

# The Personal Writings of Joseph Smith

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truth therefore I cried unto the Lord for mercy for there was none else to whom I could go and to obtain mercy and the Lord heard my cry in the wilderness and while in 'the' attitude of calling upon the Lord 'in the 16th year of my age' a pillar of fire light above the brightness of the sun at noon day come down from above and rested upon me and I was filled with the spirit of god and the 'Lord' opened the heavens upon me and I saw the Lord and he spake unto me saying Joseph 'my son' thy sins are forgiven thee. go thy 'way' walk in my statutes and keep my commandments behold I am the Lord of glory I was crucified for the world that all those who believe on my name may have Eternal life 'behold' the world lieth in sin and at this time and none doeth good no not one they have turned aside 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 proph-ets and Ap[osto]les behold and lo I come quickly as it [is] wr[ite]n of me in the cloud 'clothed' in the glory of my Father and my soul was filled with love and for many days I could rejoice with great joy and the Lord was with me but [I] could find none that would believe the heavenly vision nevertheless I pondered these things in my heart ~~about that time my mother and~~ but after many days [p. 3] I fell into transgression and sinned in many things which brought a wound upon my soul and there were many things which transpired that cannot be written and my Fathers family have suffered many persecutions and afflictions and it came to pass when I was seventeen years of age I called again upon the Lord and he shewed unto me a heavenly vision for behold an angel of the Lord came and stood before me and it was by night and he called me by name and he said the Lord had forgiven me my sins and he revealed unto me that in the Town of Manchester Ontario County N. Y. there was plates of gold upon which there was engravings which was engraven by Maroni & his fathers the servants of the living God in ancient days and deposited by the commandments of God



and kept by the power thereof and that I should go and get them and he revealed unto me many things concerning the inhabitants of the earth which since have been revealed in commandments & revelations and it was on the 22d day of Sept. AD 1822 and thus he appeared unto me three times in one night and once on the next day and then I immediately went to the place and found where the plates was deposited as the angel of the Lord had commanded me and straightway made three attempts to get them and then being exceedingly frightened I supposed it had been a dream of Vision but when I considered I knew that it was not therefore I cried unto the Lord in the agony of my soul why can I not obtain them behold the angel appeared unto me again and said unto me you have not kept the commandments of the Lord which I gave unto you therefore you cannot now obtain them for the time is not yet fulfilled therefore thou wast left unto temptation that thou mightest be made acquainted with the power of the adversary therefore repent and call on the Lord thou shalt be forgiven and in his own due time thou shalt obtain them [p. 4] for now I had been tempted of the adversary and sought the Plates to obtain riches and kept not the commandment that I should have an eye single to the glory of God therefore I was chastened and sought diligently to obtain the plates and obtained them not until I was twenty one years of age and in this year I was married to Emma Hale<sup>e</sup> Daughter of Isaac Hale<sup>e</sup> who lived in Harmony Susquehanna County Pennsylvania on the 18th [of] January AD. 1827, on the 22d day of Sept of this same year I obtained the plates and the in December following we moved to Susquehanna by the assistance of a man by the name of Martin Harris<sup>o</sup> who became convinced of the visions and gave me fifty Dollars to bare my expences and because of his faith and this righteous deed the Lord appeared unto him in a vision and shewed unto him his marvellous work which he was about to do and <he> immediately came to Susquehanna and said the Lord had shown him that he must go to new York City with some of the <ch>aracters so we proceeded to copy some of them and he took his journey to the Eastern City<sup>s</sup> and to the Learned <saying> read this I pray thee and the learned said I cannot but if he

History: 1832 Joseph Smith Letterbook 1, p. 3 Text p. 516 LDS Church Archives.

the Lord for mercy for there was none else to whom I could go and to obtain mercy and the Lord heard my cry in the wilderness and while in <sup>the</sup> attitude of calling upon the Lord, a pillar of fire light above the brightness of the sun at noon day come down from above and rested upon me and I was filled with the spirit of God and the <sup>Lord</sup> opened the heavens upon me and I saw the Lord and he spake unto me saying Joseph <sup>my Son</sup> thy sins are forgiven thee go thy <sup>way</sup> walk in my

Joseph Smith's 1832 Diary:

third line] -ss and while in <the> attitude of calling upon the Lord <in the 16th year of my age> a pillar of [fourth line] fire light above the brightness of the sun at noon day [fifth line] come down from above and rested upon me and I was filled [sixth line] with the spirit of God and the <Lord> opened the heavens upon [seventh line] me and I saw the Lord and he spake unto me saying [eighth line] Joseph <my Son> thy sins are forgiven thee. go thy <way> walk in my



hair is long and considerably silvered with age [p. 22] I should think he is about 50 or 55 years old, tall and strait slender built of thin visage blue eyes, and fair complexion, he wears a sea green frock coat, & pantaloon of the same, black fur hat with narrow brim, and while speaking frequently shuts his eyes with a scowl on his countenance: I made some enquiry after his name but received no definite answer, we soon commenced talking upon the subject of religion and after I had made some remarks concerning the bible I commenced giving him a relation of the circumstances connected with the coming forth of the book of Mormon, as follows—being wrought up in my mind, respecting the subject of religion and looking at the different systems taught the children of men, I knew not who was right or who was wrong and I considered it of the first importance that I should be right, in matters that involve eternal consequences; being thus perplexed in mind I retired to the silent grove and bowed down before the Lord, under a realising sense that he had said (if the bible be true) ask and you shall receive knock and it shall be opened seek and you shall find and again, if any man lack wisdom let him ask of God who giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not; information was what I most desired at this time, and with a fixed determination to obtain it, I called upon the Lord for the first time, in the place above stated or in other words I made a fruitless attempt to play, my tongue 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 [p. 23] and looked around, but saw no person or thing that was calculated to produce the noise of walking, I knelt again my mouth was opened and my tongue liberated, and I called on the Lord in mighty prayer, a pillar of fire appeared above my head, it presently rested down upon me head, and filled me with joy unspeakable, a personage appeared in the midst of this pillar of flame which was spread all around, and yet nothing consumed, another personage soon appeared like unto the first, he said unto me thy sins are forgiven thee, he testified unto me that Jesus Christ is the Son of God; and I saw many

angels in this vision; I was about 14 years old when I received this first communication; When I was about 17 years old I saw another vision of angels in the night season after I had retired to bed I had not been a sleep, when but was meditating upon my past life and experience, I was very conscious that I had not kept the commandments, and I repented heartily for all my sins and transgression, and humbled myself before Him whose eyes are over all things, all at once the room was illuminated above the brightness of the sun an angel appeared before me, his hands and feet were naked pure and white, and he stood between the floors of the room, clothed with purity inexpressible, he said unto me I am a messenger sent from God, be faithful and keep his commandments in all things, he told me of a sacred record which was written on plates of gold, I saw in the vision the place where they were deposited, he said the Indians were the literal descendants of Abraham he explained many things of the prophecies to [p. 24] me, one I will mention which is this in Malachi 4 chap. behold the day of the Lord cometh &c. also that the Urim and Thummim, was hid up with the record, and that God would give me power to translate it, with the assistance of this instrument he then gradually vanished out of my sight, or the vision closed, while meditating on what I had seen, the angel appeared to me again and related the same things and much more, also the third time bearing the same tidings, and departed; during the time I was in this vision I did not realize any thing else around me except what was shown me in this communication: after the vision had all passed, I found that it was nearly day-light, the family soon arose, I got up also—on that day while in the field at work with my Father he asked me if I was sick I replied, I had but little strength, he told me to go to the house, I started and went part way and was finally deprived of my strength and fell but how long I remained I do not know, the Angel came to me again and commanded me to go and tell my Father, what I had seen and heard, I did so, he wept and told me that it was a vision from God to attend to it I went and found the place, where the plates were, according to the direction of the Angel, also saw



me for the benefit of my people, therefore this shall be his calling until I shall order it otherwise in my wisdom and it shall be said of him in a time to come, behold Warren the Lord's Scribe, for the Lords Seer whom he hath appointed in Israel: Therefore <if he will> keep my commandments he shall be lifted up at the last day, even so Amen

A Gentleman called this after noon by the name of Erastus Holmes of Newbury Clemon [Clermont] Co. Ohio, he called to make enquiry about the establish-ment of the church of the latter-day Saints and to be instructed more perfectly in our doctrine &c I commenced and gave him a brief relation of my experience while in my 1p. 36j juvenile years, say from 6 years old up to the time I received the first visitation of Angels which was when I was about 14, years old and also the the visitations that I received afterward, concerning the book of Mormon, and a short account of the rise and progress of the church, up to this, date he listened verry attentively and seemed highly gratified, and intends to unite with the Church he is a verry candid man indeed and I am much pleased with him.

On Sabath morning the 15th [November 1835] he went with me to meeting, which was held in the Sch=ool-house on account of the Chappel not being finished plastering. President Rigdon pre=ched on the subject of men's being called to preach the gospel and their qualifications &c we had a fine discourse it was verry interesting indeed. Mr. Holmes was well satisfied, he came home with me and dined.

Said Holmes has been a member of the Methodist Church, and was excommunicated for receiving, the Elders of the church of the latter-day Saints into his house

Went to meeting in the afterno[o]n, before part=aking of the sacrament Isaac Hills case was agitated again, and settled after much controversy, and he retained in the church by making an humble acknowledg[me]nt before the church, and concealing to have his confession published in the Messenger and advocate, after which the ordinance of the Lord[s] Supper was administered, and

presented the characters which had been translated, with the translation thereof, to Professor Charles Anthon, a gentleman celebrated for his literary attainments. Professor Anthon stated that the translation was correct, more so than any he had before seen translated from the Egyptian. I then showed him those which were not yet translated, and he said that they were Egyptian, Chaldaic, Assyriac, and Arabic; and he said they were true characters" (Section 2, verses 62, 63, 64).

According to Joseph Smith then, Martin Harris, his colleague, obtained from the learned Professor Charles Anthon of Columbia University a validation of Smith's translation of the reformed Egyptian hieroglyphic characters found on the plates which Moroni made available to him. The difficulty with Smith's statement is that Professor Anthon never said any such thing, and fortunately he went on record in a lengthy letter to Mr. E. D. Howe, a contemporary of Joseph Smith who did one of the most thorough jobs of research on the Mormon prophet and the origins of Mormonism extant. Howe has never been refuted, and because of this he is feared and hated by Mormon historians and not a few contemporary Mormons.

Upon learning of Smith's claim concerning Professor Anthon, Mr. Howe wrote him at Columbia. Professor Anthon's letter reproduced here from Howe's own collection is a classic piece of evidence the Mormons would like very much to see forgotten.

New York, N.Y., Feb. 17, 1834  
Mr. E. D. Howe  
Painesville, Ohio

Dear Sir:

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

See also Comprehensive History by B. H. Roberts

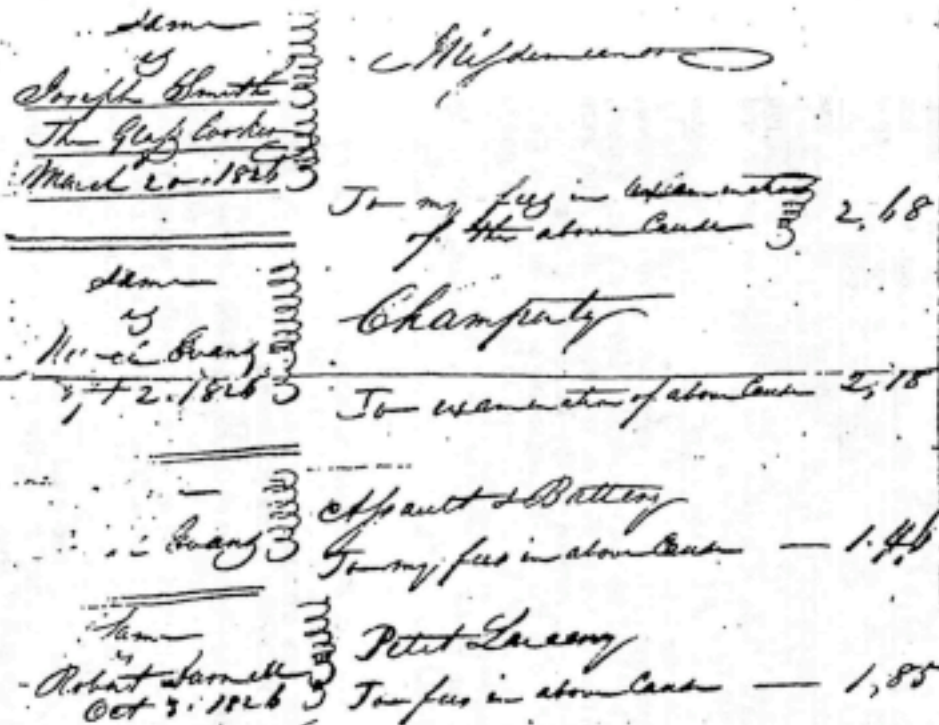


been deciphered "by the gift of God." Everything, in this way, was effected by the large pair of spectacles. The farmer added, that he had been requested to contribute a sum of money towards the publication of the "golden book," the contents of which would, as he had been assured, produce an entire change in the world and save it from ruin. So urgent had been these solicitations, that he intended selling his farm and handing over the amount received to those who wished to publish the plates. As a last precautionary step, however, he had resolved to come to New York, and obtain the opinion of the learned about the meaning of the paper which he brought with him, and which had been given him as a part of the contents of the book, although no translation had been furnished at the time by the young man with the spectacles. On hearing this odd story, I changed my opinion about the paper, and, instead of viewing it any longer as a hoax upon the learned, I began to regard it as a part of a scheme to cheat the farmer of his money, and I communicated my suspicions to him, warning him to beware of rogues. He requested an opinion from me in writing, which of course I declined giving, and he then took his leave carrying the paper with him. This paper was in fact a singular scroll. It consisted of all kinds of crooked characters disposed in columns, and had evidently been prepared by some person who had before him at the time a book containing various alphabets, Greek and Hebrew letters, crosses and flourishes, Roman letters inverted or placed sideways, were arranged in perpendicular columns, and the whole ended in a rude delineation of a circle, divided into various compartments, decked with various strange marks, and evidently copied after the Mexican Calendar given by Humboldt, but copied in such a way as not to betray the source whence it was derived. I am thus particular as to the contents of the paper, inasmuch as I have frequently conversed with my friends on the subject, since the Mormonite excitement began, and well remember that the paper contained anything else but "Egyptian Hieroglyphics." Some time after, the same farmer paid me a second visit. He brought with him the golden book in print, and offered it to me for sale. I declined purchasing. He then asked permission to leave the book with me for examination. I declined receiving it, although his manner was strangely urgent. I adverted once more to the roguery which had been in my opinion practiced upon him, and asked him what had become of the gold plates. He informed me that they were in a trunk with the large pair of spectacles. I advised him to go to a magistrate and have the trunk examined. He said the "curse of God" would come upon him should he do this. On my pressing him, however, to pursue the course which I had recommended, he told me that he would open the trunk, if I would take the "curse of God" upon myself. I replied that I would do so with the greatest willingness, and would incur every risk of that nature, provided I could only extricate him from the grasp of the rogues. He then left me.

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

Your respectfully,  
Charles Anthon, LL.D.  
Columbia University.

Professor Anthon's letter is both revealing and devastating where Smith's and Harris' veracity are concerned. We might also raise the question as to how Professor Anthon could say that the characters shown to him by Martin Harris and authorized by Joseph Smith as part of the material copied from the revelation of the Book of Mormon were "Egyptian, Chaldaic, Assyriac, and Arabic" when the Book of Mormon itself declares that the characters were "reformed Egyptian," the language of the Nephites. Since the language of the Book of Mormon was known to "none other people," how would it be


  
 Joseph Smith  
 The Glass Looker  
 March 20, 1826  
 To my fees in examination  
 of the above cause 2.68  
  
 Champarty  
 To my fees in above cause 2.18  
  
 Assault & Battery  
 To my fees in above cause 1.46  
  
 Petit Larceny  
 To my fees in above cause 1.85

ABOVE IS A PHOTOGRAPH OF JUSTICE ALBERT NEELY'S BILL SHOWING THE COSTS INVOLVED IN SEVERAL TRIALS IN 1826. THE FIFTH ITEM FROM THE TOP MENTIONS THE TRIAL OF "JOSEPH SMITH THE GLASS LOOKER." WHEN THE LETTER "S" WAS REPEATED IN DOCUMENTS OF JOSEPH SMITH'S TIME, AS IN THE WORD "GLASS" THE TWO LETTERS APPEARED AS A "P" (SEE THE WORD "ASSAULT" IN ITEMS 1, 47 AND 9). TO THE LEFT WE HAVE TYPED OUT THE PORTION OF THE BILL WHICH MENTIONS JOSEPH SMITH. THIS BILL PROVES THAT THE PUBLISHED COURT RECORD IS AUTHENTIC.

same  
vs  
Joseph Smith  
The Glass Looker  
March 20, 1826

Misdemeanor  
To my fees in examination  
of the above cause 2.68



to him that is not learned, saying, *Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I am not learned.*"

(Verses 11 and 12.) No man could read it, but God gave to an unlearned boy the gift to translate it.

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

The characters I speak of are the engravings on the golden plates from which the book was translated. They were engraved thereon by the hand of a holy prophet of God whose name was Mormon, who lived upon this land four hundred years after Christ. Mormon's son, Moroni, after witnessing the destruction of his brethren, the Nephites, who were a white race—they being destroyed by the Lamanites (Indians)—deposited the golden plates in the ground, according to a command of God. An angel of the Lord directed Brother Joseph to them. The language of the Nephites is called the reformed Egyptian language.

I will give you the preface to the Book of Mormon, written by Moroni, and translated in the same manner as the Book was translated.

# PREFACE.

AN ACCOUNT WRITTEN BY THE HAND OF MORMON UPON PLATES TAKEN FROM THE PLATES OF NEPHEI.

"Wherefore, it is an abridgement of the record of the people of Nephi, and also of the Lamanites; written to the Lamanites, who are a remnant of the house of Israel; and also to Jew and Gentile; written by way of commandment, and also by the Spirit of prophecy and of revelation. Written and sealed up, and hid up unto the Lord, that they might not be destroyed; to come forth by the gift and power of God unto the interpretation thereof; sealed by the hand of Moroni, and hid up unto the Lord, to come forth in due time by the way of Gentile; the interpretation thereof by the gift of God.

"An abridgement taken from the Book of Ether; also, which is a record of the people of Jared; who were scattered at the time the Lord confounded the language of the people, when they were building a tower to get to heaven; which is to show unto the remnant of the house of Israel what great things the Lord hath done for their fathers; and that they may know the covenants of the Lord, that they are not cast off forever; and also to the convincing of the Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God, manifesting himself unto all nations.

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. He was wrong in thus judging Bro. Martin, because he was doing all he could toward selling his land. 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. Hyrum 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. Jacob Whitmer and John Whitmer were also present when Hyrum Page and Oliver Cowdery returned from Canada. 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 beheld 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 of the heart of man. When a man enquires of the Lord concerning a matter, if he is deceived by his own carnal desires, and is in error, he will receive an answer according to his erring heart, but it will not be a revelation from the Lord. This was a lesson for our benefit and we should have profited by it in future more than we did. Without much explanation you can see the error of Hyrum Smith in thinking evil of Martin Harris without a cause, and desiring to leave him out in the publication of the Book; and also the error of Brother Joseph in listening to the persuasions of men and enquiring of the Lord to see if they might not go to Toronto to sell the copy-right of the Book of Mormon, when it was made known to Brother Joseph that the will of the Lord was to have Martin Harris raise the money.

Remember this matter brethren; it is very important. Further on I will give you references of scripture on this point, showing that this is God's way of dealing with His people. Now is it wisdom to put your trust in Joseph Smith, and believe all his revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants to be of God? Every one who does not desire to be of Paul, or of Apollos, or of Joseph, but desires to be of Christ will say that it is not wisdom to put our trust in him and believe his revelations as if from God's own mouth! I will say here, that I could tell you other false revelations that came through Brother Joseph as mouthpieces, (not through the stone) but this will suffice. Many of Brother Joseph's revelations were never printed. The revelation to go to Canada was written down on paper, but was never printed. When Brother Joseph was humble he had the Spirit of God with him; but when he was not humble he did



not have the Spirit. Brother Joseph gave many true prophecies when he was humble before God; but this is no more than many of the other brethren did. Brother Joseph's true prophecies were almost all published, but those of the other brethren were not. I could give you the names of many who gave great prophecies which came to pass. I will name a few: Brothers Ziba Peterson, Hiram Page, Oliver Cowdery, Parley P. Pratt, Orson Pratt, Peter Whitmer, Christian Whitmer, John Whitmer, myself and many others had the gift of prophecy. Hiram Page prophesied a few days before the stars fell in November, 1833, that the stars would fall from heaven and frighten many people. This prophecy was given in my presence. I could give you many instances of true prophecies which came through the above named brethren, but I desire to be brief. I could also tell you of some false prophecies which some of them gave, when they were not living humble.

After the translation of the Book of Mormon was finished, early in the spring of 1830, before April 6th, Joseph gave the stone to Oliver Cowdery and told me as well as the rest that he was through with it, and he did not use the stone any more. He said he was through the work that God had given him the gift to perform, except to preach the gospel. He told us that we would all have to depend on the Holy Ghost hereafter to be guided into truth and obtain the will of the Lord. The revelations after this came through Joseph as "mouth piece;" that is, he would enquire of the Lord, pray and ask concerning a matter, and speak out the revelation, which he thought to be a revelation from the Lord; but sometimes he was mistaken about it being the word of the Lord. As we have seen, some revelations are of God and some are not. In this manner, through Brother Joseph as "mouth piece" came every revelation to establish new doctrines and offices which disagree with the New Covenant in the Book of Mormon and New Testament! I would have you to remember this fact.

In June, 1829, the Lord called Oliver Cowdery, Martin Harris, and myself as the three witnesses, to behold the vision of the Angel, as recorded in the fore part of the Book of Mormon, and to bear testimony to the world that the Book of Mormon is true. I was not called to bear testimony to the mission of Brother Joseph Smith any father than his work of translating the Book of Mormon, as you can see by reading the testimony of us three witnesses.

In this month I was baptized, confirmed, and ordained an Elder in the Church of Christ by Bro. Joseph Smith. Previous to this, Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery had baptized, confirmed and ordained each other to the office of an Elder in the Church of Christ. I was the third person baptized into the church. In August, 1829, we began to preach the gospel of Christ. The following six Elders had then been ordained: Joseph Smith, Oliver Cowdery, Peter Whitmer, Samuel H. Smith, Hyrum Smith and myself. The Book of Mormon was still in the hands of the printer, but my brother, Christian Whitmer, had copied from the manuscript the teachings and doctrine of Christ, being the things which we were commanded to preach. We preached, baptized and confirmed members into the Church of Christ, from August, 1829, until April 6th, 1830, being *eight months* in which time we had proceeded rightly; the offices in the church being Elders, Priests and Teachers.



Information from the  
National Museum of Natural History  
SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION WASHINGTON, D.C. 20560

Your recent inquiry concerning the Smithsonian Institution's alleged use of the Book of Mormon as a scientific guide has been received in the Smithsonian's Department of Anthropology.

The Book of Mormon is a religious document and not a scientific guide. The Smithsonian Institution has never used it in archeological research and any information that you have received to the contrary is incorrect. Accurate information about the Smithsonian's position is contained in the enclosed "Statement Regarding the Book of Mormon," which was prepared to respond to the numerous inquiries that the Smithsonian receives on this topic.

Because the Smithsonian regards the unauthorized use of its name to disseminate inaccurate information as unlawful, we would appreciate your assistance in providing us with the names of any individuals who are misusing the Smithsonian's name. Please address any correspondence to:

Anthropology Outreach Office  
Department of Anthropology  
National Museum of Natural History MRC 112  
Smithsonian Institution  
Washington, DC 20560

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THE DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY  
SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION  
1996



the Smithsonian Institution has never used the Book of Mormon in any way as a scientific guide. Modern archaeologists see no direct connection between the archaeology 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 peoples of eastern, central, and northeastern Asia. Archaeological 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 dating from about 25,000 to 30,000 years ago.

Recent evidence indicates that the first people to reach this continent from the East were the women who briefly visited the northeastern part of North America around A.D. 1000 and then settled Greenland. There is nothing to show that they reached Mexico or Central America.

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 pre-Columbian Indian civilizations, is the fact that none of the principal Old World domesticated food plants or animals (except the dog) occurred in the New World in pre-Columbian times. American Indians had no wheat, barley, oats, millet, rice, cattle, pigs, chickens, horses, donkeys, camels before 1492. (Camels and horses were in the Americas, along with the bison, mammoth, and mastodon, but all these animals were 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 melted meteoric iron). Native copper was worked in various locations in pre-Columbian times, but 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 western coast of South America began several hundred years before the Christian era. However, such inter-hemispheric contacts appear to have been the results of accidental voyages originating in the 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 Asian and the Near East.

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

Reports of findings of ancient Egyptian, Hebrew, and other Old World writings in the New World in the last century 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.

son. When I first looked upon him I was afraid, but the fear soon left me. 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 Nephi. That God had a work for me to do, and that my name should be had for good and evil among all nations, kindreds, and tongues; or that it should be both good and evil spoken of among all people. He 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. He also said that the fulness of the everlasting gospel was contained in it, as delivered by the Saviour 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 was what constituted Seers in ancient or former times, and that God had prepared them for the purposes of translating the book.

After telling me these things, he commenced quoting the prophecies of the Old Testament. He first quoted part of the third chapter of Malachi, and he quoted also the fourth or last chapter of the same prophecy, though with a little variation from the way it reads in our Bibles. Instead of quoting the first verse as it reads in our books, he quoted it thus: 'For behold the day cometh that shall burn as an oven, and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly shall burn as stubble, for they that come shall burn them, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch;' and again, he quoted the fifth verse thus: 'Behold, I will reveal unto you the Priesthood, by the hand of Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.' He also quoted the next verse differently: 'And I will plant in the hearts of the children, the promises made to the fathers, and the hearts of the children shall turn to their fathers; if it were not so, the whole earth would be utterly wasted at His coming.'

In addition to these, he quoted the eleventh chapter of Isaiah, saying that it was about to be fulfilled. He quoted, also, the third chapter of Acts, twenty-second and twenty-third verses, previously as they stand in our New Testament. He said that that prophet was Christ, but the day had not yet come when 'they who would not hear his voice should be cut off from among the people,' but soon would come.

He also quoted the second chapter of Joel, from the twenty-eighth to the last verse. He also said that this was not yet fulfilled, but was soon to be. And he further stated, the fulness of the revelations was soon to come in. He quoted many other passages of scripture, and offered many explanations which caused me to question him. Again, he 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 day. While thus was progressing great numbers were being baptized in the font. Those who wish for further information concerning the scenes of the Sabbath in Nauvoo, or any other day in the week, would do well to "come and see."

W. WOODRUFF.

# **HISTORY OF JOSEPH SMITH.**

(Continued.)

While I was thus in the act of calling upon God I discovered a light appearing in the room which continued to increase until the room was lighter than at noon-day, 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 any thing 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. 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 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 Nephi. That God had a work for me to do, and that my name should be had for good and evil, among all nations, kindred, and tongues; or that it should be both good and evil spoken of among all people. He 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. He also said that the fullness of the everlasting gospel was contained in it, as delivered by the Saviour 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 was what constituted seers in ancient or former times, and that God had prepared them

for the purpose of translating the book. After telling me these things he commenced quoting the prophecies of the Old Testament, he first quoted part of the third chapter of Malachi; and he quoted also the fourth or last chapter of the same prophecy though with a little variation from the way it reads in our Bibles. Instead of quoting the first verse as reads in our books he quoted it thus, "For behold the day cometh that shall burn as an oven, and all the proud yea and all that do wickedly shall burn as stubble, for they that cometh shall burn them saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch," and again he quoted the fifth verse thus, "Behold I will reveal unto you the Priesthood by the hand of Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord." He also quoted the next verse differently, "And he shall plant in the hearts of the children the promises made to the fathers, and the hearts of the children shall turn to their fathers, if it were not so the whole earth would be utterly wasted at his coming." In addition to these he quoted the eleventh chapter of Isaiah saying that it was about to be fulfilled. He quoted also the third chapter of Acts, twenty second and twenty third verses precisely as they stand in our New Testament. He said that that prophet was Christ, but the day had not yet come when "they" who would not hear his voice should be cut off from among the people," but soon would come.

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

# **The Test of A Prophet**

How Do You Know If A Prophet Is Telling You The Truth?

## **Old Testament Warning Against False Prophets:**

Jeremiah 5:13,31;14:4; 23:16,21,25,26,30-32,36;29:8,9  
 Lamentations 2:14

Ezekiel 13:1-3, 6,7,10; 22:28

(How many false prophecies does it take to make one a false prophet? Just One!)

## **New Testament Prophets:**

1 Corinthians 14:3,22,24,25,29,31,32,36,37

## **Warning Against False Prophets:**

Matthew 7:15; 24:11,24

## **Jesus Is The Fulfillment Of All Prophecy:**

Hebrews 1:1-3

Luke 24:25-27,32,44-47;18:31; 16:16; Jn. 5:39

## **The Test Of A True Prophet Of God: (100% accurate)**

Deuteronomy 13:1-5

→ Deuteronomy 18:18-21

→ Jeremiah 28:9 "But the prophet who prophecies peace will be recognized as one truly sent by the LORD only if his prediction comes true."

→ 1 Samuel 9:6 "Everything he says comes true"

→ Ezekiel 33:33 "When all this comes true, and it surely will, then they will know that a prophet has been among them."

## **Prophecies In Question:**

**Joseph Smith** ("... he thought a prophet is always a prophet, but I told him a prophet was a prophet only when he was acting as such..." Smith, *History of Church*, V.5, p. 265)

• Civil War (upon all nations, slaves rise up against



masters, vexation of Gentiles (Native Americans), famine, plague, earthquake, end of all nations) (D & C 87)

• Jesus Second Coming/Millennial in 1890,91

(1834 plus 56 is 1890)

(Documentary History of Church, Vol 2, p. 182)

(Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought, Fall 1966 p.76)

(Journal of Oliver Boardman Huntington, V.2, p.128-29)

• Zion/New Jerusalem/Temple will be built "before that generation should pass away."

(D & C: 84:1-5,37,114,115; 57)

(revelation given 1832)

(Pratt, Journal of Discourse, V. 13, p. 360,362, 5/5/1870) "God promised... in 1832...

before the generation then living had passed away... they would return and build... God cannot lie... He will fulfill His promises... it must come to pass..."

(Pratt, Journal of Discourse, V. 17, p. 111, 6/14/1874

"will complete the temple before this generation passes away'..."

(Journal of Discourse, Pratt, V. 14, p. 275;

(Journal of Discourse, G. Smith, 3/10/1861, V.9, p.21;

(Journal of Discourse, G. Cannon, 10/23/1864,

V. 10 p. 344 "The temple at Center Stake of Zion... in this generation... the generation in which the revelation was given which is upwards of 30 years ago."

D & C 45:30,31;

Mormon Doctrine, p. 310;

D & C 45:30,31

D & C 124:49-51 still must build

(Reorganized LDS Church presently owns temple

• David W. Patten prophecy

(11 other men? Mission near Spring? Testify to world? Settle up business? Died 6 months later) (D & C 114)

(Documentary History of the Church, Vol. 3, p. 170-175; 3:23)

(revelation 4/17/1838 - died 10/25/1838)

• Zion is unmovable from Jackson County, Missouri (moved)

(D & C 97:19; 101:17-20; 57:1-3)

• United Order (Church to own common property) (D & C 104:1,4)

• Rebuilding of Temple in Missouri(1837,1838) (D & C 115:1,7-12)

• Newel K Whitney conditional prophecy concerning destruction of New York, Albany, and Boston if they rejected Mormonism (D & C 84:112-115)

• Oliver Granger (sacred remembrance) (D & C 117:12-15)

• Gathering of Zion to Missouri and the destruction of wicked in US. Return of lost 10 tribes of Israel (D & C 57:1-3)

(Documentary History of Church, Vol 1, p. 315-16, 1/4/1833)

(Documentary History of Church, Vol 2, p. 145, 8/16/1834)

• Government of US overthrown

(Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 302) (History of the Church, V. 5, p. 394, 5/18/1834)

• Canadian Revelation

(Whitmer, An Address To All Believers In Christ 1827 p. 30-31) \*

(A Comprehensive History of the Church,

Vol 1, p. 164-65)

(Mormon Portraits, 1186, p. 311)



## Other questionable false prophecies:

- D & C 3:16-20: Indians converted
- D & C 111:treasures?
- D & C 112:3-12: Thomas Marsh - later an apostate;
- D & C 115:7,8,10-12,17,121
- D & C 127:2: Victory over foes
- D & C 124:20,21: George Miller -later an apostate;
- D & C 124:56-60 Nauvoo house stay in Smith family forever)
- (see also D & C 3:1-3/D & C 1:37 - no allowance for excuses/fulfillment)

J. Smith Sr. said Joseph would stay in office until Christ returns, History of the Church, V.1, p. 323, 1/23/1833)

## Living Prophets (Presidents of the Church)

- Thatcher - return to Missouri, Smith's body resurrected, government pass to the Mormon leadership, US cities and railroads destroyed.
- Cannon - Jesus would return twice - 1st to temple in 1891
- Johnson/Kimball/Hyde/Woodruff - see Jesus return before death  
(Journal of Discourse, Vol 18, p. 37; Vol 21, p. 124)
- Pratt - by 1888 no unbelieving Gentiles in US.
  - build a great city which last 1000 years,
  - Mormons would return to Jackson County(Journal of Discourse, V.13, p. 138, 4/10/1870)
- Young/Smith/Lorenzo - New Jerusalem temple built in Missouri in that generation
- Young - Civil War not free slaves/government destroyed (Journal of Discourse, V. 10, p. 250) (10/6/1863)
- Kimball/Snow - Mormons will return to Missouri and build a temple  
(Conference Reports, p. 14,64; April 1898)

- Kimball - Young would become President of US (1856)  
(Journal of Discourse, V.5, p. 219)

• Young "Not till all Adam's children have the privilege to receive the priesthood and the kingdom and resurrection... will it be time to remove the curse from Cain and his posterity."

(Journal of Discourse, V. 2, p. 143, 12/12/1854  
(Journal of Discourse, V. 7, p. 290,291,

10/9/1859)

- Joseph Smith said "the moon is inhabited by 1000 year old Quakers,

(Journal of Oliver B. Huntington, V. 2, p. 166)

\* If present day prophets can contradict earlier prophets/ revelations, who do you trust? Which is authoritative? Which is erroneous/false? Is God a God of contradiction/confusion?

\* If Joseph Smith is a true prophet, can you list five prophecies that 100% came true?

\* How many false prophecies does it take to make one a false prophet? (just one)

## Revelation Complete: (final authority)

(Scripture is complete/ ended with the apostles)

Hebrews 1:1-3 (Luke 24:25-27,44,45; Col 2:10)

2 Peter 1:12-14,19-21; 3:15,16

Jude 3

2 Timothy 1:13,14; 3:15-17

John 20:30,31



<sup>7</sup>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.

<sup>8</sup>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.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>10</sup>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.

Let's outline the major elements of this passage: (1) it is "the word of the Lord" (verses 2 and 4); (2) "New Jerusalem" shall be built at this place (which according to verse 3 is in Missouri); (3) the temple would be built "in this generation"; (4) "this generation" would not pass away until the temple is built and the glory of the Lord rests upon it.

As I noted previously when referring to the major problems with D&C 84:21-22, this revelation was given September 22 and 23, 1832. The prophecy is that the temple would be built on the "temple lot within the time span of the current generation." As we both know, Elder, no temple has been built on that site—in fact, the property is owned by another religious group that claims Joseph Smith as its founder, just as you. What then shall we say about this prophecy? I would like to note how the friendly contemporaries of Joseph Smith understood his words:

... Here we learn the arts of cultivation and of building; we learn to irrigate the land; we also, in many respects, prepare ourselves for a day when we shall go to the place that has been appointed for the building up of the city of Zion and for the building of the house which shall be a great and glorious temple, on which the glory of the Lord shall rest—a temple that will excel all others in magnificence that have ever been built upon the earth. Who is there that is prepared for this movement back to the centre stake of Zion, and where the architects amongst us that are qualified to erect this temple and the city that will surround it? We have to learn a great many things, in my opinion, before we are prepared to return to that holy land; we have to learn to practice the principles that we have been taught; we have to study to fill up every hour of our time in industrial

patience prepare ourselves as good and skilful workmen, as builders in the great building which our Father has prepared.<sup>11</sup> And let me remind you that it is predicted that this generation will not pass away till a temple shall be built, and the glory of the Lord rest upon it, according to the promises.<sup>12</sup>(Elder George A. Smith, Journal of Discourses, 3/10/1861, 9:71)

... From the day that God established this Church to the present the stream of revelation has continued to flow uninterruptedly. It flows pure for us to drink at until we are filled to repletion; and if we do not drink, it is our own fault. The servants of God are not to blame, for they have been laboring by day and by night, from the beginning, with us, as a people, to prepare us for the great things that are at our very doors, and that God intends to perform in this generation. I feel the importance of this, probably not as much as I ought, and wish to do; nevertheless, when I see the great events that are taking place at this time among the nations—when I view the destiny that awaits us as a people, and the great things God has in store for us, I almost feel as though I was a laggard on the path, and too slow entirely for the great events that are coming upon the earth. The day is near when a Temple shall be reared in the Center Stake of Zion, and the Lord has said his glory shall rest on that House in this generation, that is in the generation in which the revelation was given, which is upwards of thirty years ago. How much are we prepared for this? We talk about it, sing about it, and delight to dwell upon it; but are we prepared for this great manifestation of glory in our midst? (Elder George Q. Cannon, Journal of Discourses, 10/23/1864, 10:344)

... that is, that they should continue to gather, but not let their flight be in haste, and let all things be prepared before them. God led forth the Prophet that He had raised up to the western part of Missouri, and pointed out, by His own finger, where the great city of Zion should stand in the latter days, the great city of the New Jerusalem that should be built up on the American continent. I say He pointed out these things and gave direction to His people to gather to that land, and commanded them to lay the corner stone of a great and magnificent temple that was to be built during the generation in which the people then lived. The corner stone was laid in the summer of 1831, in Jackson County, State of Missouri. All these things were done by commandment and revelation, and



God.

... God has been with us from the time that we came to this land, and I hope that the days of our tribulations are past. I hope this, because God promised in the year 1832 that we should, before the generation then living had passed away,<sup>47</sup> return and build up the City of Zion in Jackson County; that we should return and build up the temple of the Most High where we formerly laid the corner stone. He promised us that He would manifest Himself on that temple, that the glory of God should be upon it; and not only upon the temple, but within it, even a cloud by day and a flaming fire by night.

We believe in these promises as much as we believe in any promise ever uttered by the mouth of Jehovah. "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 to-morrow. Why? Because God cannot lie. He will fulfill all His promises. He has spoken, it must come to pass. This is our faith. (Elder Orson Pratt, *Journal of Discourses*, 5/5/1870, 13:360, 362).

It seems to me, Elder Hahn, that these men who were called "apostles of Christ" and who took active roles of leadership in the LDS Church understood D&C 84:4-5 in such a way as to preach that the temple would be built in Jackson County, Missouri, within the generation that was alive in 1832. There can be no mistaking that. And with reference to the meaning of "generation" in this passage, I note as well the definition given by Bruce R. McConkie when, in *Mormon Doctrine*, page 310, he addresses the term and says, "A generation may be measured in terms of the life of the oldest persons who live in a particular period" (D&C 45:30-31; 84:4-5). Note he specifically references D&C 84:4-5 in his definition.

One common defense given by LDS people is to be found in D&C 124:49-51, a "revelation" that was given after the Mormons were driven from Missouri, resulting in an inability to build the temple as D&C 84:1-5 had commanded. It is clear that the early apostles, such as those cited above, did not think that this passage released them from the imperative action of building the temple; however, modern LDS refer to it as an "explanation" of Smith's prophecy. The passage reads,

"Verily, verily I say unto you, that when I give a commandment

to any of the sons of men to do a work unto my name, and those sons of men go with all their might and with all they have to perform that work, and cease not their diligence, and their enemies come upon them and hinder them from performing that work, behold, it behooveth me to require that work no more at the hands of those sons of men, but to accept of their offerings.

<sup>48</sup>And the iniquity and transgression of my holy laws and commandments I will visit upon the heads of those who hindered my work, unto the third and fourth generation, so long as they repent not, and hate me, saith the Lord God.

<sup>49</sup>Therefore, for this cause have I accepted the offerings of those whom I commanded to build up a city and a house unto my name, in Jackson county, Missouri, and were hindered by their enemies, saith the Lord your God.

This is, of course, a very convenient "out" for Joseph and prophecy. However, it is also just as obviously an excuse for a prophecy: Is God incapable of controlling the actions of men? In Old Testament the enemies of Israel came against them and defeated them as a part of God's will and purpose (Isaiah 10:5-19). Nothing mentioned about this by Smith—in fact, the blame is put squarely the enemies of the LDS Church, not upon any sinfulness of the people. Are God's decrees really dependent upon the actions of evil men, Elder Hahn? The tests of a prophet given by the Holy Spirit in Deuteronomy 13 and 18 do not make a place for "failures due to enemies that are strong to be resisted." Smith, upon failing to rear the temple in Missouri, came up with an excuse for the failure—but his excuse does keep him from falling under the condemnation of God's Word as a prophet.

No matter how you stretch it, Elder, this prophecy fails the test. Even if you were very liberal and gave to the word "generation" meaning of a full hundred years, you still ran out of time over fifty years ago. Smith said it was the word of the Lord; he defined the exact event that would take place—the temple would be built at a specific local that is known to this day; he defined the time parameters in which would take place—prior to the death of that generation. It is a prophecy that can be tested—and it fails.

I will address one more false prophecy and leave the subject at that for as I noted in my last letter, it only takes one false prophecy to disqualify a person as a true prophet of God. The next prophecy is found in D&C, Section 114:



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.

For verily thus saith the Lord, that inasmuch as there are those among you who deny my name, others shall be planted in their stead and receive their bishopric. Amen.

The revelation is dated April 17, 1838, and was given to Joseph Smith at Far West, Missouri. Daniel Ludlow, in his book *A Companion to Your Study of the Doctrine and Covenants* cites Joseph Fielding Smith's words from *Church History and Modern Revelation*, 2:85:

On April 17, 1838, the Prophet received a revelation for David W. Patten who had for some time been located in Missouri and with Elder Thomas B. Marsh was maintaining a steady influence amidst the opposition of disaffected brethren, including the three who had been appointed to preside, David Whitmer, William W. Phelps and John Whitmer. The Lord called upon Elder Patten to settle up his business as soon as possible, make a disposition of his merchandise, and prepare to take a mission the following spring, in company with others to preach the Gospel to all the world. . . . Elder Patten obedient to this revelation took steps to meet this call which had come to him. Events were to develop, however, which would change the nature of his mission before the following spring could arrive.

And what was the nature of these "events" spoken of by Joseph Fielding Smith? David W. Patten died October 25, 1838, in the "battle of Crooked River." He never lived to see the "next spring" as the revelation predicted. He went on no mission with eleven other men.

Why would the Lord command that Patten should prepare for a mission the next spring, which would take place in the company of eleven other men, if the Lord knew that he would not live to see that day? Is it not clear that here we have Joseph Smith, in the name of the Lord, giving instructions to a man to prepare for a mission, when in fact Smith did not know that Patten was going to die? How could he? This shows the *human* origin of Smith's "revelation." He did not know the future, and could not foresee what was going to happen to Patten.

But the true God knew what was going to happen. That is why, in fact, the true God of the Bible is able to *mock* the idols of the peoples in Isaiah 40 through 48—more than once he challenges these false gods to predict the future, but they cannot. Any predictions they make, any commands they may give, can be overthrown by something as simple as a musketball fired by a fleeing man near the Crooked River.

I have encountered three common responses from LDS people to this prophecy and its failure. The first runs like this: "All blessings are based upon obedience and faithfulness. Patten must not have remained faithful to his calling, and as a result lost his blessing. See, even the second verse talks about people denying God's name, and others being planted in their stead." Folks who respond in this way obviously know little of the historical situation in which Patten died. Note the story from the *Documentary History of the Church*, pages 170–175: According to the DHC, a "mob" takes some Mormon brethren captive. "Captain" David W. Patten (who was also an apostle, by the way) is dispatched with about seventy-five men to catch the mob and rescue the prisoners. Early on the morning of Thursday, October 25, they approach the mob's camp:

Fifteen of the company were detached from the main body while sixty continued their march till they arrived near the ford of Crooked river, (or creek) where they dismounted, tied their horses, and leaving four or five men to guard them, proceeded towards the ford, not knowing the location of the encampment. It was just as the dawning of light in the east, when they were marching quietly along the road, and near the top of the hill which descends to the river that the report of a gun was heard; and young Patrick O'Banion reeled out of the ranks and fell mortally wounded. Thus the work of death commenced, when Captain Patten ordered a charge and rushed down the hill on a fast trot, and when within about fifty yards of the camp formed a line. The mob formed a line under the bank of the river, below their tents. It was yet so dark that little could be seen by looking to the west, while the mob looking towards the dawning light, could see Patten and his men, when they fired a broadside, and three or four of the brethren fell. Captain Patten ordered the fire returned, which was instantly obeyed, to great disadvantage in the darkness which yet continued. The fire was repeated by the mob, and returned by Captain Patten's company, who gave the watchword "God and Liberty." Captain Patten then



ordered a charge, which was instantly obeyed. The parties immediately came in contact, with their swords, and the mob was soon put to flight, crossing the river at the ford and such places as they could get a chance. In the pursuit, one of the mob fled from behind a tree, wheeled, and shot Captain Patten, who instantly fell, mortally wounded, having received a large ball in his bowels. . . .

I went with my brother Hyrum and Lyman Wight to meet the brethren on their return, near Log creek, where I saw Captain Patten in a most distressing condition. His wound was incurable.

Brother David Patten was a very worthy man, beloved by all good men who knew him. He was one of the Twelve Apostles, and died as he had lived, a man of God, and strong in the faith of a glorious resurrection, in a world where mobs will have no power or place. One of his last expressions to his wife was—"Whatever you do else, O! do not deny the faith". . . .

*Saturday, 27.*—Brother Patten was buried this day at Far West, and before the funeral, I called at Brother Patten's house, and while meditating on the scene before me in presence of his friends, I could not help pointing to his lifeless body and testifying, "There lies a man that has done just as he said he would—he has laid down his life for his friends."

As can be seen, Patten died "strong in the faith" according to Joseph Smith himself. The mention of men denying God's name and being removed from their bishoprics in verse 2 of Section 114 is not in any way in reference to Patten—rather, it is in reference to a situation that existed at the time in Far West where David Whitmer, John Whitmer, and William W. Phelps were "causing trouble" and had been removed from the local presidency. See Elder George Q. Cannon's narration of these events in his *Life of Joseph Smith the Prophet*, pp. 221–224.

The most common defense raised is that Patten did indeed serve a mission—but his mission was in the "spirit world" where he went after he died. But surely you can see that this is not what the "revelation" says at all. There are far too many objections to this understanding. First, did the eleven other men also die and go to the "spirit world" with Patten? Second, what is "spring" in the spirit world? Are there seasons there? Third, the revelation says that he would "testify of my name and bear glad tidings unto all the world." not to the spirit world. This revelation clearly speaks of an *earthly* mission to take place in the spring of 1839, not a spiritual mission to take place in the fall of 1838. Finally, a not very common, but plausible defense is this: This is

not really a prophecy of a future event, but simply a command to David Patten to be *prepared* to go on a mission. It is not *explicitly* stated that he was going to *go* on the mission at all, rather he was simply to be *prepared* to do so. You can probably see immediately, Elder Hahn, how this perspective can create a route of escape for Joseph Smith by stretching the revelation to the breaking point so as to avoid his obvious error. It is true that the spring mission itself is not *specifically* prophesied; however, the spring mission is given as the reason why Patten was to settle up his business and make a disposition of his merchandise. There is not even a hint that this was just a "theoretical" mission, or simply a "testing" of Patten's obedience. None of this comes from the text itself. It is interesting to note with reference to this the fact that according to the DHC 3:23, another revelation was received by Smith on the same day as Section 114, though this revelation is not a part of the D&C. It reads:

Verily thus saith the Lord, let my servant Brigham Young go unto the place which he has bought, on Mill Creek, and there provide for his family until an effectual door is opened for the support of his family, until I shall command him to go hence, and not to leave his family until they are amply provided for. Amen.

Note that both of these "revelations" were giving specific directions for specific men to do specific things. There is nothing in the "revelation" for Brigham Young that would lead us to believe that he was "testing" him, nor is there anything in D&C 114 that would suggest that this was anything but a straightforward command to prepare for a mission that was *supposed* to take place the next spring, that being the spring of 1839. Smith had no way of knowing Patten would not live that long—Patten was only about thirty-eight years of age. Also, the fact that he says that this mission would be conducted "in the company with others, even twelve including himself" indicates that Smith was laying out the specifics of *how* the mission would be run. *If* this is really the "word of the Lord" as Smith claims, why would God speak in this way? Why would God describe the *specifics* of a mission that would never take place?

So here you have two prophecies, Elder Hahn. Remember at the outset that I said that it is not really my duty to have to prove them wrong, but, since you claim Smith was a prophet, it is really your duty to prove them right! Can you do so? Can you show me how D&C 84:1–



that the Lord sent forth His angel to reveal the truths of heaven as in times past, even as in ancient days. This should have been hailed as the great blessing which could have been bestowed upon any nation, kindred, tongue, or people. It should have been received with hearts of gratitude and gladness, praise and thanksgiving.

But as it was in the days of our Savior, so was it in the advent of this new dispensation. It was not in accordance with the notions, traditions, and pre-conceived ideas of the American people. The messenger did not come to an eminent divine of any of the so-called orthodox, he did not adopt their interpretation of the Holy Scriptures. The Lord did not come with the armies of heaven, in power and great glory, nor send His messengers paraded with august eke than the truth of heaven, to communicate to the weak, the lowly, the youth of humble origin, the sincere enquirer after the knowledge of God. But He did send His angel to this same obscure person, Joseph Smith jun., who afterwards became a Prophet, Seer, and Revelator, and informed him that he should not join any of the religious societies of the day, for they were all wrong; that they were following the precepts of men instead of the Lord Jesus; that He had a work for him to perform, inasmuch as he should prove faithful before Him.

No sooner was this made known, and published abroad, and people began to listen and obey the heavenly summons, than opposition began to rage, and the people, even in this favored land, began to persecute their neighbors and friends for entertaining religious opinions differing from their own.

I pause now to ask, had not Joseph Smith a right to pre-empt and establish a different, a new religion and form of worship in this government?

Every one must admit he had. This right was always held sacred, for upon it was based the religious liberty of every citizen of the Republic. It was a privilege held sacred in the bosom of every class of people; no Judge dared invade its holy precincts? No Legislator nor Governor ventured to obstruct the free exercise thereof. How then should it be esteemed an object worthy of persecution that Joseph Smith, the man called of God to perform a work in restoring the Gospel of salvation unto the children of men, and his followers, true believers in his divine mission, should attempt to exercise the same privilege held sacred by all others, of every name, nature, and description, and equally so by them? Why should he and his followers be debarred the privilege of worshipping God according to the dictates of their consciences? Legally they cannot, and I will further state, that legally they have not. No; whenever the iron hand of oppression and persecution has fallen upon this people, our oppressors have broken their own laws, set at defiance and trampled under foot every principle of equal rights, justice, and liberty found written in that rich legacy of our fathers, THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES.

Whenever popular fury has been directed against us, no power in the government has been found potent enough to afford protection, and what is still more astonishing, honorable enough to yield redress, nor has any effort succeeded in bringing to justice those individuals who had perpetrated such fearful crimes. No! The murderer, the assassin, the mid-day plunderer, and highway robber roam unmolested, and mingle unquested in the society of the rulers of the land; they pass and re-pass as current coin, producing no jar in the sensibilities of refinement, no odium in the atmosphere in which they move.

Belham Young  
Journal of Discourses  
Volume 2, Page 171  
1855

Heber C. Kimball  
Journal of Discourses  
Volume 6, Page 29  
1857

light. Do you not see it springs from God. It emanates from him; and if it is in us and abounds, it will be in us as a well of water springing up into everlasting life, from whence it springs.

Well, here are a few ideas before you,—something I had not thought of before I got up. Well, I am called and ordained to be a teacher and to instruct; but if you do not receive my instructions and the principles of truth that emanate from me, then you are not prepared for the Lord says, "If a man offers you a gift, and you do not receive that gift with gladness and joy, then, of course, the man that offers the gift is not blessed; but if the receiver receives it with joy, then the man that gives the gift has joy in giving it. Do you not see it? Well, upon the same principle, if God confers gifts, and blessings, and promises, and glories, and immortality, and eternal lives, and you receive them and treasure them up, then our Father and our God has joy in that man. Do you understand me? I do not know whether you get my ideas or not; but, to save my head, I cannot talk any plainer. You know I am called simple. Well, I wish I was simpler and could convey things with greater simplicity than I do. Why? Because I have not a spirit within me to wish to talk one word to you except good sense, and light, and information, and instruction to the child that sits before me to-day. Do you not see God is not pleased with any man except those that receive the gifts, and treasure them up, and practise upon those gifts? And he gives those gifts, and confers them upon you, and will have us to practise upon them. Now, these principles to me are plain and simple.

Do you suppose that God in person called upon Joseph Smith, our Prophet? God called upon him; but he did not come himself and call, but he sent Peter to do it. Do you not see?

TRUTH, LIFE, AND LIGHT, ETC.

He sent Peter and sent Moroni to Joseph, and told him that he had got the plates. Did God come himself? No: He sent Moroni and told him there was a record, and says he, "That record is matter that pertains to the Lamanites, and it tells when their fathers came out of Jerusalem, and how they came, and all about it; and says he, "If you will do as I tell you, I will confer a gift upon you." Well, he conferred it upon him, because Joseph said he would do as he told him. "I want you to go to work and take the Urim and Thummim, and translate this book, and have it published, that this nation may read it." Do you not see, by Joseph receiving the gift that was conferred upon him, you and I have that record?

Well, when this took place, Peter came along to him and gave power and authority, and says he, "You go and baptize Oliver Cowdery," and then ordain him a Priest. "He did it, and do you not see his words were in exercise? Then Oliver, having authority, baptized Joseph and ordained him a Priest. Do you not see the words, how they manifest themselves?

Well, then Peter comes along. Why did not God come? He sent Peter, do you not see? Why did he not come along? Because he has agents to attend to his business, and he sits upon his throne and is established at headquarters, and tells this man, "Go and do this;" and it is behind the veil just as it is here. You have got to learn that.

Peter comes along with James and John and ordains Joseph to be an Apostle, and then Joseph ordains Oliver, and David Whitmer, and Martin Harris; and then they were ordered to select twelve more and ordain them. It was done. Do you not see words were manifest? They received the truth, and thus you and I are here to-day; and if it had not



## The Nature Of God:

(What is God our Heavenly Father like?)

LDS:

• "As man is... God once was..."

As God is... man may become."

- An exalted man/with a body of flesh and bones/changeable/limited
- Plurality of Gods

## The Bible Says: (NKJV)

John 4:24 "God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

Isaiah 43:10-13 "... I am He. Before Me there was no

God formed, nor shall there be after Me. I, even I, am the LORD. and besides Me there is no savior... I am God. Indeed before the day was I am He..."

Isaiah 44:6,8,24 "I am the First and I am the Last;

Besides Me there is no God...Is there a God besides Me? I know not one. I am the LORD who makes all things, who stretches out the heavens all alone..."

Isaiah 45:5,6,14,21,22 "I am the LORD (Jehovah), and

there is no other, there is no God (Elohim) besides Me... there is none besides Me. A just God (Elohim) and a Savior; there is none besides Me."

Isaiah 40:14,25,28 "With whom did He take counsel, and who instructed Him? To whom then will you liken Me, or to whom shall I be equal?" says the Holy One. The everlasting God, the LORD..."

Hebrews 6:13 "When God made his promise to Abraham, since there was no one greater for him to swear by, He swore by Himself..."

Psalms 139:7 "Where can I go from Your Spirit?

Where can I flee from Your presence?"

Psalms 90:2 "From everlasting to everlasting, You are God"

God"

Psalms 102:27 "You remain the same."

Jeremiah 23:23,24 "Do I not fill heaven and earth?

says the LORD."(Jehovah)

1 Timothy 1:17 "Eternal, immortal, invisible God"

1 Timothy 6:16 "Who alone has immortality dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see."

Jeremiah 10:10 "The LORD (Jehovah) is the true God (Elohim)."

Exodus 20:2,3 "I am the LORD (Jehovah) thy God

(Elohim)... thou shalt have no other gods (Elohim) before me."

Hosea 11:9 "I am God and not man."(Job 9:32 "He is not a man as I am.")

Genesis 3:5 Satan's lie "You will be like God..."

(Ezekiel 28:2; Isaiah 14:14)

Questions:

- Who created first man/woman/matter/intelligence (mind)/Law?
- If the law of progression is eternal, does Heavenly Father continue to progress?
- If Heavenly Father was once a man, how can he truly be eternal/unchanging?
- Where in the Bible does it mention a mother god?
- God is described as having wings, feathers, and as a consuming fire. (Ps. 57:1; 91:4; Heb. 12:29) Isn't this literary metaphor? (1 Peter 3:12; Jn. 10:6)



## The LDS Challenge:

"The world has been unable to place a finger upon anything that is inconsistent or out of harmony in the revelations of Joseph Smith with that which has been revealed before, or predicted by the prophets and the Lord Himself." (J. F. Smith, Doctrine of Salvation, V.1, p.302)

"If Joseph Smith was a deceiver,... then he should be exposed; his claims should be refuted, and his doctrines shown to be false... If his claims and declarations were built upon fraud and deceit, there would appear many errors and contradictions, which would be easy to detect. The doctrines of false teachers will not stand the test when tried by the accepted standards of measurement, the scriptures." (Doctrines of Salvation, Joseph Fielding Smith, 1954; V.1:188,189)

"Wherefore, confound your enemies; call upon them to meet you both in public and in private; in as much as ye are faithful their shame shall be made manifest." (Joseph Smith, Doctrine and Covenants, 71:7; 1831)

"Convince us of our errors of doctrine, if we have any, by reason, logical argument, or by the Word of God, and we will ever be grateful... that you have been instruments in the hands of God of redeeming your fellow beings." (Orson Pratt, The Seer, p. 15)

"If a faith will not bear to be investigated, if its' preachers and professors are afraid to have it examined, their foundation must be very weak..."

# The Quest For The Truth