

Challenging the Cults

8. Answering Mormons



The Egyptian Papyri scroll Joseph Smith claimed authored by Abraham, and translated in English by Smith into the Book of Abraham, in the Pearl of Great.

The first “Prophet” of the Mormons is Joseph Smith. From a few followers after the publication of the *Book of Mormon*, the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints has grown to over 12 million with the latest statistics. They are sending thousands of missionaries to reach the “Christian” world with the “Restored” Gospel revealed in the “Book of Mormon”.

How should Christians respond to Mormons and their LDS missionaries? First, many of these LDS missionaries have never had a chance to examine their beliefs in the LDS church or Joseph Smith. Most are raised in the Mormon faith going back for generations, with everybody around them involved in the LDS church. Secondly, people who convert to Mormonism are largely from nominal Christian, or un-churched households looking for hope. Since Mormons are not permitted to read material critical of the Mormon beliefs, the LDS church or Joseph Smith, we can expose the “Truth”.

Born-Again Christians, who know their Bible and love the lost, have an opportunity to show seeking Mormons the “True” Gospel of Christ. However, the most effective way to reaching Mormon’s is not by debating Bible verses and doctrines, since many Mormon’s see the Bible as a corrupted book, with its true message restored by Joseph Smith Jr., “The Prophet”.

The Real Question

Is Joseph Smith God’s Prophet? This is the real question, to address when meeting Mormons. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (LDS) and the Reorganized Church of Latter Day Saints (RLDS) rests and falls on Joseph Smith’s identity as “Prophet”. Time should not be spent discussing peripheral issues such as polygamy, baptizing the dead and exchanging Bible verses, Mormon missionaries are trained to deal on this level. Missionaries are not trained, to deal with the real issue of Joseph Smith and his prophet status commenting on this point, Reed and Farkas write,

Disputing with a well-versed Mormon over questions of deity, theology, and the afterlife can be like the archers and spearmen exchanging shots with those on the wall. But attacking the LDS Church itself, destroying its credibility by exposing its long history of error—this is akin to undermining the wall and causing it to topple over. When LDS Church authority falls, so do all teachings and doctrines that depend on it for support.¹

In the Doctrine and Covenants Joseph Smith Jr., claims the significance of his revelations, given to him by the Lord. Since, he claims the office of Prophet, and foundation to the only “True” Church, Christians should not be shy about challenging his claim and the LDS Church’s claim.

Wherefore, I the Lord, knowing the calamity which should come upon the inhabitants of the earth, called upon my servant Joseph Smith, Jr. and spake unto him from heaven, and gave him commandments....And having received the record of the Nephites, yea, even my servant Joseph Smith, Jun., might have power to translate through the mercy of God, by the power of God, the Book of Mormon.....to lay the foundation of this church, and bring it forth out of obscurity...the only true and living church upon the face of the whole earth, with which I, the Lord, am well pleased... *Doctrine and Covenants 1:17,29,30*

¹ Reed, Farkas, *How to Rescue Your Loved One from Mormonism*, Baker Publishing, 1994, pg. 33, Farkas was converted to Mormonism and later became a Born-Again believer, Reed was a Jehovah Witness who also found became a believer in the Biblical Jesus.

An Apostle to the Mormon Church, Joseph Fielding Smith, commenting on the Joseph Smith Jr., claims and revelations writes.,

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, for the doctrines of an impostor cannot be made to harmonize in all particulars with divine truth.²

Joseph Smith Jr., claim of prophet, and his restoration of the only “True” church put the onerous on Christians to examine and refute his claims and statements in light of the scripture. If Joseph is a prophet we should accept his prophet status but if he is not a prophet, he should be exposed and those entrapped rescued.

The Test of a Prophet.

The book of Deuteronomy provides a test for those who claim to speak for Lord. Joseph Smith Jr., clearly falls under this test. By his own words, the Lord has set him apart to deliver a message to an apostate world. We must then ask the question, is he a prophet of the Lord?

20 'But the prophet who presumes to speak a word in My name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or who speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die.'

21 "And if you say in your heart, 'How shall we know the word which the Lord has not spoken?'

22 when a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the thing does not happen or come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him.
Deuteronomy 18:20-21

- Two reasons for the death of a false prophet
 1. Speaks in the name of other gods
 2. Presumes to speak a word in “My name”, which I have not commanded

- If the word does not come to pass...the Lord has not spoken it.

To testing Joseph Smith, there are several aspects of his revelations can be examined. The LDS Church recognizes *The Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants* and *Pearl of Great Price* as revealed scripture. The Reorganized LDS church accepts only the Book of Mormon. The LDS church also recognizes the continuation of the prophetic mantle on Joseph Smith Jr., successors, including Brigham Young and succeeding presidents of the LDS. The Bible is recognized as God’s word, but with the caveat, “*As far as it is translated correctly*”³, which de-facto subordinates it to other Mormon scripture with no translation questions.

A Survey of Mormon Scripture

The Book of Mormon: (BOK)

The BOK claims to be the translation of Golden-tablets left behind on the Hill Cumorah in Palmyra, New York. The Gold-tablets were placed in a stone vault by Moroni, son of Mormon. Mormon was the father of the resurrected Moroni, who placed the gold-tablets in the stone vault. Mormon before he died, wrote on Gold-tablets the writings of the earlier prophets, Nephi, Jacob, Enos etc.,. Their writings record the departure of righteous Jews from in Jerusalem 600 BC and their arrival in the Americas. These Jews divide into two camps the righteous Nephites and the wicked Lamanites, after his resurrection in Jerusalem, Jesus goes to America to deliver the Gospel to the descendents of Israel, the Nepites. The Lamanites (forefathers to the Indians) who have dark skin⁴ and the Nephites have a final battle in A.D. 421 near the Hill Cumorah. The righteous are killed off in the battle, the last remaining descendent Mormon, Moroni buries the Gold-tablets of his father Mormon in the Hill Cumorah, latter recovered by Joseph Smith Jr.

The resurrected Moroni, appearing as an angel, takes Joseph Smith to the site in 1823 but does not allow him to remove the tablets till 1827. Along with the “Plates” Smith receives the Urim and Thummim two stones set in silver bowls, like eyeglasses which allows him to translate “Reformed Egyptian”.

² Doctrines of Salvation, Apostle Joseph Fielding Smith, Vol. 1, 1954, p. 188

³ Articles of the Faith, Verse 8, History of the Church, Vol. 4, pp. 535-541

⁴ A common saying within Mormonism was “Whitesome and delightsome” meaning the lighter the skin the more valiant and righteous was the soul before being birthed into the world. (See 2 Nephi 5:21). In the 1981 edition the word white was changed to pure.

Doctrine and Covenants

Joseph Smith's first sixty-five "Revelations" were published as the Book of Commandments for the Government of the Church of Christ in 1833 this was revised in 1835 as the Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of Latter Day Saints. The 1981 edition included prophecies by Brigham Young Section 136 and Joseph F. Smith on October, 1918. The Doctrine and Covenants (DC) also includes two "Official Declarations", one removing Polygamy as a church teaching by Wilford Woodruff in October 1890, and one allowing black males to enter the LDS Priesthood.

Pearl of Great Price

The Pearl of Great Price is about sixty pages long, and includes the *Book of Moses*, *Book of Abraham*, and portions of Smith's revision of Matthew's Gospel, Joseph Smith account of the Gold-Tablets and a brief Mormon *Articles of Faith*.

Another Gospel?

One question that should be asked is the "Gospel" of Mormonism different from the Gospel of the Bible? Paul explains that the Gospel he taught was revealed by Jesus Christ to Paul.

12 For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ.
Galatians 1:12

Therefore, Paul warns the Church in Galatia to be ware of those who are trying to "Pervert" the Gospel that was revealed. He specifically warns the Church, that if an "Angel" from Heaven preach another Gospel⁵ let him be accursed.

6 I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel,
7 which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ.
8 But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed.
9 As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed. *Galatians 1:6-9*

So is the message of Mormon "Another Gospel"? The "Book of Mormon" clearly proclaims its distinction from the message and church prior to its revelation.

Wherefore, I the Lord, knowing the calamity which should come upon the inhabitants of the earth, called upon my servant Joseph Smith, Jr. and spake unto him from heaven, and gave him commandments....And having received the record of the Nephites, yea, even my servant Joseph Smith, Jun., might have power to translate through the mercy of God, by the power of God, the Book of Mormon.....to lay the foundation of this church, and bring it forth out of obscurity...the only true and living church upon the face of the whole earth, with which I, the Lord, am well pleased... *Doctrine and Covenants 1:17,29,30*

The *Book of Mormon* and *Joseph Smith Jr.*, is the foundation of this "Only true and living Church" in contrast to the Church built on the foundations of the Scriptures and prophets.

According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it.

For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.
1 Corinthians 3:10-11

having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord,
Ephesians 2:20-21

⁵ εὐαγγέλιον *Euaggelion* (yoo-ang-ghel'-ee-on); Word Origin: Greek, Noun Neuter, Strong #: 2098
good news, glad tidings.

The Book of Mormon commenting on the Bible makes the following statement, regarding it being the only scripture and Jews being the source of that Scripture.

Thou fool, that shall say: A Bible, we have got a Bible, and we need no more Bible. Have ye obtained a Bible save it were by the Jews? Know ye not that there are more nations than one? 2 Nephi 29:6-7

Based on the words of the "Book of Mormon" and the "Doctrine and Covenants" Mormonism is another Gospel, from what Paul delivered to the Church of Galatia, built on the foundation of the Apostles and Jesus Christ.

Is the Jesus of Bible and the Mormon Jesus the same person?

 <p>The Jesus of Mormonism</p>	 <p>The Jesus of the Bible</p>
<p>God the Father of the Mormon Jesus was once a man before he was god with a god over him.</p> <p>4. "God exists and we had better strive to be prepared to be one with them" (Brigham Young, Journal of Discourses 7:238)</p> <p>5. "As man is, God once was: <u>as God is, man may become</u>" (Prophet Lorenzo Snow, quoted in Milton R. Hunter, <i>The Gospel Through the Ages</i>, 105-106)</p> <p>6. Remember that God, <u>our heavenly Father, was perhaps once a child, and mortal like we ourselves</u>, and rose step by step in the scale of progress, in the school of advancement; has moved forward and overcome, until He has arrived at the point where He now is" (Apostle Orson Hyde, <i>Journal of Discourses</i>, 1:123)</p>	<p>The Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit is the One and "Only" God.</p> <p>For thus says the Lord, Who created the heavens, Who is God, Who formed the earth and made it, Who has established it, Who did not create it in vain, Who formed it to be inhabited: "I am the Lord, and there is <u>no other</u>." Isaiah 45:18</p> <p>8 Do not fear, nor be afraid; Have I not told you from that time, and declared it? You are My witnesses, <u>Is there a God besides Me? Indeed there is no other</u> Rock; I know not one." Isaiah 44:8</p>
<p>The Mormon Jesus is a god, one of many</p> <p>This Jesus became a God through his obedience and consistent effort in his pre-existent state.</p> <p>(See <i>The Gospel Through The Ages</i>, page 51 by M. R. Hunter.) He became a son of God just as our children are sons. (See <i>Doctrines of Salvation</i>, Vol. 1, page 12 by J. F. Smith.)</p>	<p>Jesus of the Bible is God incarnate</p> <p>The Jesus of the Bible is absolute and eternal Deity.</p> <p>Scripture reveals this in John 1:1, Romans 9:5, Titus 2:13 and Hebrews 1:8. He was and is eternally God the Son. His eternal Sonship is presented biblically in John 1:18, Colossians 1:12-19, Hebrews 1:8 and Psalm 2:7.</p>
<p>The Mormon Jesus is the result of a sexual act</p> <p>The Jesus of Mormonism was conceived by sexual union between the Mormon god and Mary who was a bigamist. She was married to Joseph and to God who is believed to be</p>	<p>The Biblical Jesus was virgin born</p> <p>The Biblical Jesus was virgin born as a result of the Holy Spirit.</p>

an exalted man and with whom she entered into sexual union resulting in the physical body of Jesus.

When the Virgin Mary conceived the child Jesus, the Father had begotten him in his own likeness. He was not begotten by the Holy Ghost. And who was the Father? He is the first of the human family; and when he took a tabernacle (Body), it was begotten by his Father in heaven, after the same manner as the tabernacles of Cain, Abel and the rest of the sons and daughters of Adam and Eve; from the fruits of the earth, the first earthly tabernacles were originated by the Father and son in succession.....Jesus, our elder brother, was begotten in the flesh by the same character that was in the garden of Eden, and who is our Father in Heaven"
(Journal of Discourses, 1:50-51)

(Isaiah 7:14, Matt. 1:23-25). The Holy Spirit was the source of Mary's pregnancy, "...she was found with child of ("ek" = shows source of cause) the Holy Ghost" (Matt. 1:18). In Matthew 1:20 we learn that Joseph was informed that Mary's child was conceived of "the Holy Ghost." The true Jesus was born of a virgin (Gal. 4:4).

The Mormon Jesus is the brother of Lucifer another son of the Mormon god

Mormon theology presents its Jesus as a brother to Lucifer, the devil who wanted to be the saviour of the world. (See *The Gospel Through the Ages*, page 15, by M. R. Hunter.)

And the Lord God, spake unto Moses, saying; That Satan, whom thou has commanded...came before me, saying—Behold, here am I, send me, I will be thy son, and I will redeem all mankind surely I will do it; wherefore give me thine honor.
But, behold, my Beloved Son which was my Beloved and Chosen from the beginning, said unto me—Father, thy will be done, and the glory be thine forever. Pearl of Great Price, Moses 4:1-2

The Biblical Jesus is the "Only" Begotten Son

The Jesus of the Bible is the only begotten (only, unique) Son, as God reveals in John 3:16. That Jesus is "Son" does not biblically show chronology, rather it reveals relationship.

The Mormon Jesus needs to be saved

The Mormon Jesus once needed to be saved himself. (See *Deseret News*, April 11, 1857 and *Mormon Doctrine*, page 257.)

The Biblical Jesus is needed for Salvation

The real Jesus is the Saviour in whom there never was any sin or personal need (1 John 3:5). Deity is utterly and eternally without sin. (See Heb. 1:12, 13, Isa. 6:15, 1 John 1:5.)

The Mormon Jesus was married in Cana to three women

The Jesus taught by Mormonism was a polygamist. (See *Journal of Discourses*, Vol. II, page 269.)

Jesus also married Mary and Martha and the other Mary at Cana of Galilee, "Whereby he could see his seed, before he was crucified" (Apostle Orson Hyde, *Journal of Discourses*, 4:259; 2:82)

The Biblical Jesus was a guest at Cana

The Jesus of history was never married. He was a guest at the wedding of Cana. He came to be a sacrifice, not to be a husband and/or to become a father.

<p>The Mormon Jesus killed</p> <p>The Mormon Jesus threw temper tantrums destroying whole cities, killing innocent women and children and sparing the guilty. (See <i>The Book of Mormon</i>, 3 Nephi 8 & 9.)</p>	<p>The Biblical Jesus was killed</p> <p>The Jesus of the Bible was the Lamb of God (John 1:29) who came to forgive sin (Mark 2:5) and to provide rest (Matt. 11:28). He is meek and lowly in heart (Matt. 11:29).</p>
<p>The Mormon Jesus does not have a personal relationship</p> <p>The Jesus of Mormonism does not have a personal relationship with us. Mormonism refers to this as "false and vain", "perilous", "improper" and part of "Lucifer's system." (See <i>Deseret News</i>, Church News Section, page 5, March 5, 1982 by Elder Bruce McConkie.)</p>	<p>The Biblical Jesus wants a relationship with us</p> <p>The authentic Jesus is one that we can know personally as Saviour. Jesus said, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice and open the door I will come in to him and sup with him and he with me" (Rev. 3:20).</p>
<p>The Mormon Jesus needed help in creation</p> <p>The Mormon "Jesus" was helped in his work of creation by Joseph Smith, Adam and many others including Noah. (See <i>Mormon Doctrine</i>, page 169, by Elder Bruce McConkie.)</p>	<p>The Jesus of the Bible is the true creator of all things -- all that ever was created was His work; He needed no assistance from Joseph Smith or anyone else. (See Colossians 1:16, 17.)</p>
<p>The Mormon Jesus is the son Adam, who was God the Father.</p> <p>The Mormon writings reveal their "Jesus" as one who "was begotten in the flesh by the same character that was in the Garden of Eden, and who is our Father in heaven." (<i>Journal of Discourses</i>, Vol. 1, pp. 50-51) Early Mormon leadership taught Adam was God, even though current writers deny it.</p>	<p>The biblical Jesus was Eternal God who partook of humanity</p> <p>(Hebrews 2:14). His incarnation was the work of the Godhead (Hebrews 10:5, Luke 1:35).</p>
<p>The Mormon Jesus is a different Jesus</p> <p>Mormon leaders have admitted that they believe in another Jesus, not the One of historic, biblical Christianity. (See <i>Ensign</i>, May, 1977, page 26.)</p>	<p>The Biblical Jesus is the only Jesus</p> <p>He warned of false Christ, and false prophets. Matthew 24 There really is only one true Jesus. False apostles and deceitful workers consistently propagate a false Jesus. (See 2 Corinthians 11:13-15.)</p>

The characteristics of the Mormon Jesus clearly differ from the Biblical Jesus. A different Jesus means a "Different" Gospel. Jesus warned about the coming of False "Christs" who would deceive many. He gave us tests to examine the claims of the "False Christs" and "False Prophets".

23 "Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'There!' do not believe it.

24 "For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.

25 "See, I have told you beforehand.

26 "Therefore if they say to you, 'Look, He is in the desert!' do not go out; or 'Look, He is in the inner rooms!' do not believe it. *Matthew 24:23-26*

By Joseph Smith's Jr., own testimony a "Christ" appeared to him in Palmyra, New York while he separated himself for prayer.

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!
Joseph Smith—History 1:17

Further, the premise of the "Book of Mormon" is exactly what Jesus warned about, listening to another "Christ" who would appear in the future. The Book of Mormon teaches that Jesus came to America after his resurrection and proclaimed another Gospel. Jesus warned about the "False Christ" saying "Look, He is in the desert" or "Look, He is in the inner rooms!". Jesus said do not "Believe it".

Was Joseph Smith Jr., a False Prophet?

The test of a prophet in Deuteronomy 18:22 stats the following

when a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the thing does not happen or come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him.

If what the "Prophet" who speaks in the "Name of the Lord" does not take place we are told there should be no fear of the person who claims to be "prophet". Did Joseph Smith speak in the name of Lord about specific future events that did not take place according to his word?

Joseph Smith Jr., throughout the book of The Doctrine and Covenants makes prophetic utterances claiming to speak for the "Lord" in first person. Secondly, Joseph is called "The Prophet" at the top of Section headings in the Doctrine and Covenants.

1. The New Jerusalem to be built in Jackson County, Missouri in Joseph Smith Jr. generation.

Joseph clearly declared in the (DC) in 1832, the New Jerusalem was to be constructed and completed in the Western Boundaries of the State of Missouri, (Jackson County) in his lifetime.

Which city shall be built, beginning at the temple lot, which is appointed by the finger of the Lord, in the western boundaries of the State of Missouri, and dedicated by the hand of Joseph Smith, Jun., and others with whom the Lord was well pleased.
Verily this is the word of the Lord, that the city New Jerusalem shall be built by the gathering of the saints, beginning at this place, even the place of the temple, which temple shall be reared in this generation.
For verily this generation shall not all pass away until an house shall be built unto the Lord, and a cloud shall rest upon it, which cloud shall be even the glory of the Lord, which shall fill the house.
Doctrine and Covenants 84:3-5

The Mormon Apostle Orson Pratt understood completely the meaning of this event happening in his lifetime, writing Forty years after the event foretold by Joseph Smith Jr., he looks for the soon coming of the Lord.

I hope this, because God promised in the year 1832 that we should, before the generation then living had passed away, return and build up the City of Zion in Jackson County; that we should return and build the temple of the Most High where we formerly laid the corner stone....The Latter-day Saints just as much expect to receive a fulfillment of that promise during the generation that was in existence in 1832 as they expect that the sun will rise and set tomorrow. Why? Because God cannot lie. He will fulfill all His promises. He has spoken, it must come to pass.
Journal of Discourses., May 5, 1870, Orson Pratt, Vol. 13, p. 362

Over 170 years later this prophecy still has not been fulfilled. At the time of its writing Joseph Smith Jr., was headquartered in Kirtland Ohio, but would die 12 years later in a jailhouse in Carthage Illinois.

2. The Mission of David W. Patten.

In section 114:1 of the Doctrine and Covenants written in April 17, 1838 we read,

Verily thus saith the Lord; it is wisdom in my servant David W. Patten, that he settle up all his business as soon as he possibly can and make a disposition of his merchandise, that he may perform a mission unto me next spring, in company with others, even twelve including himself, to testify of my name and bear glad tidings unto all the world.

Was David W. Patten able to go on his mission? No, he died in October, 1838 in a gun battle, six months after the prophecy was declared. A dead David W. Patten could not perform his mission as prophesied by the "Prophet".

Are parts of the Book of Mormon borrowed from King James Bible?

Thousand of words in the Book of Mormon can be found in the King James Bible. There are verbatim quotations in the Book of Mormon from the King James Bible, in addition to many verses peppered throughout the BOM.

KJV verses found in the Book of Mormon

Book of Mormon	Bible
Moroni 10	I Corinthians 12:1-11
2 Nephi 14	Isaiah 4
2 Nephi 12	Isaiah 2
Mosiah 14	Isaiah 53
3 Nephi 13	Matthew 6
3 Nephi 11:27	I John 5:7 ⁶

Are there Changes in the Book of Mormon?

The Book of Mormon was published for the first time in 1830, the direct result of a translation process guided by the "Holy Spirit", translating the "Word of God" from the "Golden-plates". If the Book of Mormon is the Word of God as it proclaims can it be changed in 150 years, from its "Holy Ghost" inspired revelation to Joseph Smith Jr., If this is the case this leads to several questions,

- Which version is the "Word of God"?
- Who changed the words God, men or God?
- If it was changed, was it really the "Word of God" to begin with?

	1830 Edition of the Book of Mormon	1981 Edition of the Book of Mormon
1 Nephi 11:18	"And he said unto me, Behold, the virgin which thou seest, is the mother of [. . .] God, after the manner of the flesh	"And he said unto me: Behold, the virgin whom thou seest is the mother of the Son of God , after the manner of the flesh."
1 Nephi 11:21	"And the angel said unto me, behold the Lamb of God, yea, even the [. . .] Eternal Father!..."	"And the angel said unto me: Behold the Lamb of God, yea, even the Son of the Eternal Father! ..."
1 Nephi 11:32	"...And I looked and beheld the Lamb of God, that he was taken by the people; yea, [. . .] the Everlasting God, was judged of the world..."	"...And I looked and beheld the Lamb of God, that he was taken by the people; yea, the Son of the everlasting God was

⁶ I John 5:7 is only found in the King James Bible and is based mainly on manuscripts dated later than the 16th century.

		judged of the world..."
1 Nephi 13:40	"...and shall make known to all kindreds, tongues, and people, that the Lamb of God is [. . . .] the Eternal Father and the Savior of the world..."	"...and shall make known to all kindreds, tongues, and people that the Lamb of God is the Son of the Eternal Father, and the Savior of the World..."
1 Nephi 19:20	"...for had not the Lord been merciful, to shew unto me concerning them, even as he had prophets of old; [. . . .] for he surely..."	"...for had not the Lord been merciful, to show unto me concerning them, even as he had prophets of old, I should have perished also. "
1 Nephi 20:1 changed in 1964 ed.	"Hearken and hear this, O house of Jacob, which are called by the name of Israel, and are come forth out of the waters of Judah, [. . . .] which swear..."	"Hearken and hear this, O house of Jacob, who are called by the name of Israel, and are come forth out of the waters of Judah, or out of the waters of baptism , who swear..."
Mosiah 21:28 changed in 1964 ed.	"...king Benjamin had a gift from God, whereby he could interpret such engravings;..."	"...king Mosiah had a gift from God, whereby he could interpret such engravings;..."
Alma 29:4	"...yea, I know that he allotteth unto men, yea, decreeth unto them decrees which are unalterable , according to their wills..."	"...yea, I know that he allotteth unto men [. . . .] according to their wills..."
Alma 46:40	"...because of the excellent qualities of the many plants and roots which God had prepared, to remove the cause of diseases which was subsequent to man by the nature of the climate."	"...because of the excellent qualities of the many plants and roots which God had prepared to removed the cause of diseases, to which men were subject by the nature of the climate."
3 Nephi 3:23	"And the land which was appointed was the land of Zarahemla, and the land which was between the land of Zarahemla and the land Bountiful."	"And the land which was appointed was the land of Zarahemla [. . . .] and the land Bountiful..."
3 Nephi 10:4	"O ye people of these great cities which have fallen which are a descendant of Jacob; yea which are of the house of Israel; O ye people of the house of Israel , how oft have I gathered you..."	"O ye people of these great cities which have fallen, who are descendants of Jacob, yea, who are of the house of Israel, [. . . .] how oft have I gathered

		you..."
3 Nephi 16:10	"and thus commandeth the Father that I should say unto you at that day, When the Gentiles shall sin against my Gospel, and shall subject the fulness of my Gospel , and shall be lifted up..."	"And thus commandeth the Father that I should say unto you: At that day when the Gentiles shall sin against my gospel,[. . . .] and shall be lifted up..."
3 Nephi 22:4	"...for thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth, [. . . .] and shalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more."	"...for thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth, and shalt not remember the reproach of thy youth , and shalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more."
Ether 9:2	"...nevertheless, the Lord was merciful unto Omer, and also to his sons and to his daughters, which were not, or which did not seek his destruction."	"Nevertheless, the Lord was merciful unto Omer, and also to his sons, and to his daughters [. . . .] who did not seek his destruction."

Fall of the Book of Abraham⁷



According to Mormon writers, the "Book of Abraham" was supposed to have been written on papyrus by Abraham about 4,000 years ago. This very same papyrus, it is claimed, was acquired by Joseph Smith in 1835. Smith translated the papyrus and published it under the title, "The Book of Abraham." It was accepted by the Mormon Church as Scripture and is now published as part of the *Pearl of Great Price* - one of the four standard works of the church.

For many years Joseph Smith's collection of papyri was lost, but on Nov. 27, 1967, the Mormon-owned *Deseret News* announced that the "collection of pa[p]yrus manuscripts, long believed to have been destroyed in the Chicago fire of 1871, was presented to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints here Monday by the Metropolitan Museum of Art."

The importance of this find cannot be overemphasized, for now Joseph Smith's ability as a translator of ancient Egyptian writing can be put to an absolute test. When the papyri were located many members of the church felt that Joseph Smith's work would be vindicated. As it turned out, however, within six months from the time the Metropolitan Museum gave the papyri to the church, the Book of Abraham had been proven untrue! The fall of the Book of

⁷ The Mission, <http://www.utlm.org/onlineresources/fallofbookabraham.htm>

Abraham was brought about by the identification of the actual fragment of papyrus from which Joseph Smith "translated" the Book of Abraham. This was made possible by comparing it with the handwritten manuscripts. Dr. James R Clark, of Brigham Young University, gave this information: "...there are in existence today in the Church Historian's Office what seem to be two separate **manuscripts of Joseph Smith's translations from the papyrus rolls...** One manuscript is the Alphabet and Grammar.... Within this Alphabet and Grammar there is **a copy of the characters, together with their translation of Abraham 1:4-28...**" (*The Story of the Pearl of Great Price*, 1962, pp. 172-73) In the publication, *Pearl of Great Price Conference*, Dec. 10, 1960, 1964 ed., pp. 60-61, Dr. Clark referred to a longer manuscript: "I have in my possession a photostatic copy of the manuscript of the Prophet Joseph Smith's **translation** of Abraham 1:1 to 2:18.... The **characters from which our present book of Abraham was translated are down the left-hand column and Joseph Smith's translation opposite**, so we know approximately **how much material was translated from each character.**"

All of the first two rows of characters on the papyrus fragment can be found in the manuscript of the Book of Abraham that is published in *Joseph Smith's Egyptian Alphabet and Grammar*. On the cover of this tract is a photograph of the original fragment of papyrus from which Joseph Smith was supposed to have translated the Book of Abraham. A careful examination of the original manuscripts in the handwriting of Joseph Smith's scribes reveals that Smith used less than four lines from this papyrus to make forty-nine verses in the book of Abraham. These forty-nine verses are composed of more than 2,000 English words!

Klaus Baer, an Egyptologist at the University of Chicago, concluded concerning the "Sensen" fragment: "Joseph Smith thought that this papyrus contained the Book of Abraham." (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Autumn 1968, p. 111) Although the noted Mormon apologist Dr. Hugh Nibley later proposed some fantastic theories in an attempt to divorce the Egyptian papyri from the Book of Abraham, at a meeting held at the University of Utah on May 20, 1968, he frankly spoke of "the fact that, the **very definite fact that, one of the fragments seemed to supply all of the symbols for the Book of Abraham.**" This was the little 'Sensen' scroll. Here are the symbols. The symbols are arranged here, and the interpretation goes along here and **this interpretation turns out to be the Book of Abraham.**"

When Egyptologists translated this piece of papyrus, they found that it contained absolutely nothing concerning Abraham. Instead, it turned out to be a pagan funerary text known as the "Book of Breathings," a work which actually evolved from the Egyptian Book of the Dead. The Book of Breathings did not come into existence until the later stages of Egyptian history - just a few centuries before the time of Christ. Like the Book of the Dead, it was buried with those who died in ancient Egypt. It is filled with magic and pagan gods. It was obviously written by a very superstitious people, and is quite different from the religion taught in the Bible.

The fact that the papyrus Joseph Smith used as the basis for his Book of Abraham is in reality the Book of Breathings cannot be disputed because the name "Book of Breathings" appears clearly on the fourth line of the fragment. In 1968 two Egyptologists from the University of Chicago's Oriental Institute, Professors John A. Wilson and Klaus Baer, identified the papyrus as the "Book of Breathings." A translation by Klaus Baer was printed in *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Autumn 1968, pp. 119-20. Professor Richard A Parker, Chairman of the Department of Egyptology at Brown University also translated the papyrus. Professor Hugh Nibley stated that "Parker is the best man in America for this particular period and style of writing." Professor Parker's translation reads as follows:

1. [.....] this great pool of Khonsu
2. [Osiris Hor, justified], born of Taykhebyt, a man likewise.

3. After (his) two arms are [fast]ened to his breast, one wraps the Book of Breathings, which is
4. with writing both inside and outside of it, with royal linen, it being placed (at) his left arm
5. near his heart, this having been done at his
6. wrapping and outside it. If this book be recited for him, then
7. he will breath like the soul[s of the gods] for ever and
8. ever. (*Dialogue A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Summer 1968, p.98)

Except for a few minor variations, other renditions of the text are in agreement with Professor Parker's. The Book of Abraham, therefore, has been proven to be a spurious translation. Egyptologists find no mention of either Abraham or his religion in this text. The average number of words that the Egyptologist used to convey the message in this text is eighty-seven, whereas Joseph Smith's rendition contains thousands of words. In one Case Joseph Smith derived 177 English words out of the word "*Khons*" - the name of an Egyptian moon god! It is impossible to escape the conclusion that the Book of Abraham is a product of Joseph Smith's imagination.

Since the original papyrus contains nothing about Abraham, some Mormon apologists have suggested that Joseph Smith may have obtained the Book of Abraham by way of direct revelation and not from the papyrus. Those who try to use this escape will find themselves trapped by the words of Joseph Smith himself. At the beginning of the handwritten manuscript, Joseph Smith asserted that it was a "*Translation of the Book of Abraham written by his own hand upon papyrus and found in the catacombs of Egypt.*" The introduction to the Book of Abraham still maintains that it was "***Translated From The Papyrus*** By Joseph Smith" (*Pearl of Great Price*, The Book of Abraham, Introduction). If the Book of Abraham is not an actual translation of the papyrus, then it is obvious that the introduction to it that appears in the *Pearl of Great Price* is a complete misrepresentation. Joseph Smith not only claimed that he translated it from the papyrus, but according to the *History of the Church*, vol.2, p. 351, he affirmed *that it was "a correct translation."*

The contents of the Book of Breathings are certainly foreign to the teachings concerning Abraham found in the Bible. The Bible says he rejected paganism, whereas the Book of Breathings is filled with pagan gods and practices. The names of at least fifteen Egyptian gods or goddesses are mentioned on the "Sensen" papyri which Joseph Smith had in his possession, but there is not one word about Abraham.

The Mormon leaders face a serious dilemma. They cannot repudiate the Book of Abraham without raising the question of Joseph Smith's ability to "translate" the Book of Mormon.

Is the Book of Mormon Archaeological?

Testing the Book of Mormon⁸

⁸ Utah Lighthouse Mission, <http://www.utlm.org/onlineresources/testingthebookofmormon.htm>

Some members of the Mormon Church have made fantastic claims about archaeologists using the Book of Mormon. For example, one letter written by a prominent Mormon, dated May 3, 1936, maintained that the Book of Mormon was used by "the government to unravel the problem of the aborigines.... it was 1920 before **the Smithsonian Institute officially recognized the Book of Mormon** as a record of any value.... it is true that the **Book of Mormon has been the guide to almost all of the major discoveries**.... This record is...recognized by **all advanced students in the field.**"

Because of many false statements disseminated by members of the Mormon Church, such as the one cited above, the Smithsonian Institution has been forced to publish a statement concerning these matters. The four-page statement begins with a denial of the claims put forth by Mormon enthusiasts: "1. 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." ("Statement Regarding The Book of Mormon," Smithsonian Institution, Spring 1986)

In 1973, Michael Coe, one of the best known authorities on archaeology of the New World, wrote an article for *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Summer 1973. After telling of the Mormon belief in Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon, he frankly stated: "Let me now state unconditionally that 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**,... nothing, **absolutely nothing**, has ever shown up in any New World excavation which would suggest to a dispassionate observer that the Book of Mormon... is a historical document relating to the history of early migrants to our hemisphere." (pp.42, 46)

Some Mormon scholars are beginning to publicly admit that archaeology does not furnish any significant evidence for the Book of Mormon. Dee F. Green, who at one time served as editor of the *University Archaeological Society Newsletter*, published at the church's Brigham Young University, made it plain that archaeological evidence did not prove the Book of Mormon: "**The first myth we need to eliminate is that Book of Mormon archaeology exists**.... If one is to study Book of Mormon archaeology, then one must have a corpus of data with which to deal. We do not. The Book of Mormon is really there so one can have Book of Mormon studies, and archaeology is really there so one can study archaeology, but the **two are not wed**. At least they are not wed in reality since **no Book of Mormon location is known with reference to modern topography**. Biblical archaeology can be studied because we do know where Jerusalem and Jericho were and are, but **we do not know where Zarahemla and Bountiful** (nor any other location for that matter) **were or are**. It would seem then that a concentration on geography should be the first order of business, but we have already seen that twenty years of such an approach has **left us empty-handed**." (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Summer 1969, pp. 77-78)

Thomas Stuart Ferguson was one of the most noted defenders of Book of Mormon archaeology. Mr. Ferguson planned the New World Archaeological Foundation which he hoped would prove The Book of Mormon through archaeological research. The Mormon Church granted hundreds of thousands of dollars to this organization, but in the end, Thomas Stuart Ferguson admitted that although the Foundation made some important contributions to New World archaeology, all his work with regard to the Book of Mormon was in vain. He admitted, in fact, that he had wasted twenty-five years of his life trying to prove the Book of Mormon. In 1975 Ferguson prepared a 29-page paper in which he wrote: "I'm afraid that up to this point, I must agree with Dee Green, who has told us that to date **there is no Book-of-Mormon geography**." In a letter to Mr. & Mrs. H.W. Lawrence, dated Feb. 20, 1976, Thomas Stuart Ferguson plainly stated: "...you can't set Book of Mormon geography down anywhere - **because it is fictional** and will never meet the requirements of the dirt-archeology."

Dr. Ray T. Matheny, professor of Anthropology at the church's Brigham Young University, admitted that he has a difficult time reconciling New World archaeology with the Book of Mormon:

"I really have difficulty in finding issue or quarrel with those opening chapters of the Book of Mormon [i. e., the first 7 chapters which only relate to Lehi and his family around the area of Jerusalem]. But thereafter **it doesn't seem like a translation** to me.... And the terminologies and the language used and the methods of explaining and putting things down are 19th century literary concepts and cultural experiences one would expect Joseph Smith and his colleagues would experience. And for that reason I call it transliteration, and I'd rather **not call it a translation** after the 7th chapter. And I have **real difficulty in trying to relate these cultural concepts** as I've briefly discussed here **with archeological findings** that I'm aware of....

"If I were doing this cold like John Carlson is here, I would say in evaluating the Book of Mormon that it **had no place in the New World whatsoever**. I would have to look for the place of the Book of Mormon events to have taken place in the Old World. It just **doesn't seem to fit anything** that he has been taught in his discipline, nor I in my discipline in anthropology, history; there seems to be **no place for it. It seems misplaced**. It seems like there are anachronisms. It seems like the items are **out of time and place**, and trying to put them into the New World. And I think there's a great difficulty here for we Mormons in understanding what this book is all about." ("Book of Mormon Archeology," Response by Professor Ray T. Matheny, Sunstone Symposium, August 25, 1984, typed copy transcribed from a tape-recording, pp. 30-31)

Three years after speaking at this symposium, Dr. Matheny wrote a letter in which he made it clear that there was still no Book of Mormon archaeology:

"While some people choose to make claims for the Book of Mormon through archaeological evidences, to me they are made prematurely, and without sufficient knowledge.

"I do not support the books written on this subject including *The Messiah in Ancient American*, **or any other**. I believe that the authors are making cases out of too little evidence and do not adequately address the problems that archaeology and the Book of Mormon present. I would feel terribly embarrassed if anyone sent a copy of any book written on the subject to the National Museum of Natural History - Smithsonian Institution, or other authority, making claims that cannot as yet be substantiated.... there are **very severe problems** in this field in trying to make correlations with the scriptures. Speculation, such as practiced so far by Mormon authors has not given church members credibility." (Letter by Ray T. Matheny, dated Dec. 17, 1987)

While there is no archaeological evidence to support the Book of Mormon's claim that there were Nephites in the New World, the existence of the Israelites in the Holy Land is verified by a great deal of evidence. The "earliest archaeological reference to the people of Israel" is a stele of the Egyptian ruler Merneptah, dated about 1220 B.C. Many ancient inscriptions mentioning the Israelites have been found, and some inscriptions even give the names of kings or other people mentioned in the Bible. The New Testament mentions a number of rulers that are known to have lived around the time of Christ. The fact that the Jews were in Palestine at the time the Bible indicates is proven by hundreds of ancient Hebrew inscriptions. Portions of every book of the Old Testament, except for the book Esther, have also been found in the manuscripts known as the Dead Sea Scrolls. When we turn to the Book of Mormon, however, we are unable to find any evidence at all that the Nephites ever existed. For more information on the Book of Mormon and many other subjects see the book *Major Problems of Mormonism* available from Utah Lighthouse Ministry for \$6.95

"Born under the covenant" in Utah, She Was Troubled to Discover How LDS Leaders Have Covered Up Embarrassing Parts of Mormon History

I was born in Logan, Utah, and lived there until I was just about to go into 6th grade. My parents were Mormons in good standing, and both came from long lines of LDS (Mormon) people. I was "born under the covenant," as my parents had been married in the temple and thus received their endowments and were married for all eternity. I was raised in the Mormon Church and baptized at age 8.

Starting in 6th grade, my family started moving around in the West. Everywhere we went, I would become involved in the Mormon Church and I grew up being taught about the pre-existence of our spirits as literal offspring of God the Father and how if we went to the celestial kingdom we could become gods and goddesses and have our own spirit children to people worlds.

I learned that God was once a man, and that it was because of the principle of eternal progression that we could become gods like him. I also learned I had a Mother in Heaven somewhere along the way — whether I learned this as a child or an adult, I don't know. I learned that the Book of Mormon was the word of God and that the Bible was so far as it was translated correctly.

I also learned over time that there had been polygamy in the family. My grandma on my father's side was the product of a polygamous marriage. I was always embarrassed by this. (I learned later that there was polygamy on the other side of the family, as well, and I have a family history detailing the hardships the polygamous families, especially women, went through.)

When I was just a girl, I saw the facsimile to the Pearl of Great Price, which is a drawing from a papyrus that Joseph Smith acquired along with some Egyptian mummies. A hovering, birdlike

creature in the drawing was said to be "an angel of God." I took a good look and thought, "It can't be," but immediately suppressed the thought. (The papyrus has since been rediscovered and is actually a part of an Egyptian Book of Breathings, although the LDS still will not admit that.)

My home was not a happy one, and I suffered both physical and emotional abuse as a youth. One of the most damaging things to me was when as a girl of fifteen I wondered why other girls were dating and I wasn't, and my mother said, "Some girls have it and some girls don't. You don't." This was devastating to me not only then but through my adulthood, until I dealt with it. As a result of such abuse, I clung to the Mormon Church and believed that my parents just weren't "living the gospel." I didn't recognize the pressures the Mormon Church was putting on them as individuals.

I went to BYU (Brigham Young University) for a semester, but was unable to stay longer as my parents were in financial straits. I came home and went to work and met the man who became my husband. He was a brand new convert to the church. We were married in the temple just less than a year after he had joined (fudging the one-year waiting period a little). I was horrified by the death oaths of the temple ceremony at the time we went through, thinking that it was like a pagan ceremony, and I had trouble going back to do the proxy work for the dead. (Due to publicity about them, the death oaths were removed several years ago.)

We started our family right away, and had three sons in five years. We attended regularly in our little branch that grew to become a ward (a small geographical division that grew in population and thus deserved official "ward" status from the church). We served in church callings whenever and wherever the bishopric decided we should serve. I was Jr. Sunday School coordinator and served in the Primary (the children's' organization) as a teacher, as well as teaching Sunday School and in the Young Women's program (teenagers) and Cub Scouts as a den mother. Steve also served in varying callings, often working with the scouts. Before we left the church, I was public relations coordinator.

At one point, a lesson was being taught in our adult Sunday School class about polygamy — not only its' early existence in the church but how God outlawed it by revelation. My husband raised his hand and asked, "When in the history of God's people has He ever changed a law to bow to political pressure?" The teacher sputtered and asked, "Why do you ask that? Why do you ask that?" Steve was nearly ostracized for a while after that. Still we kept on, and our boys went through scouts, and the first two passed twelve years of age and held the Aaronic Priesthood.

Steve and I had had problems in our marriage, and in the process of counseling began to allow ourselves to acknowledge thoughts we had suppressed before. We both confronted our abusive pasts (Steve's at the hand of Christian parents — by the way, he went on to see remorse in his Dad and to combat abuse in his church of birth after we left the Mormon Church, which had a lasting impact; my parents denied my abuse). He began to face his negative feelings about Mormon authority (and I, mine) and I committed myself to reading the New Testament without Mormon preconceptions. In doing so, I was struck by the first few chapters of Romans, in which I read about Abraham's faith being credited to him as righteousness. Having been raised with the idea that the only way to attain righteousness was to strive for it, I was struck by what was said. I told Steve, "If this is right, the Mormon Church is wrong." The more I read, the more my perception changed.

We stopped one evening not long after that at Steve's old church and asked a question about prophesy. The pastor patiently looked up the information and considered the question. Such a change from the threatened and angry way Steve's questions were handled in the Mormon Church! We decided to attend once there, as perhaps the first of many churches we might visit until we found the right one for us.

Before we did so, however, we made our decision to leave the Mormon Church, and make it a clean break. We didn't want our names left on the records of the church, to swell the ranks, as they count the "inactive" members. We requested our names be removed and were told we would have to go through a high council court and be excommunicated because my husband was an elder. We did so and were asked to reconsider; we bore our witness of Jesus. Some Mormons have been convinced that we must have committed some major infraction such as adultery, which is a reason many Mormons are excommunicated, but it wasn't so. We protested having to go through that to change churches, and the rules may have been changed since then. Our sons also wrote letters asking that their names be removed.

It was after making our decision that we read "No Man Knows My History," by Fawn Brodie, and "Joseph Smith, the First Mormon," by Donna Hill, and discovered the wealth of documentation that indicated the Mormons weren't getting the whole story from their leaders. The facts told by the documentation about the origins of the church and many other aspects, including polygamy, are far different than the official Mormon versions!

We began speaking about our experiences in the Mormon Church at Christian churches, and we especially told about the temple ceremony and the special clothes we wore there and the undergarments we wore as a result of going through the temple. Over time, though, my family's extremely negative reactions, including a letter from my mother saying she had "lost a beautiful daughter," left me depressed. We had decided to stay with the church of my husband's youth, a rather liberal Mennonite Church (liberal for Mennonites, that is), and we had been baptized there. I fell from the high of our speaking engagements to a low. I rebelled against the idea of organized religion altogether, even the rather-unorganized Mennonite Church. I stopped attending church and focused on working to help support the family. I lived a moral life, but saw no need for church attendance. I believed I could worship Jesus on my own.

My husband developed a terminal disease, and he eventually passed away in 1995, after 11 years out of the Mormon Church. Towards the end of his illness (about 9 months before), I attended a church Ladies Night Out and the speaker talked about the importance of getting in the Word. I had read the Bible off and on and prayed at times, with the feeling that my prayers weren't answered, but this time I decided to start reading the Bible and not stop. I had a One-Year Bible (NIV) with selections from the OT, NT, Psalms and Proverbs for each day, and I started reading it. I continued reading, no matter what, and my attitude of rebelliousness began to abate. Three months later, a friend from church saw me in the store and invited me to go to Bible Study Fellowship a nondenominational Bible study, with her. I went and enjoyed it immensely. We were studying the life of Moses. With each week's lesson, I learned more of how the Old Testament pointed toward Jesus. The subject matter was rich and I was growing spiritually. It helped me be strong as my husband's health continued to deteriorate.

He passed away, and I was faced with life without him. He had always been a dominant and extremely strong person, and now I was even faced with taking over his business. The Lord gave me strength and I was able to do so successfully.

People at church were so loving and supportive at the time of his death that I was led to begin attending Zion Mennonite again. Not long after, I started a new year of BSF again, studying the Book of John. (I am no longer in BSF.) Then I was asked to co-edit the church newsletter, and later become church reporter to the regional newspaper. I was given a choice in the matter in both instances! Both have brought me a great amount of joy. I also edit the Oregon Mennonite Historical and Genealogical Society newsletter and am on the Society's executive board as a result. I can testify that reading the scriptures daily changed my life.

The business continues to do well, benefiting me and my sons. I give thanks to God for His goodness and His grace in bringing me to where I am today.

Additional Testimoines

<http://www.irr.org/mit/stories.html>

truthnet.org