid of the “trouble” (fetuses) caused by his dalliances.
9. Misled people about the hard currency deposits in the Kirtland Safety Society “bank” that he started as well as the money bills (notes) in circulation.
10. Created supposedly “restored” temple “ordinances” by altering Masonic concepts and rituals.
11. Was duped during the Kinderhook Plates hoax and shown to be a fraudulent “translator” of the Egyptian papyri that he acquired in 1835 (Smith’s Book of Abraham).

Like a naïve, trusting child, my mother unquestioningly accepted the LDS Church’s sugar-coated information about Smith and the Mormon religion and organization. She was warned by her husband, my father, that Mormonism was a fraud, but refused to examine the evidence. Her motivation for becoming a Latter-day Saint and participating in the religious community has always been emotional, fundamentally. As explained in the first chapter, the truth has often conflicted with what people feel and their emotion-based beliefs.

#### **Children’s sins “be upon the heads of the parents”**

For generations, Mormons have believed that it is not enough to have just one generation of adult members complying with the church’s requirements, including paying tithing. To their way of thinking, children should also be fully obedient to Mormonism, including “donating” (handing over) one-tenth of their allowance, cash gifts, and other sources of money to the LDS Church, even before baptism and confirmation, which typically happens shortly after their eighth birthday. Attending weekly church services and indoctrination sessions is expected of all Mormons, regardless of their age.

Latter-day Saint parents have been “brainwashed” to believe that if they do not ensure that their offspring are taught “the gospel” (Mormonism), “the sin be upon the heads of the parents,” quoting one of Smith’s “revelations” in the *Doctrine and Covenants*.<sup>4</sup> The verse is one of many psychologically manipulative LDS scriptural passages that have inculcated fear and guilt in church members. The two emotions are discussed later in this chapter in the context of how Mormonism “programs” and coerces people.

#### **Misleading teachings**

The Mormon Church has a *long* history of not disclosing to potential converts and Latter-day Saints facts that put its leadership, doctrines, teachings,

and practices in a negative light. One example of many was in the July 2012 issue of the *New Era* magazine for youth that provided the following response to the question, “People sometimes ask me [any Latter-day Saint teenager] if we believe in polygamy. What should I tell them?”:

We believe that marriage is between one man and one woman. However, in biblical and more modern times, polygamy (or plural marriage) has been practiced when God has directed it for specific purposes... This is why Church leaders selectively authorized some plural marriages in the 19th century for about 50 years. It was officially discontinued in 1890 when President Wilford Woodruff directed that no more such marriages should take place. The state of monogamy (one man, one woman) has been the Church’s teaching on marriage ever since.<sup>5</sup>

Reading this official answer, adolescent Mormons, who, like their credulous parents are substantially ignorant of actual Latter-day Saint history, would not realize that the LDS Church did not inform them about:

1. The practice of polygamy by Mormons spanning, in total, not “50 years,” but at least seven decades. Latter-day Saint plural marriage started with Smith’s illegal bigamous union with teenager Fanny Alger in Ohio in 1835, per LDS online genealogy (marriage) data,<sup>6</sup> and continued into the early twentieth century, as revealed to Americans during the Smoot hearings and in Senate documents. To skirt U.S. law after the church issued its Manifesto<sup>7</sup> in 1890, Mormon men and their plural-wives-to-be traveled to Mexico, where apostle and First Presidency member Anthony Ivins “sealed” them for “all time and eternity.” The couples then returned to the United States to secretly—and unlawfully—live the “spiritual wifery” lifestyle.<sup>8</sup>
2. The illicit practice of polygamy by church president Joseph F. Smith and other high-ranking Mormon men (e.g., apostles John Henry Smith and Charles Penrose) after 1890.
3. Polygamist “prophets, seers, and revelators” Young, Kimball, Taylor, and Woodruff (prior to 1890) as well as Parley Pratt, Orson Cannon, and George Teasdale were emphatic that plural marriage would not end because it had been “restored” by “the Lord” via a “revelation” to Smith. In 1869, Woodruff said that if the church got rid of polygamy, “then we must do away with prophets and Apostles, with revelation and the gifts and graces of the Gospel...and finally give up our religion altogether... We just can’t do that.”<sup>9</sup>
4. As church president, Woodruff ultimately gave into pressure from the U.S. government to end polygamy and announced in 1890 via the LDS-

owned *Deseret Weekly* that the practice would cease (the doctrine has continued to the present, however, as explained). Doing an about-face in relation to plural marriage opened the way for the Utah Territory to become a state in 1896.

5. Smith's written "revelation" about "the plurality of wives" (*D&C* 132) and the fact that it conflicts with "translated" text in the second chapter of Jacob in the *Book of Mormon* as well as the 1835 and 1844 editions of the *Doctrine and Covenants*.\*
6. Smith repeatedly violated the "principles" known to him since 1831—according to the LDS Church—that Mormon men were commanded by "the Lord" to restrict their desiring of females and polygamous unions to "virgins...vowed to no other man," and only if "the first [wife] give her consent."\*
7. Present-day apostles Oaks and Nelson as well as other temple-endowed males are polygamists for "eternity," according to Latter-day Saint doctrine.\*
8. Plural marriage was taught to Mormons, including teenage Seminary students, myself included, during the twentieth century as an "eternal," "restored" doctrine, one that would be obeyed by "worthy" Latter-day Saints after the return of Jesus Christ in "power and glory" to the earth, and forever (after death) in the Celestial Kingdom.

\* Explained in Chapter 9.

For well over a century, the LDS Church has cherry-picked "faith-promoting" bits of information about Mormonism and packaged and presented them as comprehensively truthful. However, the organization's materials and productions have been anything but trustworthy. Tangentially, it was Nazi Germany's master propagandist, Josef Goebbels, who said:

If you tell a lie big enough and keep repeating it, people will eventually come to believe it.

That propaganda is good which leads to success, and that is bad which fails to achieve the desired result. It is not propaganda's task to be intelligent, its task is to lead to success.<sup>10</sup>

The "success" of misleading Mormonism can be measured by the enormous amount of money that indoctrinated, duped Latter-day Saints have handed over to the LDS Church since 1830. Mormon "programming" involving whitewashed information as well as fear-instilling doctrines and teachings have psychologically pressured members—remember, "coercion is

codified as the duress crime”—to pay the church, making it one of the richest organizations in the United States (details are in the next chapter).

### **Illusion of respectability**

Dictionary.com defines illusion as “something that deceives by producing a false or misleading impression of reality.” Respectability means “the state or quality of being respectable,” and “worthy of respect or esteem” is the definition of respectable. Individuals and institutions deserving of respect are honest, transparent, and non-coercive. They do not systematically use propaganda and conceal troubling historical facts in order to exploit people. Conversely, the Mormon Church and its senior leadership routinely have.

The Latter-day Saint organization has invested huge resources to make itself appear to be respectable as Jesus’ “restored” church. Its luxurious temples and buildings such as the income-generating LDS Conference Center (1.4 million square feet, with 21,200 seats, pear wood paneling, large alabaster light coverings, quartz monzonite exterior walls, etc.) and \$3-billion City Creek development (office buildings, retail stores, and condominiums), all in Salt Lake City, *are* visually impressive. But so too were the multi-million-dollar homes, corporate jets, and other lavish possessions of senior executives on the Forbes list of fraudsters mentioned in the Introduction. For example, the 12,827-square-foot condominium of Enron’s leading criminal, Kenneth Lay, was listed for sale in 2009 at \$12.8 million, and Bernie Madoff’s \$7-million, turbocharged yacht called “Bull” reportedly cost \$250,000 annually to crew and \$11,000 to fuel.

### **Coercive tactics**

The core message of Mormonism has always been a fearful one: Obey or the quality of your “mortal probation” (life) will deteriorate and you will suffer forever after death because you did not comply with the LDS Church’s doctrines and teachings or participate in its “ordinances” (rituals) on earth. Evidence of the dysfunctional Latter-day Saint mindset was in an article by apostle Todd Christensen in the March 2013 issues of the *Ensign* and *Liahona* magazines:

Our choice in this life is not whether we will or will not be subject to any power. Our choice is to which authority we will yield obedience: God’s or Satan’s. As Lehi [the *Book of Mormon* character] stated, it is a choice between liberty and captivity (see 2 Nephi 2:27). If it is not one, it is necessarily the other.<sup>11</sup>

Again, Satan, Mormonism’s imaginary “fallen angel,” who was supposedly called Lucifer in the religion’s “premortal existence,” is the supreme bugaboo to fear. Imagine the harmful effect on the vulnerable psyches of children due to Latter-day Saint indoctrination about a very



powerful and evil spirit—the Devil—who seeks their “spiritual destruction,” beginning at the “age of accountability” (eight years old).<sup>12</sup> Shamefully, there are no limits to Mormon fear-mongering. For example, during General Conference in April 2009, church president Thomas Monson told young Latter-day Saints:

[M]ost of you have access to amazing technological advances. You communicate through cell phones, text messaging, instant messaging, e-mailing, blogging, Facebook, and other such means...

Although this is a remarkable period when opportunities abound, you also face challenges which are unique to this time [i.e., the “last days”]. For instance, the very technological tools I have mentioned provide opportunities for the adversary [a.k.a. Satan] to tempt you and to ensnare you in his web of deceit, thereby hoping to take possession of your destiny...

Some years ago another First Presidency [comprised of three LDS “prophets”] made this statement, and your First Presidency today echoes the appeal. I quote: “To the youth...we plead with you to live clean [be “morally pure”], for the unclean life leads only to suffering, misery, and woe physically—and spiritually it is the path to destruction.”<sup>13</sup>

Monson’s nonsense about electronic forms of communication providing Mormonism’s archfiend with “opportunities...to tempt” young Latter-day Saints and “ensnare” them “in his web of deceit” was typical of cultic Latter-day Saint “programming” designed to create and fortify fear. For the aged Mormon leader—Monson is in his latter eighties—and his General Authority colleagues, all of whom have spent decades mentally regurgitating and teaching LDS absurdities, “the unclean life” means behaving in ways that psychologically healthy people know from experience are harmless (e.g., drinking coffee and tea, enjoying alcoholic beverages socially, “making out” with one’s boyfriend or girlfriend).

I have often wondered if Latter-day Saints would be less afraid of Mormonism’s Satan if his Hebrew name, *ha-Satan*, “the opposer,” had been translated to Stan. If that was the case, church lessons would say something like: “In the premortal existence, Lucifer was cast out of heaven because of his rebellion against Heavenly Father. He was thrust down to earth without a body, where he became Stan, the Evil One.” Nobody in their right mind would be afraid a fictitious spirit so-named, so why fear a psychological construct called Satan, a figment of people’s imagination? It makes no sense. Unfortunately, Mormons have been “brainwashed” to dread much more than their religion’s chief phantasm; the list of things to fear includes:

1. The omniscient and omnipotent Heavenly Father, per LDS theology, becoming displeased and even angry with Latter-day Saints because they have not fully complied with Mormon doctrines and church teachings.
2. Not being “worthy” to receive God’s blessings (the LDS religion defines “worthiness” and stipulates what is required to achieve and maintain it).
3. Being “spiritually impure” and thus “unclean” and “unworthy” of “exaltation” in the Celestial Kingdom after death.
4. Suffering “eternal damnation” after finishing their “mortal probation” due to residual “sinfulness” because they did not truly repent “with a broken heart and contrite spirit” (more on this topic later in this chapter).
5. Not measuring up in terms of “worthiness” and personal “spiritual purification” and spending eternity alone, without the companionship of their “righteous,” “exalted” Latter-day Saint spouse, children, parents, siblings, relatives, and friends.
6. Not being “perfect” (mentioned more than 6,650 times on lds.org) in terms of obedience to church teachings and requirements, and being judged by God, per Mormon theology, as undeserving of “blessings,” particularly “eternal life.”
7. God and Satan, as defined by Mormonism, monitoring members’ thoughts, words, and deeds to determine if they are “righteous” or “unrighteous,” and interfering in their lives based on whether they have behaved “worthily” or “unworthily,” as stipulated by the LDS religion.
8. God’s punishments for “slothfulness” and “disobedience,” as defined by Mormonism.
9. Suffering as horribly as Jesus supposedly did near the end of his life if Mormons do not repent of their “sins.” The LDS Church teaches that the supernatural and physical agony caused by the negative “spiritual” consequences of humans’ acts of “unrighteousness,” which Jesus magically took upon himself the night before he was crucified, was so intense that he bled from every pore.
10. Lucifer/Satan/the Devil/the Adversary gaining power over Latter-day Saints if they do not comply with Mormon doctrines and church teachings.
11. Questioning Mormonism and doubting its many far-fetched and erroneous concepts.
12. The imagined army of evil spirits led by Lucifer/Satan.

13. The Devil taking control of Mormons' "souls" and their lives falling apart if they "stray" from the "straight and narrow path" of the Latter-day Saint religion.
14. The "natural man" (mentioned nearly five hundred times on lds.org). The *Book of Mormon* says "the natural man [or woman] is an enemy to God."<sup>14</sup> The LDS Church states on its main website that the "natural man" is anyone "who chooses to be influenced by the passions, desires, appetites, and senses of the flesh rather than by the promptings of the Holy Spirit. Such a person can comprehend physical things but not spiritual things," the latter being defined by Mormonism.<sup>15</sup>
15. The Final Judgment of Latter-day Saints who were not zealously obedient during their "mortal probation" (lives).
16. God testing Mormons' emotion-based conviction—called a "testimony"—about the LDS religion with "trials and tribulations" beyond what they can endure.
17. Not being strong enough in terms of Latter-day Saints' "faith" (i.e., religious beliefs) to withstand Satan's "fiery darts" and "buffetings" (mentioned at least 210 and 108 times, respectively, on lds.org).
18. Not sacrificing and doing enough to build up the LDS Church and missing out on "blessings" and suffering from "the punishments and the judgments which the Lord has declared," quoting Mormon apostle Spencer Kimball.
19. Not making a regular effort to share LDS doctrines and teachings with non-members. The church has taught that God will hold Latter-day Saints responsible for the "spiritual welfare" of non-Mormons who would have joined if members had spoken up about their religion and invited non-members to participate in Mormonism.
20. Losing the influence and protection of the Holy Ghost through "slothfulness" and "unrighteousness" (mentioned a minimum of 80 and 456 times on lds.org, respectively).
21. "Unworthy" influences affecting Mormon family members in ways that cause them to "stray from the fold" (i.e., stop participating in the church).
22. Being burned at the Second Coming of Jesus Christ if a church member does not pay tithing, per Mormon scripture (*D&C 64:23*).
23. Increasing iniquity, wars, plagues, pestilences, calamities, etc. in the "last days" (mentioned more than two thousand times on lds.org).

24. Not finding a “worthy” man (or woman) to marry in one of the LDS Church’s temples.
25. Fearing what the local church leadership (bishopric or branch presidency) will think and Mormonism’s “Lord God Almighty” will do if Latter-day Saints decline a church “calling” (an unpaid work position in the organization).
26. Rejection by LDS family members and/or other Mormons if a church member says or does anything that is negatively judged by Latter-day Saints, per their religious belief system.
27. Negative “spiritual consequences” of not going on a mission, or leaving it early, and how priesthood leaders and other Mormons will react.
28. Losing the approval of Mormonism’s God and other LDS authority figures (e.g., church leaders, parents) as well as the Latter-day Saint community if a Mormon is not fully obedient to church doctrines, teachings, and policies.
29. Church disciplinary action if a member expresses disapproval with the organization’s leadership and/or publicly disagrees with one or more tenets of the Mormon religion.
30. Asserting Latter-day Saints’ right to always think for themselves and choose their values by which to govern their behavior (the church and its patriarchal leadership have always emphasized unwavering obedience to Mormonism, even if members do not comprehend why compliance is necessary from the LDS priesthood perspective).
31. Confronting Mormon patriarchy and insisting that girls and women be ordained to the priesthood and treated as equals to male Latter-day Saints.
32. Conflict and confrontation, including debates about Joseph Smith, early church history, the *Book of Mormon*, and other aspects of Mormonism (the emphasis in the community has always been on being “nice” and non-confrontational, not authentic).
33. “Carnal” (sexual) urges and desires, a non-heterosexual orientation (if applicable), thinking or talking about sex, reading or viewing sexually arousing material, and otherwise exploring one’s sexuality.
34. Other people’s claimed mystical experiences that are not congruent with church teachings about what originates with God.

35. Not wearing temple garments and Satan causing Latter-day Saints to experience physical harm as a result.
36. So-called “anti-Mormon” books, websites, videos, and other productions.

### **Overcoming LDS cognitive dissonance and Mormon “voodoo”**

Using the handle of “slimchance,” in January 2013 a husband and father in his early thirties—“My wife and I are both 33 years old,” he wrote—described his experience of leaving the LDS Church on the Recovery from Mormonism website. The following is an excerpt from his posted biographical piece:

Psychologically it was hard to accept that the church wasn’t everything it claimed to be[,] but at the same time it was a relief to get rid of the cognitive dissonance. Occasionally I would second guess myself and wonder if Satan was deceiving me. Had he clouded my judgement? Was my mind not working right? Ultimately, reason outweighed emotion and I finally said to myself, “The Church isn’t what everybody [Latter-day Saints] told me it is.” At that point I experienced a new kind of euphoria. I can’t explain it other than it was like I was using a part of my mind that I had suppressed and it felt so damn good to use it again. It was kind of like how good it feels to get an arm out of a cast or your feet out of a pair of stiff boots.

As I learned new things [about Joseph Smith, early Latter-day Saint history, the *Book of Mormon*, etc.] I shared them with my wife and she was with me the whole way. We took [the] first steps together. Shedding our [temple] garments was awesome. We told the bishop we weren’t going to do our callings anymore. We spent Sunday mornings together as a family in our home or in a beautiful park; it was such a great way to rest from the week and grow closer to each other.

Paying tithing was one of the last things I was still doing. Deep down I had a fear that if I stopped I would be struck by some sort of terrible voodoo. Finally I said to my wife that I was going to stop. I got my next paycheck and I did not follow my typical habit. I did not sit down and write a check for the church before paying my other bills. Then a week later a miracle happened. I got an unexpected 12% pay raise from the owner of my company. How ironic. I chuckled for a long time.<sup>16</sup>

The irony stemmed from the fact that Mormons had been indoctrinated to believe that not paying a “tithe” to the LDS Church would result in “the Lord” withholding blessings from them, or worse, “chastising” them. How? By

allowing unfortunate and stressful situations to occur (e.g., being laid off from work, having expensive car trouble, becoming sick and incurring medical bills).

Disturbingly, Smith's "revelation" of September 1831, which became Section 64 of the *Doctrine and Covenants*, said that church members who paid tithing "shall not be burned at his [Jesus'] coming."<sup>17</sup> In other words, only by paying one-tenth of their money gifts and allowances, wages, salaries, pensions, inheritances, and other financial increases to the LDS Church can Latter-day Saints ensure that they will not be burned alive during an imagined, cataclysmic, supernatural event that could happen at any time, according to Mormonism. One does not need a degree in criminal psychology to recognize that this LDS "truth" is in fact minacious.

### **Guilt and shame**

In addition to fear, Latter-day Saints have been conditioned to experience two other intensely negative feelings, guilt and shame, if they do not obey church teachings and comply with its many requirements. Guilt is defined as "a feeling of responsibility or remorse for some offense, crime, wrong, etc., whether real or imagined."<sup>18</sup> Robert Caldwell, a mental health expert and the co-director of the Counseling and Guidance Center in Bethesda, Maryland, explains online about the two distressing emotions:

Shame is the inner experience of being "not wanted." It is feeling worthless, rejected, cast out. Guilt is believing that one has done something bad; shame is believing that one is bad. Shame is believing that one is not loved because one is not lovable. Shame always carries with it the sense that there is nothing one can do to purge its burdensome and toxic presence. Shame cannot be remedied, it must be somehow endured, absorbed, gilded, minimized or denied. Shame is so painful, so debilitating that persons develop a thousand coping strategies, conscious and unconscious, numbing and destructive, to avoid its tortures.<sup>19</sup>

Mormon patriarchy has always been adept at fortifying guilt and shame in Latter-day Saints' psyches. For example, in November 2011 LDS apostle Packer told young adult church members:

Because you are being tested [by God, per LDS doctrine], it is expected that you will make some mistakes. I assume that you have done things in your life that you regret, things that you cannot even apologize for, much less correct; therefore, you carry a burden. It is time now to use the word guilt, which can stain like indelible ink and cannot easily be washed away. A stepchild of guilt is disappointment, regret for lost blessings and opportunities.<sup>20</sup>

Since the 1830s, Latter-day Saint leaders have sermonized about “guilt,” “sins,” “disobedience,” “unworthiness,” “spiritual uncleanness,” and the like *ad nauseum*. The psychological effect has been to undermine Mormons’ self-esteem and make them feel guilty and shameful for a wide range of behaviors, from drinking coffee, tea and cola sodas to not attending church meetings, holding back on tithing payments, and exploring their sexuality before marriage. In some cases, the LDS-inculcated sense of shame has been so intense that church members have killed themselves, a tragic phenomenon studied by Dr. Mark Malan, a member of the American Association of Suicidologists with a practice in Mormon-heavy Utah.

The LDS Church formally indoctrinates children as young as four to believe that upon reaching their eighth birthday, they “begin to be accountable to Heavenly Father,” who is all-knowing and all-powerful, according to Mormon theology.<sup>21</sup> They are also told that they should “repent and do better each day with the help of the Holy Ghost” when they “make mistakes,” thus conditioning them to become hyper-vigilant about their thoughts and behavior and adding significant stress to their young lives.<sup>22</sup> Mormonism’s leadership has consistently failed to comprehend that kids need to feel safe, loved, accepted, and comfortable with themselves despite whatever LDS-defined “mistakes” they make (e.g., going to bed without praying, not wanting to attend church because it is boring, not reading Mormon scriptures, not paying tithing on their allowance and money gifts).

The Latter-day Saint Church also teaches that “repentance is one of the first principles of the gospel and...includes turning away from sin and turning to God for forgiveness.”<sup>23</sup> Starting at age ten, in LDS classes children are told that “[r]epentance is the way provided for us to become free from our sins and to receive forgiveness for them.”<sup>24</sup> They are also taught that “[t]o repent, we must feel sincere sorrow for our sins. We must stop sinning and begin keeping the commandments,” which Mormonism defines.<sup>25</sup> Because of “brainwashed” LDS teachers, kids are instructed to “write down things they can do throughout their lives, such as pray, pay tithing, attend church, read the scriptures, and so on, that will help them endure to the end.”<sup>26</sup>

#### **“A broken heart and contrite spirit”**

The Latter-day Saint religion asserts that “[i]n addition to recognizing our sins, we must feel sincere sorrow for what we have done. We must feel that our sins are terrible.”<sup>27</sup> Mormons are supposed to feel guilty for their “sinfulness” as part of the LDS “spiritual purification” process. To that end, the stated objective of an Aaronic Priesthood lesson for teenage males is to “come to understand the necessity for having a broken heart and a contrite spirit.”<sup>28</sup> The lesson states: “What does it mean to have a broken heart? (To suffer extreme sorrow)” and “What does the word contrite mean? (Repentant).” It goes on to say that a “broken heart...is the natural consequence of a person’s recognizing and admitting his own sins and imperfections.” Adolescent Latter-day Saints are also taught that people are “natural, carnal, and fallen” and

“have sinned and transgressed the laws of God, for which a punishment is designated by the law of justice.”<sup>29</sup>

Mormons of all ages are not informed, however, that swindler and adulterer Joseph Smith repeatedly “sinned and transgressed the laws of God,” as explained in previous chapters. If the LDS religion is to be believed, its founding “prophet” somehow managed to avoid “the law of justice” and was rewarded with “eternal life” in the presence of “gods and angels” in the Celestial Kingdom near Kolob.<sup>30</sup> As a resurrected, “exalted” being, Smith will purportedly spend eons of time creating spirit children with his wives, and as a deity oversee the manufacture and management of his own universe. However, on this planet, unless humanity experiences “broken hearts and contrite spirits” and feels “terribly” about their “natural, carnal, and fallen” state, and repents and converts to Mormonism, they will suffer “eternal damnation, irretrievable misery and hopeless despair,” quoting Smith, the ultimate Latter-day Saint hypocrite.<sup>31</sup>

### **The belief-emotion connection**

Why did Joseph Smith not feel guilty about having extramarital affairs, breaking the law by marrying single and espoused females, getting women and teenage girls pregnant and having Bennett eliminate fetuses sired by him, lying to people about the cash holdings and bills in circulation of the Kirtland Safety Society, indirectly threatening Emma with destruction, and otherwise behaving in reprehensible ways? Because he had convinced himself that he was God’s chosen “prophet” and therefore answerable only to the deity concept created and fortified by his mind. As psychological constructs, time and again Mormonism’s Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ conveniently wanted what Smith desired. However, he lacked integrity as well as psychological self-knowledge and therefore created with his thoughts a “Lord God Almighty” that transmitted to him “revelations” in accordance with his wants, be they sexual, financial, or other.

Smith is an interesting psychological case study in that he marched through life to the beat of his own drum while managing to convince thousands of people that he was a special “prophet” whom God had chosen to be instrumental in the re-establishment of Christianity. He concocted new and bold religious ideas and presented them as divinely “restored” spiritual “truths,” fooling many people in the process. Since 1830, millions of Latter-day Saints have spent much of their lives mentally regurgitating Smith’s ideas and those of other senior church leaders. Their mindset has been the direct result of countless hours of Latter-day Saint indoctrination and conditioning of their psyches.

There are thousands of personal accounts posted online by former Mormons describing the harmful mental and emotional effects of LDS “programming,” including the following two examples:



1. The best decision I made was leaving TSCC [The So-Called Church, a.k.a. the LDS Church]. I no longer feel burdened, anxious, sick and worried constantly. I feel like a huge weight has been lifted off of me. I'm happy and I don't have panic attacks about being left behind from my family for eternity and constantly needing to repent. My mental health was in horrible shape when I was a member of TSCC. I had been hospitalized in psychiatric units 3 times before I finally cut my ties. Once I left TSCC, the guilt, shame, hopelessness, anxiety and deep depression associated with everything being shoved down my throat by TSCC was no longer holding me down[,] and I haven't been hospitalized since.<sup>32</sup>
2. My mom was hinting at a loan from me to pay her tithing at one time.

Here she was [on a] fixed income, [a] poor money manager[,] and at the end of the year she would have to come up with tithing on her meager retirement [income].

I think she went into debt a couple of times to pay up. She had raised all four of her children to pay tithing (well, except for her one black sheep...me.). Served in numerous [church] positions, served a mission in Nigeria of all places. Converted her husband [to Mormonism]. Given her all to the morg [a fusion of "Mormon" and "Borg"\*] - Yet, she felt like a failed sinner because she couldn't come up with the 2 grand [\$2,000]. She felt like her place in the celestial kingdom was at stake. What a horrible thing to hang over an old woman. "Pay up or you will never see your children in the next life."<sup>33</sup>

\*For readers not familiar with the Borg, Wikipedia says (including the bold text):

**Borg** is a collective proper noun for a fictional alien race that appears as recurring antagonists in various incarnations of the Star Trek franchise. The Borg are a collection of species that have been turned into cybernetic organisms functioning as **drones** of the **Collective**, or the hive. A pseudo-race, dwelling in the Star Trek universe, the Borg force other species into their collective and connect them to "the hive mind"; the act is called **assimilation** and entails violence, abductions, and injections of microscopic machines called nanoprobes. The Borg's ultimate goal is "achieving perfection."<sup>34</sup>

Notably, the flag of Utah, which was developed as a territory and founded as a state by Mormons, has had a beehive on it for more than a century.

### **Cognitive dissonance and confusion**

In addition to fear, guilt, and shame created by cultic Mormon “programming,” Latter-day Saints routinely suffer from cognitive dissonance, the “psychological conflict resulting from incongruous beliefs and attitudes held simultaneously,” quoting the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*.<sup>35</sup> About.com has a similar description: “The term cognitive dissonance is used to describe the feeling of discomfort that results from holding two conflicting beliefs.”<sup>36</sup> Examples of incongruous beliefs related to Mormonism are:

- 1a. Joseph Smith was a true prophet of God and the person through whom Jesus Christ restored his religion and re-established his church.
- 1b. Joseph Smith was a charlatan who lied about being visited by celestial beings, the *Book of Mormon*, and much more. He illegally started the Latter-day Saint practice of polygamy and kept it going for many years. He also misled and defrauded people, and his judgment in key areas of church affairs was critically flawed.
  
- 2a. The *Book of Mormon* is true and the most correct of any book on earth. It contains the word of God and is a witness of Jesus Christ.
- 2b. There are many things described in the *Book of Mormon* that did not exist in the pre-Columbian New World. Also, the volume does not mention civilizations, cultures, animals, plants, etc. that *were* in the Western Hemisphere during the supposed timeline of the LDS religion’s “keystone.” The complete lack of archaeological, linguistic, and genetic evidence supporting the *Book of Mormon* thoroughly undermines Joseph Smith’s claim that the scriptural work was a “translation” of compiled ancient American history.
  
- 3a. Mormonism has benefited people around the globe and the Latter-day Saint Church has helped many individuals and families.
- 3b. The theological and doctrinal foundation of Mormonism is dubious at best, and the LDS Church has not been honest with Latter-day Saints and potential converts about Joseph Smith, the *Book of Mormon*, early church history, and more. Jesus’ restored organization would not have misled millions of people, taken billions of dollars from them, and focused so much on expanding its wealth. Nor would it have caused so much psychological harm.

The twin of Mormonism-caused cognitive dissonance is confusion. Many Latter-day Saints are confused because they have nagging doubts about the LDS Church and its theology, but they have been led to believe that the religion is “restored” Christianity and thus doctrinally flawless. Psychologically, it is a

Catch-22 situation for church members because if they pay attention to and mentally explore their doubts, which are legitimate, they automatically “stray” from “the straight and narrow path” that leads back to God, according to Mormonism. However, there are many facts that a lot of Latter-day Saints have become aware of since the advent of the Internet in the early 1990s that conflict with the LDS religion. Thanks to online information as well as well-researched and -written books, members have learned “faith”-destroying facts about Joseph Smith and his religious movement, which has been “besieged by the modern age,” according to *Reuters* in January 2012.<sup>37</sup>

Should Latter-day Saints simply believe—“have faith” is how it has been described for generations—and ignore all the proof that has exposed Mormonism as a fraud, or pay attention to it, like Markopolos did when he reviewed the questionable financial data from Bernard Madoff’s firm? Their personal growth, particularly their psychological maturation, depends on them doing the latter, as difficult as that course of action might be for them due to their ties, emotional and other, to the LDS Church, Mormon community and culture, and Latter-day Saint family members, relatives, and friends.

### **Constricting attention and devaluing reason**

Attention is synonymous with consciousness, the core human attribute. Even before we psychologically separated at a rudimentary level when we were infants, we were aware. Physical sensations and needs, emotions, thoughts and dreams, impulses and hunches, and likes and dislikes comprise much of our experience as conscious entities.

American psychotherapist Dr. Nathaniel Branden, a pioneer in the study of self-esteem and an author of several books on the subject, says on his website that one of the “keys of responsibility” is awareness. “You have a choice,” he says online, “you can pay attention and be fully present when you are making critical decisions such as working on a project, reading your performance review or deciding whether to have another drink. Or you can be physically present but mentally absent during these activities. Either way, you are responsible for the level of consciousness you bring to any occasion – and you are responsible for the results.”<sup>38</sup>

Lamentably, cultic Mormonism has conditioned millions of Latter-day Saints to not pay attention to facts that conflict with church doctrines and teachings and the organization’s sanitized version of LDS history. The religion has also “programmed” members to distrust their minds when their innate critical thinking has caused them to question and doubt what the church has taught them to believe is “true.” Mormon “programming” has also conditioned Latter-day Saints of all ages to betray their rationality, their key survival and life-enhancement inner resource.

People who have allowed their capacity for reasoned thinking to atrophy through lack of use have invariably become dysfunctional thinkers. For example, when Monson told young Latter-day Saints that “the very technological tools I have mentioned provide opportunities for the adversary [Satan]

to tempt you and to ensnare you in his web of deceit, thereby hoping to take possession of your destiny,” he was communicating nonsense. No reasoned person would have uttered such an absurdity.

In January 2013, Monson’s First Presidency colleague, apostle Dieter Uchtdorf, told LDS young adults that “Satan is the great deceiver, the accuser of [the] brethren [the fifteen ‘prophets’], the father of all lies, who continually seeks to deceive that he might overthrow us.” After articulating that bit of Mormon tripe, the seventy-two-year-old exposed more of his irrationality:

The adversary has many cunning strategies for keeping mortals from the truth... For those who already embrace the truth [Mormonism], his [the Devil’s] primary strategy is to spread the seeds of doubt. For example, he has caused many members of the Church to stumble [in terms of their “faith”] when they discover information about the Church that seems to contradict what they had learned previously. If you experience such a moment, remember that in this age of information there are many who create doubt about anything and everything, at any time and every place.<sup>39</sup>

Once again, Mormonism’s fictitious *über*-villain, Satan, got the blame for allegedly interfering in Latter-day Saints’ lives. Like Monson, Uchtdorf tried to make young Mormons fearful of online information. Not surprisingly, he avoided acknowledging that the LDS Church has fooled millions of people since the 1830s via its materials, General Authority sermons, missionary lessons, pageants, film productions, etc. He essentially said that the “stumble” problem of “many members of the Church”—reading online information, scrutinizing their religion, and concluding that it is based on lies—was *their* fault, not the organization’s for misleading them. Such has been the arrogance of Latter-day Saint patriarchy for generations.

Ironically, Uchtdorf said: “The thing about truth is that it exists beyond belief. It is true even if nobody believes it.”<sup>40</sup> In the context of Mormonism, he meant that it is irrelevant whether people believe in the religion or not because he and other credulous Latter-day Saints “know” it is “true.” However, the documented evidence, much of which has been presented in this book, has proven otherwise.

### **Limiting personal relationships**

Because LDS leaders assert that “Satan is the great deceiver” who “seeks all of us, including the very elect of God” (i.e., Mormons) and desires to “ensnare” humanity and take us “carefully down to hell,” quoting the *Book of Mormon*, Latter-day Saints have been conditioned to be wary of people who are non-Mormons as well as “slothful” and former members (the latter are called “apostates”).<sup>41</sup>

In the November 2008 issue of the *New Era*, teenage Latter-day Saints were reminded that “honorable men of the earth who were blinded by the craftiness of men” will not receive “Celestial Glory” and their unfortunate fate will be in the “Terrestrial world,” the envisaged post-mortality “kingdom” where “souls” are “damned” forever.<sup>42</sup> Not surprisingly, the article said nothing about the crucial need to develop critical thinking and use it to ascertain which people are “honorable” or not, and who employs “craftiness” or not. Consequently, LDS adolescents were left to wonder if some or all the non-Mormons with whom they associated—fellow students, school teachers, store cashiers, and others—were among the “deceived” portion of humanity.

### **Cult BITE control**

On his website and in his books about cults, expert Steve Hassan has explained that by exerting key types of control—behavior, information, thought, and emotional—cultic groups create a psychology in their followers that includes an elitist “Us vs. them” view of humanity.<sup>43</sup> This aspect of cult “brainwashing” certainly applies to Mormonism, which asserts that faithful Latter-day Saints—“the elect,” allegedly—will end up on Jesus’ “right hand” at the Final Judgment. According to LDS doctrine, “unworthy” church members and “sinful” non-Mormons will be on Christ’s left and thus rejected.

Within the Mormon Church, there have been labels created and used in relation to Mormons’ participation or non-involvement in the organization that have engendered and fortified a sense of superiority: “active” (stalwart), “less active”/“slothful,” “inactive” (non-participating), “righteous,” “unrighteous,” “faithful,” and “apostate” (previously mentioned).

Hassan also says on his website that cult conditioning involves “irrational fears of ever leaving the group or even questioning the leader’s authority”; “the person under mind control cannot visualize a positive, fulfilled future without being in the group”; “[t]errible consequences will take place if you [the cult member] leave”; and there is “[n]ever a legitimate reason to leave” (from the group’s perspective).<sup>44</sup> All these points apply to Mormonism.

Socially, the effect of LDS “programming” has been to restrict Latter-day Saints’ relationships with non-Mormons because the former believes that the latter have been “blinded by the craftiness of men,” who are influenced by Satan, according to Mormonism. The *Book of Mormon* says that the “path” that leads to God is “straight and narrow,” an indication that Latter-day Saints must be steadfastly obedient and remain devoted to the LDS religion throughout their lives in order to merit “blessings” during mortality and “celestial glory” after death.<sup>45</sup>

### **Other symptoms**

In addition to the harmful effects of Mormon indoctrination and conditioning described so far, there are dozens of other symptoms resulting from cultic LDS “programming,” including:

1. Depression because the Latter-day Saint religion and culture have impeded Mormons' psychological maturation and personal growth. Also, many women in the LDS Church have been depressed due to the multi-generational, institutionalized disempowerment of females by Latter-day Saint priesthood leaders.
2. Feeling like a stranger to oneself because of years and often decades of unquestioning compliance with LDS doctrines and teachings and the expectations of the Latter-day Saint "tribe."
3. Believing that God, as defined by Mormonism, is always watching and judging, and feeling stressed as a result.
4. Believing that one must always be "perfect" and suffering from anxiety attacks, headaches, and other problems resulting from Mormonism-caused stress.
5. Feeling that one is just not good enough, no matter how hard one tries as a church member or how much one sacrifices for the Latter-day Saint Church.
6. Feeling overwhelmed with the many demands of church, family, work and/or school.
7. Believing that one must be busily engaged in "building up the kingdom of God on earth" (the Mormon Church) and feeling guilty when one relaxes.
8. Believing that one must "endure to the end" to prove one's "worthiness" to God, as defined by Mormonism.
9. Fluctuating between "righteousness" and "sinfulness," per the LDS belief system.
10. Mentally beating up on oneself for "mistakes," "transgressions," and "sins," including those committed long ago.
11. Feeling that God has not granted forgiveness for one's "unrighteousness" despite having spent a lot of time "repenting."
12. Believing that one is a "sinner" and having an "I-am-nothing-without-God" mindset.
13. Feeling little or no personal power and not taking full responsibility for the quality of one's life.
14. Believing that God, as defined by Mormonism, uses "trials and tribulations" to test one's "worthiness."

15. Sensing that one is naïve and otherwise psychologically immature and not knowing what to do to overcome one's lack of personal growth.
16. Feeling that one must obtain and maintain the approval of one's Mormon parents, church leaders, God (as defined by Mormonism), and the Latter-day Saint community.
17. Being psychologically enmeshed (i.e., having poor personal boundaries/ being co-dependent/enmeshed) with Mormon family members, relatives, and other Latter-day Saints.
18. Not communicating what one truly thinks and feels because one believes that Mormons will disapprove of the truth and respond with rejection.
19. Believing that one cannot say "no" to church leaders when approached to do assignments and "callings."
20. Most or all of one's conversations focus on things related to Mormonism and having little or nothing to say about non-Mormons and non-LDS matters because one is substantially or entirely ignorant of the world outside of the Latter-day Saint Church and community.
21. Lack of resilience because one has been indoctrinated to believe that Mormonism's all-powerful God will come to the rescue as long as one is a faithful church member.
22. Sensing "unrighteous" feelings (e.g., anger, frustration, resentment) within oneself but not understanding why the emotions exist or knowing how to deal with them, particularly since Mormons regard them as "bad."
23. Passiveness-aggressiveness.
24. Emotional volatility.
25. Suppressed intuition.
26. Smothered imagination, creativity, and spontaneity.
27. Emotional numbness/low awareness of one's emotions.
28. Joylessness/feeling burdened by existence.
29. Believing Mormon superstitions.
30. Automatically ignoring or trivializing facts that conflict with church teachings and LDS beliefs.

31. Distrusting one's mind, mental processes, and judgments.
32. Magical thinking.
33. Obstructed/poor critical thinking skills.
34. Polarized/"black-and-white" thinking.
35. Experiencing a constant barrage of thoughts/having a restless mind.
36. Repressed intelligence/intellectual abilities.
37. Deliberately under-achieving in order to placate others.
38. For male Mormons: feeling emasculated.
39. Using Mormonism as an escape from dealing with life's challenges and problems.
40. Using priesthood blessings as a quick "spiritual" fix, but avoiding the necessary process of determining and addressing the root problem(s).
41. Habitually judging people based on their church membership status and devotion to Mormonism.
42. Feeling separate from and "spiritually" superior to non-members.
43. Lacking tolerance of opposing views or other religious beliefs.
44. Not wanting to go on a mission and feeling pressured to go.
45. Feeling guilty for not going on a mission or coming home early.
46. Post-mission guilt and depression.
47. Feeling pressured to get married and have children.
48. Feeling shameful about one's sexuality, sexual urges and desires, and related thoughts.
49. Believing and feeling that one is "spiritually filthy" due to one's sexual behavior (past and/or present).
50. Believing that sensuality/sensuousness is "carnal" and "wicked."



Books could be written about the harmful psychological effects of cultic Mormonism. Many former members of the LDS Church have shared online details about the daunting challenge of re-programming their psyches after they discovered that the organization systematically misled them and abused their trust while taking money from them. Titles of their posted personal stories include “Mormon Fatigue,” “Losing my faith and finding myself,” “Twelve Years Was Enough,” “Could Not Live A Lie,” “Confused No More,” and “Leaving Manipulation Behind.”

It is no surprise to anyone aware of Mormonism and the abundant nonsense it has “programmed” Latter-day Saints to believe that sermons by LDS General Authorities have included titles such as “Overcoming the Stench of Sin,” “Sin and Suffering,” “Beware Concerning Yourselves,” “Spiritual Crocodiles,” and “Satan’s Bag of Snipes.”

Shamefully, the psyche-wounding and reason-inhibiting LDS cult has duped and disempowered millions of people since Joseph Smith started his religious swindle in the early nineteenth century. However, during the Internet Age the grassroots Recovery from Mormonism and Post-Mormon movements have helped hundreds of thousands of people liberate themselves—psychologically, first and foremost—from the chronically dishonest and manipulative Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The life-transforming process of individual and collective liberation from Mormonism will continue for as long as the disempowering, lies-based religion exists.

## Chapter 12

### Raking in Billions: The Mormon Scam and Corporate Empire

**The only difference between a cult and a religion is the amount of real estate they own.** – Frank Zappa, American composer, singer-songwriter, electric guitarist, recording engineer, record producer, and film director.

**Ensign Peak Advisors is an investment fund of the Mormon Church. According to profiles on LinkedIn, managers at Ensign Peak specialize in international equities, cash management, fixed income, quantitative investment, and emerging markets. One of Ensign Peak’s vice presidents in 2006 [Laurence Stay] told the *Deseret News* that “billions of dollars change hands every day.”** – Online text from *Businessweek*’s “The Mormon Global Business Empire.”

**Most of the revenue of the [Mormon] religion is from the U.S., and a large percentage comes from an elite cadre of wealthy donors, like Mitt Romney...[it] is a religion that appeals to economically successful men by rewarding their financial acuity with respect and positions of prestige within the religion.** – University of Tampa sociology professor Ryan Cragun, who provided *Reuters* with this information in 2012.

When Joseph Smith, Jr. launched his religious movement in the late 1820s, he had virtually no money to finance its operations or expansion. None of his peep/seer stones had supernaturally revealed the location of any buried treasure and he was not inclined to do physical labor to raise the required funds, as explained by the printer of the *Book of Mormon*, John Gilbert, to a *Detroit Post and Tribune* reporter in 1877:

There were nine children in the Smith family. Joe was then about 23 years of age. He was a lazy, good-for-nothing lout, chiefly noted for his capacity to hang around a corner grocery and punish poor whisky. He had good physical strength, but he never put it to any use in the way of mowing grass or sawing wood. He could wrestle pretty well, but was not given to exerting his muscles in any practical way. He had evidently made up his mind that there was an easier way of getting a living than by honest industry.

He was the discoverer of a magic stone which he used to carry around in his hat. Holding it carefully laid in the bottom of his hat[,] he would bring his eye to bear on it at an angle of about 45 degrees... He would [then] draw a circle on the ground and say...“dig deep enough within this circle and you will find a pot of gold.” But he never dug himself.<sup>1</sup>

Mormonism's whisky-drinking, "good-for-nothing lout" needed somebody with \$3,000—equal to \$82,200 today—to pay for the printing of five thousand copies of the *Book of Mormon*, since he had not worked and saved the required sum. Enter Martin Harris, the "credulous man" initially suckered by Smith to part with fifty dollars, and much more later. Wikipedia's article about the duped financial backer of the Latter-day Saint "keystone" says:

Until 1831, Harris lived in Palmyra, New York, where he was a prosperous farmer. Harris's neighbors considered him both an honest and superstitious man. A biographer wrote that Harris's "imagination was excitable and fecund." For example, Harris once perceived a sputtering candle to be the work of the devil. An acquaintance said that Harris claimed to have seen Jesus in the shape of a deer and walked and talked with him for two or three miles. The local Presbyterian minister called him "a visionary fanatic."

A friend, who praised Harris as being "universally esteemed as an honest man," also declared that Harris's mind "was overbalanced by 'marvellousness'" and that his belief in earthly visitations of angels and ghosts gave him the local reputation of being crazy. Another friend said, "Martin was a man that would do just as he agreed with you. But, he was a great man for seeing spooks."<sup>2</sup>

The *Detroit Post and Tribune* piece said that Harris "had mortgaged his farm to pay the printer's bill" for the *Book of Mormon* and "was cleaned out financially" as a result.<sup>3</sup> He would hardly be the last person stressed to the max cash-wise by the LDS Church, which grew richer after Mormons settled in Utah and the organization expanded its money-making ventures following the official termination of the practice of polygamy in 1890.

#### **"The General Electric of American religion"**

In August 1997, *TIME* reported that the Latter-day Saint Church's "current assets total a minimum of \$30 billion. If it were a corporation, its estimated \$5.9 billion in annual gross income would place it midway through the FORTUNE 500, a little below Union Carbide and the Paine Webber Group but bigger than Nike and the Gap."<sup>4</sup> Nearly fourteen years later, in June 2011, a *Newsweek* article said the church had become "an organization that resembles a sanctified multinational corporation—the General Electric of American religion."<sup>5</sup>

Six months before the *TIME* article, Signature Books published a 928-page volume, *The Mormon Hierarchy: Extensions of Power*, by historian D. Michael Quinn that included an in-depth examination of the corporatization of the LDS Church between 1848 and 1996. The publisher's related webpage says the Latter-day Saint "governing apostles, seventies, and presiding bishops" are "like directors of a large corporation or supreme court justices" in that they "lobby among their colleagues, forge alliances, out-manuever opponents, and broker compromises."<sup>6</sup> Quinn's impressive volume revealed not a harmonious church

directed by “revelations”—contrary to what generations of Mormons had been led to believe—but a religious organization with substantial and expanding business interests managed by priesthood officials who engaged in “bureaucratic intrigue” and “clandestine political activities.”<sup>7</sup> Signature Books’ online text also says that “privileged power-vested activities” carried out by LDS officers included “personal ‘loans’ from church coffers (later written off as bad debts)” and “investigative and punitive actions by church security forces.”<sup>8</sup>

Quinn’s illuminating work partly pulled back the curtain on the Mormon Church as it grew in wealth and power, an evolution of the American organization that reminds one of the ascent of the Roman Catholic Church in Europe centuries ago. In his *Mormon Doctrine*, LDS apostle Bruce McConkie referred to the world’s largest Christian institution as “the great and abominable church.”<sup>9</sup> Lds.org says that “[t]he devil founded the great and abominable church” and “[t]he great and abominable church shall be cast down.”<sup>10</sup>

During eighteen-plus decades of Catholic activities in Europe and the Americas, the LDS Church marketed Smith’s religious fraud in several countries, misleading millions of people who naively joined and enriched the organization immensely by paying “tithes and offerings.” Unfortunately, they were ignorant of crucial facts about Mormonism and erroneously believed that their financial support was helping to establish “the kingdom of God on earth.”<sup>11</sup> Due to their ignorance of the true nature of the Latter-day Saint movement, many still do.

How much tithing has the LDS Church taken from its duped membership? Latter-day Saints in the United States and other nations are not allowed to find out. In July 2012, *Businessweek* reported that the church “offers little financial transparency even to its members, who are required to tithe [pay] 10 percent of their income to gain access to Mormon temples.”<sup>12</sup> The news article, “How the Mormons Make Money,” said that based on an analysis by Professor Ryan Cragun, “the LDS Church is likely worth \$40 billion today and collects up to \$8 billion in tithing each year.”<sup>13</sup> He told *Businessweek* reporter Caroline Winter:

There are religious groups that own radio stations, but they don’t also own cattle ranches. There are religious groups that own retreats, but they don’t also own insurance companies. Given their array of corporate interests, it would probably make more sense to refer to them as The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Holdings Inc.<sup>14</sup>

### **Governing corporations and several companies**

*Businessweek*’s online “organizational guide to the church’s businesses” graphic reveals a “Corporation of the President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints” above a “Corporation of the Presiding Bishop of the Church of Jesus Christ of LDS.”<sup>15</sup> Structured beneath the two corporations are six parent companies: Ensign Peak Advisors, Deseret Management Corp., Suburban Land Reserve, Property Reserves, AgReserves, and Farmland Reserve. Below Deseret Management Corp. are shown half a dozen more

income-generating enterprises: Deseret Digital Management, Beneficial Financial Group, Temple Square Hospitality, Bonneville International Corp., Deseret Book Co., and Deseret News Publishing Co.

Winter explained that the LDS Church's City Creek Center in Salt Lake City has "nearly 100 stores and restaurants, ranging from Tiffany's (TIF) to Forever 21."<sup>16</sup> When the \$3-billion development officially opened in March 2012, then-eighty-four year-old church president Monson was "flanked by Utah dignitaries," quoting the *Businessweek* article, and "cheered, 'One, two, three—let's go shopping!'"<sup>17</sup> Interestingly, the Bible says that Jesus Christ, who is Monson's priesthood superior, according to Latter-day Saint doctrine, told his followers:

Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:

But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:

For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.<sup>18</sup>

After reviewing government reports and other documents, Winter was able to piece together the following information about the Mormon Church's "treasure" beyond its money-making City Creek Center shopping mall, office buildings, and residences for sale (new condominiums have reportedly been listed for as much as \$2 million):

1. Deseret Management Corp. is the "umbrella organization for many of the church's for-profit businesses" and "reaps [an] estimated annual revenue of \$1.2 billion from six subsidiaries, according to the business information and analysis firm Hoover's Company Records (DNB). Those subsidiaries run a newspaper, 11 radio stations, a TV station, a publishing and distribution company, a digital media company, a hospitality business, and an insurance business with assets worth \$3.3 billion."<sup>19</sup>
2. AgReserves is "another for-profit Mormon umbrella company" that with "other church-run agricultural affiliates" own and operate about "1 million acres in the continental U.S., on which the church has farms, hunting preserves, orchards, and ranches. These include the \$1-billion, 290,000-acre Deseret Ranches in Florida, which, in addition to keeping 44,000 cows and 1,300 bulls, also has citrus, sod, and timber operations."<sup>20</sup>
3. AgReserves also has business operations in Britain, Canada, Australia, Mexico, Argentina, and Brazil. *Businessweek* reported that Dun & Bradstreet, a New Jersey firm that maintains information on more than two hundred million companies worldwide, learned that the LDS Church's Australian property alone was valued in 1997 "at \$61 million" and "has estimated annual sales of \$276 million."<sup>21</sup>

4. Hawaii Reserves, another profitable star in the church's corporate constellation, "owns or manages more than 7,000 acres on Oahu, where it maintains commercial and residential buildings, parks, water and sewage infrastructure, and two cemeteries."<sup>22</sup>
5. As owner, the LDS Church also operates a forty-two-acre tropical theme park, the Polynesian Cultural Center (PCC), on the north side of Oahu. The *Businessweek* report explained: "General-admission adult tickets cost \$49.95; VIP tickets cost up to \$228.95. In 2010 the PCC had net assets worth \$70 million and collected \$23 million in ticket sales alone, as well as \$36 million in tax-free donations."<sup>23</sup> The business pays no federal taxes since its LDS management has convinced government officials that PCC is a "living museum" and many young people who work there attend the church's university next door. However, students are charged as much as \$7,893 per semester for tuition, books, and room and board.<sup>24</sup>
6. Utah Property Management Associates "manages portions of City Creek Center."<sup>25</sup>

More information about the Mormon Church's corporations is online:

1. In December 2007, *ETN Global Travel News* reported that "a new 220-room hotel" costing more than an "outdated" 2004 estimate of "\$30 million" was being developed by the church's Hawaii Reserves Inc.<sup>26</sup>
2. *Google Finance* explains that LDS Church-owned "Bonneville International Corporation owns and operates about 15 radio stations in four markets including Los Angeles, Phoenix, Salt Lake City, and Seattle. It also operates a television station (NBC affiliate KSL-TV in Salt Lake City). Other activities include Bonneville Interactive Services (services to its own operations), Bonneville Satellite Company (digital and analog services) and Bonneville Communications (public-service announcements for national not-for-profit organizations). The company is owned by Deseret Management."<sup>27</sup>
3. KSL reported in March 2006 that the "Southern Nevada Water Authority has struck a \$7.2 million deal with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to use church water rights to help slake the thirst of the Las Vegas area... A 20-year lease lets the Las Vegas-based water agency draw 2,001 acre-feet of water a year, or enough to serve some 4,000 homes, with an option for two 10-year extensions."<sup>28</sup>
4. In January 2012, a report by *ABC News* (in the U.S., not Australia) said: "Underscoring the prominent, if little discussed role that Mitt Romney played as a Mormon leader, the private equity giant once run by the GOP presidential frontrunner carved his church a slice of several of its most lucrative business deals, securities records show, providing it with

millions of dollars worth of stock in some of Bain Capital's most well-known holdings."<sup>29</sup> The news piece, "Mitt Romney Sent Millions to Mormon Church," also states: "Newly uncovered stock contributions made during Romney's Bain days suggest there is another dimension to Romney's support for the church -- one that could involve millions more than has been previously disclosed."

5. In 2006, Laurence Stay, vice president of the LDS Church's wealth management firm, Ensign Peak Advisors (EPA), told the *Deseret News* that doing financial trades using "billions of dollars" daily involved people—starting with Mormon financial managers—who "can trust each other."<sup>30</sup> The State of Utah's online corporate registry shows that EPA was registered in September 1997 as a non-profit corporation.<sup>31</sup> The record also reveals that the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) designation for EPA is, oddly, "Grantmaking and Giving Services."
6. In November 2013, the *Tampa Bay Times* reported that "[t]he Mormon Church is poised to become the largest private landowner in the state." How? By spending "\$565 million" to acquire "nearly 383,000 acres [of timber and ranch land] in northwest Florida."<sup>32</sup>
7. Three months later, a Philadelphia Business Journal news story said the "Mormon church has unveiled plans to construct a 32-story apartment tower" in the city's center. Reportedly, the edifice will have "258 market-rate apartments as well as 13 townhouses. About 12,000 square feet of the development will be dedicated to street-level retail." And the expense? "While church officials declined to say how much the project will cost, it is estimated to run roughly \$120 million."<sup>33</sup>

Critically, the Mormon Church would have few, if any, companies or properties had it not been for millions of deceived Latter-day Saints handing over at least one-tenth of their income and other types of financial increases to the transparency-averse organization.

### **Support "Prophet" Smith (because "the Lord" said so)**

Less than a year after Joseph Smith launched his religious movement, he claimed that God had revealed to him that Mormons were to "consecrate" (give) their properties and other assets to the church. In turn, they would receive what they needed, and if there was enough left over to cover their wants the church's patriarchal leadership would consider their request(s).

Smith wrote in his "revelation" (*D&C* 42) that property, including goods, from members "cannot be taken from the church."<sup>34</sup> The LDS organization's summary for the forty-second section of the *Doctrine and Covenants* says that "[c]onsecrated properties are to be used to support Church officers." Who was

chief among them and wielded the greatest ecclesiastical power in terms of deciding how the influx of wealth would be used?<sup>35</sup> Joseph Smith, Jr.

A church lesson titled “Consecration and Sacrifice” used to indoctrinate Mormons tells the instructor to “[e]xplain that we must be willing to sacrifice our desires, energy, time, or material goods to build our [Heavenly] Father’s kingdom on earth [i.e., the Latter-day Saint Church].”<sup>36</sup> An online General Conference sermon and *Ensign* article, “Obedience, Consecration, and Sacrifice,” by apostle Bruce McConkie says:

Sacrifice and consecration are inseparably intertwined. The law of consecration is that we consecrate our time, our talents, and our money and property to the cause of the Church: such are to be available to the extent they are needed to further the Lord’s interests [as defined by the LDS organization] on earth.

The law of sacrifice is that we are willing to sacrifice all that we have for the truth’s [i.e., Mormonism’s] sake—our character and reputation; our honor and applause; our good name among men; our houses, lands, and families: all things, even our very lives if need be.<sup>37</sup>

Since the early nineteenth century, how much wealth has the Mormon Church taken from Latter-day Saints in the form of their “money and property”? Adjusted for inflation, about \$200 billion, which makes Mormonism the largest swindle in U.S. history, by far.<sup>38</sup> While church operations have consumed much of the cash, buying and developing real estate in several countries and establishing and growing businesses such as those previously listed has financially benefited the organization enormously.

It is particularly noteworthy that in excess of fifteen million Latter-day Saints have not been given a share of the church’s wealth. They have, however, been expected to part with theirs throughout their lives “to further the Lord’s interests on earth,” which are determined not by the sacrificing membership, but by the church’s senior patriarchal leaders in consultation with an inner circle of Mormon money managers and business directors.

### **Latter-day Saint Church wealth secrets**

The *Businessweek* article mentioned “the [LDS] church’s lack of transparency, and its centralized finances,” and quoted Ron Madson, a fifty-seven year-old “lawyer and lifelong Mormon who once served as a church bishop,” as follows:

The money [from Latter-day Saints] may be perfectly administered, for all we know. But we don’t know... When we see these expenses for the City Creek Mall, for the hunting preserves, these commercial enterprises, Ensign Peak, we don’t know where it’s going.<sup>39</sup>



Dr. Quinn was interviewed by Winter for the *Businessweek* report and told her that “several high-ranking church insiders” had disclosed to him that “the church’s finances are so compartmentalized that no single person, not even the president, knows the entirety of its holdings.”<sup>40</sup> She also explained in her news article that “[i]n some cases, individual General Authorities augment their salaries by serving as board members of the church’s for-profit companies. Several have business backgrounds.”<sup>41</sup> For example, apostle Quentin Cook worked as a president, CEO, and vice-chairman in the health-care industry, and prior to those positions he was a corporate lawyer for more than a quarter century. Other priesthood leaders have had legal and/or business careers.

It is puzzling that many LDS men have been intelligent enough to complete technical training or university and work in demanding professions that require substantial knowledge and rational thinking (e.g., computer systems analyst, lawyer, accountant, physician), while apparently believing Mormonism’s many absurdities, as described in the previous chapters.

### **“The work of the Lord”?**

Returning to the concept of tithing, Latter-day Saints worldwide have been repeatedly taught that their “tithe” is used by the LDS Church “for the Lord’s purposes”—“the Lord” conveniently wanting whatever the senior male leadership decides.<sup>42</sup> In General Conference in October 2010, Monson told church members that “[w]e are engaged in the work of the Lord Jesus Christ.”<sup>43</sup> A church audio production on lds.org says “[t]he work of the Lord is lifting, helping, encouraging, and serving His children,” which certainly sounds magnanimous.<sup>44</sup> The New Testament stories about Jesus describe a spiritual teacher who was very concerned about the poor, handicapped, and infirmed.

Based on what is written in the Bible, Christianity’s founder was not interested in creating and using propaganda to mislead people and have them join his religious movement, or starting and managing businesses so that the church organization that later claimed to represent him would become rich. Also according to the New Testament, Jesus did not spend his time acquiring assets such as real estate holdings or use his influence to further a political agenda. The Mormon Church, however, has accumulated immense wealth and wielded its money-backed clout in the arena of politics (see the online *Los Angeles Times* report, “Mormon Church to be fined by state political commission over Proposition 8,” for relevant information).<sup>45</sup>

In General Conference in April 2012, Donald Hallstrom of the LDS Presidency of the Seventy told Latter-day Saints that “the purpose of the Church is to help us live the gospel” (Mormonism).<sup>46</sup> “Worldwide Leadership Training” provided in early 2012 included a question from senior Mormon apostle Russell Ballard: “What is the main purpose of the Church?” The response from the Elaine Dalton, head of the Young Women’s auxiliary was: “It’s to bring families, to seal families so that they can be eternal in our Heavenly Father’s kingdom.” Ballard responded with, “Absolutely. And we

could use His words, ‘This is my work.’”<sup>47</sup> Having the church’s wealth management firm, Ensign Peak Advisors, trade “billions of dollars” of financial securities every day to generate profits for the financially opaque organization is, supposedly, part of God’s “work.” Who would have imagined that “the Lord” would be so focused on making money?

### **Mormons in Canada and elsewhere kept in the dark**

The *Businessweek* report said that “[a]ccording to U.S. law, religions have no obligation to open their books to the public, and the Mormon Church officially stopped reporting any finances in the early 1960s.”<sup>48</sup> However, outside the United States there are three democratic nations—Canada, the United Kingdom, and New Zealand—that *do* require religious organizations to file an annual financial report if they want to maintain their favorable tax status as registered charities. Research for this book included reviewing the filed reports as well as other official LDS materials. My investigation uncovered a money shell game as well as charitable giving by the Mormon Church that has been far less than what one would expect of Jesus’ “restored” organization.

Latter-day Saints worldwide, including those in Canada, have been told that “[t]ithing funds are used to build churches and temples, to sustain missionary work, and to build the kingdom of God on earth.”<sup>49</sup> According to data from the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA), the Canadian equivalent of the U.S. Internal Revenue Service, in 2010 Mormons in North America’s most northerly nation donated a total of \$150,973,539 to the LDS Church.<sup>50</sup> What percentage of their money was used “to build churches and temples, to sustain missionary work, and to build the kingdom of God on earth”? Online CRA data reveals less than one-third (31.8 percent). Where did the remaining 68.2 percent—\$102.9 million—go, per the information filed by the church? To its Brigham Young University in the United States. Were Latter-day Saints in Canada informed by the “prophets” or other church leaders that their funds would be used that way? No. What does BYU do in relation to helping Canadian church members “live the gospel” and “seal families so that they can be eternal”? Nothing; the university is a private post-secondary education institution that gives out degrees, not “sealings” or “exaltation.”

Why would the U.S.-based LDS Church use most of the funds from Mormons in Canada to pay its BYU bills? To free up \$102.9 million from its other income sources, particularly those in the United States. CRA rules allow monies from Canadian church members to be used to cover the expenses of an educational institution operated by a religious organization—but not for financial trades, particularly those of a speculative nature (e.g., stocks, spreads on credit default swaps). For decades, the Latter-day Saint Church has quietly moved funds around, and systematically concealed such activities from its tithe-paying members in Canada and other countries, in order to increase its wealth.

What kind of trading involving financial instruments to generate profits for the church has occurred? According to Roger Clarke, president of Ensign Peak Advisors, “liquid securities: stocks and bonds.”<sup>51</sup> But there is more: an April 2009 letter from him to the International Swaps and Derivatives Association confirmed EPA’s “adherence to the 2009 ISDA Credit Derivatives Determinations Committees and Auction Settlement CDS [Credit Default Swap] Protocol.”<sup>52</sup> What are credit derivatives and default swaps? Investopedia.com provides the answers:

Definition of ‘Credit Derivative’: Privately held negotiable bilateral contracts that allow users to manage their exposure to credit risk. Credit derivatives are financial assets like forward contracts, swaps, and options for which the price is driven by the credit risk of economic agents (private investors or governments).<sup>53</sup>

Definition of ‘Credit Default Swap - CDS’: A swap designed to transfer the credit exposure of fixed income products between parties. A credit default swap is also referred to as a credit derivative contract, where the purchaser of the swap makes payments up until the maturity date of a contract. Payments are made to the seller of the swap. In return, the seller agrees to pay off a third party debt if this party defaults on the loan. A CDS is considered insurance against non-payment. A buyer of a CDS might be speculating on the possibility that the third party will indeed default.<sup>54</sup>

Bear in mind that the global financial crisis that began in mid-2007 and cost \$14 trillion to fix, according to a July 2013 U.S. Federal Reserve report, was fundamentally caused by investment banks and hedge funds, mostly in the USA, being over-exposed to credit default swaps, collateralized debt obligations, and synthetic CDOs. During the resulting Great Recession, about thirty-one million people worldwide lost their jobs. News reports, articles, and books since ’07 have explained how insatiable corporate greed facilitated by imprudent government deregulation of the financial industries of various nations—the United States, in particular—caused banking, investment, and employment carnage in many countries. The lives of countless people around the globe were disrupted and many income-desperate individuals killed themselves as a result.<sup>55</sup>

During the Great Recession, the worst economic downturn in eight decades, Mormon patriarchal leaders told church members, including those who had been laid off and were struggling to cover their living expenses with less money due to reduced work hours or meagre employment insurance benefits, to keep paying “tithes.” Shamefully, the organization’s well-compensated senior leadership did not reduce the multi-billion-dollar financial burden on struggling Latter-day Saints by giving them a break on tithing. Seated in plush chairs in the hugely expensive—rumoured to cost as much as US\$400

million—LDS Conference Center in Salt Lake City, the Mormon “Politburo” of dark-suited General Authorities also gave no indication to the membership that they would lead by example in times of hardship by reducing the remuneration they paid themselves out of church accounts, which Latter-day Saints were not permitted to see.

Not surprisingly, during the Great Recession none of the LDS “prophets” or other patriarchal leaders took the time in any session of General Conference or other church meeting to inform Mormons that the church had socked away £268,431,000 in its British accounts and NZD\$165,647,000 in New Zealand alone.<sup>56</sup> Converted into U.S. funds, the reserves in those two countries totaled about \$556 million. The huge sum makes one wonder how much wealth has been quietly deposited by the Latter-day Saint Church in bank accounts around the globe, including—quite possibly—countries that provide offshore financial services to the rich. Again, sacrificing members are not allowed to look at the organization’s records to find out.

Another disturbing fact is that during the Great Recession—in April 2009, specifically—financially-struggling Mormons, including tithe-payers who attended the LDS Midwest Area Conference in the United States, were made to feel badly if they approached the church for help to pay their living costs.<sup>57</sup>

It is no surprise to anyone who understands the importance of money in the corporatized LDS Church that its “Brethren” and other General Authorities have repeatedly told members that they need to financially sacrifice for the organization throughout their lives. Again, according to Mormon doctrine the “spiritual worthiness” of Latter-day Saints and their “exaltation” in the imaginary Celestial Kingdom significantly depends on them forking over cash or money equivalents to the church during their “mortal probation.” Since the nineteenth century, this bit of LDS “programming” has proven to be very effective in terms of “persuading” (coercing) Latter-day Saints to “give” (pay) the church tens of billions of dollars.

Sacrifices expected of Mormons to benefit the increasingly wealthy LDS Church have certainly exceeded “tithes and offerings.” For example, in the mid-1970s the senior priesthood leadership decided that an expensive temple would be constructed in Sao Paulo, Brazil—and members should cover much of the bill. Consequently, poor Latter-day Saints “gave the gold from their dental work to help pay for the temple,” quoting a church webpage.<sup>58</sup> With an annual income of approximately \$2 billion at the time, the Mormon organization *could* have covered the edifice’s expense, thereby helping members, particularly those living in grinding poverty in ghettos and shantytowns. But such action would have reduced the sum in at least one church bank account, so it did not happen.

### **No financial warning from the Celestial Kingdom?**

During the Great Recession, KSL in Salt Lake City reported that Mark Willes, president and CEO of the LDS Church’s Deseret Management Corp., revealed that one of the organization’s companies, Beneficial Life, took a

\$600-million hit that was “completely tied to the meltdown in the financial markets.”<sup>59</sup> Evidently, LDS “prophets, seers, and revelators” responsible for both companies either failed to receive a “revelation” about the looming crisis from “the Lord” (why wouldn’t he protect a profitable corporation in his church’s business portfolio?) or they *did* get a transmission from the Celestial Kingdom but did not act on the “divine” warning. Either way, the result was very costly. The report said that “deep job cuts” were instituted at Beneficial Life due to “impairments of \$600 million,” quoting Willes.

One wonders why Latter-day Saints bother to believe in a Heavenly Father/Elohim character who purportedly lives “on a globe like a sea of glass and fire, where all things...are manifest, past, present, and future” since his supposed existence on “a great Urim and Thummim” has clearly not helped Mormons avoid losses—financial and other—for reasons not of their own making.

Interestingly, more than a dozen astute non-Mormons—Dean Baker, Wynne Godley, Fred Harrison, Michael Hudson, Eric Janszen, Steve Keen, Jakob Brøchner Madsen, Hyman Minsky, Jens Kjaer Sørensen, Kurt Richebächer, Nouriel Roubini, Peter Schiff, Robert Shiller, and Martin Weiss—*did* predict the implosion of the multi-trillion-dollar U.S. subprime credit “bubble” and associated global financial mauling and economic havoc. Without prayers and fasting, “seer” stones and scriptures, or “whisperings of the Holy Ghost” and “revelations” they scrutinized the facts and provided cogent warnings about the approaching catastrophe.

**“...more and more like a corporation and less and less like a church”**

In her *Businessweek* news article, Winter reported that a Welfare Services fact sheet from the LDS Church revealed that between 1985 and 2010 the organization “gave \$1.3 billion in humanitarian aid in more than 178 countries and territories.”<sup>60</sup> She noted that documentation “from the previous year indicates that less than one-third of the sum was monetary assistance, while the rest was in the form of ‘material assistance.’”<sup>61</sup> On average, the church donated a relatively paltry \$52 million annually during a period when more than eight million people perished due to natural disasters, starvation, and disease. Larger donations from the “restored” church of Jesus Christ were certainly needed.

How much money did the LDS Church take in between 1985 and 2010, using the \$5.9-billion figure in the 1997 *TIME* article as a mid-point reference and the organization’s reported membership growth during the quarter-century—5,920,000 to 14,131,467 Latter-day Saints—as the statistical basis for the calculation? About \$154 billion. Winter also wrote:

A study co-written by Cragun and recently published in *Free Inquiry* estimates that the Mormon Church donates only about 0.7 percent of its annual income to charity; the United Methodist Church gives about 29 percent.<sup>62</sup>

Ironically, Methodism, a Christian sect that began about seven decades before Joseph Smith was born, was “an abomination,” according to the extra-terrestrial, floating “Personage” who purportedly spoke to Mormonism’s founder in the woods in 1820. The irony stems from the fact that Methodists, who are, according to LDS doctrine, not “worthy” to live with Mormonism’s Heavenly Father and his resurrected wives, Jesus Christ and the Holy Ghost, or “exalted” Latter-day Saints after death, have consistently focused on helping less fortunate people, as did the New Testament’s Jesus of Nazareth.

Returning to Winter’s report, Madson, the former LDS bishop, told the *Businessweek* reporter:

Members of our faith are very generous and very sacrificing, very charitable—they pay tithes and fast offerings, and when they see needs, they address those needs. When we see the church not doing the same things it asks the members to do, we recoil. We wonder, is this looking more and more like a corporation and less and less like a church?<sup>63</sup>

When I labored as a young Mormon missionary in Peru in 1984/5, I saw not one humanitarian project managed or supported by the LDS Church to assist impoverished Peruvians, including many church members. Like millions of non-Mormon Peruvians, scores of Latter-day Saints in the poverty-stricken South American country needed clean water, medical care, and better nutrition. Shamefully, the church did not use its great wealth to help them with their basic existence needs. It did, however, regularly indoctrinate them and their children to pay “el diezmo y las ofrendas” (“tithing and offerings”).

The deplorable conditions in the filthy slums where I was sent to live and proselytize contrasted starkly with the church’s new, pristine, multi-million-dollar temple in La Molina, one of the richest neighborhoods in the country. During the building’s dedication, senior apostle Gordon Hinckley said:

Surely father Lehi [the *Book of Mormon*’s patriarchal Israelite character] has wept with sorrow over his posterity [dark-skinned Lamanites in the Americas, including Peruvians]. Surely he weeps today with gladness, for in this holy house there will be exercised the fullness of the priesthood [i.e., ceremonies and rites] to the blessing, not only of those of this and future generations, but also to the blessing of those of previous generations [due to Latter-day Saint “work for the dead”].<sup>64</sup>

Instead of buying real estate in the part of Lima best known for “large and luxurious houses” where “some of the most exclusive Peruvian social clubs are located,” quoting the Wikipedia article about La Molina, and constructing a grand edifice in which to perform Freemasonry-derived rituals, would Mormons in Peru have not been better served if the LDS Church had used its significant resources to dig water wells and set up medical clinics and communal

farms? Of course! After all, what has been the point during the past generation of traveling to La Molina in order to learn Masonic-esque hand grasps and phrases in the main Latter-day Saint temple ceremony and then return to their shacks in sprawling areas of squalor? Truly, there has never been a legitimate one.

### **Lying for the Lord**

Mormon patriarchy has long-employed a disingenuous strategy known as “lying for the Lord” to mislead people and deflect unwanted scrutiny, including investigations of its business empire. MormonWiki.org says:

Lying for the Lord refers to the practice of lying to protect the image of and belief in the Mormon religion, a practice which Mormonism itself fosters in various ways. From Joseph Smith’s denial of having more than one wife, to polygamous Mormon missionaries telling European investigators that reports about polygamy in Utah were lies put out by “anti-Mormons” and disgruntled ex-members, to [church president] Gordon B. Hinckley’s dishonest equivocation on national television over Mormon doctrine, Mormonism’s history seems replete with examples of lying. Common members see such examples as situations where lying is justified. For the Mormon, loyalty and the welfare of the church are more important than the principle of honesty, and plausible denials and deception by omission are warranted by an opportunity to have the Mormon organization seen in the best possible light. This is part of the larger package of things that lead many to describe Mormonism as a cult. “Lying for the Lord” is part of Mormonism’s larger deceptive mainstreaming tactics, and conversion numbers would be drastically lower if important Mormon beliefs were fully disclosed to investigators.<sup>65</sup>

It is noteworthy that Hinckley worked in the church’s media relations department. He once said that “being true [to Mormonism] is different than being honest,” and misleadingly told *The Wall Street Journal* in 1983:

The business involvement which we [the LDS Church and its corporate subsidiaries] have is a very, very minor part of our activity... We try to operate the few – and I emphasize that – the few business interests that we do have in a business-like prudent way, as any prudent business corporation would do, and use them for public good.<sup>66</sup>

Five years later, *The Mormon Corporate Empire* by John Heinerman, PhD, and Anson Shule explained:

[I]n fact, the LDS Church has considerably more than a few business interests. The Church’s investments are enormous, constantly shifting

to take advantage of profit margins in the stock market, and highly diversified. The Church runs a virtual business empire, with assets close to \$8 billion by conservative estimates. These Church operations have been run basically for their economic returns and not necessarily for the public good.<sup>67</sup>

Without institutionalized “lying for the Lord,” the Mormon Church would not have accumulated assets worth many billions of dollars or enjoyed a huge annual income. A direct correlation between the organization’s misleading behavior and its expanding wealth has always existed.

**“Losing a record number of its membership”**

Yet another example of the Mormon Church’s dishonesty pertains to member resignations. Since the 1990s, hundreds of thousands of people have terminated their membership in the organization, yet despite that reality the church has continued to count ex-Mormons as “members”—albeit “resigned members.” Why the deception? To create and perpetuate a “faith”-bolstering illusion that “the Church continues to grow and to move forward,” quoting Monson in General Conference in April 2010.<sup>68</sup> The truth, however, was reported by *ABC News* in Salt Lake City twenty-one months later:

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is losing a record number of its membership. A new report [by *Reuters* the previous day] quotes an LDS general authority who said more members are falling away [i.e., leaving] today than any time in the past 175 years.

At meetings like General Conference, Utahns may be used to seeing members of the LDS Church show up in record numbers. But according to a recent Reuters article citing LDS General Authority Marlin K. Jensen, for the church as a whole, the record is going in a different direction.

Elder Jensen told the news outlet times have changed, and “attrition has accelerated in the last five or 10 years.” Some church members ABC 4 talked to said they see the faithful leaving.<sup>69</sup>

Why would “the faithful” leave the supposedly “restored” church of Jesus Christ “in droves,” quoting the “recent Reuters article”? Gordon Hinckley, LDS Church president and leading apostle, unwittingly provided the answer in General Conference in April 2003:

Each of us has to face the matter—either the Church is true, or it is a fraud. There is no middle ground. It is the Church and kingdom of God, or it is nothing.<sup>70</sup>



## Final thoughts

The documented facts presented in this book have explained the religious scam of Joseph Smith, Jr. and the ongoing fraud of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints since his death in June 1844. Smith's lies, manipulations, and abuses as well as their lingering harmful effects have been strong evidence that he was no "prophet of God." As a consummate liar, practiced law-breaker, and a serial adulterer he was certainly no leader with authority from "the Lord" to re-establish ancient Christianity.

Contrary to LDS whitewash about Smith, he did not die as a martyr to the cause of Mormonism. Instead, he perished in a gunfight at Carthage Jail on charges partly related to his illegal practice of polygamy.<sup>71</sup> As with other cult leaders, his self-delusion and related offenses ultimately got him killed.

The misleading and manipulative Mormon Church *is* nothing, really. According to the Gospel of St. Matthew in the Bible, Jesus asked an important question that could well be directed at the men who run the lucrative Latter-day Saint racket headquartered in Salt Lake City: "For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul?"<sup>72</sup>

The New Testament also says that Jesus taught that "a sound tree cannot bear evil fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit... Thus you will know them by their fruits."<sup>73</sup> The LDS Church has never been "a sound tree"; since its creation in the early nineteenth century it has been fundamentally corrupt. As comprehensively explained in this book, the Utah-based organization has systematically deceived millions of people and extracted large sums of money from them. It has also psychologically harmed children, teenagers, and adults. No amount of blinkered Latter-day Saint "faith" will ever change these reprehensible realities.

Mormonism, a multi-generational fraud, needs to end now. As church president, Thomas Monson should call a news conference and apologize to the world for Smith's lies and the LDS organization's unethical conduct. Monson also needs to direct church officials to seek out and reimburse Latter-day Saints who have paid tithing. Furthermore, he should order that Mormon missionaries be transported home so they can get on with their lives instead of wasting several months marketing church propaganda and nonsense.

Realistically, the sham of Mormonism is going to continue for some time. There is far too much money—billions of dollars annually—for Monson or another "prophet" to publicly acknowledge the LDS Church's fraud. The Latter-day Saint religion is thoroughly American and nowhere in the world does money talk louder than in the United States.

Ironically, LDS "seers and revelators" failed to predict the creation and expansion of the Internet in the late twentieth century or the profoundly negative impact on the Mormon Church of websites with "faith"-destroying facts about Smith, the *Book of Mormon*, and many other aspects of Mormonism. According to the 2012 *Reuters* special report mentioned earlier, after Jensen acknowledged that people were leaving the church "in droves," he

said: “For the younger generation, everything’s out there for them to consume if they want to Google it.”<sup>74</sup> Many have done so and learned online that Joseph Smith was a charlatan and the LDS Church and its priesthood leaders, particularly “the Brethren,” routinely abused their trust.

Finally, with billions of people around the globe accessing the Internet and information about cultic Mormonism easy to find online, the days of the LDS Church and religion are numbered. The odds are very good that before the end of this century, the Latter-day Saint swindle, the costliest in U.S. history, will be no more.

## Notes and References

### Introduction

1. The online presentation begins at [forbes.com/pictures/fhjj45eilg/our-take-on-the-10-biggest-frauds-in-recent-u-s-history/](http://forbes.com/pictures/fhjj45eilg/our-take-on-the-10-biggest-frauds-in-recent-u-s-history/).
2. “#1: Enron” at [forbes.com/pictures/fhjj45eilg/1-enron/](http://forbes.com/pictures/fhjj45eilg/1-enron/).
3. “#2: Bernard Madoff” at [forbes.com/pictures/fhjj45eilg/2-bernard-madoff/](http://forbes.com/pictures/fhjj45eilg/2-bernard-madoff/).
4. Details of calculations of the LDS Church’s wealth are in Chapter 12. They are based on membership data published by the organization since 1972 and financial information in news articles since the late-20<sup>th</sup> century.
5. Information about Hassan’s education, qualifications, and professional background are online at [freedomofmind.com/Media/pressKit/bioFactSheet.php](http://freedomofmind.com/Media/pressKit/bioFactSheet.php).
6. Cult expert Steve Hassan has six webpages about the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints under his Alphabetical Listing; see the “ABC” sub-category on his website at [freedomofmind.com/Info/list.php](http://freedomofmind.com/Info/list.php).
7. There are more than 280 instances of “prophet of the Restoration” on the LDS Church’s main website, [lds.org](http://lds.org).
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### Chapter 1: “Hail to the Prophet”

1. [lds.org/locations/joseph-smith-birthplace-memorial](http://lds.org/locations/joseph-smith-birthplace-memorial).
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5. Richard L. Bushman. *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism*. Champaign, IL: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1984:144 (ref. [press.uillinois.edu/books/catalog/63cqw8ge9780252011436.html](http://press.uillinois.edu/books/catalog/63cqw8ge9780252011436.html)).
6. Brodie, 6.
7. “The Burned Over District is a nickname given by 20th Century historians to western and central New York. It comes from a quote by Charles Finney, the father of American revivalism, who explained in the 1870’s that the region had seen so many revivals in the previous decades that it no longer had any more ‘fuel’ (the unconverted) to ‘burn’ (convert).” (Ref. [patheos.com/blogs/unreasonablefaith/2009/11/joseph-smith-and-the-burned-over-district/](http://patheos.com/blogs/unreasonablefaith/2009/11/joseph-smith-and-the-burned-over-district/)).
8. Several pages in historian Dr. Quinn’s *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View* explain Joseph Smith’s astrological beliefs and practices. The volume

## Notes and References

- contains photographs of relevant items such as the Mormon leader's Jupiter Talisman (see "Astrology" in the book's index). The publisher's URL for the book is [signaturebooks.com/2010/02/early-mormonism-and-the-magic-world-view/](http://signaturebooks.com/2010/02/early-mormonism-and-the-magic-world-view/).
9. More information about Swedenborg's extraterrestrial beliefs is in his 1758 book, *Life on Other Planets* (ref. [swedenborg.com/archive/products/life-on-other-planets/](http://swedenborg.com/archive/products/life-on-other-planets/)).
  10. Katherine Weber. "75 Percent of Americans Do Not Consider Mormons Part of Christianity." *Christian Post*, October 12, 2011 (ref. [global.christianpost.com/news/75-percent-of-american-pastors-do-not-consider-mormons-part-of-christianity-57956/](http://global.christianpost.com/news/75-percent-of-american-pastors-do-not-consider-mormons-part-of-christianity-57956/)).
  11. D. Michael Quinn. *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View*. Salt Lake City: Signature Books, revised edition, 1998:back cover.
  12. Quinn, 42.
  13. For more information, see pages 30 to 65 of Chapter 2, "Divining Rods, Treasure-Seeking, and Seer Stones" in *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View*.
  14. Frederic G. Mather. "Early Days of Mormonism," *Lippincott's Magazine of Popular Literature and Science*, August 1880:199. An excerpt says: "Joe Smith had paid several visits to this region when the first settlers were struggling with the wilderness. It was a much wilder country than that about Palmyra, and the inhabitants were much more credulous. Upon these people Smith practised with his peek-stone. A number of aged persons now living in that vicinity give this description of the prophet: He was six feet or a trifle over in height; of stout build, but wiry; his hair and complexion were light; his eyes were blue and mild; and 'he did not look as if he knew enough to fool people so,' as one old lady expresses it. When 'peeking' he kneeled and buried his face in his white stovepipe hat, within which was the peek-stone." (Ref. [gutenberg.org/files/24851/24851-h/24851-h.htm](http://gutenberg.org/files/24851/24851-h/24851-h.htm)).
  15. Quinn, 56.
  16. Grant Palmer. *An Insider's View of Mormon Origins*. Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2002:8.
  17. Ibid.
  18. Ibid.
  19. Ibid. Also, see Palmer, 66.
  20. A. W. B. (Abram W. Benton). *Evangelical Magazine and Gospel Advocate* (under the heading of "Mormonites"):120. Google books has a digital copy of the periodical at [books.google.com/books?id=-zMrAAAAYAAJ](http://books.google.com/books?id=-zMrAAAAYAAJ).
  21. See the seventh paragraph at [josephsmithpapers.org/intro/revelations-and-translations-series-introduction](http://josephsmithpapers.org/intro/revelations-and-translations-series-introduction) (this LDS Church webpage is titled "Joseph Smith as Revelator and Translator"). Checked on August 27, 2014.
  22. Russell Nelson. "A Treasured Testament." *Ensign*, July 1993 (ref. [lds.org/ensign/1993/07/a-treasured-testament?lang=eng](http://lds.org/ensign/1993/07/a-treasured-testament?lang=eng)).
  23. Ibid.
  24. Reorganized Latter-day Saint Church. "Last Testimony of Sister Emma," *History of the RLDS Church, Volume 3*. Independence, Missouri: Herald House, 1951:356.
  25. [southparkstudios.com/full-episodes/s07e12-all-about-mormons](http://southparkstudios.com/full-episodes/s07e12-all-about-mormons).
  26. "A Peaceful Heart." *The Friend*, September 1974 (ref. [lds.org/friend/1974/09/a-peaceful-heart?lang=eng](http://lds.org/friend/1974/09/a-peaceful-heart?lang=eng)).
  27. An artist's rendition of the silver bows connected to the breastplate, with seer stones attached to the bows, pictorially convey the Mormon idea that the stones were reading glasses with a supernatural power. The image is online at [mormonthink.com/img/trans3.jpg](http://mormonthink.com/img/trans3.jpg).
  28. On [lds.org](http://lds.org), there are more than 1,150 instances of "seer."
  29. Quinn, 43-44.

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30. Quinn, 44.
31. Mather, “Early Days of Mormonism”; *Lippincott’s Magazine*, August 1880:199 (see note #14 for the webpage link).
32. Quinn, 42.
33. Ibid.
34. Palmer, 188.
35. Palmer, 188–9. The reference in Coburn’s book, *Mormonism: Or Life Among the Mormons*, which was published in 1888, is in footnote #35 on p. 189 in Palmer’s book.
36. The LDS Church has an online cartoon video of the visitations at [lds.org/media-library/video/doctrine-and-covenants/doctrine-and-covenants-stories?icid=osd](https://www.lds.org/media-library/video/doctrine-and-covenants/doctrine-and-covenants-stories?icid=osd).
37. [lds.org/manual/teachings-joseph-smith/the-life-and-ministry-of-joseph-smith?lang=eng](https://www.lds.org/manual/teachings-joseph-smith/the-life-and-ministry-of-joseph-smith?lang=eng).
38. There are more than 1,000 instances of “fulness of times” on [lds.org](https://www.lds.org).
39. End-time: “the time of the prophesied end of the world” (ref. [merriam-webster.com/dictionary/end-time](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/end-time)).
40. “The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the official name of the religion commonly called the Mormon Church” (ref. [mormon.org](https://www.mormon.org)). Also, B. H. Roberts, a First Council of the Seventy member (LDS Church General Authority) from 1888 to 1933, and the organization’s historian for a number of years, wrote in the third volume of *History of the Church*: “It will be observed that in verses three and four of this revelation [*Doctrine and Covenants*, Section 115] the Lord gives to the Church its official name, ‘The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.’ Previous to this the Church had been called ‘The Church of Christ,’ ‘The Church of Jesus Christ,’ ‘The Church of God,’ and by a conference of Elders held at Kirtland in May, 1834...it was given the name ‘The Church of the Latter-day Saints.’” (The online reference is [byustudies.byu.edu/hc/hcpgs/hc.aspx](https://byustudies.byu.edu/hc/hcpgs/hc.aspx). Click on Volume 3, Chapter 3, and scroll down to read the “D&C 115” text under “Chapter 3 Notes.”)
41. See the picture links (three of them) beside “First Vision” at [lds.org/manual/ behold-your-little-ones-nursery-manual/index-of-visuals?lang=eng](https://www.lds.org/manual/ behold-your-little-ones-nursery-manual/index-of-visuals?lang=eng).
42. “Lesson 5: The First Vision [-] *Primary 3*, 1994, 20–23” (ref. [lds.org/manual/primary-3/lesson-5-the-first-vision?lang=eng](https://www.lds.org/manual/primary-3/lesson-5-the-first-vision?lang=eng)).
43. “Lesson 42: I Belong to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints [-] *Primary 1: I Am a Child of God*, 2000, 138–41” (ref. [lds.org/manual/primary-1/lesson-42?lang=eng](https://www.lds.org/manual/primary-1/lesson-42?lang=eng)).
44. [lds.org](https://www.lds.org) shows that there are dozens of church lessons and General Conference sermons and hundreds of church magazine articles as well as other Latter-day Saint materials that mention Smith’s purported First Vision.
45. Chapter 1, verses 7 to 20 of “Extracts from the History of Joseph Smith, the Prophet [-] *History of the Church*, Volume 1, Chapters 1 through 5” (ref. [lds.org/scriptures/pgp/js-h/1.7-20?lang=eng](https://www.lds.org/scriptures/pgp/js-h/1.7-20?lang=eng)).
46. There are more than 3,450 instances of “restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ” on [lds.org](https://www.lds.org).
47. Palmer, 253.
48. Wesley P. Walters. “The Mormon Prophet Attempts to Join the Methodists” (ref. [utlm.org/onlineresources/josephsmithmethodist.htm](https://utlm.org/onlineresources/josephsmithmethodist.htm)).
49. *The Amboy Journal*; Amboy, Illinois; June 11, 1879:1. The U.S. Library of Congress has information about the newspaper at [chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85033348/](https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85033348/).

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50. Gordon Hinckley. "What Are People Asking about Us?" General Conference, October 1998 (ref. [lds.org/general-conference/1998/10/what-are-people-asking-about-us?lang=eng](http://lds.org/general-conference/1998/10/what-are-people-asking-about-us?lang=eng)).
51. Gordon Hinckley. "The Marvelous Foundation of Our Faith." General Conference, October 2002 (ref. [lds.org/general-conference/2002/10/the-marvelous-foundation-of-our-faith?lang=eng](http://lds.org/general-conference/2002/10/the-marvelous-foundation-of-our-faith?lang=eng)).

### Chapter 2: Mystical Beings from the Kolob Extraterrestrial Neighborhood

1. *Joseph Smith History (JSH)*, Chapter 1, verses 66-72 (ref. [lds.org/scriptures/pgp/js-h/1.66-72?lang=eng](http://lds.org/scriptures/pgp/js-h/1.66-72?lang=eng)).
2. *JSH* 1:27 (ref. [lds.org/scriptures/pgp/js-h/1.27?lang=eng](http://lds.org/scriptures/pgp/js-h/1.27?lang=eng)).
3. *JSH* 1:29-35 (ref. [lds.org/scriptures/pgp/js-h/1.29-35?lang=eng](http://lds.org/scriptures/pgp/js-h/1.29-35?lang=eng)).
4. *JSH* 1:42 (ref. [lds.org/scriptures/pgp/js-h/1.42?lang=eng](http://lds.org/scriptures/pgp/js-h/1.42?lang=eng)).
5. The LDS Church's Joseph Smith Papers website has a digitally scanned historical document that says "...he was a messenger. sent from the presence of God to me. and that his name was Nephi.— that he had a work for me to do that my name should be had for good and evil. among all nations. kindreds. & tongues — that there was a book deposited: written upon gold plates, giving an account of the former inhabitants of this Continent. as well as their origin..." (Ref. [josephsmithpapers.org/paperSummary/history-circa-1841-draft-draft-3?p=20#!/paperSummary/history-circa-1841-draft-draft-3&p=6](http://josephsmithpapers.org/paperSummary/history-circa-1841-draft-draft-3?p=20#!/paperSummary/history-circa-1841-draft-draft-3&p=6)). Also, "The angel Moroni story has also been changed since the first edition of the P.of G.P. was published in 1851. That edition said that the angel 'Nephi' revealed the gold plates to Smith (p. 41). Other early Mormon sources which mention the angel Nephi are: The Millennial Star Vol III, pp. 53, 71 and Times and Seasons Vol. III pp. 749, 753. In the latter volume on page 710, Joseph Smith said, 'This paper commences my editorial career. I alone stand responsible for it.' Thus, if the angel's name is wrong, Smith is at fault. In 1853, Joseph's mother, Lucy Mack Smith, also said the angel's name was Nephi (Biographical Sketches, p. 79)." (Ref. "Moroni or Nephi" at [utlm.org/onlinebooks/mclaims1.htm](http://utlm.org/onlinebooks/mclaims1.htm)).
6. *JSH* 1:33 (ref. [lds.org/scriptures/pgp/js-h/1.33?lang=eng](http://lds.org/scriptures/pgp/js-h/1.33?lang=eng)).
7. "Nephi begins the record of his people...About 600 B.C." (ref. [lds.org/scriptures/bofm/1-ne/1?lang=eng](http://lds.org/scriptures/bofm/1-ne/1?lang=eng)).
8. LDS Church articles and lessons provide information about Smith's claim that he translated "reformed Egyptian" into English. On [lds.org](http://lds.org), there are at least 45 instances of "reformed Egyptian."
9. The LDS Church's summary for Mormon 10 is online at [lds.org/scriptures/bofm/moro/10?lang=eng](http://lds.org/scriptures/bofm/moro/10?lang=eng).
10. On [lds.org](http://lds.org), there are nearly 1,600 instances of "celestial kingdom."
11. Because LDS Church presidents (senior "prophets") have taught that a) polygamy is essential for a Mormon priesthood holder's eternal salvation (see [utlm.org/onlinebooks/changech9b.htm#255](http://utlm.org/onlinebooks/changech9b.htm#255) for details); b) "As man is, God once was; and as God is, man may become" (ref. [lds.org/general-conference/1977/04/our-great-potential?lang=eng](http://lds.org/general-conference/1977/04/our-great-potential?lang=eng)); c) the ultimate purpose of life is to become gods and goddesses (see the search results at [lds.org/search?lang=eng&query=gods+and+goddesses](http://lds.org/search?lang=eng&query=gods+and+goddesses) for more information); and d) the church has never rescinded the doctrine of polygamy (i.e., it is still doctrinally in force), the inescapable conclusion is that Mormonism's Heavenly Father is a polygamist, as is the resurrected Jesus Christ. Also, in the summary for Joseph Smith's polygamy "revelation" (*D&C* Section 132), the LDS Church said for three decades until

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- 2013: “Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet, at Nauvoo, Illinois, recorded 12 July 1843, relating to the new and everlasting covenant, including the eternity of the marriage covenant, and also the plurality of wives (see History of the Church 5:501–7).”
12. See “Facsimile 2, figure 1. Kolob” at [lds.org/manual/the-pearl-of-great-price-student-manual/the-book-of-abraham?lang=eng](https://lds.org/manual/the-pearl-of-great-price-student-manual/the-book-of-abraham?lang=eng).
  13. Ibid.
  14. LDS Church lesson: “The Book of Abraham.” Pearl of Great Price Student Manual, 2000:28–41. The relevant section titles are: “Abraham 3:2–16. The Name of the Great One Is Kolob,” “Abraham 3:2–10, 16–17. Other Governing Stars,” and “Abraham 3:3–4. The Same Order as That upon Which Thou Standest.” The lesson is online at [lds.org/manual/the-pearl-of-great-price-student-manual/the-book-of-abraham?lang=eng](https://lds.org/manual/the-pearl-of-great-price-student-manual/the-book-of-abraham?lang=eng).
  15. Abraham 3:13 (ref. [lds.org/scriptures/pgp/abr/3.13?lang=eng](https://lds.org/scriptures/pgp/abr/3.13?lang=eng)).
  16. See “Facsimile 2, figure 5. Enish-go-on-dosh” at [lds.org/manual/the-pearl-of-great-price-student-manual/the-book-of-abraham?lang=eng](https://lds.org/manual/the-pearl-of-great-price-student-manual/the-book-of-abraham?lang=eng).
  17. See “Abraham 3:2–16. The Name of the Great One Is Kolob” at [lds.org/manual/the-pearl-of-great-price-student-manual/the-book-of-abraham?lang=eng](https://lds.org/manual/the-pearl-of-great-price-student-manual/the-book-of-abraham?lang=eng).
  18. Andrew Skinner. “The Book of Abraham: A Most Remarkable Book.” *Ensign*, March 1997 (ref. [lds.org/ensign/1997/03/the-book-of-abraham-a-most-remarkable-book?lang=eng](https://lds.org/ensign/1997/03/the-book-of-abraham-a-most-remarkable-book?lang=eng)). Also, see “Facsimile 2, figure 3. A Crown of Eternal Light” at [lds.org/manual/the-pearl-of-great-price-student-manual/the-book-of-abraham?lang=eng](https://lds.org/manual/the-pearl-of-great-price-student-manual/the-book-of-abraham?lang=eng).
  19. A search for “celestialized” on [lds.org](https://lds.org) reveals church lessons and magazine articles that say that “the earth will become celestialized,” “until the earth is celestialized,” the earth “shall be sanctified, celestialized,” the earth’s “celestialized state,” “the future celestialized earth,” and “the earth in its celestialized state.”
  20. *Journal of Discourses (JoD)* 13:270–1 (go to [contentdm.lib.byu.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/JournalOfDiscourses3/id/9608/rec/1](https://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/JournalOfDiscourses3/id/9608/rec/1) and scroll down on the right side, then click on “The Gospel--The One-man Power,” then click on “270,” followed by “271”).
  21. Skinner, “The Book of Abraham: A Most Remarkable Book” (see note #18 above for the webpage link).
  22. The quote is part of the section titled “Authority to Lead His Church Restored” at [mormon.org/restoration/](https://mormon.org/restoration/).
  23. The quote is part of the section titled “Additional Information” at [lds.org/topics/aaronic-priesthood?lang=eng](https://lds.org/topics/aaronic-priesthood?lang=eng).
  24. There are in excess of 170 instances of “higher priesthood” on [lds.org](https://lds.org).
  25. “John the Baptist Conferring the Aaronic Priesthood” (first image at [lds.org/media-library/images/gospel-art/church-history?lang=eng&start=11&end=20](https://lds.org/media-library/images/gospel-art/church-history?lang=eng&start=11&end=20)) and “Melchizedek Priesthood Restoration” (second image at [lds.org/media-library/images/gospel-art/church-history?lang=eng&start=11&end=20](https://lds.org/media-library/images/gospel-art/church-history?lang=eng&start=11&end=20)).
  26. [mormon.org/restoration/](https://mormon.org/restoration/).
  27. “The Dark Ages of Christianity” at [mormon.org/beliefs/restoration](https://mormon.org/beliefs/restoration).
  28. Harvey Newcomb. *Great Apostasy: Being an Account of the Origin, Rise and Progress of Corruption and Tyranny in the Church of Rome*. Whitefish, MT: Kessinger Publishing, 2003 (reprint):ix–x. Information about Newcomb’s book, which was first published in 1833, is at [books.google.com/books?id=XZ0JL9AhS0wC&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs\\_ge\\_summary\\_r&redir\\_esc=y#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.com/books?id=XZ0JL9AhS0wC&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q&f=false).

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29. Phil Lawler. "Indulgences and the nature of the Church." March 26, 2009 (ref. catholicculture.org/commentary/otn.cfm?id=389&repos=6&subrepos=5&searchid=812575).
30. "indulgence" (ref. britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/286800/indulgence).
31. "Ninety-five Theses" (ref. britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/415676/Ninety-five-Theses).
32. In October 2010, PBS aired its television program, "God in America" (ref. pbs.org/godinamerica/) that discussed the roots of American Protestantism. The religious movement began about 250 years before the United States was founded and a generation after the discovery of the New World by Christopher Columbus in A.D. 1492 (C.E.). Information about the history of Protestantism is online at en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Protestantism.
33. "Chapter 8: Prophets and Apostasy," Missionary Preparation Student Manual, 2005 (ref. lds.org/manual/missionary-preparation-student-manual/chapter-8-prophets-and-apostasy?lang=eng).
34. 1 Nephi 10:18 (ref. lds.org/scriptures/bofm/1-ne/10.18?lang=eng).
35. Mormon 9:9 (ref. lds.org/scriptures/bofm/morm/9.9?lang=eng).
36. Since the 1940s, extensive historical research has been done about the "morphing" Latter-day Saint religion, much of it by Jerald and Sandra Tanner, the latter being a great-great-granddaughter of Brigham Young, the Mormon Church's second president after Joseph Smith's death in June 1844. See the Tanners' *The Changing World of Mormonism* for details (ref. utlm.org/onlinebooks/changecontents.htm).
37. "In 1835 the 'Lectures on Faith,' which were originally delivered before a class of the elders, in Kirtland, Ohio, were printed in the Doctrine and Covenants. In these lectures it was definitely stated that God the Father was a personage of spirit." (Ref. utlm.org/onlinebooks/changech7.htm#183). However, *D&C* 130:22 says: "The Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man's;" (ref. lds.org/scriptures/dc-testament/dc/130.22?lang=eng).
38. Dallin Oaks. "Fundamental to Our Faith." *Ensign*, January 2011. The text from Oaks' address at the Harvard Law School is at lds.org/ensign/2011/01/fundamental-to-our-faith?lang=eng.
39. Dallin Oaks. "The Only True and Living Church." *Liahona*, August 2011 (ref. lds.org/liahona/2011/08/the-only-true-and-living-church?lang=eng).
40. "Resurrection" (ref. lds.org/study/topics/resurrection?lang=eng).
41. Ibid.
42. Information about Mormonism's Kolob is online at lds.org/search?lang=eng&query=kolob.
43. *History of the Church*, vol. 1, chpt. 5, footnote #2 (ref. byustudies.byu.edu/hc/hcpgs/hc.aspx).
44. "Lucy Mack Smith, Preliminary Manuscript 1," cited in *Lucy's Book* (Lavina Fielding Anderson, editor); Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2001:439 (see "p. 439" at signaturebookslibrary.org/?p=9209).
45. Palmer, 227–229.
46. The LDS Church's *Gospel Study* guide explains the concept of priesthood at lds.org/study/topics/priesthood?lang=eng.
47. Bruce McConkie. "The Doctrine of the Priesthood." General Conference, April 1982 (ref. lds.org/general-conference/1982/04/the-doctrine-of-the-priesthood?lang=eng).
48. There are more than 450 instances of "kingdom of God on earth" on lds.org.
49. *History of the Church*, vol. 6, chapter 17, pp. 364–65 (ref. byustudies.byu.edu/hc/hcpgs/hc.aspx).



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50. Douglas Brinley. "I Have A Question." *Ensign*, January 1996 (ref. lds.org/ensign/1996/01/i-have-a-question/i-have-a-question?lang=eng).
51. Ibid.
52. Ibid.
53. Ibid.
54. Ibid.
55. Ibid.
56. "Revelation" (ref. lds.org/topics/revelation?lang=eng).
57. Ibid.
58. Boyd Packer. "How Does the Spirit Speak to Us?" *New Era*, February 2010 (ref. lds.org/new-era/2010/02/how-does-the-spirit-speak-to-us?lang=eng).
59. Ibid.
60. Hosea 1:2 (ref. biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hosea+1&version=NIV).
61. James Faust. "Continuous Revelation." *Ensign*, November 1989 (ref. lds.org/ensign/1989/11/continuous-revelation?lang=eng).
62. The LDS Church's summary for *D&C* 89 is online at lds.org/scriptures/dc-testament/dc/89?lang=eng.
63. *D&C* 89:4 (ref. lds.org/scriptures/dc-testament/dc/89.4?lang=eng).
64. *D&C* 89:7 (ref. lds.org/scriptures/dc-testament/dc/89.7?lang=eng).
65. *D&C* 89:18–21 (ref. lds.org/scriptures/dc-testament/dc/89.18-21?lang=eng).
66. Brodie, 167.
67. Latter-Day Saints' *Millennial Star*, vol. 23, p. 720 (ref. utlm.org/images/changingworld/chwp32millennialstar.gif).
68. Gary Dean Guthrie. "Joseph Smith As An Administrator." M.A. thesis, Brigham Young University, May 1969:161. The digital scan of Guthrie's paper is at contentdm.lib.byu.edu/cdm/ref/collection/MTGM/id/3327. Click on "The Prophet's Model of Administration (1843)" on the right side, then on "161" on the expanded sub-menu.
69. *History of the Church* 7:101 (ref. byustudies.byu.edu/hc/hcpgs/hc.aspx).
70. *History of the Church* 6:616 (ref. byustudies.byu.edu/hc/hcpgs/hc.aspx).
71. See "Joseph Smith's Bar" on p. 472-3 at utlm.org/onlinebooks/changech18.htm.
72. Brigham Young drank coffee on a regular basis, as explained on page 408 in *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* by Mormon history experts Jerald and Sandra Tanner. Information about their book is at utlm.org/booklist/titles/mormonismshadoworreality\_ub001.htm. Also, in April 1867 Brigham Young acknowledged that he had "chewed tobacco for many years" (ref. utlm.org/onlinebooks/changech18.htm).
73. See "Brigham Young's Distillery" on p. 474 at utlm.org/onlinebooks/changech18.htm.
74. Ibid.
75. There are several instances of "obedience is the first law of heaven" on lds.org.

### Chapter 3: First Visions, a Mystical Amphibian, the Book of Gold, and a Dead Swede

1. *JSH* 1:5-22 (ref. lds.org/scriptures/pgp/js-h/1.5-22?lang=eng).
2. "Changing First Vision Accounts - 1827 First Vision Account as related to Willard Chase" (ref. mit.irr.org/changing-first-vision-accounts-1827-first-vision-account-related-willard-chase).
3. "Art. VII - History and Ideas of the Mormons." *The Westminster Review*, Volume LIX, January and April 1853:105 (ref. books.google.com/books?id=k0GgAAAAMAAJ).
4. Quinn, 149.

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5. Quinn, 152–3.
6. “The Salamander Letter: THE TEXT OF THE DOCUMENT.” *Los Angeles Times*, March 29, 1987 (ref. [articles.latimes.com/1987-03-29/magazine/tm-793\\_1\\_stone-joseph](http://articles.latimes.com/1987-03-29/magazine/tm-793_1_stone-joseph)). Additional information about Mark Hofmann’s “Salamander Letter” forgery is at [utlm.org/onlinebooks/trackingch6b.htm#SALAMANDER%20LETTER](http://utlm.org/onlinebooks/trackingch6b.htm#SALAMANDER%20LETTER).
7. Robert Lindsey. “Dealer In Mormon Fraud Called A Master Forger.” *New York Times*, February 11, 1987 (ref. [nytimes.com/1987/02/11/us/dealer-in-mormon-fraud-called-a-master-forger.html](http://nytimes.com/1987/02/11/us/dealer-in-mormon-fraud-called-a-master-forger.html)). Additional information about Mark Hofmann is online at [murderpedia.org/male.H/h/hofmann-mark.htm](http://murderpedia.org/male/H/h/hofmann-mark.htm) and [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mark\\_Hofmann](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mark_Hofmann).
8. See note #6 as well as “TEXT OF 1830 MORMON LETTER” at [nytimes.com/1985/10/18/us/text-of-1830-mormon-letter.html](http://nytimes.com/1985/10/18/us/text-of-1830-mormon-letter.html).
9. Details about the involvement of various LDS General Authorities, including apostles, with Mark Hofmann are in *The Mormon Murders: A True Story of Greed, Forgery, Deceit, and Death* (first published in 1988) by American lawyers Steven Naifeh and Gregory White Smith. See note #12 for the webpage link.
10. “Discernment, Gift of[.] To understand or know something through the power of the Spirit. The gift of discernment is one of the gifts of the Spirit. It includes perceiving the true character of people and the source and meaning of spiritual manifestations.” (Ref. [lds.org/search?lang=eng&query=gift+of+discernment+](http://lds.org/search?lang=eng&query=gift+of+discernment+)).
11. “Gifts of the spirit” is mentioned more than 380 times on [lds.org](http://lds.org).
12. [amazon.com/Mormon-Murders-Steven-Naifeh/dp/0451401522/ref=tmm\\_mmp\\_title\\_0?ie=UTF8&qid=1331411837&sr=1-2](http://amazon.com/Mormon-Murders-Steven-Naifeh/dp/0451401522/ref=tmm_mmp_title_0?ie=UTF8&qid=1331411837&sr=1-2).
13. “Fraudulent Documents from Forger Mark Hofmann Noted.” *Ensign*, October 1987 (ref. [lds.org/ensign/1987/10/news-of-the-church/fraudulent-documents-from-forger-mark-hofmann-noted?lang=eng](http://lds.org/ensign/1987/10/news-of-the-church/fraudulent-documents-from-forger-mark-hofmann-noted?lang=eng)).
14. Ibid.
15. Peter Bauder. *The Kingdom and Gospel of Jesus Christ: Contrasted with That of Anti-Christ. A Brief Review of Some of the Most Interesting Circumstances, Which Have Transpired Since the Institution of the Gospel of Christ, from the Days of the Apostles*. Canajoharie, New York: Printed by A. H. Calhoun, 1834; Republished in: Dan Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, vol. 1, Salt Lake City: Signature Books:16-17. Also, see [en.wikisource.org/wiki/Peter\\_Bauder\\_interview\\_with\\_Joseph\\_Smith](http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Peter_Bauder_interview_with_Joseph_Smith).
16. *JSH* 1:22 (ref. [lds.org/scriptures/pgp/js-h/1.22?lang=eng](http://lds.org/scriptures/pgp/js-h/1.22?lang=eng)).
17. “Changing First Vision Accounts - 1832 First Vision Account by Joseph Smith, Jr.” (ref. [mit.irr.org/changing-first-vision-accounts-1832-first-vision-account-joseph-smith-jr](http://mit.irr.org/changing-first-vision-accounts-1832-first-vision-account-joseph-smith-jr)). Also, see the text beginning at “[1832]” at [lds.org/ensign/1984/12/joseph-smith-jr-in-his-own-words-part-1?lang=eng](http://lds.org/ensign/1984/12/joseph-smith-jr-in-his-own-words-part-1?lang=eng).
18. Palmer, 236–7.
19. “...on November 4, 1833, Joseph dictated a journal entry to Oliver Cowdery, the second elder of the Church...” (ref. [lds.org/ensign/2007/12/the-joseph-smith-journals](http://lds.org/ensign/2007/12/the-joseph-smith-journals)). Also, “Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery were designated by the Lord and sustained by the Church as Apostles of Jesus Christ and as ‘first elder’ and ‘second elder,’ respectively” (ref. [lds.org/ensign/1996/08/the-kingdom-of-god-will-roll-on-succession-in-the-presidency?lang=eng](http://lds.org/ensign/1996/08/the-kingdom-of-god-will-roll-on-succession-in-the-presidency?lang=eng)). Details of Oliver Cowdery’s involvement in the Latter-day Saint movement are also at [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oliver\\_Cowdery](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oliver_Cowdery).
20. See “Changing First Vision Accounts - 1834–35 First Vision Account in Messenger and Advocate” at [mit.irr.org/changing-first-vision-accounts-1834-35-first-vision-account-in-messenger-and-advocate](http://mit.irr.org/changing-first-vision-accounts-1834-35-first-vision-account-in-messenger-and-advocate).

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21. Ezra Benson. “The Greatest Event in History.” *New Era*, April 2004 (ref. [lds.org/new-era/2004/04/the-greatest-event-in-history?lang=eng](http://lds.org/new-era/2004/04/the-greatest-event-in-history?lang=eng)).
22. “Joseph Smith’s Changing First Vision Accounts” by Joel B. Groat (ref. [mit.irr.org/joseph-smiths-changing-first-vision-accounts](http://mit.irr.org/joseph-smiths-changing-first-vision-accounts)).
23. There are more than sixty instances of “greater priesthood” on [lds.org](http://lds.org).
24. *D&C* 84:19–22 (ref. [lds.org/scriptures/dc-testament/dc/84.19-22?lang=eng](http://lds.org/scriptures/dc-testament/dc/84.19-22?lang=eng)).
25. Quinn, 13.
26. Quinn, 14.
27. *Ibid.*
28. *Ibid.*
29. *Ibid.*
30. *Ibid.*
31. *Ibid.*
32. Palmer, 244.
33. *Ibid.*
34. Quinn, 14. Also, see note #135 on page 371 of his *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View*.
35. Quinn, 14–15.
36. Quinn, 15.
37. Quinn, 153.
38. “About Emanuel Swedenborg” (ref. [newchurch.net.au/?page\\_id=50](http://newchurch.net.au/?page_id=50)).
39. Palmer, 245.
40. Palmer, 245–6.
41. Palmer, 248.
42. Palmer, 248, 251.
43. *D&C* 6:6 (ref. [lds.org/scriptures/dc-testament/dc/6.6?lang=eng](http://lds.org/scriptures/dc-testament/dc/6.6?lang=eng)).
44. Todd Christofferson. “Come to Zion.” General Conference, October 2008 (ref. [lds.org/general-conference/2008/10/come-to-zion?lang=eng](http://lds.org/general-conference/2008/10/come-to-zion?lang=eng)).
45. *Ibid.*
46. “The Life and Ministry of Joseph Smith,” *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith*, (2007):xxii–25 (ref. [lds.org/manual/teachings-joseph-smith/the-life-and-ministry-of-joseph-smith?lang=eng](http://lds.org/manual/teachings-joseph-smith/the-life-and-ministry-of-joseph-smith?lang=eng)).
47. Christofferson, “Come to Zion” (see note #44 for the webpage URL).
48. *D&C* 52:42 (ref. [lds.org/scriptures/dc-testament/dc/52.42?lang=eng](http://lds.org/scriptures/dc-testament/dc/52.42?lang=eng)).
49. “Smith and his volunteers left Kirtland on May 4, 1834. By June 4, they had marched across Indiana and Illinois, reaching the Mississippi River, which they crossed, entering Missouri. They crossed most of the state by the end of June, and news of their approach caused some alarm among non-Mormons in Jackson and Clay Counties. Attempts to negotiate a return of the Latter Day Saints to Jackson County proved fruitless, but Smith decided to disband Zion's Camp rather than attempt to ‘redeem Zion’ by force. Many members of the camp believed they should fight and criticized Smith. Much of the camp subsequently became ill with cholera. The two-thousand-mile march failed in its objective. Fourteen participants died.” (Ref. [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zion%27s\\_Camp#The\\_march](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zion%27s_Camp#The_march) – checked on August 28, 2014). Information about Zion’s Camp is also online at [mormonthink.com/glossary/zions-camp.htm](http://mormonthink.com/glossary/zions-camp.htm) and [lds.org/manual/church-history-in-the-fulness-of-times-student-manual/chapter-twelve-zions-camp?lang=eng](http://lds.org/manual/church-history-in-the-fulness-of-times-student-manual/chapter-twelve-zions-camp?lang=eng).
50. Brodie, 160.
51. David Haight. “Hymn of the Obedient: ‘All Is Well.’” General Conference, October 1997 (ref. [lds.org/general-conference/1997/10/hymn-of-the-obedient-all-is-well?lang=eng](http://lds.org/general-conference/1997/10/hymn-of-the-obedient-all-is-well?lang=eng)).

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52. Brodie, 164.
53. Ibid.
54. Brodie, 157.
55. Brodie, 192.
56. Ibid.
57. *D&C 111:2–4* (ref. [lds.org/scriptures/dc-testament/dc/111.2-4?lang=eng](http://lds.org/scriptures/dc-testament/dc/111.2-4?lang=eng)).
58. Brodie, 193.
59. Brodie, 194.
60. Brodie, 188.
61. Jerald and Sandra Tanner. *Mormonism - Shadow or Reality?*, p. 531. Also, see the third paragraph under “Joseph Smith’s Kirtland Bank Failure” on the Tanners’ website at [utlm.org/onlineresources/josephsmithsbank.htm](http://utlm.org/onlineresources/josephsmithsbank.htm).
62. “Throughout history, auditory hallucinations have been construed as evidence of communication with divine powers, although contemporary medical models often view them as undesirable and a sign of mental illness. In psychiatry, auditory hallucinations carry considerable weight in the diagnostic process, so there is a clear need for clinicians to have a greater understanding of the multiple facets of this phenomenon. Auditory hallucinations are false perceptions of sound. They have been described as the experience of internal words or noises that have no real origin in the outside world and are perceived to be separate from the person’s mental processes.” (Ref. [psychiatrytimes.com/schizophrenia/auditory-hallucinations-psychiatric-illness](http://psychiatrytimes.com/schizophrenia/auditory-hallucinations-psychiatric-illness)).
63. Brodie, 194.
64. Information about the Kirtland Safety Society (“bank”) is at [utlm.org/onlineresources/josephsmithsbank.htm](http://utlm.org/onlineresources/josephsmithsbank.htm) and [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kirtland\\_Safety\\_Society](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kirtland_Safety_Society). The LDS apologist view of what happened can be read at [byustudies.byu.edu/PDFLibrary/12.4PartridgeFailure-1518c5ab-4202-41eb-84b4-0cc8fce9fc5e.pdf](http://byustudies.byu.edu/PDFLibrary/12.4PartridgeFailure-1518c5ab-4202-41eb-84b4-0cc8fce9fc5e.pdf).
65. [utlm.org/images/3dollarbill\\_bank.jpg](http://utlm.org/images/3dollarbill_bank.jpg) and [utlm.org/images/3dollarbill\\_antibank.jpg](http://utlm.org/images/3dollarbill_antibank.jpg).
66. Brodie, 194.
67. See “KSS Organization” at [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kirtland\\_Safety\\_Society#KSS\\_organization](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kirtland_Safety_Society#KSS_organization). Checked on August 28, 2014.
68. See note #65.
69. Brodie, 197.
70. Ibid.
71. Ibid.
72. Ibid.
73. Ibid.
74. Robert Kent Fielding. “The Growth of the Mormon Church in Kirtland,” Ohio. Ph.D dissertation, Indiana University, Department of History, 1957:182.
75. Fielding, 182–183.
76. Brodie, 197.
77. Brodie, 197–8.
78. Brodie, 199.
79. Brodie, 201.
80. Ibid.
81. Joseph Smith – discourse given in Kirtland, Ohio on April 6, 1837, as reported in the Latter Day Saints’ *Messenger and Advocate*, April 1837 ed., p. 488 (ref. [josephsmithpapers.org/paperSummary/discourse-6-april-1837?p=2](http://josephsmithpapers.org/paperSummary/discourse-6-april-1837?p=2)).
82. From the Historical Collections of the Harvard Business School: “Historians have traditionally attributed the Panic of 1837 to a real estate bubble and erratic American

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- banking policy... Developments in banking compounded the crisis. The money supply swelled when the Bank of the United States lost its charter and each of the nation's 850 banks could again issue banknotes (a private form of currency) with little restraint. This paper money then depreciated rapidly when President Jackson's Specie Circular of 1836 mandated payment for government land in gold or silver. Ten months later banks refused to redeem their notes in specie, bringing commerce to a standstill." (Ref. [library.hbs.edu/hc/crises/1837.html](http://library.hbs.edu/hc/crises/1837.html)).
83. "The Mormon Pioneer Memorial Monument is dedicated to the more than 6,000 pioneers who died making the journey to Utah from Illinois and other parts of the world between 1847 and 1869." (Ref. [utah.com/mormon/pioneer\\_memorial\\_monument.htm](http://utah.com/mormon/pioneer_memorial_monument.htm)).
  84. See note #62 as well as [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Auditory\\_hallucination](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Auditory_hallucination) (checked on August 29, 2014).
  85. "JOSEPH MENTALLY ILL?" (ref. [utlm.org/newsletters/no90.htm#JOSEPH\\_MENTALLY\\_ILL](http://utlm.org/newsletters/no90.htm#JOSEPH_MENTALLY_ILL)).
  86. Quinn, 108.
  87. Lawrence Foster. "The Psychology of Religious Genius: Joseph Smith and the Origins of New Religious Movements." *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Winter 1993, Vol. 26, No. 4, Winter 1993:10 (ref. [dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/issues/V26N04.pdf](http://dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/issues/V26N04.pdf)).
  88. "Statements by Joseph Smith." (ref. [utlm.org/onlineresources/importanceofjosephsmithinmormonism.htm](http://utlm.org/onlineresources/importanceofjosephsmithinmormonism.htm)).
  89. *History of the Church* 6:408–9 (ref. [byustudies.byu.edu/hc/hcpgs/hc.aspx](http://byustudies.byu.edu/hc/hcpgs/hc.aspx)).
  90. Brodie, 356.
  91. Foster, 11.
  92. Brodie, 362.
  93. [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_people\\_with\\_bipolar\\_disorder](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_people_with_bipolar_disorder) (checked on August 29, 2014).
  94. Lucy Mack Smith, *Biographical Sketches of Joseph Smith the Prophet, and His Progenitors for many Generations*. Liverpool: S. W. Richards, 1853:85. A searchable version is online at [books.google.com/books?id=gWUoAAAAYAAJ](http://books.google.com/books?id=gWUoAAAAYAAJ).

### Chapter 4: The Book of Mormon - Part I: Holding Up the Latter-day Saint Belief Arch

1. Ezra Benson. "The Book of Mormon – Keystone of Our Religion." General Conference, October 1986 (ref. [lds.org/general-conference/1986/10/the-book-of-mormon-keystone-of-our-religion?lang=eng](http://lds.org/general-conference/1986/10/the-book-of-mormon-keystone-of-our-religion?lang=eng)).
2. A digital photograph of the title page of the 1830 edition of the Book of Mormon is online at [inephi.com/1.htm](http://inephi.com/1.htm).
3. On [lds.org](http://lds.org), there are more than one hundred references to Joseph Smith having "translated" the *Book of Mormon* (ref. [lds.org/search?lang=eng&query=joseph+smith+translated+the+book+of+mormon](http://lds.org/search?lang=eng&query=joseph+smith+translated+the+book+of+mormon)).
4. "Gold plates" is mentioned in excess of 530 times and "golden plates" more than 220 times on [lds.org](http://lds.org).
5. [lds.org](http://lds.org) mentions the Jaredites leaving the "Tower of Babel" and arriving "in the Americas about 2200 B.C." Also, the following statement was in the *Ensign* and *Liahona* magazines in September 1984: "The Savior appeared to the earliest Book of Mormon prophet, the brother of Jared, in about 2200 B.C." (Ref. [lds.org/ensign/1984/09/i-have-a-question?lang=eng](http://lds.org/ensign/1984/09/i-have-a-question?lang=eng)). More recently, the October 2011 *Ensign* said: "Jaredites [-] This group left the Tower of Babel and arrived in the Americas about 2200 B.C. They flourished until about 600 B.C., when wars destroyed

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- everyone but Coriantumr.” (Ref. [lds.org/ensign/2011/10/book-of-mormon-timeline?lang=eng](https://www.lds.org/ensign/2011/10/book-of-mormon-timeline?lang=eng)).
6. Smith’s letter to John Wentworth is known in the LDS Church as the “Wentworth Letter.” The full text is online at [lds.org/ensign/2002/07/the-wentworth-letter?lang=eng](https://www.lds.org/ensign/2002/07/the-wentworth-letter?lang=eng).
  7. Ibid.
  8. [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hebrew#Classical\\_Hebrew](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hebrew#Classical_Hebrew) (checked on August 28, 2014).
  9. John C. Bennett. *The History of the Saints: Or, An Exposé of Joe Smith and Mormonism*. Boston, Leland & Whiting, 1842:69 (ref. [books.google.com/books?id=0IY3AAAAMAAJ](https://books.google.com/books?id=0IY3AAAAMAAJ)).
  10. Palmer, 189.
  11. Ibid.
  12. Palmer, 190.
  13. Cameron J. Packer. “Cumorah’s Cave.” *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*: Vol. 13, Issue 1-2, 2004:50–57, 170–71.
  14. “Journal of Discourses” (ref. [lds.org/study/topics/journal-of-discourses?lang=eng](https://www.lds.org/study/topics/journal-of-discourses?lang=eng)).
  15. *JoD* 19:38 (ref. [contentdm.lib.byu.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/JournalOfDiscourses3/id/9597/rec/11](https://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/JournalOfDiscourses3/id/9597/rec/11)).
  16. *JSH* 1:42 (ref. [lds.org/scriptures/pgp/js-h/1.42?lang=eng](https://www.lds.org/scriptures/pgp/js-h/1.42?lang=eng)).
  17. *JSH* 1:50 (ref. [lds.org/scriptures/pgp/js-h/1.50?lang=eng](https://www.lds.org/scriptures/pgp/js-h/1.50?lang=eng)).
  18. *JSH* 1:51–53 (ref. [lds.org/scriptures/pgp/js-h/1.51-53?lang=eng](https://www.lds.org/scriptures/pgp/js-h/1.51-53?lang=eng)).
  19. *JSH* 1:59 (ref. [lds.org/scriptures/pgp/js-h/1.59?lang=eng](https://www.lds.org/scriptures/pgp/js-h/1.59?lang=eng)).
  20. “Chapter 3: The Angel Moroni and the Gold Plates (1823–1827)” (ref. [lds.org/media-library/video/2010-06-04-chapter-3-the-angel-moroni-and-the-gold-plates-1823-1827?lang=eng](https://www.lds.org/media-library/video/2010-06-04-chapter-3-the-angel-moroni-and-the-gold-plates-1823-1827?lang=eng)).
  21. Palmer, 3.
  22. Teenager Lucy Walker was one of several Mormon females pressured by Joseph Smith to secretly marry him. Historian Todd Compton’s book, *In Sacred Loneliness: The Plural Wives of Joseph Smith*, says that thirty-seven year-old Joseph told teenager Lucy that their marriage would have to be secret, but he would acknowledge her as his wife “beyond the Rocky Mountains” (he did not). Lucy revealed: “I afterwards married Joseph as a plural wife and lived and cohabitated with him as such,” implying that their relationship had a sexual component to it. Joseph’s wife, Emma, was ignorant about the union; Lucy recounted that “Emma Smith was not present and she did not consent to the marriage; she did not know anything about it at all.” For more information, see [wivesofjosephsmith.org/23-LucyWalker.htm](https://wivesofjosephsmith.org/23-LucyWalker.htm).
  23. “Lesson 15: The Coming Forth of the Book of Mormon.” *Primary 3: Choose the Right B*, (1994). The lesson is online at [lds.org/manual/primary-3/lesson-15-the-coming-forth-of-the-book-of-mormon?lang=eng](https://www.lds.org/manual/primary-3/lesson-15-the-coming-forth-of-the-book-of-mormon?lang=eng).
  24. *JoD* 19:38 (ref. [contentdm.lib.byu.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/JournalOfDiscourses3/id/9597/rec/11](https://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/JournalOfDiscourses3/id/9597/rec/11)).
  25. “Millennium” (ref. [lds.org/study/topics/millennium?lang=eng](https://www.lds.org/study/topics/millennium?lang=eng)).
  26. “Book of Mormon Timeline” (ref. [lds.org/ensign/2011/10/book-of-mormon-timeline?lang=eng](https://www.lds.org/ensign/2011/10/book-of-mormon-timeline?lang=eng)).
  27. [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tower\\_of\\_Babel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tower_of_Babel) (checked on August 28, 2014).
  28. [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shinar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shinar) (checked on August 28, 2014).
  29. Ether 6:14–16 (ref. [lds.org/scriptures/bofm/ether/6.14-16?lang=eng](https://www.lds.org/scriptures/bofm/ether/6.14-16?lang=eng)).
  30. Ether 2:6 (ref. [lds.org/scriptures/bofm/ether/2.6?lang=eng](https://www.lds.org/scriptures/bofm/ether/2.6?lang=eng)).
  31. Ether 2:16–25 (ref. [lds.org/scriptures/bofm/ether/2.16-25?lang=eng](https://www.lds.org/scriptures/bofm/ether/2.16-25?lang=eng)).
  32. Ether 6:5–8 (ref. [lds.org/scriptures/bofm/ether/6.5-8?lang=eng](https://www.lds.org/scriptures/bofm/ether/6.5-8?lang=eng)).

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33. Ether 6:4 (ref. [lds.org/scriptures/bofm/ether/6.4?lang=eng](http://lds.org/scriptures/bofm/ether/6.4?lang=eng)).
34. Ibid.
35. Ether 2:2–3 (ref. [lds.org/scriptures/bofm/ether/2.2-3?lang=eng](http://lds.org/scriptures/bofm/ether/2.2-3?lang=eng)). Also, see “The Jaredites Leave Babel” (ref. [lds.org/liahona/1990/12/the-jaredites-leave-babel?lang=eng](http://lds.org/liahona/1990/12/the-jaredites-leave-babel?lang=eng)).
36. “Chapter 50: The Jaredites Leave Babel” (ref. [lds.org/media-library/video/2010-12-50-chapter-50-the-jaredites-leave-babel?category=book-of-mormon/book-of-mormon-stories&lang=eng](http://lds.org/media-library/video/2010-12-50-chapter-50-the-jaredites-leave-babel?category=book-of-mormon/book-of-mormon-stories&lang=eng)); “Chapter 51: The Jaredites Travel to the Promised Land” (ref. [lds.org/media-library/video/2010-12-51-chapter-51-the-jaredites-travel-to-the-promised-land?category=book-of-mormon/book-of-mormon-stories&lang=eng](http://lds.org/media-library/video/2010-12-51-chapter-51-the-jaredites-travel-to-the-promised-land?category=book-of-mormon/book-of-mormon-stories&lang=eng)); and “Chapter 52: The Destruction of the Jaredites” (ref. [lds.org/media-library/video/2010-12-52-chapter-52-the-destruction-of-the-jaredites?category=book-of-mormon/book-of-mormon-stories&lang=eng](http://lds.org/media-library/video/2010-12-52-chapter-52-the-destruction-of-the-jaredites?category=book-of-mormon/book-of-mormon-stories&lang=eng)).
37. Keith Meservy. “LORD = Jehovah.” *Ensign*, June 2002 (ref. [lds.org/ensign/2002/06/lord-jehovah?lang=eng](http://lds.org/ensign/2002/06/lord-jehovah?lang=eng)).
38. Russell Nelson. “Jesus the Christ – Our Master and More.” *Liahona*, April 2000 (ref. [lds.org/liahona/2000/04/jesus-the-christ-our-master-and-more?lang=eng](http://lds.org/liahona/2000/04/jesus-the-christ-our-master-and-more?lang=eng)).
39. Ether 2:23 (ref. [lds.org/scriptures/bofm/ether/2.23?lang=eng](http://lds.org/scriptures/bofm/ether/2.23?lang=eng)).
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10. The *Book of Mormon* has four instances of “goat” or “goats” (ref. [lds.org/scriptures/search?lang=eng&type=verse&query=goat&testament=bofm](https://www.lds.org/scriptures/search?lang=eng&type=verse&query=goat&testament=bofm)).
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15. The words “ship,” “ships,” and “shipping” appear, in total, 22 times in the *Book of Mormon* (ref. [lds.org/scriptures/search?lang=eng&type=verse&query=ship&testament=bofm](https://www.lds.org/scriptures/search?lang=eng&type=verse&query=ship&testament=bofm)).
16. “Steel” appears five times in the *Book of Mormon* (ref. [lds.org/scriptures/search?lang=eng&type=verse&query=steel&testament=bofm](https://www.lds.org/scriptures/search?lang=eng&type=verse&query=steel&testament=bofm)).
17. 140 verses in the *Book of Mormon* mention either “sword” or “swords” (ref. [lds.org/scriptures/search?lang=eng&type=verse&query=sword&testament=bofm](https://www.lds.org/scriptures/search?lang=eng&type=verse&query=sword&testament=bofm)).
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21. Four *Book of Mormon* verses mention “silks,” and “silk” is mentioned in one verse (ref. lds.org/scriptures/search?lang=eng&query=silk&testament=bofm).
22. 3 Nephi 14:16 in the *Book of Mormon* mentions “figs” (ref. lds.org/scriptures/bofm/3-ne/14.16?lang=eng).
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29. “Sabbath” is mentioned in five *Book of Mormon* verses (ref. lds.org/scriptures/search?lang=eng&type=verse&query=Sabbath&testament=bofm).
30. 425 verses in the *Book of Mormon* mention either “king” or “kings” (ref. lds.org/scriptures/search?lang=eng&query=king&testament=bofm).
31. Mormon 9:32–34 (ref. lds.org/scriptures/bofm/morm/9.32-34?lang=eng).
32. See the LDS Church’s summary for Mormon 9 at lds.org/scriptures/bofm/morm/9?lang=eng.
33. Jacob 7:27 (ref. lds.org/scriptures/bofm/jacob/7.27?lang=eng).
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68. Bill McKeever and Aaron Shafovaloff. "Fooling the Prophet with the Kinderhook Plates" (ref. [mrm.org/kinderhook-plates](http://mrm.org/kinderhook-plates)).
69. "Joseph Smith and the Kinderhook Plates" (see note #67 for the webpage URL).
70. Stanley Kimball. "Kinderhook Plates Brought to Joseph Smith Appear to Be a Nineteenth-Century Hoax." *Ensign*, August 1981 (ref. [lds.org/ensign/1981/08/kinderhook-plates-brought-to-joseph-smith-appear-to-be-a-nineteenth-century-hoax?lang=eng](http://lds.org/ensign/1981/08/kinderhook-plates-brought-to-joseph-smith-appear-to-be-a-nineteenth-century-hoax?lang=eng)).
71. See note #8 at "Fooling the Prophet with the Kinderhook Plates" by Bill McKeever and Aaron Shafovaloff (ref. [mrm.org/kinderhook-plates](http://mrm.org/kinderhook-plates)).
72. From the article by Stanley Kimball (see note #70) in the August 1981 *Ensign*: "Dr. Johnson used a scanning electron microscope (SEM) to examine the grooves that form[ed] the characters on the plate to determine whether they were cut or scratched with a tool or whether they were etched with acid. A scanning Auger microprobe (SAM) was used to detect any nitrogen residues that might have been left in the grooves as a result of etching with nitric acid. To determine the composition of the metal, an X-ray fluorescence analysis was done on a small amount of material removed from the plate (a destructive test). And finally, an edge of the plate was ground and polished so that the metal could be examined by microscope for impurities and inclusions (also a destructive test)... As a result of these tests, we concluded that the [Kinderhook] plate owned by the Chicago Historical Society is not of ancient origin." (Ref. [lds.org/ensign/1981/08/kinderhook-plates-brought-to-joseph-smith-appear-to-be-a-nineteenth-century-hoax?lang=eng](http://lds.org/ensign/1981/08/kinderhook-plates-brought-to-joseph-smith-appear-to-be-a-nineteenth-century-hoax?lang=eng)).
73. "3,913 Changes in the Book of Mormon" (ref. [utlm.org/onlinebooks/3913intro.htm](http://utlm.org/onlinebooks/3913intro.htm)).
74. David Whitmer. *An Address To All Believers In Christ*. (1887):30-31 (ref. [books.google.com/books/about/An\\_address\\_to\\_all\\_believers\\_in\\_Christ.html?id=wVU3AAAAMAAJ](http://books.google.com/books/about/An_address_to_all_believers_in_Christ.html?id=wVU3AAAAMAAJ)). Also, see "The Canadian Revelation" at [utlm.org/onlinebooks/changech14.htm](http://utlm.org/onlinebooks/changech14.htm) and "Why did Joseph Smith try selling the Book of Mormon copyright?" at [i4m.com/think/history/sell\\_bom\\_copyright.htm](http://i4m.com/think/history/sell_bom_copyright.htm).
75. John Hammond. *The Creation of Mormonism: Joseph Smith Jr. in The 1820s, Volume II*. Bloomington, Indiana: Xlibris Corporation, 2011:199 (ref. [books.google.com/books/about/Volume\\_II\\_the\\_Creation\\_of\\_Mormonism.html?id=cnoeMcEQPzsC&redir\\_esc=y](http://books.google.com/books/about/Volume_II_the_Creation_of_Mormonism.html?id=cnoeMcEQPzsC&redir_esc=y)).

### Chapter 6: Premortal Existence, the Swede's Three Heavens, and Wicked Outer Darkness

1. The first part of Smith's "King Follett" sermon was published in the April 1971 *Ensign* (ref. [lds.org/ensign/1971/04/the-king-follett-sermon?lang=eng](http://lds.org/ensign/1971/04/the-king-follett-sermon?lang=eng)) and the

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- conclusion in the same periodical the following month (ref. [lds.org/ensign/1971/05/the-king-follett-sermon?lang=eng](http://lds.org/ensign/1971/05/the-king-follett-sermon?lang=eng)). Also, see [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/King\\_Follett\\_discourse](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/King_Follett_discourse) (checked on August 28, 2014).
2. Abraham 3:16-19 (ref. [lds.org/scriptures/pgp/abr/3.16-19?lang=eng](http://lds.org/scriptures/pgp/abr/3.16-19?lang=eng)).
  3. Abraham 3:21-23 (ref. [lds.org/scriptures/pgp/abr/3.21-23?lang=eng](http://lds.org/scriptures/pgp/abr/3.21-23?lang=eng)).
  4. See the LDS Church's summary for the Book of Abraham (ref. [lds.org/scriptures/pgp/abr/1?lang=eng](http://lds.org/scriptures/pgp/abr/1?lang=eng)).
  5. Information about Smith's "translation" of the Egyptian papyri that he acquired in 1835 is available in the following sources: 1) Charles Larson's 1992 book, *By His Own Hand Upon Papyrus: A New Look at the Joseph Smith Papyri* (ref. [amazon.com/His-Own-Hand-Upon-Papyrus/dp/0962096326](http://amazon.com/His-Own-Hand-Upon-Papyrus/dp/0962096326)); 2) "Fall of the Book of Abraham" by Sandra and Jerald Tanner at [utlm.org/onlinebooks/changech11a.htm](http://utlm.org/onlinebooks/changech11a.htm); 3) a 56-minute documentary, "The Lost Book of Abraham," at [youtube.com/watch?v=hcyzkd\\_m6KE](http://youtube.com/watch?v=hcyzkd_m6KE); and 4) [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book\\_of\\_Abraham](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Abraham) (checked on August 28, 2014).
  6. "The Plan of Salvation," p. 19 (ref. [lds.org/bc/content/ldsorg/content/english/manual/missionary/pdf/36950\\_the-plan-of-salvation-eng.pdf?lang=eng](http://lds.org/bc/content/ldsorg/content/english/manual/missionary/pdf/36950_the-plan-of-salvation-eng.pdf?lang=eng)).
  7. Ibid.
  8. "The Great Council in Heaven." *Liahona*, April 1984 (ref. [lds.org/liahona/1984/04/the-great-council-in-heaven?lang=eng](http://lds.org/liahona/1984/04/the-great-council-in-heaven?lang=eng)).
  9. Carl Haub. "How Many People Have Ever Lived on Earth?" (ref. [prb.org/Publications/Articles/2002/HowManyPeopleHaveEverLivedonEarth.aspx](http://prb.org/Publications/Articles/2002/HowManyPeopleHaveEverLivedonEarth.aspx)).
  10. Paul Harris. "Population of world 'could grow to 15bn by 2100.'" *The Guardian*, October 22, 2011 (ref. [guardian.co.uk/world/2011/oct/22/population-world-15bn-2100](http://guardian.co.uk/world/2011/oct/22/population-world-15bn-2100)).
  11. From an article by Mormon apostle Joseph Wirthlin, "The Lord's Side," in the March 1993 *Ensign*: "The line between those who are on the Lord's side and those who follow the adversary has been with us from the beginning. Even before the creation of this world, the children of God divided themselves into two groups with different loyalties. One-third of the host of heaven followed Lucifer, separating themselves from the presence of God and from the two-thirds who followed the Son of God. (See *D&C* 29:36–39.) This division has persisted throughout the history of mankind and will continue until the day of judgment when Jesus comes again in His glory." (Ref. [lds.org/ensign/1993/03/the-lords-side?lang=eng](http://lds.org/ensign/1993/03/the-lords-side?lang=eng)).
  12. "Premortal Life" (ref. [lds.org/manual/true-to-the-faith/plan-of-salvation?lang=eng](http://lds.org/manual/true-to-the-faith/plan-of-salvation?lang=eng)).
  13. See "Place No More for the Enemy of My Soul" by LDS apostle Jeffrey Holland (ref. [lds.org/general-conference/2010/04/place-no-more-for-the-enemy-of-my-soul?lang=eng](http://lds.org/general-conference/2010/04/place-no-more-for-the-enemy-of-my-soul?lang=eng)); "Satan—The Great Deceiver" by apostle Marion Romney (ref. [lds.org/general-conference/1971/04/satan-the-great-deceiver?lang=eng](http://lds.org/general-conference/1971/04/satan-the-great-deceiver?lang=eng)); and "Satan's Bag of Snipes" by LDS Presiding Bishopric counselor Richard Edgley (ref. [lds.org/general-conference/2000/10/satans-bag-of-snipes?lang=eng&clang=ase](http://lds.org/general-conference/2000/10/satans-bag-of-snipes?lang=eng&clang=ase)).
  14. Wirthlin, "The Lord's Side." See note #11 for the webpage link.
  15. David Haight. "Spiritual Crevasses." General Conference, October 1986 (ref. [lds.org/general-conference/1986/10/spiritual-crevasses?lang=eng](http://lds.org/general-conference/1986/10/spiritual-crevasses?lang=eng)).
  16. Bruce McConkie. "The Doctrine of the Priesthood." General Conference, April 1982 (ref. [lds.org/general-conference/1982/04/the-doctrine-of-the-priesthood?lang=eng](http://lds.org/general-conference/1982/04/the-doctrine-of-the-priesthood?lang=eng)).
  17. Russell Ballard. "O That Cunning Plan of the Evil One." General Conference, October 2010 (ref. [lds.org/general-conference/2010/10/o-that-cunning-plan-of-the-evil-one?lang=eng](http://lds.org/general-conference/2010/10/o-that-cunning-plan-of-the-evil-one?lang=eng)).

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19. Quentin Cook. "Stewardship—a Sacred Trust." General Conference, October 2009 (ref. [lds.org/general-conference/2009/10/stewardship-a-sacred-trust?lang=eng](http://lds.org/general-conference/2009/10/stewardship-a-sacred-trust?lang=eng)).
20. Mark Petersen. "Race Problems—As They Affect The Church." Address given on August 27, 1954 at the Convention of Teachers of Religion on the College Level, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah (ref. [utlm.org/onlinebooks/curseofcain\\_appendix\\_b.htm](http://utlm.org/onlinebooks/curseofcain_appendix_b.htm)).
21. "Foreordination" (ref. [lds.org/topics/foreordination?lang=eng](http://lds.org/topics/foreordination?lang=eng)).
22. "Lesson 2: 'Thou Wast Chosen Before Thou Wast Born,'" *Old Testament: Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual*, 2001 (ref. [lds.org/manual/old-testament-gospel-doctrine-teachers-manual/lesson-2-thou-wast-chosen-before-thou-wast-born?lang=eng](http://lds.org/manual/old-testament-gospel-doctrine-teachers-manual/lesson-2-thou-wast-chosen-before-thou-wast-born?lang=eng)).
23. Ibid.
24. *The Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson*, 1988:104–5. Refer to the paragraph under "1. Abraham learns that in the premortal life many spirits were foreordained to their mortal missions" at [lds.org/manual/old-testament-gospel-doctrine-teachers-manual/lesson-2-thou-wast-chosen-before-thou-wast-born?lang=eng](http://lds.org/manual/old-testament-gospel-doctrine-teachers-manual/lesson-2-thou-wast-chosen-before-thou-wast-born?lang=eng).
25. Ezra Benson. "In His Steps." *Ensign*, September 1988 (ref. [lds.org/ensign/1988/09/in-his-steps?lang=eng](http://lds.org/ensign/1988/09/in-his-steps?lang=eng)).
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27. "Chapter 3: The Plan of Salvation," *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Fielding Smith*, 2013:58–71 (ref. [lds.org/manual/teachings-of-presidents-of-the-church-joseph-fielding-smith/chapter-3-the-plan-of-salvation?lang=eng](http://lds.org/manual/teachings-of-presidents-of-the-church-joseph-fielding-smith/chapter-3-the-plan-of-salvation?lang=eng)).
28. From author and retired LDS Church Educational System director Grant Palmer's "Three Meetings with a LDS General Authority, 2012-2013": "He [‘a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy’] said that each new member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles is given one million dollars to take care of any financial obligations they have.... He said that it takes about two to three years before the new apostle discovers that the church is not true... He said they [the apostles] privately talk among themselves and know the foundational claims of the restoration are not true, but continue on boldly ‘because the people need it,’ meaning the people need the church... The one million dollar gift, plus their totally obedient attitude makes it easy for them [the apostles] to go along when they find out the church is not true. For these reasons and others, he doesn't expect any apostle to ever expose the truth about the foundational claims." (Ref. [mormonthink.com/grant9.htm](http://mormonthink.com/grant9.htm)).
29. Gordon Hinckley. "Family Home Evening." *Ensign*, March 2003 (ref. [lds.org/ensign/2003/03/family-home-evening?lang=eng](http://lds.org/ensign/2003/03/family-home-evening?lang=eng)).
30. Bruce McConkie. *Mormon Doctrine*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966:708.
31. There 280-plus instances of "work for the dead" on [lds.org](http://lds.org).
32. There are more than 900 instances of "will of the Lord" on [lds.org](http://lds.org).
33. There are in excess of 820 instances of "endure to the end" on [lds.org](http://lds.org).
34. "Purification" and "purified" appear on [lds.org](http://lds.org) more than 310 times in total.
35. "No unclean thing" appears on [lds.org](http://lds.org) at least 230 times.
36. Exaltation: "The highest state of happiness and glory in the celestial kingdom" (ref. [lds.org/scriptures/gs/exaltation.?lang=eng#](http://lds.org/scriptures/gs/exaltation.?lang=eng#)). Also, according to the LDS Church "exaltation" is synonymous to "eternal life." Also, [lds.org](http://lds.org) says: "Eternal life, or exaltation, is to live in God's presence and to continue as families..."

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- However, to inherit eternal life requires our ‘obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel [Mormonism].’” (Ref. [lds.org/topics/eternal-life?lang=eng](https://www.lds.org/topics/eternal-life?lang=eng)).
37. “EXALTATION” (ref. [lds.org/scriptures/gs/exaltation.?lang=eng](https://www.lds.org/scriptures/gs/exaltation.?lang=eng)).
  38. “Death, Physical” (ref. [lds.org/study/topics/death-physical?lang=eng](https://www.lds.org/study/topics/death-physical?lang=eng)).
  39. “Fall of Adam” (ref. [lds.org/study/topics/fall-of-adam?lang=eng](https://www.lds.org/study/topics/fall-of-adam?lang=eng)).
  40. “Chapter 7: Heavenly Father’s Plan,” *Missionary Preparation Student Manual*, 2005 (ref. [lds.org/manual/missionary-preparation-student-manual/chapter-7-heavenly-fathers-plan?lang=eng](https://www.lds.org/manual/missionary-preparation-student-manual/chapter-7-heavenly-fathers-plan?lang=eng)).
  41. “Death” (ref. [lds.org/scriptures/bd/death?lang=eng&letter=d&country=ca](https://www.lds.org/scriptures/bd/death?lang=eng&letter=d&country=ca)).
  42. “What happens to our spirits between death and resurrection? ... They go to either paradise or spirit prison” (ref. [lds.org/manual/book-of-mormon-gospel-doctrine-teachers-manual/lesson-30-the-great-plan-of-happiness?lang=eng](https://www.lds.org/manual/book-of-mormon-gospel-doctrine-teachers-manual/lesson-30-the-great-plan-of-happiness?lang=eng)).
  43. “Chapter 41: The Postmortal Spirit World,” *Gospel Principles*, 2011 (ref. [lds.org/manual/gospel-principles/chapter-41-the-postmortal-spirit-world?lang=eng](https://www.lds.org/manual/gospel-principles/chapter-41-the-postmortal-spirit-world?lang=eng)).
  44. In the *Book of Mormon*, Alma 40:12 says: “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.” (Ref. [lds.org/scriptures/bofm/alma/40.12?lang=eng](https://www.lds.org/scriptures/bofm/alma/40.12?lang=eng)).
  45. “Those in spirit prison have the opportunity to learn the gospel of Jesus Christ, repent of their sins, and receive the ordinances of baptism and confirmation through the work we do in temples.... If they accept the gospel and their temple work has been done, they may enter paradise.” (Ref. [lds.org/topics/paradise?lang=eng](https://www.lds.org/topics/paradise?lang=eng)).
  46. “Chapter 41: The Postmortal Spirit World,” *Gospel Principles*, 2011 (ref. [lds.org/manual/gospel-principles/chapter-41-the-postmortal-spirit-world?lang=eng](https://www.lds.org/manual/gospel-principles/chapter-41-the-postmortal-spirit-world?lang=eng)).
  47. “Resurrection” (ref. [lds.org/topics/resurrection?lang=eng](https://www.lds.org/topics/resurrection?lang=eng)).
  48. Ezra Benson. “Friend to Friend: He Is Risen!” *The Friend*, April 1981 (ref. [lds.org/friend/1981/04/friend-to-friend-he-is-risen?lang=eng](https://www.lds.org/friend/1981/04/friend-to-friend-he-is-risen?lang=eng)).
  49. “Chapter 44: The Second Coming of Jesus Christ,” *Gospel Principles*, 2009 (ref. [lds.org/manual/gospel-principles/chapter-44-the-second-coming-of-jesus-christ?lang=eng](https://www.lds.org/manual/gospel-principles/chapter-44-the-second-coming-of-jesus-christ?lang=eng)).
  50. Robert Woodford. “The Remarkable Doctrine and Covenants.” *Ensign*, January 1997 (ref. [lds.org/ensign/1997/01/the-remarkable-doctrine-and-covenants?lang=eng](https://www.lds.org/ensign/1997/01/the-remarkable-doctrine-and-covenants?lang=eng)).
  51. Russell Nelson. “Protect the Spiritual Power Line.” General Conference, October 1984 (ref. [lds.org/general-conference/1984/10/protect-the-spiritual-power-line?lang=eng](https://www.lds.org/general-conference/1984/10/protect-the-spiritual-power-line?lang=eng)).
  52. “Chapter 44: The Second Coming of Jesus Christ.” *Gospel Principles*, 2011, 257–62 (ref. [lds.org/manual/gospel-principles/chapter-44-the-second-coming-of-jesus-christ?lang=eng](https://www.lds.org/manual/gospel-principles/chapter-44-the-second-coming-of-jesus-christ?lang=eng)).
  53. *The Essential Brigham Young* (Foreword by Eugene E. Campbell). Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1992:99. Also, see Bill McKeever’s “Joseph Smith - ‘President of the Resurrection’” at [mrm.org/president-resurrection](http://mrm.org/president-resurrection).
  54. “Chapter 46: The Final Judgment,” *Gospel Principles*, 2011 (ref. [lds.org/manual/gospel-principles/chapter-46-the-final-judgment?lang=eng](https://www.lds.org/manual/gospel-principles/chapter-46-the-final-judgment?lang=eng)).
  55. Ibid.
  56. Ibid.
  57. Ibid.

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60. *JoD* 5:196 (ref. [contentdm.lib.byu.edu/cdm/ref/collection/JournalOfDiscourses3/id/9601](https://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/cdm/ref/collection/JournalOfDiscourses3/id/9601)).
61. “Kingdoms of Glory” (ref. [lds.org/topics/kingdoms-of-glory?lang=eng](https://www.lds.org/topics/kingdoms-of-glory?lang=eng)).
62. “The Plan of Salvation,” *Liahona*, August 2010 (ref. [lds.org/liahona/2010/08/the-plan-of-salvation?lang=gl&clang=eng](https://www.lds.org/liahona/2010/08/the-plan-of-salvation?lang=gl&clang=eng)).
63. Alma 40:13 (ref. [lds.org/scriptures/bofm/alma/40.13?lang=eng](https://www.lds.org/scriptures/bofm/alma/40.13?lang=eng)).
64. Quinn, 217–8.
65. See the LDS Church’s summary for *D&C* Section 76 (ref. [lds.org/scriptures/dc-testament/dc/76?lang=eng](https://www.lds.org/scriptures/dc-testament/dc/76?lang=eng)).
66. *D&C* 76:24 (ref. [lds.org/scriptures/dc-testament/dc/76.24?lang=eng](https://www.lds.org/scriptures/dc-testament/dc/76.24?lang=eng)).

### Chapter 7: Cain’s Cursed Seed, Sacred Little Factories, and the Bedeviled Missouri River

1. See the results at [lds.org/search?lang=eng&query=seed+of+Cain](https://www.lds.org/search?lang=eng&query=seed+of+Cain) for links to Mormon materials which state that Cain’s progeny were black (Negroes).
2. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 1966 ed.:108–9.
3. Genesis 4:2 (ref. [biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis%204:2&version=NIV](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis%204:2&version=NIV)).
4. Genesis 4:3–4 (ref. [biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis%204:3-4&version=NIV](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis%204:3-4&version=NIV)).
5. Genesis 4:4–5 (ref. [biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis%204:4-5&version=NIV](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis%204:4-5&version=NIV)).
6. Genesis 4:12 (ref. [biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis%204:12&version=NIV](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis%204:12&version=NIV)).
7. Genesis 4:13–14 (ref. [biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis%204:13-14&version=NIV](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis%204:13-14&version=NIV)).
8. Genesis 4:15 (ref. [biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis%204:15&version=NIV](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis%204:15&version=NIV)).
9. Abraham 1:23 (ref. [lds.org/scriptures/pgp/abr/1.23?lang=eng](https://www.lds.org/scriptures/pgp/abr/1.23?lang=eng)).
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12. Genesis 9:18 (ref. [biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis%209:18&version=NIV](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis%209:18&version=NIV)).
13. “Ham” (ref. [lds.org/scriptures/bd/ham](https://www.lds.org/scriptures/bd/ham)).
14. See the second paragraph under “Historical Background” at [lds.org/manual/doctrine-and-covenants-student-manual/section-50-59/section-58-the-land-of-zion?lang=eng](https://www.lds.org/manual/doctrine-and-covenants-student-manual/section-50-59/section-58-the-land-of-zion?lang=eng).
15. See “Early Black Converts” at [utlm.org/onlinebooks/curseofcain\\_part2.htm](https://utlm.org/onlinebooks/curseofcain_part2.htm).
16. “*Selections from the Book of Moses*. An extract from the book of Genesis of Joseph Smith’s translation of the Bible, which he began in June 1830.” (Ref. [lds.org/scriptures/pgp/introduction?lang=eng](https://www.lds.org/scriptures/pgp/introduction?lang=eng)).
17. Quoted from the LDS Church’s summary for Moses 7 (ref. [lds.org/scriptures/pgp/moses/7?lang=eng](https://www.lds.org/scriptures/pgp/moses/7?lang=eng)).
18. “...the Lord showed unto Enoch all the inhabitants of the earth” (Moses 7:21) and “the giants of the land, also, stood afar off” (Moses 7:15). (Ref. [lds.org/scriptures/pgp/moses/7.15-21?lang=eng](https://www.lds.org/scriptures/pgp/moses/7.15-21?lang=eng)).



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19. Moses 7:8 (ref. [lds.org/scriptures/pgp/moses/7.8?lang=eng](https://www.lds.org/scriptures/pgp/moses/7.8?lang=eng)).
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### Chapter 9: Mormon Polygamy: Joseph Smith's Infamous 'Legacy'

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20. In General Conference in April 1977, LDS Church president Spencer Kimball told Latter-day Saints: “Remember what was said a while ago, that ‘As man is, God once was; and as God is, man may become.’” (Ref. [lds.org/general-conference/1977/04/our-great-potential?lang=eng](http://lds.org/general-conference/1977/04/our-great-potential?lang=eng)). A year later, Mormon General Authority (First Quorum of the Seventy member) George Lee told members: “Scriptures, more than anything else, will assist you to overcome the world and enable you to become gods and goddesses, kings and queens in the celestial world.” (Ref. [lds.org/general-conference/1978/04/staying-unspotted-from-the-world?lang=eng](http://lds.org/general-conference/1978/04/staying-unspotted-from-the-world?lang=eng)). Thirty years later, LDS apostle Jeffrey Holland reminded Mormon men to “...think of yourself and of her [each man’s wife] as the god and goddess you both inherently are...” (Ref. [lds.org/general-conference/2007/04/the-tongue-of-angels?lang=eng](http://lds.org/general-conference/2007/04/the-tongue-of-angels?lang=eng).)
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  23. “Discourse by Elder Joseph F. Smith, delivered in the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, Sunday Morning, July 7, 1878.” Reported by Geo. F. Gibbs and later published in the *JoD* 20:28, 31 (see note #21).
  24. *D&C* 132:61–62 (ref. [lds.org/scriptures/dc-testament/dc/132.61-62?lang=eng](http://lds.org/scriptures/dc-testament/dc/132.61-62?lang=eng)).
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  46. Compton, 497–8.
  47. Compton, 498.
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78. A digital scan of the relevant pages (1 and 2) of the Nauvoo Expositor are online at [solomonspalding.com/docs/exposit1.htm](https://solomonspalding.com/docs/exposit1.htm). The newspaper’s text is also online at [en.wikisource.org/wiki/Nauvoo\\_Expositor](https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Nauvoo_Expositor) (checked on August 28, 2014).
79. Ibid.
80. Ibid.
81. Van Wagoner, 69.
82. Ibid.
83. Ibid.
84. Joseph Smith’s Offer of Surrender (Letter to Governor Ford), June 23, 1844 (ref. [law2.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/carthage/smithsurrender.html](https://law2.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/carthage/smithsurrender.html)).
85. Brodie, 393.
86. *D&C* 135:3 (ref. [lds.org/scriptures/dc-testament/dc/135.3?lang=eng](https://lds.org/scriptures/dc-testament/dc/135.3?lang=eng)).
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## Notes and References

### Chapter 10: Get Endowed and Sealed and Work in Mormon Temples for the Dead

1. Information about the number of LDS temples in operation, under construction, and announced is online at [ldschurchtemples.com/temples/](http://ldschurchtemples.com/temples/).
2. Lds.org contains more than 1,600 instances of “house of the lord.”
3. There are dozens of online photos of the exteriors and interiors of Mormon temples. They can be viewed by using the Google search engine for “LDS temples” and clicking on the “Images for lds temples” search result. The same can be done for “lds temples interior pictures.”
4. “Temples” (ref. [lds.org/study/topics/temples?lang=eng](http://lds.org/study/topics/temples?lang=eng)).
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6. [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mormonism\\_and\\_Freemasonry#Similarities\\_in\\_symbology\\_and\\_ritual](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mormonism_and_Freemasonry#Similarities_in_symbology_and_ritual). Checked on August 27, 2014.
7. Terry Chateau. “Mormonism and Freemasonry” (ref. [freemasonry.bcy.ca/history/lds/mormonism.html](http://freemasonry.bcy.ca/history/lds/mormonism.html)).
8. From page 535 of the Tanners’ *The Changing World of Mormonism*: “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...” (ref. [utlm.org/onlinebooks/changech22b.htm#535](http://utlm.org/onlinebooks/changech22b.htm#535)).
9. See “Masonic Ritual in the Temple Ceremony” in the *The Changing World of Mormonism* (ref. [utlm.org/onlinebooks/changech22b.htm#536](http://utlm.org/onlinebooks/changech22b.htm#536)) and Wikipedia’s article, “Mormonism and Freemasonry [-] Similarities in symbology and ritual” (see note #5).
10. There are five instances of “temple ordinances were restored” on lds.org.
11. “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.” (Ref. note #2 at [ldsendowment.org/veil.html](http://ldsendowment.org/veil.html)).
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15. “Chapter 38: Eternal Marriage,” *Gospel Principles*, 2011 (ref. [lds.org/manual/gospel-principles/chapter-38-eternal-marriage?lang=eng](http://lds.org/manual/gospel-principles/chapter-38-eternal-marriage?lang=eng)).
16. Robert Hales. “Blessings of the Temple.” *Ensign*, October 2009 (ref. [lds.org/ensign/2009/10/blessings-of-the-temple?lang=eng](http://lds.org/ensign/2009/10/blessings-of-the-temple?lang=eng)).
17. “Chapter 7: The Immortality of the Soul,” *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: George Albert Smith*, 2010 (ref. [lds.org/manual/teachings-george-albert-smith/chapter-7?lang=eng](http://lds.org/manual/teachings-george-albert-smith/chapter-7?lang=eng)).
18. Kimball, “Our Great Potential” (see note #14 for the webpage URL).
19. “Outer space, or simply space, is the void that exists between celestial bodies, including the Earth. It is not completely empty, but consists of a hard vacuum containing a low density of particles: predominantly a plasma of hydrogen and helium, as well as electro-magnetic radiation, magnetic fields, and neutrinos. Observations have now recently proven that it also contains dark matter and dark energy.” (Ref. [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Outer\\_space](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Outer_space).)
20. *D&C* 131:7–8 (ref. [lds.org/scriptures/dc-testament/dc/131.7-8?lang=eng](http://lds.org/scriptures/dc-testament/dc/131.7-8?lang=eng)).
21. “The LDS Endowment [-] The Creation” (ref. [ldsendowment.org/creation.html](http://ldsendowment.org/creation.html)).



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31. Isaiah 44:8 (ref. [lds.org/scriptures/ot/isa/44.8?lang=eng](http://lds.org/scriptures/ot/isa/44.8?lang=eng)).
32. Alma 11:26–31 (ref. [lds.org/scriptures/bofm/alma/11.26-31?lang=eng](http://lds.org/scriptures/bofm/alma/11.26-31?lang=eng)).
33. Joseph Smith, Jr. The King Follett Sermon. *Ensign*, April 1971 (ref. [lds.org/ensign/1971/04/the-king-follett-sermon](http://lds.org/ensign/1971/04/the-king-follett-sermon)).
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37. See Chapter 22, "Changes in the Temple Ceremony," of the Tanners' *The Changing World of Mormonism* (ref. [utlm.org/onlinebooks/changech22b.htm](http://utlm.org/onlinebooks/changech22b.htm)). Other relevant webpages include "The LDS Endowment" at [ldsendowment.org](http://ldsendowment.org), Wikipedia's "Endowment (Mormonism)" at [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Endowment\\_\(Mormonism\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Endowment_(Mormonism)), and "All About Mormon Temple Worship" at [i4m.com/think/temples/](http://i4m.com/think/temples/).
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39. Ibid.
40. "Lesson 32: Preparing for the Temple Endowment," *Aaronic Priesthood Manual* 3, 1995:131–35 (ref. [lds.org/manual/aaronic-priesthood-manual-3/lesson-32-preparing-for-the-temple-endowment?lang=eng](http://lds.org/manual/aaronic-priesthood-manual-3/lesson-32-preparing-for-the-temple-endowment?lang=eng)).
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45. Examples of news reports: "Child Abuse Cover-Up Costs Mormon Church \$3 Million" (ref. [prnewswire.com/news-releases/child-abuse-cover-up-costs-mormon-church-3-million-71939217.html](http://prnewswire.com/news-releases/child-abuse-cover-up-costs-mormon-church-3-million-71939217.html)); "\$5 Million Sexual Abuse Lawsuit Filed Against Mormon Church in Multnomah County" (ref. [prnewswire.com/news-releases/5-million-sexual-abuse-lawsuit-filed-against-mormon-church-in-multnomah-county-71939217.html](http://prnewswire.com/news-releases/5-million-sexual-abuse-lawsuit-filed-against-mormon-church-in-multnomah-county-71939217.html)).

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46. See “THE GARMENT” (right column) at [ldsendowment.org/parallelinitiaty.html](http://ldsendowment.org/parallelinitiaty.html).
  47. Molly Farmer. “Two Mormon missionaries killed in Texas, third taken to hospital.” *Deseret News*, November 8, 2011 (ref. [deseretnews.com/article/705393985/Two-Mormon-missionaries-killed-in-Texas-third-taken-to-hospital.html?pg=all](http://deseretnews.com/article/705393985/Two-Mormon-missionaries-killed-in-Texas-third-taken-to-hospital.html?pg=all)).
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  49. A search on [lds.org](http://lds.org) reveals multiple instances of “the Lord truly moves in mysterious ways,” “the mysterious ways of God,” and “the Lord works in mysterious ways.”
  50. “The Law of Consecration” (ref. [ldsendowment.org/terrestrial.html](http://ldsendowment.org/terrestrial.html)). Also, the LDS Church has relevant articles and lessons (see the links listed at [lds.org/search?lang=eng&query=law+of+consecration](http://lds.org/search?lang=eng&query=law+of+consecration)).
  51. Ibid.
  52. “Lesson 18: The Lord Reveals the Law of Consecration,” *Primary 5: Doctrine and Covenants: Church History*, 1997 (ref. [lds.org/manual/primary-5-doctrine-and-covenants-and-church-history/lesson-18-the-lord-reveals-the-law-of-consecration?lang=eng](http://lds.org/manual/primary-5-doctrine-and-covenants-and-church-history/lesson-18-the-lord-reveals-the-law-of-consecration?lang=eng)).
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  54. Ibid.
  55. Considering that the LDS Museum possesses twenty Rembrandt Biblical etchings (see [deseretnews.com/article/600133779/Rembrandt-etchings-at-LDS-Museum.html?pg=all](http://deseretnews.com/article/600133779/Rembrandt-etchings-at-LDS-Museum.html?pg=all) for details), and works related to the Bible by the renowned Dutch artist have fetched as much as \$25.8 million for a single piece at auction (see [artbible.info/art/large/738.html](http://artbible.info/art/large/738.html) for more information), it is not unreasonable to conclude that the value of the church’s collection is in the millions of dollars.
  56. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 1966 ed.:114.
  57. Rahul Karmakar. “US Mormon Church ‘baptises’ Mahatma Gandhi, Hindus shocked,” *Hindustan Times*, February 29, 2012 (ref. [hindustantimes.com/india-news/us-mormon-church-baptises-mahatma-gandhi-hindus-shocked/article1-818684.aspx](http://hindustantimes.com/india-news/us-mormon-church-baptises-mahatma-gandhi-hindus-shocked/article1-818684.aspx)).
  58. Ibid.
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  61. Peter Wallsten and Jason Horowitz. “Elie Wiesel calls on Mitt Romney to make Mormon Church stop proxy baptisms of Jews.” *Washington Post*, February 14, 2012 (ref. [washingtonpost.com/politics/elie-wiesel-calls-on-mitt-romney-to-make-mormon-church-stop-proxy-baptisms-of-jews/2012/02/14/gIQAZK6bER\\_story.html](http://washingtonpost.com/politics/elie-wiesel-calls-on-mitt-romney-to-make-mormon-church-stop-proxy-baptisms-of-jews/2012/02/14/gIQAZK6bER_story.html)).
  62. [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oath\\_of\\_vengeance](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oath_of_vengeance). Checked on August 27, 2014. Also, from Jerald and Sandra Tanners’ comprehensive *The Changing World of Mormonism*: “Some Mormon apologists have maintained that there was no ‘oath of vengeance’ in the temple ceremony, but the ‘Daily Journal of Abraham H. Cannon’ makes it very plain that there was such an oath. Under the date of December 6, 1889, Apostle Cannon recorded the following in his diary: “About 4:30 p.m. this meeting adjourned and was followed by a meeting of Presidents

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- Woodruff, Cannon and Smith and Bros. Lyman and Grant... In speaking of the recent examination before Judge Anderson[,] Father said that he understood 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,' December 6, 1889, pp. 205-206)." (Ref. utlm.org/onlinebooks/changech22b.htm#532).
63. Heber C. Kimball's Journal, December 21, 1845 (ref. utlm.org/newsletters/no48.htm).
  64. ldsendowment.org/timeline.html.
  65. senate.gov/artandhistory/history/common/briefing/Oath\_Office.htm.
  66. Quoted from the Introduction of *The Politics of American Religious Identity: The Seating of Senator Reed Smoot, Mormon Apostle* by Dr. Kathleen Flake (ref. uncpress.unc.edu/browse/page/336).

### Chapter 11: The Psychological Effects of Cultic Mormonism: Reinforcing the LDS Fraud

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2. Mitchell Zuckoff. "Charities: the foundation of Madoff's scheme?" *CNN Money*, January 5, 2009 (ref. money.cnn.com/2008/12/29/news/newsmakers/zuckoff\_madoff.fortune/).
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5. "To the Point," *New Era*, July 2012 (ref. lds.org/new-era/print/2012/07/to-the-point?lang=ita&clang=eng).
6. See familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.2.1/SP82-WTV for details.
7. "Official Declaration 1" (ref. lds.org/scriptures/dc-testament/od/1).
8. Jerald and Sandra Tanner wrote in their illuminating volume, *The Changing World of Mormonism*: "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. Stanley S. Ivins, the son of Anthony W. Ivins, told us that his father received instructions after the Manifesto to perform marriages for time and all eternity outside 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 alright to perform the ceremony. He performed regular marriages as well as plural marriages and kept a record of each marriage in a book. 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." (Ref. utlm.org/onlinebooks/changech9c.htm#274).
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### Chapter 12: Raking in Billions: The Mormon Scam and Corporate Empire

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