

Problems With Mormonism

Compiled by Steve Gregg

"[Mormonism] must stand or fall on the story of Joseph Smith. He was either a prophet of God...or he was one of the biggest frauds this world has ever seen. There is no middle ground."

—Joseph Fielding Smith (10th president of LDS), *Doctrines of Salvation*, 1954, vol. 1, p. 188

Jesus said:

"Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves." (Matthew 7:15)

"For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. (Matthew 24:24)"

Three Marks of a false prophet:

A. Bad character—

"But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you... And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of" (2 Peter 2:1-2)

E. D. Howe, a contemporary of Smith who did tremendous research during Joseph's lifetime, obtained one of the most interesting statements concerning the early life of Joseph Jr. and of the Smith family. Smith himself never dared to answer Howe's charges, though they were well known to him, so great was the weight of contemporary evidence. Mr. Howe obtained a statement signed by sixty-two residents of Palmyra, New York—one that cannot be ignored by any serious student of Mormonism:

We, the undersigned, have been acquainted with the Smith family for a number of years while they resided near this place, and we have no hesitation in saying that we consider them destitute of that moral character which ought to entitle them to the confidence of any community. They were particularly famous for visionary projects, spent much of their time in diggings or money, which they pretended was hid in the earth; and to this day, large excavations may be seen in the earth, not far from their residence, where they used to spend their time in digging for hidden treasures. Joseph Smith Sr., and his son Joseph, were in particular considered entirely destitute of moral character and addicted to vicious habits. {Mormonism Unveiled [Painesville, Ohio, 1834],261}

One-sided testimony? "The amazing fact is that there exist no contemporary pro-Mormon statements from reliable and informed sources who knew the Smith family and Joseph intimately." (Kingdom of the Cults, 204)

"And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you..." (2 Peter 2:3)

The **Book of Abraham** is an 1835 work produced by Joseph Smith that he said was based on Egyptian papyri purchased from a traveling mummy exhibition. According to Smith, the book was "a translation of some ancient records...purporting to be the writings of Abraham, while he was in Egypt, called the Book of Abraham, written by his own hand, upon papyrus." Smith's translation of the papyri describes a story of Abraham's early life, including a vision of the cosmos...

The Book of Abraham papyri were thought lost in the 1871 Great Chicago Fire. However, in 1966 several fragments of the papyri were found in the archives of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, and in the LDS Church archives. They are now referred to as the Joseph Smith Papyri. Upon examination by professional Mormon and non-Mormon Egyptologists, these fragments were found to bear no resemblance to Smith's interpretation, and were identified as common Egyptian funerary texts, dating to about the first century BC. As a result, the Book of Abraham has been the source of significant controversy, with Mormon apologists having presented a number of theories in defense of the authenticity of the Book of Abraham. (from Wikipedia)

“Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls...” (2 Peter 2:14)

Richard Lyman Bushman, Mormon historian, in *Rough Stone Rolling*, a biography of Joseph Smith, said that at least ten of Joseph Smiths [20 or so] wives were simultaneously married to men still living. This would suggest that polygamy for the purpose of bearing seed would not apply in their cases, since they already had husbands by whom they could bear children (see Jacob 2:30).

In 1834, Joseph had an affair with Fanny Alger, their 16-year-old nanny (his wife Emma caught them in the barn having sex). Fanny became pregnant and was sent to live with her sister. This was 9 years before Smith received the divine revelation permitting him to practice polygamy.

Sarah Pratt, wife of Apostle Orson Pratt, accused Joseph of trying to seduce her while her husband was away on a mission for the church.

Nancy Rigdon, teenaged daughter of Sydney Rigdon (once Joseph Smith's closest friend and supporter), claimed that Joseph tried to sexually seduce her, promising her and her family exaltation in the celestial kingdom, if she would have sex with him.

The *Nauvoo Expositor*, published by ex-Mormons, who lived under Smith's tyranny, accused him of abuse of power and rampant sexual misconduct. (He had their newspaper plates destroyed)

“...they speak great, swelling words...” (2 Peter 2:18)

“I have more to boast of than ever any man had. I am the only man that has ever been able to keep a whole church together since the days of Adam. A large majority of the whole have stood by me. Neither Paul, John, Peter, nor Jesus ever did it. I boast that no man ever did such a work as I. The followers of Jesus ran away from Him; but the Latter-day Saints never ran away from me yet . . .” (*History of the Church*, Vol. 6, p. 408-409).

B. False prophecy—

But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die. And if thou say in thine heart, how shall we know the word which the Lord hath not spoken? When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him. (Deut.18:20-22)

Prophecy #1 — Temple to be built in Independence, Missouri. In September of 1832 Joseph Smith prophesied that the New Jerusalem and a new temple would be built in Zion, Missouri, a site near Independence.¹³ He further stated that his generation would not all pass away until these events took place. The temple was never built in Smith's lifetime or within the generation of his contemporaries. The Mormons were driven out of Missouri in 1839. The site where the temple was to be built is not even owned today by the Mormon Church. (Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, *Doctrine and Covenants*, Salt Lake City, Utah, section 84:2-5,31.)

Prophecy #2 — The End of all nations. In December 1832 Smith prophesied that South Carolina would rebel against the federal government, resulting in a war that would spread worldwide and would result in the "full end of all nations."¹⁴ Nothing needs to be said about the failure of this bizarre prophecy. (Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, *Doctrine and Covenants*, Salt Lake City, Utah, section 87)

Prophecy #3 — The Return of the Lord. In 1835, as the prophecies of William Miller were growing in popularity, Joseph Smith stated that "the return of the Lord is nigh — even fifty-six years should wind up the scene." (*History of the Church*, vol. 2, p. 182)

The 56 years passed in 1891. In a diary entry dated April 6, 1843, Smith repeated this prophecy, stating the

Lord would return when "I am 85 years old, 48 years hence, or about 1890." (*Doctrine and Covenants*, section 130:14-17 and *History of the Church*, vol. 5, p. 336) Smith was killed when he was 39 years old.

Prophecy #4 — The Liberty jail prophecies. In March of 1839 Smith issued a whole package of prophecies from his jail cell in Liberty, Missouri.¹⁷ Among other things, he predicted that his enemies would be destroyed "by the sword," that his friends would never charge him with transgressions, and that God was about to change the times and seasons. None of these prophecies came true. The enemies of the Mormons were not destroyed, God did not change the times and seasons, and Smith's friends did turn on him with serious charges that ultimately led to his arrest and death (*Doctrine and Covenants*, section 121:5-15)

Prophecy #5 — The United States Government to be overthrown. In May of 1843 Smith prophesied that if the United States government did not redress the wrongs suffered by the Mormons in Missouri, the government would be "utterly overthrown and wasted." ". . . I prophesy in the name of the Lord God of Israel, unless the United States redress the wrongs committed upon the Saints in the state of Missouri and punish the crimes committed by her officers that in a few years the government will be utterly overthrown and wasted, and there will not be so much as a potsherd left . . ." (*History of the Church*, Vol. 5, p. 394.) The federal government rejected the Mormon petitions and their "wrongs" were not redressed, yet the U.S. government continued to exist.

Prophecy #6 — His son to succeed him. In April 1844 Smith prophesied that his son would succeed him and would become "president and king of Israel." The child was named David. Needless to say, he never became "president and king of Israel." Nor did he succeed his father. He died in 1904 at the age of 60, after spending the last 27 years of his life in an insane asylum. (Michael D. Quinn, *The Mormon Hierarchy*, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1994, p. 644)

Other Failed Prophecies¹

Many of Smith's incorrect prophecies, like the one concerning his son, were related to individuals. For example, in 1835 he prophesied that Orson Hyde would go to Jerusalem and prepare the way for the regathering of the Jewish people. (*Prophecies of Joseph Smith and Their Fulfillment*, p. 261.)

In like manner, in 1837 Smith prophesied that the president of the Church's Council of Twelve Apostles, a man named Thomas Marsh, would go forth "unto the ends of the earth" to preach to both Jews and Gentiles. Less than two years later, Marsh was excommunicated! (*Doctrine and Covenants*, section 112.)

In 1841 Smith declared that a fellow named George Miller was a man "without guile" who could be trusted, and that no man should "despise my servant George, for he shall honor me." Seven years later, George Miller was excommunicated. (*Doctrine and Covenants*, section 124:20-21)

C. The wrong god—

If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, And the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the Lord your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul. (Deut.13:13)

1. Unchanged since eternity (Mal.3:6; Psalm 90:2) never was a man

¹ Joseph Smith prophesied that he and his family would possess the house he was building at Nauvoo "for ever and ever" (*Doctrine and Covenants* 124:22-23, 59), yet, the LDS authorized *The Comprehensive History of the Church*, states:

"The Nauvoo House was never completed; and after its unfinished walls had stood unprotected for a number of years and were crumbling to decay, they were taken down; the foundations were torn up and the excellent building stone of which they were constructed sold for use in other buildings in and about Nauvoo." (1:16)

“I am going to tell you how God came to be God. We have imagined that God was God from all eternity. These are incomprehensible ideas to some, but they are the simple and first principles of the gospel...the Father of us all dwelt on an earth the same as Jesus Christ himself did ... (Joseph Smith, *Journal of Discourses*, 6:3-4)

“God himself was once as we are now, and is an exalted Man, and sits enthroned in yonder heavens...I say, if you were to see him to-day, you would see him like a man in form — like yourselves, in all the person, image, and very form as a man....it is necessary that we should understand the character and being of God, and how he came to be so; for I am going to tell you how God came to be God. We have imagined and supposed that God was God from all eternity, I will refute that idea, and will take away and do away the veil, so that you may see....and that he was once a man like us; yea, that God himself the Father of us all, dwelt on an earth the same as Jesus Christ himself did.”(*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 6, p. 3).

“Remember that God, our heavenly Father, was perhaps once a child, and mortal like we ourselves, and rose step by step in the scale of progress, in the school of advancement; has moved forward and overcome, until He has arrived at the point where He now is” (Apostle Orson Hyde, *Journal of Discourses*, 1:123).

“When our father Adam came into the garden of Eden, he came into it with a celestial body, and brought Eve, one of his wives, with him. He helped to make and organized this world. He is MICHAEL, the Archangel, the ANCIENT OF DAYS! About whom holy men have written and spoken—HE is our FATHER and our GOD, and the only God with whom we have to do” (Brigham Young, In the *Journal of Discourses*, 1:50).

2. The Only God ever to exist (Isaiah 43:10; 44:8)

“Hence, the doctrine of a plurality of Gods is as prominent in the Bible as any other doctrine. It is all over the face of the Bible . . . Paul says there are Gods many and Lords many . . . but to us there is but one God—that is pertaining to us; and he is in all and through all”(*History of the Church*, Vol. 6, page 474).

“In the beginning, the head of the Gods called a council of the Gods; and they came together and concocted a plan to create the world and people it.”(*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 6, p. 5).

3. Spirit, not having flesh and bones (John 4:24; Luke 24:39)

“The Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man’s: the Son also; but the Holy Ghost has not a body of flesh and bones, but is a personage of Spirit” (*Doctrine and Covenants*, 130:22).

“Each of these Gods, including Jesus Christ and His Father, being in possession of not merely an organized spirit, but a glorious immortal body of flesh and bones” (Parley P. Pratt, *Key to the Science of Theology*, ed. 1978, 23).

4. Omnipresent (Jer.23:23-24; Ps.139:8)

5. Not seen by man (Ex.33:20; John 1:18)

6. Created all things from nothing (Hebrews 11:3; John 1:3)

7. Jesus was uniquely God’s Son (John 3:16)

8. Jesus was not created (John 1:3; Col.1:16)

9. Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit (Matt.1:18, 20)

10. Jesus born in Bethlehem (Mic.5:2; Matt.2:1)—Alma 7:9-10 has Him born in Jerusalem

The Book of Mormon:

"If false, [the Book of Mormon] is one of the most cunning, wicked, bold, deep-laden impositions ever palmed upon the world; calculated to deceive and ruin millions who will sincerely receive it as the Word of God, and will suppose themselves securely built upon the rock of truth, until they are plunged, together with their families, into hopeless despair."

—[Apostle] Orson Pratt's Works, *Divine Authenticity of the Book of Mormon*, Liverpool, 1851

"I told the brethren that the Book of Mormon was the most correct of any book on earth, and the keystone of our religion, and a man would get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book." (*History of the Church*, Vol. 4, page 461)

The conning of Martin Harris—prosperous farmer, who in 1827, visited pastor John A. Clarke, who believed him to be the "mark" of a con by Smith.

Joseph's mother went to Harris' farm and told him about the gold plate discovery

He was told that Joseph found the plates by looking into a peep stone. Later, Harris was conned by Smith, Oliver Cowdery and David Whitmer into claiming to see the plates with his spiritual eyes, and into financing the publication of the Book of Mormon.

11 witnesses who saw the plates:

First 3 witness saw only through "spiritual eyes" (according to Harris (Recollections of John H. Gilbert, 1892, Typescript, BYU, 5-6).

David Whitmer, Oliver Cowdery (distant cousin of Smith), Martin Harris

All three later apostatized from the Mormon Church and were declared thereby to be "counterfeiters, thieves [and] liars" (cf. *Senate Document* 189, February 15, 1841, 6-9).

8 others (from only two unscrupulous families) said they saw and handled plates:

Smith's father, Smith's brother Hyrum; Samuel H. Smith

Christian Whitmer, Jacob Whitmer, Peter Whitmer, Jr, John Whitmer, Hiram Page (brother-in-law)

All 8 from two families!

"I could not feel more satisfied and at rest if the entire Whitmer family had testified!" —Mark Twain

Joseph Smith later inveighed against the character of the witnesses (cf. *Doctrine and Covenants*, 3-12; 10:7; *History of the Church*; 3:228, 3:232).

Problems with "the most correct book" in the world:

The Book of Mormon has undergone extensive revision, in 1920 and in 1981—with the result that over 100 verses (approximately 4000 words) have been changed from the 1830 edition, without the aid of the golden plates to guide the revisers. Examples:

Mosiah 21:28—King Benjamin (1830) was changed to King Mosiah.

More than 20 changes have been made in 1 Nephi 19:16-20.

More than 18 changes can be counted in Alma 28:14—29:11

In 1830, 1 Nephi 11:21 contained the declaration: "And the angel said unto me, behold the Lamb of God, yea, even the Eternal Father." This has been changed to: "And the angel said unto me, behold the Lamb of God, yea, even the Son of the Eternal Father."

Compare the credentials of “most correct book” with those of the Bible:

No material culture of Lamanites or Nephites has been found in the Americas. By contrast, archaeology has found evidence of all the major cultures mentioned in scripture. In fact, most of the place names in the Bible have retained their same names to this day.

The Flora and fauna mentioned in the Bible are period- and geographically-accurate.

Not so with Book of Mormon. 1 Nephi 18:25 speaks of cows, asses, horses, goats being found here by Lehi's sons. The book also speaks of horse-drawn chariots used in massive wars. Ether 9:19 mentions elephants. Mosiah 9:9 says they had wheat and barley. What are actually found in pre-Columbian Mesoamerica are llamas, turkeys, dogs, beans, corn and squash.

1 Nephi 18:25 speaks of gold, silver and copper used in metallurgic terms—e.g., Metal armor, metal coins and metal plates for writing. Steel is also mentioned.

No evidence of smelting, nor any metallurgical artifacts exist.

Helaman 3:15 mentions many books and many records that were kept chiefly by the Nephites. Yet, no records exist of these writings. Abundant ancient records and writings have been found from the biblical cultures. We have manuscript evidence for the NT that is 2000 years old, and even older for the Old Testament. There is no ancient evidence of the Book of Mormon or any of the alleged written records.

Mormon 9:32 mentions Reformed Egyptian as the language of the Nephites. No such language is known to linguists or Egyptologists. Nor is there any evidence of Egyptian language found in artifacts from ancient Mesoamerica.

Bible mentions Roman and Jewish coins from the first century, which have been found in great abundance. Alma 11 describes Nephite metal coinage. No pre-Columbian coins have been found in the Americas. Metallic coins did not exist in America until Europeans brought them.

Bible describes many wars that have been confirmed by archaeology and external historic sources. Book of Mormon describes epic battles, allegedly occurring as recently as 400 A.D., but not a trace of evidence for them has been found. Ether 15 describes a war in which 2 million men were slain by steel swords. Where are the swords and the skeletons?

In Mormon 8:2 Lamanites destroy Nephites at hill Cumorah, in New York. At least 230,000 victims are mentioned. No steel swords have been found, no chariot parts, no mass graves. Experts say the pre-Columbian Indians had no metal weapons, just stone.

The temples described in scripture have been found by archaeologists.

2 Nephi 5:16 says that Nephi, descended from Joseph, built a temple like Solomon's, and appointed his sons as priests. Jews would not build a temple outside Jerusalem, or ordain non-Levitical priests.

Historical figures—Omri, David, Caiaphas, Pilate, Jesus of Nazareth and many others have been documented from sources outside the Bible. The New Testament names characters with typical names, known (from non-biblical sources) to have been common at the time. No evidence has emerged to suggest that any characters in the Book of Mormon ever existed.

No evidence exists of Christianity in ancient America, though Book of Mormon claims that there were massive conversions due to Christ's visit here.

Summary of DNA controversy, from Wikipedia:

Mormon scholars have argued that the DNA taken from modern-day Israelis has been intermixed with DNA from many other nations, thus they do not contain the same traits that Israelites had when Lehi left Israel (Stubbs 2003). Also, modern Native Americans have intermixed, which has changed their DNA from that of their ancestors' as well. It is also noted by Mormon researchers that another factor affecting genetic diversity of New World inhabitants is the fact that 90 percent of the population died as the result of disease introduced

by the Spaniards and others after their arrival (Coe 2002, p. 231).

Michael F. Whiting, director of Brigham Young University's DNA Sequencing Center and an associate professor in BYU's Department of Integrative Biology, concluded in his article "DNA and the Book of Mormon: A Phylogenetic Perspective" that Book of Mormon critics attempting to use DNA "have not given us anything that would pass the muster of peer review by scientists in this field, because they have ignored the real complexity of the issues involved. Further, they have overlooked the entire concept of hypothesis testing in science and believe that just because they label their results as 'based on DNA,' they have somehow proved that the results are accurate or that they have designed the experiment correctly. At best, they have demonstrated that the global colonization hypothesis is an oversimplified interpretation of the Book of Mormon. At worst, they have misrepresented themselves and the evidence in the pursuit of other agendas." Additionally, although he admits the usefulness of population genetics and of DNA in inferring historical events, he contests that, "given the complexities of genetic drift, founder effect, and introgression, the observation that Native Americans have a preponderance of Asian genes does not conclusively demonstrate that they are therefore not descendants of the Lamanite lineage, because we do not know what genetic signature that Lamanite lineage possessed at the conclusion of the Book of Mormon record." Lastly, he concludes, "[There is] a strong possibility that there was substantial introgression of genes from other human populations into the genetic heritage of the Nephites and Lamanites, such that a unique genetic marker to identify someone unambiguously as a Lamanite, if it ever existed, was quickly lost." and that, "[t]here are some very good scientific reasons for why the Book of Mormon is neither easily corroborated nor refuted by DNA evidence, and current attempts to do so are based on dubious science" (Whiting 2003, pp. 24–35).

Murphy has responded to Whiting's comments as follows: "While Whiting, in his presentation for FARMS at BYU, exclaimed delight at the prospect of evolutionary biology coming to the defense of the Book of Mormon, he offered no scientific data to substantiate an Israelite origin of indigenous peoples anywhere in the Americas. In fact, he conceded, 'current genetic evidence suggests that Native Americans have a genetic history representative of Asia and not the Middle East.'" Murphy further states: "One of the most surprising critiques to emerge was the false allegation that I am evading peer review or that the research I reviewed would not stand up to peer review ... The article ["Lamanite Genesis, Genealogy, and Genetics"] was a summary of genetic research on Native American origins, nearly all of which had been subjected to peer review prior to publication in leading scientific journals such as *American Journal of Human Genetics*, *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, and *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* Whiting's and Lambert's claims are little more than an inaccurate projection of the inadequacies of LDS apologetics onto my publications." (Murphy, p. 113)

Response to West Eurasian origins

In November 2013 Nature published a discovery linking Western Eurasians in the Middle East and Europe to the indigenous Native American population. According to the study the genomes sequenced show distinct genetic markers that are unique to the indigenous Native Americans and western Eurasia, but with no relation to East Asians. The study indicates that 14 to 38% of Native American ancestry may originate through this gene flow. One of the authors, Professor Kelly Graf, explained the significance of this, stating that:

"Our findings are significant at two levels. First, it shows that Upper Paleolithic Siberians came from a cosmopolitan population of early modern humans that spread out of Africa to Europe and Central and South Asia. Second, Paleoindian skeletons like Buhl Woman with phenotypic traits atypical of modern-day indigenous Americans can be explained as having a direct historical connection to Upper Paleolithic Siberia."

Many *Book of Mormon* defenders have responded to the article with reservation. While the descendants of Lehi would carry similar genetic markers, defenders have pointed out that that the genome would have already been in the Western Hemisphere far earlier than the *Book of Mormon* claims. The remains date between 17,000 and 24,000 years ago, more than 15,000 years prior to when Lehi's descendants would have left Jerusalem, although, it admits that genetic mixing could have taken place at a much more recent time and that time frame is unknown.

Additional problems:

Written in faux King James-style English, though clumsily, and with poor grammar:

“I, Nephi, having been born of goodly parents, therefore I was taught...” (1 Nephi 1:1)
 “thou wilt not suffer those who come to thee that they shall perish” (1 Nephi 1:14)
 “took nothing with him, save it were his family...” (1 Nephi 2:4)
 “Jared...did molten out of a rock sixteen small stones...” (Ether 4:1)
 “I will tell you of the wrestle which I had before God...the words...sunk deep into my heart” (Enos 2-3)

1. Plagiarisms from the King James Bible²

Some plagiarisms duplicate errors in the KJV, such as:

- A. 3 Nephi presents Peter’s paraphrase of Deut.18:15-19 (from Acts 3:22-23) as coming from Jesus, as a quotation He attributes to Moses.
- B. 2 Nephi 14:5 copies the KJV’s mistranslation of Isaiah 4:5—where “defense” (KJV) is a poor translation, since the Hebrew word *chuppah* means “canopy.”
- C. 2 Nephi 15:25 repeats verbatim the KJV at Isaiah 5:25, where “torn” is a mistranslation. The Hebrew *suchah* means “refuse.”
- D. Unusual New Testament phrases used by ancient characters: e.g. “being grieved because of the hardness of their hearts” (1 Nephi 2:18; cf. Mark 3:5); “In the nurture and admonition of the Lord” (Enos 1; cf. 1 Eph.6:4); “thy faith hath made thee whole” (Enos 8; cf. Matt.9:22); “dumb idols” (Alma 31:1; cf. 1 Cor.12:2)

2. Anachronisms:

- A. Ether 4:1 speaks of “transparent glass” though glass was not yet invented in 600 BC.
- B. Laman had a steel sword (1 Nephi 4:9), as did the Jaredites (Ether 7:9) and Nephi had steel sword and bow—yet steel was not yet invented.
- C. Nephi also had a compass (cf. Acts 28:13 KJV), though compasses were not yet invented.

3. Questionable origins: “Manuscript Found,” or “Manuscript Stolen” ???

Many in Joseph Smith’s day believed that they recognized in the *Book of Mormon* storyline, a story written by a preacher, Solomon Spaulding, who wrote numerous “romances” about similar themes. Many believed that the *Book of Mormon* had plagiarized a particular work of Spaulding’s (now lost), entitled “*Manuscript Found.*” Among others, John, the brother of Solomon Spaulding, and John’s wife both testified that the story in the *Book of Mormon* was Spaulding’s.

In 1884, a story written by Spaulding was found in Hawaii, entitled “*Manuscript Story,*” which many experts say was not similar enough to the Book of Mormon story to be its source (though, interestingly, it too was written in Old English). However, the title of this work is different from that of the story suspected to be the source, and many see enough similarities (seventy-five similarities have been identified) even in this manuscript to postulate that “*Manuscript Story*” was a first draft of a tale that Spaulding later re-worked under the title “*Manuscript Found.*” Many students of Mormon history believe

² Plagiarisms from the KJV in the Book of Mormon:

Moroni 10	1 Corinthians 12:1-11
2 Nephi 12	Isaiah 2
2 Nephi 14	Isaiah 4
3 Nephi 13	Matthew 6
Mosiah 14	Isaiah 53

that this manuscript “*found*” its way into the hands of Joseph Smith—either by purchase or theft—and that it formed the basis of the plotline, to which Joseph added religious and doctrinal material, from the KJV and other sources.

Joseph Smith’s death:

Smith was the Mayor of the Mormon metropolis of Nauvoo, IL (June, 1844)

Seven former Mormons started a newspaper called *Nauvoo Expositor*, to expose Joseph’s abuse of power and his secret practice of polygamy (about which he was lying, because he opposed polygamy publicly). Joseph ordered the printing plates destroyed and his orders were carried out.

Joseph then tried to quell the negative public reaction to this illegal act by calling on the Nauvoo Legion (5,000 men in a standing army) and illegally declaring martial law. Governor Thomas Ford became involved and summoned Joseph to come to Carthage to answer for these things, but, instead, he fled to Iowa. His wife encouraged him by letter to return, calling him a coward for abandoning the church. He returned and went to Carthage, IL, where he was arrested and charged with treason because of the martial law declaration.

Cyrus Wheelock smuggled pistols into jail to Joseph and Hiram. When Hiram was shot dead, Smith killed two men and wounded another during the mob break-in. Joseph was killed by several bullets while trying to escape through the window of the jail.

—*The Documentary History of the Church* (Mormon publication), Vol.7: pp. 101-103

In July of 1828, when he was 23 years old, Smith made the following proclamation:

“For although a man may have many revelations, and have power to do many mighty works, yet if he boasts in his own strength, and sets at naught the counsels of God, and follows after the dictates of his own will and carnal desires, he must fall and incur the vengeance of a just God upon him.”
(*Doctrine and Covenants*, section 3:4)

Unique Mormon Theological Errors:

A. The Priesthood

The Mormons maintain that Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery received the Aaronic priesthood from the hand of John the Baptist on May 15, 1829, and that “*the Melchizedek Priesthood was conferred upon Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery through the ministration of Peter, James, and John, shortly after the conferring of the Aaronic order.*” (John A. Widtsoe, *The Priesthood and Church Government*, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1939, 107).

By contrast, the Bible teaches that:

- A. The Aaronic priesthood was passed from father-to-son, only within the Levitical clan of Aaron. It was never possessed by Christ, nor any of the apostles (Heb.7:13-14);
- B. The Aaronic priesthood was temporary, pertaining to the Old Covenant Law, and has been “changed” (replaced) by the Melchisedek priesthood of Christ (Heb.7:12);
- C. The Melchisedek priesthood belongs to one individual, who possesses it by virtue of His immortality, that is, His not being subject to death (Heb.7:8, 16);
- D. Because He will never again die, Jesus has an “unchangeable” (that is, non-transferable) priesthood. It is not conferred upon others than Himself (Heb.7:24).

B. Human Deification

“You have got to learn how to be Gods yourselves; to be kings and priests to God, the same as all Gods

have done before you—namely, by going from a small degree to another, from grace to grace, from exaltation to exaltation, until you are able to sit in glory as doth those who sit enthroned in everlasting power.” (Joseph Smith, *Journal of Discourses*, 6:3-4)

“As man is, God once was: as God is, man may become” (Prophet Lorenzo Snow, quoted in Milton R. Hunter, *The Gospel Through the Ages*, 105-106).

Yet, the Bible says:

“Before me there was no god formed, nor shall there be after me.” (Isaiah 43:10)

“And the serpent said to the woman...you will be like God...” (Gen.3:4-5)

“For you have said in your heart... ‘I will be like the Most High.’” (Isaiah 14:13-14)

“The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth shall perish from the earth and from under these heavens.” (Jer.10:11)

C. Jesus

“But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him.” (2 Cor.11:3-4)

The Mormon Jesus was...

A. Sired by sexual intercourse:

“When the Virgin Mary conceived the child Jesus, the Father had begotten him in his own likeness. He was not begotten by the Holy Ghost And who was his father? He is the first of the human family.... Jesus, our elder brother, was begotten in the flesh by the same character that was in the garden of Eden, and who is our Father in Heaven.” (Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, 1:50-51)

“The birth of the Saviour was as natural as are the births of our children; it was the result of natural action. He partook of flesh and blood—was begotten of his Father, as we are of our fathers.” (Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, 8:115)

“His [Christ’s] unique status in the flesh as the offspring of a mortal mother [Mary] and of an immortal, or resurrected and glorified, Father [Elohim].” (Apostle James Talmage in *The Articles of Faith*, ed. 1974, 473)

The Bible says:

“She was found with child by the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 1:18)

“That which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost” (v. 20).

B. Spirit brother of Satan —

Pearl of Great Price: Moses 4:1-4

Brigham Young, (the *Journal of Discourses*, 13:282)

C. A polygamist—married to Mary, Martha and Mary Magdalene

(according to Apostle Orson Hyde, *Journal of Discourses*, 4:259; 2:82).