

JOSEPH SMITH'S CLAIMS EXAMINED

No 1820 Revival; 1st Vision Unreliable

Joseph Smith alleged that because of a revival in 1820 in the vicinity of Palmyra, NY, he went to the woods to pray for guidance as to which church he should join. He claimed that two glowing personages appeared to him and told him to join none of them, as they were all wrong, their creeds an abomination and their professors corrupt.

There is no evidence from the churches of Palmyra that there was a revival in 1820. Baptismal records show that there was a revival 4 years later in 1824, but this destroys the chronology established by Smith as recorded in official church history.

There are also problems with his first vision story:

- The official version was not recorded until 18 years after the event supposedly occurred.
- There is no mention of it in Oliver Cowdery's history of the Latter Day Saint movement written in 1834 under Smith's supervision.
- In 1828, Smith attempted to join the Methodist church, a direct violation of the command he allegedly received from God 8 years earlier.

But most troubling of all, is the fact that early church publications and records document at least 6 distinctly different versions of his first vision. The differing versions contradict each other in regard to Smith's age, the reason he went to the woods to pray, the number and identity of the personages who appeared to him, and most notably, the message he received.

BOM not Translation

Joseph Smith claimed that he translated the text of the *Book of Mormon* from gold plates through the Urim and Thummin by the power of the Holy Spirit. The title page of the *Book of Mormon* published today contains the words "Translated by Joseph Smith." This is a core belief of his followers.

You will be shocked to learn that the above account did not happen. According to the witnesses present in the room when Joseph Smith was dictating the text of

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the *Book of Mormon*, "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." (quote David Whitmer)

The gold plates were under a cloth or hidden in the woods and were not used directly in the creation process. Other witnesses included Emma Smith, Martin Harris, Oliver

Cowdery, Isaac Hale and Michael Morse (Joseph Smith's brother in law).

These details do not contradict the statements by the 11 witnesses. The unavoidable conclusion is, the *Book of Mormon* is not a "translation" within the commonly held meaning of that word.

No BOM Archeology

No person mentioned in the *Book of Mormon* has ever been identified in the ancient archeology of the Americas. No place mentioned in that book has ever been located geographically.

The language referenced in the *Book of Mormon* is Reformed Egyptian and no evidence for that language has been found anywhere on the earth. No event mentioned in the *Book of Mormon* has been confirmed from any objective source.

Many objects mentioned in the *Book of Mormon* (e.g. steel, coins, wheels, swords, horses, Christian or Hebrew artifacts) have not been confirmed with archeology. Many objects and customs that archeology confirms did exist during that time period (e.g. obsidian, human sacrifice, dogs as food, adobe brick, terrace farming, hieroglyphics, cotton, tobacco) are not mentioned in the *Book of Mormon*. In contrast, hundreds of archeological findings support the accuracy of the Bible.

Archeologists and researchers who have examined *Book of Mormon* claims have rejected its validity. Thomas Stuart Ferguson, Dan Vogel, Dee Green, Michael Coe and the Smithsonian Institute have all issued statements denying the historicity of the *Book of Mormon*.

DNA Refutes BOM

In 1830, Joseph Smith presented the *Book of Mormon* to the world, declaring it to be the most correct of any book on earth. It has been promoted for the past 174 years by his followers, not only as a scriptural supplement to the Bible, but also as a literal history of the ancestors of the American Indians.

Joseph Smith taught that Native Americans were actually descendants of Jews who had traveled to the Americas in three migrations; the first at the time of the Tower of Babel, the last two, approximately 600 BC

However, recent DNA analysis of American Indians from more than 150 tribes, both ancient and present-day, reveals that Joseph Smith's claims have no basis in fact. Of the thousands of Native Americans tested, 99.4% were of North East Asian descent, while the remaining 0.6% were of African and European descent.

No DNA evidence supports Joseph Smith's assertion that American Indians are of Jewish or Hebrew descent.

BOM Text Impossible

The *Book of Mormon* text contains logical impossibilities. The *Book of Mormon's* Old Testament portion (BMOT) quotes heavily from the New Testament of the Bible. There are at least 185 quotations and 2,500 unique vocabulary words from the New Testament in the BMOT such as: "Bible," "Jesus," "Christ," "Christian" and "baptism".

These New Testament words do not appear in the Old Testament of the Bible but they do appear in the BMOT. It is impossible to quote a text 600 years before it came into existence.

Similarly, circa 550 BC, Nephi quoted four verses from the *Book of Malachi* over 100 years before they were written, circa 425 BC. Since these verses were not

written until after Lehi left Jerusalem, Nephi could not have had access to them. In short, this is a double impossibility of both time and space.

The Book of Mormon also contains 18 chapters of the book of Isaiah from the 1611 King James Version of the Bible, including most of the italicized words. Nephi quotes from that version 2,000 years before it came into existence.

Smith Convicted

In 1826 at Bainbridge, New York, Joseph Smith was arrested, tried and convicted of the crime of “glass looking,” an occult practice similar to crystal ball gazing. This trial was the direct result of Smith’s attempt to find buried treasure for Josiah Stowell, for a fee, with the use of a seer stone.

For many years, followers of Joseph Smith denied the reports of those present at the trial and accused them of being Smith’s enemies. Court documents including a bill of costs from Justice Albert Neely have now been found that confirm that the trial occurred and that Joseph was convicted of the crime of “glass looking.”

The significance of this conviction is more than the fact that Joseph Smith was convicted of a crime. The described use of the seer stone is eerily similar to the method Joseph Smith actually used in creating the *Book of Mormon* as described herein.

Smith and Polygamy

On July 12, 1843, in Nauvoo, Illinois, Joseph Smith allegedly received a revelation commanding the practice of polygamy, which he labeled celestial marriage. His diary contains the following entry, “I received the following revelation in the presence of my brother Hiram and Elder William Clayton.”

Excerpts from the revelation read, “...I [the Lord] reveal unto you a new and everlasting covenant and if ye abide not in that covenant, then are ye damned; for no one can reject this covenant and be permitted to enter into my glory...If ye abide in my covenant...then shall...[ye] be Gods.”

William Clayton, Smith’s personal secretary, recorded the following, “I did write the revelation on celestial marriage given through the prophet Joseph Smith, on 12th of July, 1843.” Many sworn testimonies given by those living in Nauvoo at the time the revelation was made public, verify the fact that Joseph Smith not only gave this revelation but also practiced polygamy himself.

Two Invalid Priesthoods

The Bible speaks of three priesthoods: the Aaronic, the Melchizedek and the Royal Priesthood of All Believers.

The Aaronic priesthood consisted of priests and a single high priest. It was instituted by God in the Old Testament to be a mediator between God and man, with the high priest offering sacrifices for the sins of the people. This priesthood was made obsolete with the death of Christ on the cross, since he was the last sacrifice for sin and the new mediator between God

and man. Neither the Bible nor church history records the existence of the Aaronic priesthood in the New Testament Christian church. Any attempt to “restore” this priesthood shows contempt for Christ’s sacrifice.

The Melchizedek priesthood was unique. The Bible records it being held by only two people, Melchizedek in the Old Testament and Jesus Christ in the New Testament. No evidence exists of any other person holding this priesthood. “Every reference in the Bible to a Melchizedek priesthood is in reference to the

specific and unique ministry which Jesus Christ alone fulfills as God’s chosen means of salvation for his people.” (Paul Trask)

The Royal priesthood consists of all born-again believers who make up the body of Christ, with Jesus as their great high priest. He is the only high priest for the Christian church. Because he will never die, his high priest status can

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never be transferred to another. Any attempt to appropriate Christ’s high priest title or ministry to oneself usurps His unique title and function and constitutes blasphemy. Consequently, Joseph Smith’s priesthood system, which includes multiple high priests, is heretical.

Of the three biblical priesthoods, Joseph Smith included in his church the two that are unavailable to Christians – The Aaronic and the Melchizedek. Tragically, he ignored the only priesthood that is available to Christians, the Royal Priesthood.

Salvation By Works

In over 30 LDS scripture passages Smith altered the requirements for salvation. He said, “ye are justified by faith and works through grace” (Rom. 4:16 Insp. Ver.) and “if ye keep the commandments of God ye shall be saved.” (Mosiah 7:94 BOM)

The Bible says, “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us.” Titus 3:5. The Bible doctrine of salvation may be summarized as: we are saved from sin and death through faith in the grace of Jesus by his sacrifice for us on the cross ~ and that alone.

Churches that remain connected to Joseph Smith do not teach the essentials of the Christian faith. Salvation by works is neither Biblical nor effective. If a church does not teach the Christian doctrine of salvation its members will be confused. They might perceive wrongfully that God has abandoned them. We are never good enough to merit God’s love and can only obtain God’s acceptance through Jesus’ atonement for our sins, which is the basis for our salvation.

Jesus–Faithful Shepherd

We understand what you may be feeling after reading the facts above. The fear and turmoil you may be experiencing is temporary. As former followers of Joseph Smith we have found Jesus is the only Faithful Shepherd. The broken-hearted can turn to Him for comfort.

It is our prayer that you will know the truth because the truth will set you free. If you are a follower of Joseph Smith who cares about the truth, you will surely be disturbed as you confirm the facts above. You may want to deny the evidence. The allegations here are too serious not to be tested.

If you discover this ad is true, you may feel that you have wasted your life. But you haven't, if you make sure you follow Jesus, not Joseph. You may be angry with us but we are only telling you the truth.

You may experience pain about the loss of identity and heritage. Jesus will never forsake you. He will send you the Holy Comforter. He will give you new friends. You may feel guilt at your part in the perpetuation of a false system. Fear not ~ Jesus can make you new and clean, but you must let the sin cease. In all religious experience, only Jesus is real. If you seek him, you will find him – it will be worth the cost.

Lifeline Ministries
www.lifeline2rlds.org