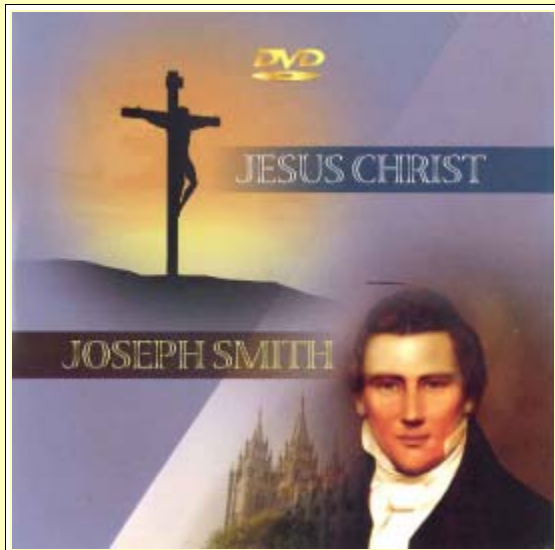


# Search for the Truth DVD

From FairWiki.org

## Jesus Christ / Joseph Smith

Replies and resources addressing the *Search for the Truth* DVD  
A collaborative effort of FAIR.



On 25 March 2007, a ninety-minute video entitled *Search for the Truth* was distributed to thousands of homes across the United States. The video has excellent production values but, unfortunately, its contents are not of a similar quality.

Though it purports to be an objective Christian evaluation of the teachings, history, and beliefs of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, it contains much that is inaccurate and very little that is balanced. Rather than focus on what they believe, the video's producers have taken it upon themselves to describe and interpret LDS beliefs and teachings, often in ways that would be objectionable or unrecognizable to Latter-day Saints.

The video contains many of the same anti-Mormon claims that misguided critics have been repeating for years. The issues it raises have been repeatedly addressed by faithful Latter-day Saints, but the video does not address or take those responses into account.

This page provides information that will help you compare the video's claims with the actual history, teachings, and beliefs of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

### A Bold Statement of Purpose

*"This video has been produced out of love for our Lord Jesus Christ and love for our Mormon and Christian friends. We pray that it will touch the hearts of all who watch through the grace and truth of Christ Jesus."*

These words, silently displayed on-screen, serve as the preface to a video that claims to contrast the beliefs of Mormonism and the beliefs of Christianity. Although the producers of this video state that it was produced out of love, the numerous mischaracterizations, misrepresentations, errors, and outright falsehoods found on the DVD

### About FAIR

The Foundation for Apologetic Information & Research (FAIR) was formed in late 1997 by a group of Mormons in an attempt to defend their faith from detractors who frequented online message boards. Incorporated as a non-profit organization in



make it difficult for believing Latter-day Saints to see that expression of love as sincere. It unfortunately perpetuates the same shopworn criticisms of Mormonism that have been answered time and time again.

We agree with the unnamed producers of *Search for the Truth*, that only when the truth is known can reasonable decisions be reached. Unfortunately, those who only view this video will never know the whole truth because it is not accurately presented.

In your own "search for the truth," we at FAIR invite you to take the time to learn why many people—including those who are familiar with the misinformation and criticisms in this video—remain faithful, practicing Mormons; ordinary people striving daily to model their lives after the extraordinary example of the Lord Jesus Christ.

*Important note:* We recognize and appreciate that the evangelical Christians who produced the DVD represent a small, fringe element within their denomination. Most Christians would, we are sure, join with the Latter-day Saints in condemning dishonest portrayals of other faiths, smear tactics, and religious bigotry.

## Table of Contents

The following Table of Contents addresses the charges made in *Search for the Truth*. These are things you won't hear in a short video, and they are things the video's producers definitely don't want you to know. (As you click on the pages, you will find this same table of contents in the upper right corner of each page.)

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November 1997, FAIR put up its first Web site in March 1998 and the FAIR Wiki in 2006.

FAIR is staffed completely by volunteers. It is not owned, controlled by, or affiliated with [The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints](#). All research and opinions provided on this site are the sole responsibility of FAIR and should not be interpreted as official statements of LDS doctrine, belief, or practice.

If you would like to be a part of FAIR, we invite you to [support FAIR](#) in any way you are able. FAIR only succeeds through the efforts of our gracious volunteers. For more information about FAIR, visit [the FAIR Web site](#).

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### Other Information

- [Letter to Distributors](#). A copy of the letter distributed with the advance copies of the DVD, providing instructions on how it was to be distributed on March 25, 2007.
- [Letter to Distributors \(Annotated Version\)](#). The same distribution letter, with an annotated commentary included.
- [Producers' press release](#). Press release about the video from its producers

### Reaction from FAIR's Readers

- [Comments from Latter-day Saints and others](#) about the DVD and FAIR's response.

### News Articles and Other Reactions to the DVD Release

- [Salt Lake Tribune](#), "Hurtful Evangelism" (letter from The Rt. Rev. Carolyn Tanner Irish, Episcopal Bishop of Utah, 2 April 2007)
- [Salt Lake Tribune](#), "The Thumb" (editorial, 31 March 2007)
- [Deseret Morning News](#), "Anti-Mormon DVD triggers a strong LDS Church rebuke" (30 March 2007)
- [The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints](#) (press release), "Response to DVD" (29 March 2007) (**Key source**)
- [Meridian Magazine](#), "Anti-Mormon DVD Being Distributed Nationwide" (n/d)
- [Salt Lake Tribune](#), "LDS a cult? 350,000 DVDs try to shake Mormons' faith" (28 March 2007)
- [Deseret Morning News](#), "Utahns receiving anti-Mormon DVDs" (28 March 2007)
- [KUTV-TV](#) (CBS affiliate in Salt Lake City, Utah), "Mormon Group Lashes Back at Anti-LDS Movie" (28 March 2007)
- [KOLD-TV](#) (CBS affiliate in Tuscon, Arizona), "Latter Day

Saints Church Outraged By DVD" (27 March 2007)

- [The Anti-Defamation League](#) (press release), "ADL Condemns 'Mormon-Bashing' DVD" (27 March 2007)
- [Arizona Daily News](#), "Ministry distributes anti-LDS DVDs across state" (26 March 2007)
- [Morehead's Musings](#) (blog), "Jesus Christ/Joseph Smith Video: Professional Polish on a Counter-Cult Apologetic Misfire" (10 February 2007)

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## Search for the Truth DVD: Intro

From FairWiki.org

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# Introduction

### Do Mormons Equate Joseph Smith and Jesus Christ?

This video begins with an ambitious declaration put forth by Patrick Powell, "Today we're going to investigate two of the world's most prominent and influential men to determine once and for all which one holds the truth."

There are several problems involved in such a task. First, Mr. Powell sets up a false dichotomy—he proposes to compare Joseph Smith and Jesus Christ. But Mormons do not equate Joseph Smith with Jesus Christ. Mormons proclaim Jesus Christ to be the divine Son of God, the only perfect and sinless person to ever be born on earth. Mormons believe that Joseph Smith is a prophet of God, subject to the same [imperfections](#) as other men; he did not live a sinless life. Indeed, in the LDS view it would be more accurate to compare Joseph Smith with Peter, Abraham, Moses, or any other biblical prophet. To state otherwise is a false comparison that serves no other purpose than to mislead the viewer.

Second, the statement attempts to set Jesus Christ in competition with Joseph Smith and presupposes that if one is right, the other is wrong. Joseph Smith, in acting as a prophet, was a witness for the divinity of Jesus Christ, bearing strong testimony for the efficacy of Christ's atoning sacrifice and the reality of Christ's

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resurrection.

Third, the video states that "men" are being compared. Yet according to commentator Dr. Phil Roberts, president of the Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, "[Jesus] was God in the flesh. He was eternal with God, co-equal, uncreated." This is obviously not "a man," as Mr. Powell asserts. It is deceptive to assert that Mormons would accept the idea that Jesus Christ was a man to be compared directly with other men.

Latter-day Saint Christians will agree with other Christians that the divine nature of Christ makes Him incomparable to any other mortal, including Joseph Smith. Is Mr. Powell unsure of what Christian theology is concerning Christ when he states that Jesus is merely one "of the world's most prominent and influential men," or is he purposefully misstating his beliefs to make an illusionary comparison between a prophet and the Son of God compelling? This is an inauspicious beginning for a video claiming to be searching for the truth.

### Are "Christianity" and "Mormonism" compatible?

The video next begs a different question—it assumes the answer it wishes its viewers to draw. Members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints insist that they are devout Christians, who worship Jesus Christ as the Only Begotten Son of God and the only way to salvation. Asking if "Christianity" and "Mormonism" are compatible is like asking if one can be from Utah or Texas and also be an American.

#### To read more:

- [Are LDS Christians?](#)
- [Have the LDS only recently claimed to be Christian?](#)
- [Do the LDS 'worship a different Jesus'?](#)

### Are there "significant differences" between "Christianity" and "Mormonism"?

Once again, the video makes a false distinction. Are there differences between LDS Christians and some other Christian denominations? Of course! There are differences between every Christian denomination, otherwise, there would be only one church. The video's producers wish to force those who do not share their views on some issues completely out of the category of "Christian." This is self-serving, and does not help in a search for truth. (A [letter](#) to distributors of the DVD characterizes the LDS Church as a "powerful cult," which demonstrates their attitude toward The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.)

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### To read more:

- [Is The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints a "cult"?](#)

### What about the Holy Bible?

The video contrasts "Joseph Smith's teachings" in the Book of Mormon, and then mentions "Jesus' teachings" in the Holy Bible. The producers of the video rely on time-honored rhetorical sleight of hand to mischaracterize the issue and to lead the viewer to a conclusion not supported by the facts.

There are at least three problems with the video's approach. First, it presupposes that the teachings in the Book of Mormon are those of Joseph Smith and not of Jesus—exactly the point the video is trying to prove. This is a textbook example of "begging the question."

Second, the approach inconsistently characterizes both the Book of Mormon and the Bible. Both books were translated from now-dead languages and were translated by mortal men. Both were originally written by mortal men. Both claim to have their ultimate source in God, including having literal statements of Jesus. One could discuss how the culture and education of Joseph Smith, the translator of the Book of Mormon, affected his translation of the Book of Mormon compared to how the culture and education of William Tyndale, a translator of the Bible, affected his translation of the Bible. Or one could compare Mormon, an original author in the Book of Mormon, with Isaiah or Matthew, original authors in the Bible. Or one could discuss how the (claimed) word of God in the Book of Mormon relates to the (claimed) word of God in the Bible. The very wording of the video is designed to prematurely dismiss the Book of Mormon. An honest comparison would demand that the video's producers compare the words of Jesus as recorded by Nephi with the words of Jesus as recorded by Matthew.

And third, this statement creates the false impression that Latter-day Saints do not believe the Bible. The LDS consider both the Holy Bible *and* the Book of Mormon to be holy scripture which contains the teachings of Christ and testify of His divinity. The producers wish to make the "Mormons" appear different from Christianity and to deny that Mormons can be called Christians.

Said Elder Neal A. Maxwell, a modern apostle of Jesus Christ:

*So when we read and turn the pages of the precious New Testament, there is a barely audible rustling like the quiet stirrings of the Spirit, something to be "spiritually discerned." ([1 Corinthians 2:14](#).) The witnessing words*

*came to us—not slowly, laboriously, or equivocally through the corridors of the centuries, but rather, swiftly, deftly, and clearly. Upon the wings of the Spirit these words proclaim, again and anew, "JESUS LIVED. JESUS LIVES!"*

—Neal Maxwell, "The New Testament—A Matchless Portrait of the Savior," *Ensign* (December 1986): 20., italics in original. [off-site](#)

#### To read more:

- [Bible basics](#)
- [Biblical inerrancy?](#)
- [Biblical sufficiency?](#)
- [Lost scripture?](#)
- [A closed canon?](#)
- FAIR Topical Guide: **LDS view of the Holy Bible** [FAIR link](#)

### Do You Have Questions?

If you have questions about anything you read on this page, we encourage you to ask. FAIR is a volunteer organization, and our members are glad to answer questions. You can ask by using our [handy contact page](#). You will get one or more answers, via e-mail, usually within a short time after asking.

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## Search for the Truth DVD: Who Is Jesus?

From FairWiki.org

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# Who Is Jesus?

### What do the Latter-day Saints believe about Jesus Christ?

The video avoided quoting any of the many LDS statements about Jesus Christ which would allow the LDS and their scriptures to speak for themselves. Instead, the DVD focused on a few ideas out of context, while assuming that the non-

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biblical (extra-biblical) creeds—to which the producers and contributors apparently subscribe—are the proper (and only) interpretation of the Bible.

The LDS believe that Jesus Christ's role is central to our Heavenly Father's plan. Christ is unique in several respects from all other beings and spirit children of God:

- Jesus is God (See [John 1:1-2](#), [Hebrews 1:6](#), [1 Nephi 11:16–26](#), [D&C 76:13](#)).
- Jesus was and is perfect (sinless) (See [Hebrews 4:15](#)),
- Jesus is the Creator (See [John 1:3](#), [Hebrews 1:1–6](#), [Mosiah 3:3](#), [Helaman 14:12](#), [Moses 2:1](#)).
- Jesus obeyed the Father in all things (See [3 Nephi 11:11](#)).
- Jesus was chosen and foreordained to be the Redeemer (See [Isaiah 43:11](#), [Mosiah 13:28–34](#), [3 Nephi 9:15](#), [Moses 4:2](#)).
- Jesus is the Mediator between God and humanity (See [John 14:6](#), [1 Timothy 2:5](#), [Hebrews 8:5](#), [2 Nephi 2:28](#), [D&C 76:69](#)).
- Jesus was "the Only Begotten"—only He, of all God's children, had a physical inheritance in His body from God the Father. (See [John 1:14](#), [John 3:16](#), [John 14:3](#), [Jacob 4:11](#), [Alma 12:33–34](#)).

#### To read more:

- Twelve Apostles, "The Living Christ: The Testimony of the Apostles, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints," *Ensign* (December 2004): 4. [off-site](#)
- [Do LDS worship a 'different' Jesus?](#)

**Claim: "There can be no greater contrast than the Jesus of the Bible with the Jesus of Mormonism." – Dr. Phil Roberts (President, Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary)**

Mormons believe in the Biblical Jesus. There is a great contrast, however, between the non-biblical *creeds* describing the nature of God and the scriptural record of God in the Bible as understood by the Latter-day Saints. The Saints have no quarrel with the Bible—they love and revere it as part of God's word to His children. They do not accept, however, the later additions of the creeds.

Just because the Saints' interpretation of some biblical passages does not match those of some other denominations does not mean that Mormons are not Christian or that they do not worship Jesus of the Bible. Were this the case, there could be no Christians, since every Christian faith differs from some other group in the

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interpretation of some Bible passages.

**To read more:**

- [Do Latter-day Saints worship a "different Jesus"?](#)

**Claim: "In the Bible, and according to history as we believe and the actual work of Jesus Christ, He was God in the flesh, He was eternal with God, coequal uncreated." – Dr. Phil Roberts (President, Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary)**

This claim illustrates the source of the critics' attack on the Church, which has nothing to do with the Bible itself. Dr. Roberts and the video's producers are *creedal Christians*. That is, they accept beliefs which were formulated by councils of men hundreds of years after Christ's resurrection in an attempt to define the nature of God and Christ. The Latter-day Saints do not accept many of these creeds because they:

1. are not found in the Holy Bible or other scripture
2. were not taught or believed by Jesus or the early Christians
3. were developed only with the addition of non-scriptural ideas and concepts (e.g., Greek philosophy)

Dr. Roberts believes that his creedal beliefs are scriptural (based on a particular interpretation of Bible verses), thus his appeal to later Christian history as authority in the above statement. The Latter-day Saints and many Christian scholars of religious history believe otherwise—they realize and admit that non-scriptural ideas had to be added to the Bible to formulate the creeds.

Latter-day Saints accept the witness that Jesus was God in the flesh and eternal with God, for this is the testimony of scripture. They do not accept the later additions of being "coequal uncreated," (though they understand 'uncreated' in a different sense than the creeds, as mentioned below).

**To read more:**

- [Godhead and the Trinity](#): History of the creeds by non-LDS Christian authors and historians

**Claim: "Nothing existed prior to the creator, which is Christ.... Jesus created all things and nothing existed prior to that creation." – Jon McCartney (Pastor, First Baptist Church of**

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## Tooele, Utah)

Pastor McCartney demonstrates that, once again, the video's quarrel is not that the Latter-day Saints do not believe the scriptures, but with the Latter-day Saints' reluctance to accept the *creedal interpretation* of scripture.

Pastor McCarney advocates the doctrine of creation out of nothing—sometimes called *creatio ex nihilo*. This doctrine holds that only God existed, and He created all other beings and things out of absolute nothingness.

This doctrine is not biblical, but draws again on the influence of Greek thought in later Christian centuries—the Latter-day Saints therefore do not accept biblical interpretations which rely on later creeds.

### To read more:

- [Creation out of nothing](#): A non-biblical doctrine from the second century A.D.

## Claim: Mormons don't believe Jesus was the creator of all things.

As noted above, this claim arises out of a commitment to the creed of *creatio ex nihilo*, not the Bible itself.

The LDS believe that some things simply cannot be created—"intelligence" and matter (see [D&C 93:29](#)). Thus, the LDS believe that God created all things *that required* creation, through Jesus Christ.

Under the *ex nihilo* creed, God cannot be created, so He exists necessarily. Creedal Christians see no contradiction in saying God created all things, even when He did not create Himself. Likewise, LDS Christians see no contradiction in claiming Jesus created all things, even if there are some things (like God) which are eternal and require no creation.

Latter-day Saints believe that, through the power of the Father, Christ is the creative agent behind everything that was, is, or will be created.

### To read more:

- [Jesus Christ, Creator](#): LDS scriptures topical guide.

## Does Colossians 1:17 teach that Jesus created all things and even the angels (including Satan) out of nothing?

Creedal Christians believe in the post-Biblical doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo* (creation out of nothing). Because this is how they understand the idea of creation, they read it into these verses.

Latter-day Saints have no quarrel with the doctrine taught in Colossians. They emphatically believe that the Father created all things by Jesus Christ. The video is misleading to suggest otherwise.

As one author observed, the Greek text does not teach *ex nihilo*, but creation out of pre-existing raw materials, since the verb *ktidzo* "carried an architectural connotation...as in 'to build' or 'establish' a city.... Thus, the verb presupposes the presence of already existing material."(Griffith, 72 [FAIRWiki link](#).)

One must not overlook [2 Corinthians 4:18](#), which states that "the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal"—suggesting that aspects of the created "unseen world" are *eternal*, despite the exercise of God's creative power upon them.

LDS doctrine sees creation as an act of organizing pre-existing, eternal matter and intelligence. (See [DC 93:29](#), [DC 131:7](#).)

Thus, Jesus certainly participated in the creation of all created things—but He worked with preexisting chaotic materials. The angelic ranks of "thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers" were also created by Christ, for these beings did not assume their angelic status or form without divine creative power, even though some aspect of their "intelligence" pre-dated God's creative acts in their behalf.

Each of us, along with Jesus and Lucifer, are children of our Father in Heaven. Our personality and character were developed during the long pre-mortal existence. During this time the Savior, as the first born of the Father, developed the attributes that allowed God the Father to trust Jesus with the creation of all things that would be created and to assume the divine role of The Son. With that same process Lucifer developed the attributes that led him into sin and rebellion.

The difference between Jesus and Lucifer is so great that we cannot fully understand it. The rest of God's children are somewhere in between these two extremes. Because of Jesus' role in the creation Satan's premortal powers and status were dependent upon the creative power and authority of God, exercised through Jesus Christ.

The difference between those who followed the Father and those who followed Lucifer is in part dependent upon the eternal aspect of each individual. This may help to explain Satan's antipathy toward Jesus, and his desire to usurp the power and authority of God possessed by Christ (see [Moses 4:1](#)).

The claim, then, that Jesus and Satan were merely peers, misunderstands and misrepresents the LDS doctrine of creation, and Jesus' pre-eminent role in it.

#### To read more:

- [Creation in Colossians 1:16](#)
- Donald Q. Cannon, Larry E. Dahl, and John W. Welch, "The Restoration of Major Doctrines through Joseph Smith: The Godhead, Mankind, and the Creation," *Ensign* (January 1989): 27–33. [off-site](#)
- Barry Robert Bickmore, "The Doctrine of God and the Nature of Man: Creatio Ex Nihilo," in *Restoring the Ancient Church: Joseph Smith and Early Christianity* (FAIR, 1999), Chapter 3. [ISBN 1893036006](#). [FAIR link](#) [Direct link](#)
- Keith Norman, "Ex Nihilo: The Development of the Doctrines of God and Creation in Early Christianity," *Brigham Young University Studies* 17:3 (1977): 291–318. [off-site](#)
- Blake T. Ostler, "Bridging the Gulf (Review of *How Wide the Divide? A Mormon and an Evangelical in Conversation*)," *FARMS Review of Books* 11/2 (1999): 103–177. [off-site](#) [PDF link](#)
- Blake T. Ostler, "Out of Nothing: A History of Creation *ex Nihilo* in Early Christian Thought," *FARMS Review* 17/2 (2005): 253–320. [off-site](#) [PDF link](#)

### What are the implications of claiming that Jesus/God created Satan out of nothing?

The DVD opines that "there is an infinite chasm between Jesus Christ, creator God, and Satan, creature who has sinned."

This conclusion reflects the creedal conviction that God is totally 'other'—i.e., He is completely different in all aspects from His creations, including humanity. However, the video does not explore the implications of the claim that God created Satan out of nothing. If God did, as claimed, create Satan *ex nihilo*, then God could have created Satan differently. Satan (and all mankind) could have been created with a nature that would not predispose him to commit sin.

If God could have created Satan (or a mortal) in a different way, then in some sense God is responsible for their evil natures. The sins and evils committed by fallen beings become *God's* fault, because He could have made things differently,

but did not. How is it then just to judge or punish a sinner for sin if the sinful nature was created by God out of nothing?

This is a major philosophical problem for those who embrace *creatio ex nihilo*. The LDS view, in which God creates by *organizing* eternal matter and intelligence, does not have these problems. Satan sinned because of his eternal nature: he made free choices based on who he has always been. Likewise, mortals cannot blame God for their sins, because their core nature was not created by God.

A Latter-day Saint Christian would argue that it does not lessen God for Him to allow other beings to make free choices and receive the consequences. Rather, they believe that there is a "vast gulf" between the loving God of the Bible and a belief that God wilfully creates degenerate, fallen, and sinful beings and then punishes them for natures which He gave them.

### **Satan's potential role in God's plan misrepresented**

The video does not accurately portray all of the LDS ideas regarding the "council in heaven" which are necessary for full understanding. The video correctly notes that two spirit children of God (Jesus and Satan) offered to play a role in God's plan for human happiness. However, it neglects to mention that Satan's offer was not welcome or anticipated. Satan's plan, and his offer to implement it, was never consistent with God the Father's plan of salvation, and if accepted it would have meant the end of any future opportunities for His children. Therefore, God would never have countenanced the implementation of Satan's offer. God says that Jesus' role was determined from the beginning: "my Beloved Son, which was my Beloved and Chosen from the beginning, said unto me—Father, thy will be done, and the glory be thine forever" ([Moses 4:2](#)).

#### **To read more:**

- [Relationship of Jesus and Satan](#)

### **Claim: "The Bible also teaches that Jesus has eternally been God, while Joseph Smith teaches that Jesus had to achieve Godhood."**

Latter-day Saint scripture teaches that Jesus is the Eternal God, Alpha and Omega, from everlasting to everlasting. Despite Christ's divinity, He nevertheless was obedient to God His Father, and "received not of the fulness at first, but continued from grace to grace, until he received a fulness" ([DC 93:13](#)).

The Saints thus accept the biblical witness that Jesus "increased in wisdom and



stature, and in favour with God and man" ([Luke 2:52](#)). If Jesus increased in wisdom, then there was a time when He had less wisdom than He now has. The Saints also accept the biblical witness that Jesus "learned obedience by the things he suffered" ([Hebrews 5:8](#)) and "was in all points tempted as we are" ([Hebrews 4:15](#)).

As Paul taught, Jesus meekly obeyed the Father in all things, and accepted a status below the role of God to which He was entitled:

[Jesus] being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:

But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:

That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;

And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. ([Philippians 2:6-11](#))

Jesus himself in [John 5:19-20](#) declared that, "The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do; for what things soever [the Father] doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. For the Father loveth the Son and showeth him all things that himself doeth..." What did Jesus do? He was born of a woman, lived a sinless life, and after atoning for our sins, was glorified with a resurrected body of "flesh and bones" ([Luke 24:36-39](#)). If Christ followed the example of his Father, then the implication is clear.

Jesus humbled Himself in obedience to the Father, and was exalted thereafter ([Hebrews 1:8-9](#)).

### **Did President Hinckley admit that the Church does not worship the Biblical Jesus?**

The video makes much of a statement by Church President Gordon B. Hinckley:

*No I don't believe in the traditional Christ. The traditional Christ of whom they speak is not the Christ of whom I speak. For the Christ of whom I speak has been revealed in this the dispensation of the Fullness of Times.*

—President Gordon B. Hinckley, *Deseret News* (20 June 1998): 7. [Screenshot](#)

It should be emphasized that the "traditions" alluded to by President Hinckley are

the non-Biblical creeds. But, members of the Church do not reject the Biblical witness—it is partly *because* the creeds are not Biblical that the LDS do not use them.

President Hinckley continues to explain that revelation teaches more about God than philosophical speculation, and insists that he is a Christian, but the video does not quote this material:

*[Jesus], together with His Father, appeared to the boy Joseph Smith in the year 1820, and when Joseph left the grove that day, he knew more of the nature of God than all the learned ministers of the gospel of the ages. Am I Christian? Of course I am. I believe in Christ. I talk of Christ. I pray through Christ. I'm trying to follow Him and live His gospel in my life.*

President Hinckley elsewhere made it clear that we differ with other Christians over the creeds, not over the scriptural witness:

*As a Church we have critics, many of them. They say we do not believe in the traditional Christ of Christianity. There is some substance to what they say. Our faith, our knowledge is not based on ancient tradition, the creeds which came of a finite understanding and out of the almost infinite discussions of men trying to arrive at a definition of the risen Christ. Our faith, our knowledge comes of the witness of a prophet in this dispensation who saw before him the great God of the universe and His Beloved Son, the resurrected Lord Jesus Christ. They spoke to him. He spoke with Them. He testified openly, unequivocally, and unabashedly of that great vision. It was a vision of the Almighty and of the Redeemer of the world, glorious beyond our understanding but certain and unequivocating in the knowledge which it brought. It is out of that knowledge, rooted deep in the soil of modern revelation, that we, in the words of Nephi, “talk of Christ, we rejoice in Christ, we preach of Christ, we prophesy of Christ, and we write according to our prophecies, that [we and] our children may know to what source [we] may look for a remission of [our] sins” ([2 Nephi 25:26](#)).*

—Gordon B. Hinckley, "We Look to Christ," *Ensign* (May 2002): 90. [off-site](#)

#### **To read more:**

- Daniel C. Peterson and Stephen D. Ricks, "Comparing LDS Beliefs with First-Century Christianity," *Ensign* (March 1988): 7. [off-site](#)
- Stephen E. Robinson, "Are Mormons Christians?," *New Era* (May 1988): 41. [off-site](#)

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# Search for the Truth DVD:Who Is God?

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## Who Is God?

**Claim: According to Joseph, "The Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man's; the Son also..." ([D&C 130:22](#)) However in John 4:24 we are told "God is Spirit..."**

President Gordon B. Hinckley recently addressed this very old criticism:

*In the account of the Creation of the earth, "God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness" ([Gen 1:26](#)).*

*Could any language be more explicit? Does it demean God, as some would have us believe, that man was created in His express image?*

*Rather, it should stir within the heart of every man and woman a greater appreciation for himself or herself as a son or daughter of God....*

*I remember the occasion more than 70 years ago when, as a missionary, I was speaking in an open-air meeting in Hyde Park, London. As I was presenting my message, a heckler interrupted to say, "Why don't you stay with the doctrine of the Bible which says in John, 'God is a Spirit?'"*

*I opened my Bible to the verse he had quoted and read to him the entire verse:*

*"God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" ([John 4:24](#)).*

*I said, "Of course God is a spirit, and so are you in the combination of spirit and body that makes of you a living being, and so am I."*

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*...Jesus's declaration that God is a spirit no more denies that He has a body than does the statement that I am a spirit while also having a body. I do not equate my body with His in its refinement, in its capacity, in its beauty and radiance. His is eternal. Mine is mortal. But that only increases my reverence for Him. I worship Him "in spirit and in truth."*  
—Gordon B. Hinckley, "First Presidency Message: In These Three I Believe," *Ensign* (July 2006): 2–8. [off-site](#)

It is interesting to note that some early Christians actually used John 4:24 as a proof text to support the notion that God has a body. While Origen (*De Principiis*, 242 [off-site](#)) didn't approve, he admits "I know that some will attempt to say that, even according to the declaration of our own scriptures, God is a body, because. . .they find it said in the Gospel according to John that 'God is a spirit, and they who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.' . . .Spirit according to them [is] to be regarded as nothing less than a body."

Tertullian (*Against Praxeus*, Chapter 7 [off-site](#)) believed "This for certain is He who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, In what form of God? Of course he means in some form, not none. For who will deny that God is a body although God is a spirit? (John 4:24). For spirit has a bodily substance of its own kind, in its own form."

While evangelical scholar Paul Copan [off-site](#) views Tertullian's belief in God's corporeality as anti-intellectual and influenced by stoicism, he writes that in Augustine's time "North African Catholics typically believed [in God's corporeality]." Copan indicated that "neo-Platonist Christians in Milan" helped Augustine adopt a belief in an incorporeal God.

The concept of God which Joseph Smith claimed to restore through revelation is clearly a match for the common beliefs of the early Christians—and, that early perspective was later altered and corrupted by philosophical innovations.

#### To read more:

- [God is a Spirit](#)
- [Corporeality of God](#)

**Claim: God has existed for eternity. But Joseph Smith taught "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." Dr. Phil Roberts says, "In Mormonism God is simply an exalted man. He was born as a man, he was conceived in a**

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**natural way and by adherence to a system of Mormonism in a previous world and a previous life through his good works in accordance with that system he became God."**

Very little is known about these matters in LDS doctrine, but Dr. Roberts manages to distort what *is* known.

There is no official doctrine on the method by which Christ's mortal body was conceived—apart from that which we are told in scripture (see [Matthew 1:](#), [Matthew 1:20](#), and [Luke 1:35](#))—despite speculation by some early members. Latter-day Saints do not deny that God has existed for eternity—they believe all intelligence is eternal and uncreated (see [D&C 93:29](#)). Latter-day Saints do not accept the late, non-biblical Trinitarian creeds. Thus, they see God the Father and Jesus Christ as separate beings, as described by a "plain reading" of the Bible.

Jesus Christ was:

- born as a mortal
- conceived with a literal, physical body to a literal, physical mother
- lived as a man/mortal
- died
- was resurrected and glorified

Given that Christ was the only one to lead a sinless life, one might agree with Dr. Roberts that "through his good works," He completed His mortal life and was exalted to divine status.

In the non-canonical King Follet Discourse, Joseph Smith simply taught that the Father went through the same process as Christ.

Although Christ shared aspects of the mortal experience with us, to argue that He was "simply a man" who became exalted is to distort LDS teaching beyond recognition. Jesus Christ has divine status and exaltation by merit and right. By analogy, we presume—but do not know—that the Father proceeded similarly. Exaltation of all other mortals is through the grace, mercy, and atonement of Christ, following the Father's plan.

**To read more:**

- [Conception of Jesus Christ](#)

**Claim: "...the Mormon teachings about many gods is false." –**

## Floyd McElveen

Members of the Church of Jesus Christ believe in more than one divine personage. Any Christian who does not embrace the late, non-biblical Trinitarian creeds will understand there to be more than one "God," in the sense of "divine person."

Latter-day Saints and scripture often use the term "God" to denote what may be more properly called "the Godhead." This is the divine unity of love, purpose, and will possessed by the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, who are "one God," while remaining distinct divine personages.

While recognizing that more than one being may have divine status, Latter-day Saints reject any attempt to worship any other being, or assume that any other being has greater power than the God of the Bible.

Elder Boyd K. Packer taught:

*The Father is the one true God. This thing is certain: no one will ever ascend above Him; no one will ever replace Him. Nor will anything ever change the relationship that we, His literal offspring, have with Him. He is Elohim, the Father. He is God. Of Him there is only one. We revere our Father and our God; we worship Him.*

—Boyd K. Packer, "The Pattern of Our Parentage," *Ensign* (November 1984): 69. [off-site](#)

### To read more:

- [Godhead and the Trinity](#)
- David L. Paulsen, "The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Joseph Smith: Defending the Faith" [FAIR link](#)
- Barry Robert Bickmore, "The Doctrine of God and the Nature of Man," in *Restoring the Ancient Church: Joseph Smith and Early Christianity* (FAIR, 1999), Chapter 3. [ISBN 1893036006](#). [FAIR link](#) [Direct link](#)

**Claim: Paul says in 1 Corinthians 8:4–5 there is only one God, and the rest are simply imaginary (see remarks by Dr. John Whitcomb).**

Mr. McElveen ignores scriptural context and scholarship in his interpretation. The verses in question read:

As concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that



there is none other God but one.  
For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,)

This is followed by a verse not cited by Mr. McElveen:

But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.  
([1 Corinthians 8:4-6](#))

Mr. McElveen would like us to conclude that because idols are mentioned in verse 4, the "gods many, and lords many" mentioned in verse 5 also refer to idols. It is clear, however, that Paul makes the distinction in verse 5. He says that while there are those that are "called gods," it is true, but he clarifies and distinguishes his meaning in two separate ways.

First, Paul follows this statement, referring to those that are called gods, with the words, "whether in heaven or in earth..."—it is unlikely that idols would be found in heaven!

Secondly, Paul acknowledges that "there be gods many, and lords many." Then he brings the point home in the next verse, though it is not cited by Mr. McElveen, since it undermines his interpretation.

Paul says that "to us," however, "there is but one God" and "one Lord." He clarifies his point: We are only to worship one God, not many gods, although they do exist. We only follow one Lord, not many Lords, although they do exist.

This is not merely a Latter-day Saint supposition. Origen (A.D. 185–ca.254), head of the Christian Church in Alexandria, wrote:

*There are some gods of whom God is god, as we hear in the prophecy, "Thank ye the God of gods," and "The God of gods hath spoken, and called the earth." Now God, according to the Gospel, "is not the God of the dead but of the living." Those gods, then, are living of whom God is god. The Apostle, too, writing to the Corinthians, says: "As there are gods many and lords many," and so we have spoken of these gods as really existing. Now there are, besides the gods of whom God is god, certain others.*

—Origen, "Commentary on John," in Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, eds., *The Ante-Nicene Fathers* (1886-1890; reprint, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978-1981), 10:315. (emphasis added)

Thus, Paul distinguishes between two groups of things:

1. non-existent gods (idols)
2. other divine beings that exist, but are not to be worshipped

Mr. McElveen has similar problems interpreting Old Testament scripture in context, discussed below.

**Claim: (cont.) "The Bible says 'before me there were no gods formed (Isaiah 43:10) neither shall there be after me.' That means that all the Mormon teachings about many gods is false. It means there was never a God before this God." - Floyd McElveen.**

Mr. McElveen's interpretation of these passages also ignores much context and Biblical scholarship.

In this portion of Isaiah, Jehovah warned Judah to trust in him alone and not to trust in false gods who had no power to deliver them. The passages portray this as a contest between Jehovah and the gods of other nations.

Consider the passage in [Isaiah 43:10-11](#), where the Lord says

Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I, even I, am the Lord; and beside me there is no saviour.

The context is clear in verse 12, which omitted (as is typical for critics who try to use this proof-text against the Latter-day Saints) from the quotation:

I have declared, and have saved, and I have shewed, when there was no *strange god* among you: therefore ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, that I am God. (italics added)

"Strange god" refers to a false god, an idol.

Likewise for 44:6, 8 — this passage is followed by extensive discussion of "graven images" ([Isaiah 44:9-17](#)).

These and similar passages in Isaiah (e.g. [Isaiah 43:10-11](#); [Isaiah 44:6,8](#); [Isaiah 45:5-6](#); [Isaiah 45:21-22](#); and [Isaiah 46:9-10](#)) cannot be called upon to disprove

LDS beliefs in separate Gods in the Godhead or human deification (see below).

As Dr. Richard Mouw of Fuller Theological Seminary observed:

*Most OT scholars see the early stages of OT thought as henotheistic, i.e., the view that there are many Gods but that Jehovah is the supreme deity before whom we should place no other. Similarly, Paul in Colossians seems to suggest that there are many powers, but we should not placate them, because everything holds together in Jesus Christ. I think the important thing is that we acknowledge that only the God and father of JC is worthy of our worship and obedience.*

—AOL on-line discussion, cited [here](#). (emphasis added)

In sum, the goal of these verses is to encourage Israel to leave off their idols and worship Jehovah alone. Any other use of them distorts Isaiah's meaning and intent.

**To read more:**

- [Isaiah: "No God beside me"](#)

### **It also means that Mormon men will never become gods. - Floyd McElveen.**

Mr. McElveen's analysis up to here has been superficial and flawed.

LDS doctrine teaches that believers are deified through the grace of Christ. This is a belief common among ancient and modern Christians, though it applies to both men *and* women—Mr. McElveen fails to mention the latter.

As one example among many, the early Christian Irenaeus (A.D. 180) wrote:

*We were not made gods at our beginning, but first we were made men, then, in the end, gods.*

—Henry Bettenson, *The Early Christian Fathers: A Selection from the Writings of the Fathers from St. Clement of Rome to St. Athanasius* (London: Oxford University Press, 1956), 94. [ISBN 0192830090](#).

Non-LDS scholar Ernst W. Benz penned a line that responds well to Mr. McElveen's superficial grasp of Christian theology and history:

One can think what one wants of this doctrine of progressive deification, but one thing is certain: with this anthropology Joseph Smith is closer to the view of man held by the ancient Church than the precursors of the

Augustinian doctrine of original sin.

—Ernst Benz, "*Imago dei*: Man as the Image of God," *FARMS Review* 17/1 (2005): 223–254. [off-site PDF link](#)

It would seem the Latter-day Saints are closer than Mr. McElveen may want to admit.

**To read more:**

- [Early Christians on deification](#)
- [Modern non-LDS Christians on deification](#)
- D. Charles Pyle, "Early Christian Doctrine on Deification" [FAIR link](#)
- Ernst Benz, "*Imago dei*: Man as the Image of God," *FARMS Review* 17/1 (2005): 223–254. [off-site PDF link](#)

**Claim: Becoming a God was the lie that the serpent told to Eve in the Garden of Eden. Dave Hunt is quoted saying, "So Mormonism takes the lie of the serpent, it's based on the saying that the lie of the serpent is the truth."**

Mr. Hunt might want to read a bit further in his Bible:

And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die:  
For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. ([Genesis 3:4-5.](#))

At first glance, it appears Mr. Hunt is right. But if Mr. Hunt had bothered to turn the page in his Bible he would have found that he was spectacularly wrong. After Adam and Eve partake of the forbidden fruit, God declares:

And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever.... ([Genesis 3:22.](#))

So God says the man is become "as one of us." Is Mr. Hunt trying to contradict God?

The serpent did lie, but the lie wasn't what Mr. Hunt claims. The Serpent lied when he said, "Ye shall not surely die." Man did become mortal and God restricted his access to the tree of life.

**Claim: "God would never condone lying. Yet in the Pearl of Great Price, Abraham is told by God to 'Let her say unto the**

**Egyptians, she is thy sister, and thy soul shall live.' (Abraham 2:24) This contradicts what is in the Bible. Why would God give us the Bible for instruction and life-molding and later give us another testimony of Jesus Christ only to contradict each other? Does God make mistakes?"**

This remark betrays an ignorance of extra-Biblical materials, LDS scripture, *and* the Bible.

In the ancient *Genesis Apocryphon* text, Abraham has the same motives described in the Pearl of Great Price as delivered by Joseph Smith. He tells Sarah that God has given him a dream in which she saves him from being killed. He then tells her:

[Say to them] of me, 'He is my brother,' and because of you I shall live, and because of your my life shall be saved...'  
And Sarai wept that night on account of my words..."  
—Geza Vermes, *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English* (Penguin Press, 1997), 453–454. See also: ([off-site.](#))

How did Joseph produce this authentic ancient detail, with this text not available until 1948?

The perspective offered by the Book of Abraham and the *Genesis Apocryphon* does not *contradict* the Bible—the Bible simply does not tell us why Abraham and Sarah claimed she was his sister ([Genesis 20:2](#)). God expresses no displeasure at their choice, and even speaks to the king in a dream to save Sarah. Given Abraham's nobility of character, it is hard to picture him taking this course if he felt God would disapprove.

During Israel's captivity in Egypt, God blessed the Egyptian midwives' decision to lie to Pharaoh about their failure to murder Hebrew infants (see [Exodus 1:19-20](#).)

However, there is an even more dramatic Biblical example of God commanding deception for the greater good—Moses himself.

The Lord speaks to Moses and says:

And I have said, I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt unto the land of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, unto a land flowing with milk and honey ([Exodus 3:17](#))

The Lord announces His intention to liberate the Israelites from slavery. But, in the very next breath, He tells Moses what to tell Pharaoh:

And they shall hearken to thy voice: and thou shalt come, thou and the elders of Israel, unto the king of Egypt, and ye shall say unto him, The LORD God of the Hebrews hath met with us: and now let us go, we beseech thee, three days' journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God. ([Exodus 3:18](#))

The "public stance" of Moses and the Israelite leaders is to be that they only want to go three days' journey to sacrifice. So, here the Lord is advocating some degree of deception. This extends to even deceiving their Egyptian neighbors:

And I will give this people favour in the sight of the Egyptians: and it shall come to pass, that, when ye go, ye shall not go empty: But every woman shall borrow of her neighbour, and of her that sojourneth in her house, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment: and ye shall put them upon your sons, and upon your daughters; and ye shall spoil the Egyptians. ([Exodus 3:21-22](#))

Because they are just going to make sacrifices, in the public version, the Israelites are to "borrow" valuable goods from the Egyptians. But, the true intent is clearly spelled out: they are to "spoil" (i.e. "loot") the Egyptians. (See [Exodus 11:2](#), [Exodus 12:35-36](#).)

Anti-Moses authors could have a field day—they could mock Moses' "ethical lapse" here, and insist that he did it all for the money. They could contrast his behavior here with the "thou shalt not covet," "thou shalt not bear false witness," and "thou shalt not steal" commands given later at Sinai, and point out that "borrowing" when you don't ever intend to come back looks a lot like "stealing."

Yet, Moses did exactly what the Lord told him to do, according to the Bible. It is therefore not inconsistent with the Bible for God to have Abraham cloud his relationship with Sarah for their own protection.

This claim by the producers and cast of The DVD regarding deceit serves as a double edged sword against them. The many misrepresentations of LDS beliefs in this video begs the question of whether or not their deceit is sanctioned by God whereas the deceit of Abraham as recorded in the Pearl of Great Price should be condemned.



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# Search for the Truth DVD:Eternal Life

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## Eternal Life

**Claim: "With the concept of God being so drastically different between the Bible and Joseph Smith's teachings one must wonder how Joseph Smith could claim that the Book of Mormon was another Testament of Jesus Christ." - Patrick Powell (Host)**

The claim that the Bible and Joseph Smith disagree is false, as shown [here](#). Joseph Smith disagrees with the non-biblical creeds and resulting *interpretations* of the Bible favored by Mr. Powell.

The Book of Mormon is another testament of Christ because it clearly teaches redemption through a personal covenant relationship with God, through the Lord Jesus Christ.

In addition, the self proclaimed purpose of the Book of Mormon is to establish the truthfulness of the Bible by substantiating it's teachings ([1 Nephi 13:39-40](#)). In this sense, it becomes a second witness of Christ by supporting the teachings of Christ and his pivotal role in the salvation of mankind, as found in the Bible.

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**Claim: "You just don't pay lip service to Jesus; you enter into Him. You become a part of Him. You absorb. You identify completely with His suffering on the cross; His resurrection from the dead; His claims to be the Son of God and therefore qualified to pay the price we could never pay; and once we believe in Him in that deep sense of commitment which can be instantaneous—in fact it has to be—at that moment we have eternal life." - Dr. John Whitcomb (theology professor, Old Testament scholar)**

Despite the video's implication, Latter-day Saints wholeheartedly teach this doctrine. The Book of Mormon, which the critics claim cannot be a testament of Jesus Christ, contains an account of a group of people who are transformed by faith in Christ:

And they had viewed themselves in their own carnal state, even less than the dust of the earth. And they all cried aloud with one voice, saying: O have mercy, and apply the atoning blood of Christ that we may receive forgiveness of our sins, and our hearts may be purified; for we believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who created heaven and earth, and all things; who shall come down among the children of men.

And it came to pass that after they had spoken these words the Spirit of the Lord came upon them, and they were filled with joy, having received a remission of their sins, and having peace of conscience, because of the exceeding faith which they had in Jesus Christ who should come, according to the words which king Benjamin had spoken unto them. ([Mosiah 4:2-3](#))

The Book of Mormon also teaches:

Yea, come unto Christ, and be perfected in him, and deny yourselves of all

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ungodliness; and if ye shall deny yourselves of all ungodliness, and love God with all your might, mind and strength, then is his grace sufficient for you, that by his grace ye may be perfect in Christ; and if by the grace of God ye are perfect in Christ, ye can in nowise deny the power of God. And again, if ye by the grace of God are perfect in Christ, and deny not his power, then are ye sanctified in Christ by the grace of God, through the shedding of the blood of Christ, which is in the covenant of the Father unto the remission of your sins, that ye become holy, without spot.  
([Moroni 10:32-33](#))

Latter-day Saints do not wish to simply pay "lip service" to Jesus, as Dr. Whitcomb says. Therefore, they seek to obey when Jesus commands them to do something. To say we believe while not trying to obey (however imperfectly) would indeed be to give lip service. As Jesus Himself taught, "If ye love me, keep my commandments" ([John 14:15](#)).

And, after presenting His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus admonishes us:

Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:  
And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.  
And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand:  
And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it. ([Matthew 7:24-27](#)).

Is Jesus lying, or does He expect us to obey to the extent we are able?

#### To read more

- [Being "born again": early Christian perspectives](#)
- "Are We Saved by Grace Alone?" [FAIR link](#)

**Claim: "In Christianity eternal life is a gift. It's the most radical understanding of how one goes to heaven, is resurrected, has eternal life, in the religious realm—by grace or saved through faith—it is the gift of God. Why is it a gift? Because Jesus Christ did something that we couldn't do for ourselves. He died on the cross satisfying God's sense of justice against sin; paid the price for our sins; was raised eternally**

**through the resurrection with a glorified body. When we put our faith and trust in Him your pain of sins and believing in Him we receive salvation as a gift." - Dr. Phil Roberts (President, Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary)**

Latter-day Saints also preach this same doctrine. The Book of Mormon teaches:

- We can't do it ourselves:

And men are instructed sufficiently that they know good from evil. And the law is given unto men. And by the law no flesh is justified; or, by the law men are cut off. Yea, by the temporal law they were cut off; and also, by the spiritual law they perish from that which is good, and become miserable forever. ([2 Nephi 2:5](#))

- We are saved by grace because of Christ's sacrifice for our sins:

Wherefore, redemption cometh in and through the Holy Messiah; for he is full of grace and truth.

Behold, he offereth himself a sacrifice for sin, to answer the ends of the law, unto all those who have a broken heart and a contrite spirit; and unto none else can the ends of the law be answered. ([2 Nephi 2:6-7](#))

- Christ died on the cross to satisfy the demands of justice:

Yea, even so he [the Messiah, Christ] shall be led, crucified, and slain, the flesh becoming subject even unto death, the will of the Son being swallowed up in the will of the Father.

And thus God breaketh the bands of death, having gained the victory over death; giving the Son power to make intercession for the children of men—

Having ascended into heaven, having the bowels of mercy; being filled with compassion towards the children of men; standing betwixt them and justice; having broken the bands of death, taken upon himself their iniquity and their transgressions, having redeemed them, and satisfied the demands of justice. ([Mosiah 15:7-9](#))

- Eternal life and salvation is a "gift from God":

...lay up for yourselves a treasure in heaven, yea, which is eternal, and which fadeth not away; yea, that ye may have that precious gift of eternal life, which we have reason to suppose hath been given to our fathers. ([Helaman 5:8](#))

- Christ was raised from the dead with a glorified body:

Behold, they will crucify him; and after he is laid in a sepulchre for the space of three days he shall rise from the dead, with healing in his wings; and all those who shall believe on his name shall be saved in the kingdom of God. ([2 Nephi 25:13](#))

It should be clear that these critics do not understand LDS doctrine, or are trying to make it appear as if the Latter-day Saints do not believe these fundamental Christian concepts.

The speakers distort or are ignorant of LDS scripture and the faith of the Latter-day Saints. They act as if such doctrines would be novel to us, but in fact they are the core doctrines of our faith.

**Claim: After mentioning the LDS doctrine of the three degrees of glory, the video adds: "In Romans 6:23 it talks about although "wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life." - Jon McCartney (Pastor, First Baptist Church of Tooele, Utah)**

Once again, the Latter-day Saints share this doctrine. The Bible and Book of Mormon teach it:

For behold, there is a wo pronounced upon him who listeth to obey that [evil] spirit; for if he listeth to obey him, and remaineth and dieth in his sins, the same drinketh damnation to his own soul; for he receiveth for his wages an everlasting punishment, having transgressed the law of God contrary to his own knowledge. ([Mosiah 2:33](#))

**Claim: "It is only by trusting Him that we come to be able to enjoy the glory of heaven. 'I am the way, the truth and life and no one, not one person, comes to the Father but through me.'" - Jon McCartney (Pastor, First Baptist Church of Tooele, Utah)**

The Latter-day Saints believe this scripture, and quote it frequently. And, this doctrine is again taught in the Book of Mormon, which the DVD insists isn't a "Christian" testament:

- Christ is the only way to salvation:

And moreover, I say unto you, that there shall be no other name given nor

any other way nor means whereby salvation can come unto the children of men, only in and through the name of Christ, the Lord Omnipotent.

([Mosiah 3:17](#))

And if it so be that [men] repent and come unto the Father in the name of Jesus, they shall be received into the kingdom of God. ([Ether 5:5](#))

- Trust in God necessary for salvation:

I would that ye should remember, that as much as ye shall put your trust in God even so much ye shall be delivered out of your trials, and your troubles, and your afflictions, and ye shall be lifted up at the last day.

([Alma 38:5](#))

Latter-day Saints would ask, however, if they are to *trust* Jesus, why they should not trust Him enough to do what He says?

This is discussed further in the next claim.

**Claim: "According to the Bible, repenting of our sins and faith in Jesus Christ is the only way to gain eternal life. In John, Jesus was asked 'What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?' Jesus answered and said to them, 'This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent.' (John 6:28,29)"**

Latter-day Saints proclaim that faith in Christ and repentance are absolutely essential for Christ's atonement to be effective in our lives.

But, they also insist that believing in Jesus includes believing what He says, and obeying Him because we love Him.

"According to the Bible," Jesus also says:

- "He that believeth *and is baptized* shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." ([Mark 16:16](#)) (emphasis added)
- "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." ([Matthew 7:21](#))
- "But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved." ([Matthew 24:13](#))
- "And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, *to give every man according as his work* shall be." ([Revelation 22:12](#)) (emphasis added)
- "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you



from the foundation of the world.... Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.... Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.... Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me.... And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal. ([Matthew 25:31-46](#)) (emphasis added)

The Bible also says:

- And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. ([1 John 2:3-4](#))
- But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. ([James 1:22](#))
- What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid.... ([Romans 6:15](#))
- ...if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins.... ([Hebrews 10:26](#))
- For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous. ([1 John 5:3](#))
- Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. ([Galatians 6:7](#))
- ...all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; *they that have done good*, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation. ([John 5:28-29](#)) (emphasis added)
- For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. ([Ephesians 2:10](#))
- This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men. ([Titus 3:8](#))
- That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God;([Colossians 1:10](#))
- Nothing saves us without Christ. But, "He that saith, I know [Christ], and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." ([1 John 2:3-4](#))

To read more:

- [Does the Church neglect the doctrine of grace?](#)

**Claim: "In the Bible it is clear that our salvation rests in the**

**hands of Jesus Christ alone. Why? Because from the beginning God's word tells us that the penalty for all sin is death—both physical death and spiritual separation from God." "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 6:23) (on screen)**

Yet again, these doctrines are all embraced by the Latter-day Saints. The Book of Mormon teaches:

- All mankind suffers spiritual and physical death

for all mankind, by the fall of Adam being cut off from the presence of the Lord, are considered as dead, both as to things temporal [i.e., physical] and to things spiritual. ([Helaman 14:16](#))

- All sin and are condemned

And by the law no flesh is justified; or, by the law men are cut off. Yea, by the temporal law they were cut off; and also, by the spiritual law they perish from that which is good, and become miserable forever. ([2 Nephi 2:5](#))

- No one can say anything of themselves

And now I ask, can ye say aught of yourselves? I answer you, Nay. Ye cannot say that ye are even as much as the dust of the earth; yet ye were created of the dust of the earth.... ([Mosiah 2:25](#))

- Christ alone can save us

Wherefore, beloved brethren, be reconciled unto him through the atonement of Christ, his Only Begotten Son, and ye may obtain a resurrection, according to the power of the resurrection which is in Christ, and be presented as the first-fruits of Christ unto God, having faith, and obtained a good hope of glory in him.... ([Jacob 4:11](#))

The DVD producers are either ignorant or deceitful about LDS beliefs concerning Christ and His atonement.

**Claim: To pay [the] penalty [for sin] a person must:**

**[1] Be sinless**

**[2] Be infinite to pay the infinite penalty for mankind's sin**

### **[3] Die as a substitute by shedding of blood to pay sin's penalty**

### **[4] Rise from the dead to defeat sin and death**

It is almost as if the DVD producers are quoting the Book of Mormon.

Yet again, all these doctrines are taught and believed by the Latter-day Saints.

#### **[1] Sinless**

- I would that ye should understand that God himself shall come down among the children of men, and shall redeem his people. ([Mosiah 15:1](#))
- Wherefore, redemption cometh in and through the Holy Messiah; for he is full of grace and truth. ([2 Nephi 2:6](#))

#### **[2] Be infinite to pay an infinite penalty**

- ...therefore there can be nothing which is short of an infinite atonement which will suffice for the sins of the world. ([Alma 34:12](#))
- ...there should be a great and last sacrifice; yea, not a sacrifice of man...for it shall not be a human sacrifice; but it must be an infinite and eternal sacrifice. Now there is not any man that can sacrifice his own blood which will atone for the sins of another. ([Alma 34:10-11](#))

#### **[3] Die as a substitute by shedding of blood**

- Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, who wrought out this perfect atonement through the shedding of his own blood. ([DC 76:69](#))
- [This] great and last sacrifice will be the Son of God, yea, infinite and eternal. And thus he shall bring salvation to all those who shall believe on his name; this being the intent of this last sacrifice, to bring about the bowels of mercy, which overpowereth justice, and bringeth about means unto men that they may have faith unto repentance. And thus mercy can satisfy the demands of justice, and encircles them in the arms of safety, while he that exercises no faith unto repentance is exposed to the whole law of the demands of justice; therefore only unto him that has faith unto repentance is brought about the great and eternal plan of redemption. ([Alma 34:14-16](#))
- And he will take upon him death, that he may loose the bands of death which bind his people([Alma 7:12](#))

#### **[4] Rise from the dead to defeat sin and death**

- Behold, they will crucify him; and after he is laid in a sepulchre for the

space of three days he shall rise from the dead, with healing in his wings; and all those who shall believe on his name shall be saved in the kingdom of God. Wherefore, my soul delighteth to prophesy concerning him, for I have seen his day, and my heart doth magnify his holy name. ([2 Nephi 25:13](#))

- death and hell must deliver up their dead, and hell must deliver up its captive spirits, and the grave must deliver up its captive bodies, and the bodies and the spirits of men will be restored one to the other; and it is by the power of the resurrection of the Holy One of Israel. ([2 Nephi 9:12](#))

These are basic, fundamental doctrines accepted without reservation by all faithful Latter-day Saints.

**Claim: "No other person could do what Jesus did; therefore only faith in Jesus' death on the cross and resurrection can save a sinner."**

This is precisely what the Book of Mormon teaches:

- Wherefore, how great the importance to make these things known unto the inhabitants of the earth, that they may know that there is no flesh that can dwell in the presence of God, save it be through the merits, and mercy, and grace of the Holy Messiah, who layeth down his life according to the flesh, and taketh it again by the power of the Spirit, that he may bring to pass the resurrection of the dead, being the first that should rise. ([2 Nephi 2:8](#))
- remember, after ye are reconciled unto God, that it is only in and through the grace of God that ye are saved. ([2 Nephi 10:24](#))
- there is no other way or means whereby man can be saved, only in and through Christ. Behold, he is the life and the light of the world. Behold, he is the word of truth and righteousness. ([Alma 38:9](#))
- ought ye not to tremble and repent of your sins, and remember that only in and through Christ ye can be saved? ([Mosiah 16:13](#))

Speakers who know so little of the fundamental doctrines of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints should not be trusted to inform others about the Church.

**Can we know that we have eternal life? Scripture states, "These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God." (1 John 5:13)**

Once again, a Latter-day Saint can only give a hearty "Amen!" By now, it should be no surprise that the Book of Mormon teaches these doctrines:

- he [Christ] shall rise from the dead, with healing in his wings; and all those who shall believe on his name shall be saved in the kingdom of God. ([2 Nephi 25:13](#))
- ...as many as will not harden their hearts shall be saved in the kingdom of God. ([Jacob 6:4](#))

The Book of Mormon teaches all these doctrines which the critics insist are so important. Why, then, are they so hostile toward the faith of the Latter-day Saints? Could it be that they do not understand that which they attack?

**Claim: "In order to gain access into the celestial heaven Joseph Smith's revelation requires keeping the Ten Commandments as well as all the commandments found throughout the three sacred Mormon books; be baptized into the Mormon Church; tithe; get married in the Temple; obey the Word of Wisdom; be baptized for the dead; magnify the Church callings; and the list goes on."**

The LDS position is here distorted very badly.

The atonement of Christ, operative in our individual lives, is required for each of us to enter the "celestial heaven" (as demonstrated extensively above). Yet, Christ sets the terms whereby the atonement may be received. LDS believe that all mankind will be saved in a kingdom of glory because of the universal atonement of the Savior. "For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" ([1 Corinthians 15:21-22](#)). This is without action on our part, but as a result of a loving Savior's atoning sacrifice and God the Father's plan of salvation.

We see, at last, the complaint which the critics have against the Latter-day Saints. The critics insist that no action of mankind's, aside from fervent, correct belief in Christ and the action of personally accepting Christ as their savior, is required for salvation.

Yet, Latter-day Saints believe that the atonement of Christ brings salvation without action on our part, without even the requirements that other faiths add to the process. But, they find it hypocritical and nonsensical to talk about a fervent faith that does not lead to fervent efforts to do one's best to honor Christ's commandments, seek His will, obey His words, and imitate His sinless life. If we love, honor, and trust someone, why would we not try to be like them to the

extent possible? How we apply these lessons has a great deal to do with how the atonement will be applied in our lives beyond the life in a heaven that comes to all men.

Of course we will not succeed perfectly in this undertaking—but, the sincerity of our faith compels us to offer our best efforts—not because we think they will save us (they will not) but because we love Christ, and desire to obey Him. As Jesus asked rhetorically, "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" ([Luke 6:46](#))

The Latter-day Saints desire to make Jesus not just Lord of their lips, but Lord of their lives.

### **The critics insist that *their* view of salvation's requirements is the only biblically legitimate one.**

The critics act as if *their* conception of salvation is the only possible one, and the only possible Biblical interpretation. But, this is clearly false, since many Christians have held other views.

One Evangelical Christian author wrote of his sudden discovery that his previous beliefs about salvation were very different from those held by the early Christians:

*If there's any single doctrine that we would expect to find the faithful associates of the apostles teaching, it's the doctrine of salvation by faith alone. After all, that is the cornerstone doctrine of the Reformation. In fact, we frequently say that persons who don't hold to this doctrine aren't really Christians. [It's almost as if Mr. Bercot has seen the DVD!]*

\* \* \*

*Our problem is that Augustine, Luther, and other Western theologians have convinced us that there's an irreconcilable conflict between salvation based on grace and salvation conditioned on works or obedience. They have used a fallacious form of argumentation known as the "false dilemma," by asserting that there are only two possibilities regarding salvation: it's either (1) a gift from God or (2) it's something we earn by our works.*

*The early Christians [and the Latter-day Saints!] would have replied that a gift is no less a gift simply because it's conditioned on obedience.... The early Christians believed that salvation is a gift from God but that God gives His gift to whomever He chooses. And He chooses to give it to those who love and obey him.*

—David W. Bercot, *Will The Real Heretics Please Stand Up: A New Look at Today's Evangelical Church in the Light of Early Christianity*, 3rd edition, (Tyler, Texas: Scroll



Publishing Company, 1999[1989]), 57, 61–62. [ISBN 0924722002](https://www.isbn.org/9780924722002) (emphasis in original)

The Latter-day Saints are pleased to be in the company of the earliest Christians. And, the LDS cannot be excluded as Christians because they have not embraced the *modified* doctrines adopted later, and now taught by *Search for the Truth*.

**To read more:**

- [Early Christian views on salvation](#)

**Claim: "There is no religion in the world that believes this except the religion of the Bible because every religion in the world says we just have to do something to contribute, we have to earn our way, we have to somehow please God with ourselves and our attitudes in our words and deeds. Impossible." - Dr. John Whitcomb (theology professor, Old Testament scholar)**

Once again, the video presumes that *their* view of the Bible is the only legitimate one.

The early Christians were certainly both Christians and believers in the Biblical texts. Evangelical author David Bercot responded to the charge that the Early Christians didn't properly "understand" the Bible the way 20th century Christians do by pointing out that Clement of Alexandria quoted the New Testament 2,400 times and Tertullian 7,000 times. Bercot concludes:

*So please don't accuse the early Christians [and, we would add, LDS Christians] of not reading their Bibles. These Christians were well aware of what Paul had written concerning salvation and grace. After all, Paul personally taught men like Clement of Rome. However, the early Christians didn't put Paul's letters to the Romans and the Galatians on a pedestal above the teachings of Jesus and the other apostles. They read Paul's words about grace in conjunction with such other scriptures as...[Matthew 7:21](#)...[Matthew 24:13](#)...[John 5:28-29](#)...[Revelation 22:12](#)...[1 Timothy 4:16](#)...*

—David W. Bercot, *Will The Real Heretics Please Stand Up: A New Look at Today's Evangelical Church in the Light of Early Christianity*, 3rd edition, (Tyler, Texas: Scroll Publishing Company, 1999[1989]), 63–64. [ISBN 0924722002](https://www.isbn.org/9780924722002)

Bercot then addresses a matter which happens to be the video's next claim....

**Claim: "In fact, the Bible refutes the ordinances in Joseph Smith's Articles of Faith by stating, 'For by grace you have**

**been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.' ([Ephesians 2:8,9 NASB](#))"**

Bercot continues:

*So, the real issue isn't a matter of believing the Scriptures, but one of interpreting the scriptures. The Bible says that "by yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast" ([Ephesians 2:8-9](#)). And yet the Bible also says, "You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only" ([James 2:24](#)). Our [i.e. evangelical] doctrine of salvation accepts that first statement but essentially nullifies the second. The early Christian doctrine of salvation gives equal weight to both."*

—David W. Bercot, *Will The Real Heretics Please Stand Up: A New Look at Today's Evangelical Church in the Light of Early Christianity*, 3rd edition, (Tyler, Texas: Scroll Publishing Company, 1999[1989]), 63–64. [ISBN 0924722002](#) (emphasis in original)

The Latter-day Saints likewise honor *all* facets of salvation taught in scripture, not just some of them.

The Bible does not "refute" the idea of ordinances for salvation. When the apostles preached to a crowd, and the people were pricked in their hearts, they cried out, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" ([Acts 2:37](#)).

Peter did *not* reply: "simply have faith in Jesus, and don't worry about any ordinances." He said:

Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. ([Acts 2:38](#))

Peter's answer is exactly what the fourth Article of Faith calls for after faith in Jesus Christ: repentance, baptism, and the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Why is Joseph Smith condemned for following Peter's teachings?

**To read more:**

- [Early Christian views on salvation](#)
- [Born of water: essential baptism in early Christianity](#)

**Claim: "Joseph Smith said, '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.... Neither Paul, John, Peter, nor Jesus ever did it. I boast that no man ever did such 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, pg. 408, 409)**

To contrast against the immediately preceding statement about "lest anyone should boast," the producers of the video include a purported statement of Joseph Smith's, wherein he does indeed boast. There is no explicit reason given for including this contrasting statement, other than to perhaps imply that Joseph was some sort of egomaniacal leader or someone who was stepping outside the bounds of propriety, and therefore not to be trusted. There are a couple of problems with such a comparison, however.

### **Joseph not the author**

First, this statement is written as if Joseph was the author of it, but he was not. Scribes assembled this account from a "synopsis" following Joseph's death. Trying to get insight into Joseph's character and intent from a statement put into his mouth after he was dead is poor history.

### **Quoted out of context**

Second, the quote is taken out of context. In the original context, Joseph was facing intense persecution by many people, including some he had previously considered to be his friends. This statement was supposedly made about a month before he was killed. He made it after reading 2 Corinthians, chapter 11 to the congregation. Note the following statement by Paul, in this scripture:

Again I say, let no one think me foolish; but if you do, receive me even as foolish, that I also may boast a little. That which I am speaking, I am not speaking in as the Lord would, but as in foolishness, in this confidence of boasting. Since many boast according to the flesh, I will boast also. For you, being so wise, bear the foolish gladly. (2 Corinthians 11:16-19, NASB)

Paul then launches into a literary tirade where he claims many things to make himself look the fool, to contrast himself with those who the Corinthians were listening to for their words of salvation, instead of to him. His words were meant to compare and contrast what the Saints at Corinth were doing against what he was offering.

Do the producers of the video dismiss the words of Paul and deny his calling as

an Apostle because he used such a literary approach that included boasting? No, they do not. Yet, they dismiss Joseph Smith when it is clear by his own statements, in context, that he engaged in the exact same literary approach. Consider the words of Joseph right after reading this chapter of Paul's to the congregation:

*My object is to let you know that I am right here on the spot where I intend to stay. I, like Paul, have been in perils, and oftener than anyone in this generation. As Paul boasted, I have suffered more than Paul did, I should be like a fish out of water, if I were out of persecutions. Perhaps my brethren think it requires all this to keep me humble. The Lord has constituted me curiously that I glory in persecution. I am not nearly so humble as if I were not persecuted. If oppression will make a wise man mad, much more a fool. If they want a beardless boy to whip all the world, I will get on the top of a mountain and crow like a rooster: I shall always beat them. When facts are proved, truth and innocence will prevail at last. My enemies are no philosophers: they think that when they have my spoke under, they will keep me down; but for the fools, I will hold on and fly over them.*

—Joseph Smith, *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 7 volumes, edited by Brigham H. Roberts, (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1957), 6:408. [GospelLink](#)

After giving the above explanation, Joseph *then* makes the statements that the video accounts to him, in the same way that Paul made outrageous "boasts" to contrast his position with the position of those who the Corinthians were starting to listen to. Paul starts the next chapter of 2 Corinthians with the statement "boasting is necessary, though it is not profitable." So, it would appear that Paul recognizes the necessity of boasting at times (though it may do little good, being unprofitable), yet the producers of the video do not allow Joseph to follow Paul's advice and, of necessity, boast at times.

Perhaps the producers are unaware of Paul's advice? Or perhaps they apply a double standard where Paul is allowed such literary and rhetorical license, but Joseph is not? Again, the producers never reveal their intent in including Joseph's Paul-like statements in their video.

#### To read more:

- [Did Joseph Smith 'boast' of keeping the Church intact](#)

**Claim: "Joseph Smith's Doctrine & Covenants teaches that Joseph himself holds the keys to the kingdom of heaven (on screen) 'Verily I say unto you, the keys of this kingdom shall**

**never be taken from you, while thou art in the world, neither in the world to come.... '([DC 90:3](#)) (on screen ends) and if Joseph Smith holds the keys to heaven then how can Jesus claim, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth'? ([Matthew 28:18](#))''**

Jesus told Peter, the chief apostle:

And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. ([Matthew 16:19](#))

Peter was told that he would hold the "keys of the kingdom of heaven." The power of these keys was to continue into the hereafter, since Peter's actions on earth would have validity in the world to come.

Jesus does not seem to think that giving Peter keys in the 16th chapter of Matthew affects His ability to hold "all authority" in the 28th chapter. Should we believe His understanding, or the critics?

If the president of a company gives responsibility for some part of his corporation, this does not mean that the president has lost authority—he has merely given an underling power to make some decisions on his behalf. Without the president, the underling has no power.

Are the critics offended that Peter was given keys?

**To read more:**

- [Joseph Smith's status in LDS belief](#)

**Claim: "God's word tells us that 'there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus.... ' ([1 Timothy 2:5](#)) In stark contrast, Brigham Young stated, '...that no man or woman in this dispensation will ever enter into the celestial kingdom of God without the consent of Joseph Smith.' (Journal of Discourses, Vol. 7 p 289)''**

Latter-day Saints embrace the doctrine taught in 1 Timothy. The Book of Mormon says likewise that

...[men] are free to choose liberty and eternal life, through the great Mediator of all men, or to choose captivity and death.... ([2 Nephi 2:27](#))

### Ignoring the Bible

At the Last Supper, Jesus himself taught His apostles:

Ye [the apostles] are they which have continued with me in my temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. ([Luke 22:28-30](#); see also [Matthew 19:28](#).)

Since the Latter-day Saints accept the witness that Joseph was called as an apostle and prophet (see [D&C 21:1](#)) with the same authority as that given to Peter, James, John, and others, they do not think it strange that he will likewise play a role in judgment.

The witness of a prophet will always be brought against those who did not accept his witness of Christ (see [Matthew 10:40](#); [John 5:45-47](#)). Could first century Christians accept Christ while rejecting the witness of Peter or Paul?

### Another incomplete quote

Not content to ignore a clear Biblical teaching, the DVD producers also failed to include the entirety of Brigham Young's quotation. Following the portion cited, Brigham said:

*...I will now tell you something that ought to comfort every man and woman on the face of the earth. Joseph Smith, junior, will again be on this earth dictating plans and calling forth his brethren to be baptized for the very characters who wish this was not so, in order to bring them into a kingdom to enjoy...he will never cease his operations, under the directions of the Son of God, until the last ones of the children of men are saved that can be, from Adam till now.... It is his mission to see that all the children of men in this last dispensation are saved, that can be, through the redemption.*

—Brigham Young, "Intelligence, etc.," *Journal of Discourses*, reported by G.D. Watt, J.V. Long and others, (9 October 1859), Vol. 7 (London: Latter-day Saint's Book Depot, 1860), 289. [off-site wiki](#)>

Clearly, Joseph's role is to function under the "direction...of the Son of God," and the primary goal is the salvation of all who will accept any degree of Christ and Joseph's witness of Him. Joseph's role is not to condemn, but to do everything



possible to encourage all to come unto Christ and be saved.

Joseph's participation in the judgment (at the command and sufferance of Jesus) is no more or less than the role assigned to the Lord's apostles at the Last Supper.

No mortal's role in the judgment supercedes the role given to Jesus, as the Book of Mormon bears witness:

...the keeper of the gate is the Holy One of Israel; and he employeth no servant there; and there is none other way save it be by the gate; for he cannot be deceived, for the Lord God is his name. ([2 Nephi 9:41](#).)

Those who condemn Joseph on these grounds must also condemn Peter and the rest of the Twelve.

**To read more:**

- [Joseph Smith's status in LDS belief](#)

**Claim: "But we cannot believe both the Bible and the writings of Joseph Smith when the Bible tells us there is only one God and Joseph Smith tells us there are many gods and we must become gods ourselves." - Pamela Robertson**

The non-Biblical creeds and the *interpretation* of the Bible chosen by Ms. Robertson are the only problems.

Millions of Christians have not accepted the post-Biblical Trinitarian creeds, and so have believed in more than one divine being.

Millions of others have had hope in the doctrine of *theosis*: humans being made like God.

Many of these Christians were among the earliest followers of Christ. Non-LDS scholar Ernst W. Benz penned a line that responds well to Ms. Robertson's superficial grasp of the issues:

One can think what one wants of this doctrine of progressive deification, but one thing is certain: with this anthropology Joseph Smith is closer to the view of man held by the ancient Church than the precursors of the Augustinian doctrine of original sin.

—Ernst Benz, "*Imago dei*: Man as the Image of God," *FARMS Review* 17/1 (2005): 223–254. [off-site PDF link](#)

It would seem the Latter-day Saints are closer to the Christianity of Jesus and His Apostles than Ms. Robertson may want to admit.

**To read more:**

- [Search for the Truth reply: Who is God](#)
- [Early Christians on deification](#)
- [Modern non-LDS Christians on deification](#)
- [Godhead and the Trinity](#)
- "Do We Have the Potential to Become Like God?" [FAIR link](#)
- D. Charles Pyle, "Early Christian Doctrine on Deification" [FAIR link](#)
- Ernst Benz, "*Imago dei*: Man as the Image of God," *FARMS Review* 17/1 (2005): 223–254. [off-site PDF link](#)

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## Search for the Truth DVD:Archaeology

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# Archaeology

### Is There Archaeological Support for the Book of Mormon?

Like numerous critics before them, the makers of this video claim that archaeological support for the Book of Mormon is non-existent compared to the supposed voluminous archaeological support for the Bible. There are major differences, however, between Old and New World archaeology as well as the

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- [Who Is God?](#)

assumptions which many people bring to their approach of Book of Mormon archaeology.

LDS Mesoamerican expert John Clark has demonstrated numerous Book of Mormon parallels to New World culture that were unknown to Joseph Smith. Time and again, the Book of Mormon view has been vindicated.

**To read more:**

- John E. Clark, "Archaeology, Relics, and Book of Mormon Belief," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 14/2 (2005): 38–49. [off-site PDF link wiki](#)
- [Book of Mormon and Biblical archaeology](#)
- Daniel C. Peterson, "Mounting Evidence for the Book of Mormon," *Ensign* (January 2000): 18–24. [off-site](#)

**Claim: One of the ways to "prove the validity of the word of God" is from "the physical facts found in archaeology..."**

Archaeology can not "prove" that a document is the "word of God." Does archaeology confirm that Jesus is the Christ, that he rose from the dead, or that he atoned for our sins? Archaeology supports the existence of Homer's Troy, does that make the *Iliad* the word of God? Are Hera and Zeus therefore to be worshiped?

There is no archaeological evidence for Moses, Abraham, Joseph of Egypt, Noah, or virtually any ancient biblical prophet, but this is never mentioned in the video. Many biblical archaeologists are not Christians. Why not, if the Bible has been proven to be the word of God by archaeological data?

All that archaeology has proven is that those who wrote the Bible lived in the ancient Near East, and knew its culture and geography—a not terribly revolutionary claim.

**To read more:**

- [Book of Mormon and Biblical archaeology](#)

**Claim: The Bible has over "25,000 evidences" for its authenticity.**

Old World archaeology has the advantage of continuity of *toponyms* (place names). In many instances (in direct contrast to what we find in Mesoamerica),

- [Eternal Life](#)
- [Archaeology](#)
- [Prophecies & Revelations](#)
- [Polygamy](#)
- [The First Vision](#)
- [The Occult](#)
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Bible cities are still known by the same names as they were known anciently. It is impossible to know if the Book of Mormon names are "right," because no one knows the pronunciation of *any* city in the Americas for the period 600 B.C.–A.D. 420.

Even with the advantages of a constant language and habitation enjoyed by biblical archaeology, however, only about 7–8% of Bible locations are known with any degree of certainty, and another 7–8% are suspected with some degree of accuracy because they are in proximity to known Bible sites. If there had not been a continuity of toponyms, many more biblical sites would not be known.

Many readers are surprised to learn that the location of numerous biblical sites are unknown. The location of Mt. Sinai, for example, has over twenty possible candidates. Some scholars reject the claim that the city of Jericho existed at the time of Joshua. The exact route taken by the Israelites on their Exodus is unknown, and some scholars dispute the biblical claim that there ever was an Israelite conquest of Canaan. Many other examples could be given.

Non-LDS biblical archaeologist, William Dever, claims that archaeology should never be supposed to prove the Bible in any sense, and that

*neither biblical scholars nor archaeologists have been able to document as historical any of the events, much less the personalities, of the patriarchal or Mosaic era.*

—William G. Dever, *Recent Archaeological Discoveries and Biblical Research* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1990), 5, 26.

#### To read more:

- [Book of Mormon and biblical archaeology](#)

**Claim: The video quotes BYU professor Dee Green who said that unlike biblical archaeology, which can be studied because we know the locations of cities such as Jerusalem, "no Book of Mormon location is known with reference to modern topography.... After twenty years of research," wrote Dee, "Book of Mormon geography has left us 'empty-handed.' "**

What the video producers fail to tell their viewers is that this statement was made in 1969. Forty additional years of Book of Mormon studies and New World archaeological research has added significantly to our understanding of both disciplines. For example, Dr. John Sorenson (anthropologist) and Dr. John Clark (archaeologist and director of the New World Archaeological Foundation) have

[reader comments](#)

- [Distorted quotes](#)

shown that the Book of Mormon fits neatly (and, at times, in surprising ways) with what we currently know about ancient Mesoamerica during Book of Mormon times. Such studies are more realistic than the research of Dee Green's generation and they tend to confirm the Book of Mormon narrative.

**To read more:**

- John E. Clark, "Archaeology, Relics, and Book of Mormon Belief," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 14/2 (2005): 38–49. [off-site PDF link](#) [wiki](#)
- [Book of Mormon and Biblical archaeology](#)
- John L. Sorenson, "Digging into the Book of Mormon: Our Changing Understanding of Ancient America and Its Scripture," *Ensign* (September 1984): 27–37. [off-site](#)
- John L. Sorenson, "Digging into the Book of Mormon: Our Changing Understanding of Ancient America and Its Scripture, Part 2," *Ensign* (October 1984): 12–24. [off-site](#)

**Claim: "Not one artifact from the Book of Mormon has ever been found. Not one city, not one empire..."**

Such a charge is based on naive and faulty assumptions. Ancient Mesoamerica was virtually unknown to the people of Joseph Smith's day and locale. When the Book of Mormon was translated, there was almost no archaeological support for the record. Today, however, most things mentioned in the Book of Mormon *have been* confirmed to have existed in—what most LDS scholars believe—are Book of Mormon lands. This would include fortifications, armor, thrones, cement, towers, trade, and more. None of these evidences, however, translate into "proof."

How would we recognize uniquely Nephite/Lamanite artifacts? How would we recognize a Nephite potsherd from a non-Nephite potsherd? Writings or markings associated with an artifact would be necessary to tell us if such potsherds were Nephite. Writings and markings are generally either

- *iconographic*: using pictures or symbols, such as a cross, or
- *epigraphic*: written language, such as the word, "cross."

Surviving epigraphic evidence from ancient America, however, is very rare.

If we knew the place names by which all ancient American cities were known during Book of Mormon times, critics might have a stronger case. The fact is, however, that extremely few ancient inscriptions give us these place names. The

few which are known are generally phonetic in nature (which means that we don't know for certain how these city names were pronounced). Because we don't know the original names of most ancient American cities, we use those designations assigned by the Spanish—such as La Venta, San Lorenz, etc. If we don't know the ancient names, how can critics claim that—according to archaeologists—there were no Book of Mormon cities such as Lib, or Bountiful?

### **Old world inscriptional evidence**

Critics almost never mention the discovery of "NHM"—an ancient site in Arabia with inscriptions which date to Lehi's era—that corresponds precisely with the Nahom of the Book of Mormon ([1 Nephi 16:34](#)) in time frame, location, and in relation to an eastward turn in the trail which the Lehites followed in their exodus from the Old World. While NHM does not constitute "proof" for the Book of Mormon, it does provide strong archaeological evidence for the book's narrative.

The precise identification of a viable route from Jerusalem across Arabia via a route totally unknown in Joseph Smith's day is also compelling evidence for 1 Nephi's ancient origins.

The video misleads its viewers about what is possible given current archaeological knowledge, and hides areas that give support to the Book of Mormon account.

### **To read more:**

- [Book of Mormon "hits" in Old World archaeology and geography](#)
- [Nahom/NHM discovery](#)

### **Claim: Not one Book of Mormon weapon, of any kind, has ever been found.**

From iconographic evidence we know that ancient Americans used weapons that function in the same way as described in the Book of Mormon. The Book of Mormon, for example, mentions swords. Metallic swords are mentioned, but they seem to be rare, elite weapons. These weapons disappear early in the Book of Mormon record.

Some swords with at least some metallic elements are mentioned for the Jaredites (e.g. [Ether 7:9](#)), and the Nephites were impressed enough by such swords to bring them back as evidence (e.g., [Mosiah 8:11](#)). This suggests that metallic swords may have been unusual to the Nephites, which correlates with the relative scarcity of metal in pre-Columbian America.



Furthermore, metal weapons are rare in *any* archaeological context (even in the much more heavily studied ancient Near East).

Most readers have assumed that the mention of swords *always* referred to metal (European-like) weapons. Such an assumption, however, is not always warranted by the text. Mesoamericans used wooden clubs, laced with volcanic obsidian (extremely sharp), or bits of sharp rock or even (on rare occasions) bits of metal. When the Spanish encountered these clubs, they dubbed them "swords," and one Spaniard claimed that these swords were so sharp that he saw a Native American cut the head off a horse with one blow.

In any event, how would we know if a weapon found was a "Book of Mormon" weapon or not? Do the critics expect these to be labeled? How do they know a weapon found in the Middle East is a "biblical" weapon, save that it came from the correct time period? How can they know if it was used by a biblical people or a different group?

The DVD misleads its viewers about what archaeology can accomplish.

#### To read more

- [Swords in Book of Mormon](#) (Key source)
- [Swords, armor, forts and tactics](#)
- John E. Clark, "Archaeology, Relics, and Book of Mormon Belief," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 14/2 (2005): 38–49. [off-site PDF link](#) [wiki](#)
- Matthew Roper, "Swords and "Cimeters" in the Book of Mormon," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 8/1 (1999): 34–43. [off-site](#) [No PDF link] [wiki](#)

#### **Claim: Not one coin "which were noted as being common in Joseph's writings" has ever been found in ancient America.**

While twentieth-century editors (possibly James E. Talmage) mistakenly added the term "coins" to the chapter heading of Alma 11, the Book of Mormon text *never* mentions coins (let alone mentions them as "being common"). Interestingly enough, however, the Book of Mormon does mention a monetary system that has remarkable Old World parallels.

This has been frequently addressed, but anti-Mormons simply ignore the evidence and keep repeating the same claim.

#### To read more:

- [No coins in Book of Mormon](#)
- "The Numerical Elegance of the Nephite System": [Table 1](#) and [Table 2](#), *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 8/2 (1999)
- John W. Welch, "Did the ancient peoples of Mesoamerica use a system of weights and scales in measuring goods & their values?," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 8/2 (1999): N/A–N/A. [off-site](#) [No PDF link] [wiki](#)
- John W. Welch, "Weighing & Measuring in the Worlds of the Book of Mormon," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 8/2 (1999): 36–46. [off-site](#) [No PDF link] [wiki](#)

**Claim: "According to the Book of Mormon" the "hill Cumorah" was "in Palmyra, N.Y...." and the "Church won't even commit itself to a map of where the Book of Mormon was supposed to have happened."**

The Book of Mormon doesn't tell us that Cumorah was in New York. And, contrary to what many people have believed, the Book of Mormon doesn't tell us where Moroni buried the plates. We do know, however, that all the plates *except* the Book of Mormon plates were buried in Cumorah. The term "Cumorah" was given to the hill in N.Y. by early Latter-day Saints, not the Book of Mormon.

Why is there no official map? The location of Book of Mormon events hasn't been revealed. Why is there no official map designating the exact location of Jesus' birth (which is debated among biblical scholars)? Why is there no official map designating the precise location of Mt. Sinai? It doesn't seem necessary for God to reveal all geographical information in order for a text to qualify as the Word of God.

The video's double standards are again on display.

**To read more:**

- [Archaeology and the Hill Cumorah](#)
- [No official position on Nephite Cumorah location](#)
- [Textual evidence about Cumorah's location](#)
- *Note:* Perhaps hoping that repetition can replace evidence, the video returns to these themes again [here](#) in less detail.

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## Search for the Truth DVD: Prophecy and Revelation

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# Prophecies and Revelations

### Did Joseph Smith receive revelation that the moon was inhabited?

We have no evidence that he did. This claim is based on a single third-hand report made in 1881, almost four decades after Joseph died. Even though the belief was popular in the nineteenth century, we have no evidence from Joseph's writings or speeches that he believed any such thing, or that he made any prophecies or revelations related to such a belief.

#### To read more:

- [Joseph Smith and Moonmen](#)

### Is [DC 84:3-5](#) an example of a failed prophecy?

A detailed examination of Joseph Smith's revelation in D&C 84 has led some to conclude that may not have been a prophecy, and if it is, its fulfillment is still in the future. Another revelation that Joseph Smith recorded in [DC 124:49-51](#) rescinded the earlier command to build a temple at Independence. The Lord accepted the diligent efforts of the Saints and wisely instructed them to build

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temples at other places where they would not be hindered by enemies.

Critics are inconsistent if they condemn Joseph Smith for this statement, while not condemning Jesus, who said that "the kingdom of God is nigh at hand. Verily I say unto you, *This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled*" ([Luke 21:31-32](#)) (emphasis added).

**To read more:**

- [Independence temple to be built in this generation](#)

**Claim: [DC 1:37-38](#) "just says that you can't make any excuses for a prophecy that doesn't come true." (Chip Thompson)**

In this passage, the Lord confirms his word (e.g., prophecies and promises) in the *Doctrine and Covenants* shall all be fulfilled. By "search[ing] these commandments" we find that:

- promised blessings are predicated by obedience ([DC 130:20-21](#))
- commandments and their promised blessings can be revoked due to disobedience ([DC 58:30-31](#) [DC 56:4](#))
- we need not "run faster or labor more than you have strength" ([DC 10:4](#))
- if circumstances render one unable to perfectly keep a commandment, it is sufficient to have good intent ([DC 124:49-51](#) see also [Mosiah 4:24-27](#))
- if men use agency to be "anxiously engaged" in good acts, they won't "lose their reward" ([DC 58:27-28](#))
- the mere presence of a commandment does not guarantee success, prayer is also needed to "come off conqueror" of Satan's opposition. ([DC 10:5](#))
- if a person in an important calling can no longer fulfill important responsibilities due to apostasy or death, the Lord can appoint a replacement ([DC 114:2](#) [DC 118:6](#) [DC 124:30](#))
- a person can be released from a calling or responsibility to attend to more important matters ([DC 126:1-3](#))

It is a misuse of the passage to recast complex texts—texts dealing with commandments in the presence of agency and conditional promises—into unconditional prophecies that must be fulfilled by the letter.

**Is [DC 114:1](#) an example of a failed prophecy?**

This revelation is an admonition for David Patten to set all his affairs in order so that he *may* perform a mission, not a prophecy that he would serve a mission. When the instructions are viewed as a commandment, the wisdom found in *Doctrine and Covenants* as outlined above can help us gain an understanding how

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the Lord works around human weaknesses to accomplish his purposes.

As revelation is received line upon line, the initially private revelation to David Patten must be interpreted in light of a fuller, second one ([DC 118:1-6](#)) received two months later that added substantial information. The more widely disseminated second revelation clarified that the Quorum of Twelve were to be the "twelve" including Elder Patten who were to embark on a mission the next spring. In fact it further specified a date (April 26) and place (Far West) to commence and where the mission would be served. Both texts suggested that fallen members of this mission group would be replaced, but the latter added specific names.

The Twelve Apostles had to fight for the survival of their families and fellow Saints in the face of mob violence and a forced, winter exile. As noted in the video, Elder Patten himself did not survive until the spring. A council was held in Quincy, Illinois in March to decide what obligations the Twelve had towards fulfilling D&C 118 (and by extension D&C 114):

*Many of the authorities considered, in our present persecuted and scattered condition, the Lord would not require the Twelve to fulfill his words to the letter, and, under our present circumstances, he would take the will for the deed; but I felt differently and so did those of the quorum who were with me. I asked them, individually, what their feelings were upon the subject. They all expressed their desires to fulfill the revelation. I told them the Lord God had spoken, and it was our duty to obey and leave the event in his hands and he would protect us. (Brigham Young Manuscript History)*

On April 26th, a group of Saints together with the Twelve Apostles gathered in the main square at Far West to take their leave. They then departed in a great hurry (the whole event occurring well before dawn) before anyone would notice because Far West was now enemy territory. President Young had heard a report that "the mob came into Far West and tantalized the committee on the subject of the revelation, saying that was one of Joe Smith's revelations which could not be fulfilled, as the Twelve and the Saints were scattered to the four winds; and threatened them severely if they were found in Far West the next day." (BYMH)

Shortly after that the Twelve, led by Brigham Young, did depart for Great Britain, where they had great success and secured the foundations for the LDS Church as we know it today. It is unfortunate that David Patten was unable to serve in that capacity, but clearly the Lord's purposes underlying D&C 114 and 118 were fulfilled anyway. David Patten did not lose his reward, having served a higher cause. As Joseph Smith eulogized, "There lies a man that has done just as he said he would—he has laid down his life for his friends." (*History of The Church*)

3:172. [GospelLink](#))

**To read more:**

- "Did Joseph Smith Prophecy Falsely Regarding David Patten?" [off-site](#)

**Claim: Elder Patten serving a mission in the Spirit World is not a satisfactory excuse because [DC 114:1](#) doesn't state it.**

The burden of proof for demonstrating that 1) a prophecy was made and 2) there is no possible way for it to come to pass falls on the critics. Proposition 1) has already been demonstrated to be false above as D&C 114 is better described as a commandment. Mr. Thompson attempts to establish proposition 2) with the claim above, but in doing so commits a logical fallacy, that of making an argument from silence. A possible way of fulfillment cannot be ruled out simply because it is not mentioned in the immediate passage. Another revealed text, gives one reason to believe that:

*faithful elders of this dispensation, when they depart from mortal life, continue their labors in the preaching of the gospel of repentance and redemption, through the sacrifice of the Only Begotten Son of God, among those who are in darkness and under the bondage of sin in the great world of the spirits of the dead. ([DC 138:57](#))*

**Claim: Joseph Smith fits the model of a false prophet given in [Deuteronomy 13:1-3](#)**

While attempting to apply this passage to Joseph Smith, a major concession must be implicitly made by these critics. They must admit that Joseph Smith has performed a *sign or wonder* that has *come to pass*. They are correct on this point, Joseph Smith uttered many wonderful prophecies that have been fulfilled. These critics, in the beginning of this segment establish Jesus' prophetic credentials by giving an example of one of his fulfilled revelations; but they failed to employ an even standard by being silent at Joseph Smith's successes. To make up this deficiency, readers are invited to learn more about Joseph Smith's true prophecies in the link below.

To demonstrate the second part of the test in [Deuteronomy 13:1-3](#) the critics would have to show that Joseph Smith advocated following *gods* apart from the God testified of in the Old Testament. The [Who is God?](#) section of the FAIR response critiques the video's attempt to do so and found it wanting.



### To read more:

- Fulfilled Prophecies of Joseph Smith [off-site](#)

### Claim: Joseph Smith does not measure up to the biblical standard for prophets in [Deuteronomy 18:21-22](#)

There is no reliable evidence that Joseph Smith fails any sound test based on [Deuteronomy 18:21-22](#). These critics have attempted to condemn Joseph Smith using a standard that would, if applied to Ezekiel, Jeremiah, Nathan, an angel of God, and Jonah, also condemn the Old Testament as a fraud. The critics are inconsistent, given their desire to condemn Joseph.

### To read more:

- [Prophetic test in Deuteronomy](#)
- The Nature of Prophets and Prophecy [off-site](#)

### Did Joseph Smith prophesy the exact date of the Second Coming of Christ?

Joseph Smith was merely speculating in 1835 when he said "even 56 years should wind up the scene." It is clear the actual revelation recorded in [DC 130:14-17](#) he had on the subject left the exact date much more uncertain.

### To read more:

- [Joseph Smith prophesied the Second Coming to be in 1890](#)
- Richard Lloyd Anderson, "Joseph Smith and the Millenarian Time Table," *Brigham Young University Studies* 3:3 (1961): 55–66. [off-site](#)

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# Search for the Truth DVD: Polygamy

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## Joseph Smith's Character: Polygamy

### Is Plural Marriage "Unbiblical"?

**Claim "I do believe that there are some that look to the example of Solomon and or David as an example for a biblical proof for the authorization of marrying multiple wives. When we look at their lives, they were in clear disobedience to the commandment of God. Hundreds of years before Solomon or David ever came on the scene, God had warned the nation of Israel, in Deuteronomy 17, he told them when you establish a King, make sure that your King does not gather to himself multiple wives. So we look at Solomon and we look at David we find out they were in direct disobedience." - Scott Gallatin (Pastor, Calvary Chapel)**

Pastor Gallatin's reading of the scripture is incomplete. Only four chapters later, the Lord gives instructions on how to equitably treat plural wives and children. (See [Deuteronomy 21:15-17](#).) Why does He not simply forbid plural marriage, if that is the intent of chapter 17? Why does He instruct the Israelites on how to conduct themselves in plural households, if all such households are forbidden?

What does the scripture addressed to kings in Deuteronomy say?

Thou shalt in any wise set him king over thee, whom the Lord thy God shall choose: one from among thy brethren shalt thou set king over thee: thou mayest not set a stranger over thee, which is not thy brother....  
Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away....

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Special Features

[\(Deuteronomy 17:15,17\)](#)

So, rather than opposing plural marriage, the command to kings is that they:

1. not multiply wives *to themselves* (i.e., only those who hold proper priesthood keys may approve plural marriage—see [2 Samuel 12:8](#), [Jacob 2:30](#), [DC 132:38-39](#));
2. that these wives not be those who turn his heart away from God ([1 Kings 11:3-4](#));
3. not take excessive numbers of wives (see [Jacob 2:24](#)).

David and Solomon are excellent examples of violating one or more of these biblical principles, as described below.

**To read more:**

- [Polygamy not Biblical?](#)
- Orson Pratt and John Philip Newman, "Does the Bible Sanction Polygamy?" *Deseret News* (12–14 August 1874) [debate].

### How does Deuteronomy apply to King David's behavior?

David is well-known for his sin with Bathsheba and his involvement in the death of her husband, Uriah. (See [2 Samuel 11:1-27](#).) Nathan the prophet arrived to condemn David's behavior, and told the king:

And Nathan said to David...Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul; And I gave thee thy master's house, and thy master's wives into thy bosom, and gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah; and if that had been too little, I would moreover have given unto thee such and such things.

Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the Lord, to do evil in his sight? thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife to be thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon.

Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house; because thou hast despised me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife. ([2 Samuel 12:7-10](#))

Nathan here tells David that the *Lord* "gave thee...thy master's wives." And, the Lord says, through His prophet, that He would have given even more than He has

- [The Good Test](#)
- [Burning in the Bosom](#)
- [The Priesthood?](#)
- [What is Hell?](#)
- [A New Beginning](#)

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Other Materials

- [Letter](#) given to distributors
- [Annotated](#) with comments
- [Producers' press release](#) with comments
- [Selected reader comments](#)
- [Distorted quotes](#)

already given of political power, wives, and wealth.

But, David *then* sinned and did evil *in the matter of Uriah*. If plural marriage is always a sin to God, then why did Nathan not take the opportunity to condemn David for all his plural marriages? Or, why did the prophet not come earlier, when David was righteous and hearkening to the Lord?

**To read more:**

- [Polygamy not Biblical?](#)

### How does Deuteronomy apply to King Solomon's behavior?

Solomon's problem is described:

But king Solomon loved many strange women, together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites;

Of the nations concerning which the Lord said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall not go in to them, neither shall they come in unto you: for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods: Solomon clave unto these in love....

Then did Solomon build an high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, in the hill that is before Jerusalem, and for Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon.

And likewise did he for all his strange wives, which burnt incense and sacrificed unto their gods. ([1 Kings 11:1-2,7-8](#))

Solomon's wives turned his heart away from God, as Deuteronomy cautioned. Nothing is said against the plurality of wives, but merely of wives taken without authority that turn his heart away from the Lord.

**To read more:**

- [Polygamy not Biblical?](#)

### Are there any other Biblical examples of legitimate plural marriage?

Certainly—examples include:

- Abraham married Hagar ([Genesis 16:3](#)), Keturah ([Genesis 25:1](#)) and other unnamed concubines ([Genesis 25:6](#)).

- Jacob ([Genesis 29:21-30](#), [Genesis 30:3-4](#), [Genesis 30:9](#)).
- Abijah had fourteen wives ([2 Chronicles 13:21](#)) and yet he is described as a righteous king of Judah who honored the Lord ([2 Chronicles 13:8-12](#)) and prospered in battle because of the Lord's blessing ([2 Chronicles 13:16-18](#)).
- Jehoiada, priest under King Joash "took for him two wives" ([2 Chronicles 24:3](#)). Jehoiada is clearly approved of, for he is described at his death as one who "had done good in Israel, both toward God and toward his house. [i.e. family]" ([2 Chronicles 24:16](#)).

If a righteous king, a righteous priest, Jacob the father of the twelve tribes, and Abraham—the pre-eminent figure of the entire Old Testament—are not condemned or corrected for legitimate plural marriages, it is untenable to claim that a biblical prohibition exists in Deuteronomy.

**To read more:**

- [Polygamy not Biblical?](#)

**Claim: "Jesus made it clear that God designed marriage for one man and one woman for life, '...a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh; so then they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate.'" (Mark 10:7-9)**

Latter-day Saints have no quarrel with this scripture. However, it says nothing at all about plural marriage—it merely indicates that a husband and wife must become one. It says absolutely nothing one way or the other about having more than one wife with which one is joined by God and commanded to "be one."

**To read more:**

- [Polygamy not Biblical?](#)

**Claim: "Furthermore the Bible repeatedly commands that a Christian leader is to be the husband of only one wife. (On screen: [1 Timothy 3:2](#); [1 Timothy 3:12](#); [Titus 1:6](#))."**

There would be no reason to limit church leaders to *one* wife if polygamy was not found within the early church. Jews of that period allowed polygamy and this was

undoubtedly brought with them as they converted to Christianity ([off-site](#)). Latter-day Saints agree that the standard instruction to all believers is monogamy—exceptions can only be commanded by God through His prophet (see [Jacob 2:30](#)).

Multiple early Christian writers also understood there to be no absolute prohibition against plural marriage in some circumstances.

**To read more:**

- [Early Christians on plural marriage](#)

## Distorting Joseph Smith's Early History

**Claim: "[In an LDS film] Joseph is even shown healing the sick in Nauvoo. Although this film is very emotional and inspiring it has no more reality to it than any other fictional story created by Hollywood. Let's now examine the historical documents about the true character of Joseph Smith."**

Joseph's healing accounts are well-attested to by multiple witnesses. There are numerous "historical documents" testifying that Joseph performed healings on multiple occasions.

Critics ought to be careful when dismissing or criticizing healing by God's power: the scribes and Pharisees likewise sought to minimize or negate the miraculous healings performed by Jesus by insisting that He was, in fact, wicked. (See, for example, [Matthew 9:34](#), [Matthew 12:13-14](#), [Matthew 12:24](#), [Mark 3:5-6](#), [Luke 5:17-26](#), [Luke 6:7](#), [Luke 14:3-4](#), [John 7:32](#), [John 9:13](#), [John 11:44-50](#), [John 12:17-19](#)).

**To read more:**

- [Personal failings of Joseph Smith](#)
- [Joseph Smith healings and miracles](#)

**Claim: "An amazing experience like [the First Vision] should radically change a person's life but by the age of 21, Joseph was arrested and brought before a judge in Bainbridge, N.Y., for deceiving Josiah Stowell, charged for glass looking and sit**



## before the court as a disorderly person."

Joseph never claimed to be perfect, and mentioned that following his vision he made foolish errors ([JS-H 1:28](#)). However, the video attempts to deceive its viewers on numerous points, as discussed in the sections below.

### To read more:

- [Personal failings of Joseph Smith](#)

## Was Joseph found guilty?

The video omits the outcome of this legal proceeding. The appearance before the judge was not a trial—as demonstrated by the Reverend Wesley Walters, a prolific anti-Mormon author. Therefore, he was not found guilty and no trial was held. The video obviously wants the viewer to conclude that Joseph was found guilty in court—after all, there is no shame in being charged with a crime if one is found not guilty. Jesus Himself was falsely condemned.

But, these facts would not serve the video's purposes, so they say nothing about the outcome.

This is one more "historical document" which the video hides from its viewers.

### To read more:

- [History of 1826 court appearance](#)

## Was Josiah Stowell deceived?

Despite their claims that they are trying to "Search for the Truth," the video does not tell its viewers that Josiah Stowell testified for Joseph as a defense witness and did not believe that Joseph had defrauded him at all. Stowell testified of Joseph's claims, "Do I believe it? No, it is not a matter of belief: I positively know it to be true."

### To read more:

- [History of 1826 court appearance](#)

## If Stowell had no complaint, why was Joseph brought before the judge at all?

The charges were brought by Stowell's family members, who seem worried that Josiah would accept Joseph's religious claims. Stowell joined the Church founded by Joseph, and remained a faithful member to the day of his death.

Do the video's authors condemn Paul because he was brought before many courts because of religious persecution? (See [Acts 23:6](#).)

**To read more:**

- [History of 1826 court appearance](#)

**Claim: "The next year he falls for Emma Hale, a girl at whose home he lodged...."**

The reader will by now not be surprised that the video distorts in both what it says and does not say. Emma Hale was not "a girl"—she was, in fact, older than Joseph Smith (she was born 10 July 1804; Joseph was born 23 December 1805).

She was an adult of twenty three at the time of their marriage (18 January 1827), but the video's goal of portraying Joseph as a rake and womanizer is made easier if they distort matters.

## Joseph Smith's Practice of Plural Marriage

**Claim: "...Emma will prove to be a companion of such loyalty that the thought of breaking the heart of a woman like this would be unthinkable for most men, but not for Joseph Smith."**

It is no secret that plural marriage was extremely challenging for Emma. However, the authors give us no citations to demonstrate what Emma thought about plural marriage and Joseph's claim to be a prophet.

Emma asked Joseph for a blessing not long before he went to Carthage. Joseph told her to write the best blessing she could, and he would sign it upon his return. Wrote Emma:

*I desire with all my heart to honor and respect my husband as my head, ever to live in his confidence and by acting in unison with him retain the place which God has given me by his side.... I desire the spirit of God to know and understand myself, I desire a fruitful, active mind, that I may be*

*able to comprehend the designs of God, when revealed through his servants without doubting.*

Emma was troubled by plural marriage, but this trouble arose partly from her conviction that Joseph was a prophet. When one woman asked Emma if she felt Joseph was still a prophet despite her opposition to plural marriage Emma replied, "Yes, but I wish to God I did not know it." That she continued to support Joseph's calling and remain with him, despite her feelings about plural marriage, speaks much of her convictions. As she told Parley P. Pratt years later:

*I believe he [Joseph] was everything he professed to be.*

If the video's producers accept Emma as an important witness, their *search for truth* obligates them to include her witness of Joseph's prophetic calling to the very end of her life.

#### To read more:

- [Emma Smith and polygamy](#) (follow link for citations)

**Claim: "Within a few short years, even men who were closest to Joseph like David Whitmer, Oliver Cowdery, William Law and William McLellin were repulsed by Joseph Smith's multiple adulteries and publicly declared Joseph an adulterer."**

It is disappointing that the Christian DVD producers think that making a public accusation against someone is sufficient to prove the case against them. Many charges were made against Jesus and the apostles, even by close friends and associates with the same purpose in mind. Are we to believe the "many of [Christ's] disciples [who] went back, and walked no more with him," ([John 6:66](#)) or those who continued faithful?

That Joseph practiced plural marriage is not a matter of debate. But the video presumes that the practice is by definition immoral in all times and circumstances. To do so is circular reasoning and begging the question.

#### **What do we know about Oliver Cowdery's witness?**

Oliver Cowdery left the Church in 1838. But the video leaves out important details. As a lawyer, Cowdery's integrity was once challenged in court because of his Book of Mormon testimony:

*The opposing counsel thought he would say something that would*

*overwhelm Oliver Cowdery, and in reply to him in his argument he alluded to him as the man that had testified and had written that he had beheld an angel of God, and that angel had shown unto him the plates from which the Book of Mormon was translated. He supposed, of course, that it would cover him with confusion, because Oliver Cowdery then made no profession of being a "Mormon," or a Latter-day Saint; but instead of being affected by it in this manner, he arose in the court, and in his reply stated that, whatever his faults and weaknesses might be, the testimony which he had written, and which he had given to the world, was literally true.*

—George Q. Cannon, *Journal of Discourses* 22:251. [off-site wiki](#)

Despite his harsh personal feelings toward Joseph Smith, Oliver continued to insist that the Book of Mormon was the word of God, and that he had seen an angel and the plates.

Oliver later returned to the Church and was rebaptized, remaining faithful to his death in a witness of Joseph's prophetic calling and the truth of the Book of Mormon.

#### **To read more:**

- [Oliver Cowdery's faithfulness to his testimony](#)

### **What do we know about David Whitmer's witness?**

David Whitmer, one of the Three Witnesses of the Book of Mormon, remained out of the Church. Whitmer disagreed with Joseph about plural marriage. The producers have created another dilemma for themselves, however, because he steadfastly maintained the truth of the Book of Mormon up to his death. If the producers accept Whitmer as an important witness, their search for truth again obligates them to disclose his witness to the truth of the Book of Mormon.

Thomas B. Marsh approached Cowdery and Whitmer about their witness following their excommunication from the Church.

*I enquired seriously at David if it was true that he had seen the angel, according to the testimony as one of the witnesses of the Book of Mormon. He replied, as sure as there is a God in heaven, he saw the angel, according to his testimony in that book.... I interrogated Oliver Cowdery in the same manner, who answered me similarly.*

—"History of Thomas Baldwin Marsh," *Deseret News* (24 March 1858).

### To read more:

- [David Whitmer's faithfulness to his testimony](#)

### What do we know about William McLellin's witness?

McLellin was an original member of the Twelve apostles. He was eventually excommunicated. It should be no surprise that McLellin vilified the Saints since he took part in mob violence and theft against them:

*He took an active part with the mob in Missouri, in robbing and driving the Saints. At the time Joseph Smith was in prison, he and others robbed Joseph's house and stable of considerable property.*

—Andrew Jenson, *Historical Record* (Salt Lake City: Andrew Jenson, 1888), 5:38–39.

McLellin also tried to form his own Church with himself at the head, and he admitted at his excommunication hearing that

*he quit praying and keeping the commandments of God, and indulged himself in his lustful desires.*

—*History of The Church* 3:91. [GospelLink](#)

If the producers are indeed searching for the truth, they are obligated to disclose McLellin's unrelenting hostility towards Joseph Smith and the Saints.

### What do we know about William Law's witness?

William Law continued to insist that Joseph was a prophet, but a fallen one:

*It was not until perhaps April or May 1844 that he organized his thinking in such a way as to systematically attack his enemy. Even then he was not assailing the validity of the Restoration. The vehemence with which William Law denounced the Prophet in 1844 was not due to disbelief in Mormon polity, but to his conviction that the Mormon leader had plunged into apostate practices.*

—Lyndon W. Cook, "William Law, Nauvoo Dissenter," *Brigham Young University Studies* 22:1 (Fall 1982): 56. [off-site](#)

Again, if the producers are engaged in a search for truth, they are obligated to disclose that Law did not dispute the validity of the Restoration despite the dilemma this creates for them.

### To read more:

- [Nauvoo Expositor](#)

## Distorting LDS Doctrine

**Claim: "In 1843, Joseph Smith had a revelation and penned D&C 132, outlining the necessity of entering into a new and everlasting covenant of plural marriage."**

As the introduction to section 132 states, the evidence is clear that Joseph mentioned the doctrines of plural marriage as early as 1831—the ideas were well-developed in his mind long before 1843. ([DC 132](#); *History of The Church* 5:xxix–xxx, 501–507. [GospelLink](#))

Doctrine and Covenants 132 teaches of "the new and everlasting covenant," which includes *marriage* since celestial marriage is a gospel ordinance:

*The gospel is the everlasting covenant because it is ordained by Him who is Everlasting and also because it is everlastingly the same. In all past ages salvation was gained by adherence to its terms and conditions, and that same compliance will bring the same reward in all future ages. Each time this everlasting covenant is revealed it is new to those of that dispensation. Hence the gospel is the new and everlasting covenant. All covenants between God and man are part of the new and everlasting covenant. ([DC 22](#); [DC 132:6-7](#).) Thus celestial marriage is "a new and an everlasting covenant" ([DC 132:4](#)) or the new and everlasting covenant of marriage....*

—Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd edition, (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966), 529–530. [GospelLink](#)

The key doctrine described in D&C 132 is not *plural marriage*, but *eternal* or *celestial* marriage, which may (if so commanded) include plural marriage. While plural marriage was practiced, some members of the Church interpreted D&C 132 as applying exclusively to polygamy, which is understandable given that they were under a duty to obey the commands given to them.

However, as Elder Bruce R. McConkie explained:

*Plural marriage is not essential to salvation or exaltation.... In our day, the Lord summarized by revelation the whole doctrine of exaltation and predicated it upon the marriage of one man to one woman. ([DC 132:1-28](#).) Thereafter he added the principles relative to plurality of wives with the express stipulation that any such marriages would be valid only if*



authorized by the President of the Church. ([DC 132:7,29-66.](#))

—Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd edition, (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966), 578. [GospeLink](#)

The video misunderstands LDS doctrine, garbles the history of Joseph's revelations on plural marriage, and distorts LDS teaching on the matter.

**To read more:**

- [Is plural marriage required for exaltation?](#)

**Claim: "Brigham Young, revealed that your godhood rests on the act of polygamy saying, 'The only men who become Gods, even the sons of God, are those who enter into polygamy.' (Journal of Discourses Vol. 11 pg. 269)"**

Unsurprisingly, the video omits material that clarifies Brigham Young's meaning (material not included in the video is indicated by **red italics**; **bold red italics** have been added for emphasis. Material quoted by the video is in black text.):

*We wish to obtain all that father Abraham obtained. I wish here to say to the Elders of Israel, and to all the members of this Church and kingdom, that it is in the hearts of many of them to wish that the doctrine of polygamy was not taught and practiced by us.... It is the word of the Lord, and I wish to say to you, and all the world, that if you desire with all your hearts to obtain the blessings which Abraham obtained, **you will be polygamists at least in your faith**, or you will come short of enjoying the salvation and the glory which Abraham has obtained. This is as true as that God lives. You who wish that there were no such thing in existence, if you have in your hearts to say: "We will pass along in the Church without obeying or submitting to it in our faith or believing this order, because, for aught that we know, this community may be broken up yet, and we may have lucrative offices offered to us; we will not, therefore, be polygamists lest we should fail in obtaining some earthly honor, character and office, etc,"—the man **that has that in his heart, and will continue to persist in pursuing that policy**, will come short of dwelling in the presence of the Father and the Son, in celestial glory. The only men who become Gods, even the Sons of God, are those who enter into polygamy. *Others attain unto a glory and may even be permitted to come into the presence of the Father and the Son; but they cannot reign as kings in glory, because they had blessings offered unto them, and they refused to accept them.**

—Brigham Young, "Remarks by President Brigham Young, in the Bowery, in G.S.L. City," *Journal of Discourses*, reported by G.D. Watt, E.L. Sloan, and D.W. Evans, (19 August 1866), Vol. 11 (London: Latter-day Saint's Book Depot, 1867), 268–269. [off-site](#)

(emphasis added)

Brigham Young made several points:

- the command to practice plural marriage is from God, and it is wrong to seek to abolish a command from God.
- to obtain the blessings of Abraham, the Saints were required to be "polygamists at least in your faith": i.e., it was not necessary that each enter into plural marriage *in practice*, but that they accept that God spoke to His prophets.
- it was wrong to avoid plural marriage for worldly, selfish reasons, such as believing the Church would fail, and hoping to have political or monetary rewards afterward.
- if one were commanded to enter into plural marriage ("had blessings offered to them"), and if one refused, God would withhold blessings later because of disobedience now.

Thus, in the context of the speech, "enter into polygamy" does not mean that all members at all times are required to be actual polygamists, but that they accept the doctrine ["polygamists at least in your faith"] and be ready to practice it if so commanded without regard for worldly pressures.

It is beyond dispute that the Saints considered plural marriage to be a command from God. Even so, it was only practiced by a minority. Thus, it is troubling that a video claiming to search for the truth *removes* the portions of a quote making it clear that Brigham allows for faithful members who are polygamists in faith only.

**To read more:**

- [Is plural marriage required for exaltation?](#)
- [Brigham Young in JD 11:269](#)

## Guilt By Association and Further Distortion of History

**Claim: "In 1842 he [Joseph Smith] married, in an eight month period, eleven women. Took a five month break, and then in 1843 he married fourteen women, five of which he married in the month of May alone. So when we understand the timeline in which Joseph Smith married these women, how quickly he was**

## **marrying women we see that Joseph Smith had a voracious appetite for a new sexual partner." - Brian Mackert (Former Fundamentalist Mormon)**

Once again, the video treats a complex issue with superficiality. It would probably be helpful to allow the early Saints to speak for themselves. B.H. Roberts, an influential leader explained:

*The Saints did not accept into their faith and practice the plural-wife system with the idea that it increased the comfort, or added to the ease of anyone. From the first it was known to involve sacrifice, to make a large demand upon the faith, patience, hope and charity of all who should attempt to carry out its requirements. Its introduction was not a call to ease or pleasure, but to religious duty; it was not an invitation to self-indulgence, but to itself-conquest; its purpose was not earth-happiness, but earth-life discipline, undertaken in the interest of special advantages for succeeding generations of men.*

—B.H. Roberts, *The Truth, The Way, The Life: An Elementary Treatise on Theology* (Provo, Utah: BYU Studies, 1991), 557.

Even neutral observers have long understood that this attack on plural marriage is probably the weakest of them all. George Bernard Shaw, certainly no Mormon, declared:

*Now nothing can be more idle, nothing more frivolous, than to imagine that this polygamy had anything to do with personal licentiousness. If Joseph Smith had proposed to the Latter-day Saints that they should live licentious lives, they would have rushed on him and probably anticipated their pious neighbors who presently shot him.*

—Bernard Shaw, *The Future of Political Science in America* (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1933).

Furthermore, Joseph Smith would not permit sexual misconduct. For example, he refused to countenance John C. Bennett's serial infidelities. If Joseph was looking for easy access to sex, Bennett—mayor of Nauvoo, First Councilor in the First Presidency, and military leader—would have been the ideal confederate. Yet, Joseph publicly denounced Bennett's actions and severed him from the Church. Bennett became a vocal opponent and critic.

The critic cannot argue that Joseph felt that only he was entitled to polygamous relationships, since Joseph went to great efforts to teach the doctrine to Hyrum and the Twelve, who embraced it with much less zeal than Bennett would have. Nor do the film producers mention the women who accepted and defended the

principle as God's will:

*Dear Cousin . . . As you are aware by my former letter to you that I am a firm believer in and do sustain the principle of plural marriage—the celestial law or higher order of marriage, which not only unites husbands and wives for time but for all eternity, which last clause is the crowning point for all. I will explain more fully, if possible, my reason for so doing, and being a firm believer in the Bible, I will take that as my guide. I find by searching its pages where God said to Abraham the father of the faithful, (in whose bosom all good Christians are praying to repose) “I will bless them that bless thee and curse them that curse thee, and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.” Now this we understand is the promise pertaining to Christ the Redeemer, who should come and be crucified to atone for the sins of the world, that as many as would hearken to his word, might be brought back into the presence of God; also in Galatians, “Now to Abraham and to his seed were the promises made,” and He saith not unto seeds as of many, but as of one, and of thy seed which is Jesus Christ, and all who read the Bible know that Abraham had more than one wife. Again, I find the same promise made of Christ that he should come through the seed of Jacob; a man having four wives, and of these plural wives came the twelve patriarchs, whose names John the revelator tells us are to be written on the twelve gates of the holy city, even the new Jerusalem. In Kings I read that David was a man after God’s own heart, and through his loins a chosen seed should be raised up even Jesus Christ the Redeemer. The Apostle Paul in his day tells the people how the Lord said, I have found the son of Jesse a man after mine own heart which shall fulfill all my will, of this man’s seed hath God, according to promise, raised unto Israel a Savior, Jesus. Isaiah confirms the same by telling us, in that day there shall be a root of Jesse which shall stand as an ensign for the people, to it shall the Gentiles seek and his rest shall be glorious. Now I learn from the Bible that Jesse, the father of David, was the son of Ruth the plural wife of Boaz and that David his son had many wives, yet in nothing did he displease the Lord only in the case of Uriah and his wife. In Revelations it says one of the Elders said unto me “weep not behold the lion of the tribe of Judah hath prevailed to open the book and loose the seven seals thereof. I am Alpha and Omega the beginning and the end; the first and the last. Again he says “I am the root and the offspring of David the bright and morning star, which makes it very plain to my understanding that God had great respect for those who believed and practised plural marriage, and indeed preferred that lineage for his holy son Jesus to come through, and as he is the root of David, who was a man after God’s own heart, it becomes a most positive proof to me that Jesus Christ, is the chief corner stone and author of this principle; therefore understanding and believing the Bible as I do, reason and my*

*own conscience forces me not only to adopt the principle of plural marriage in my faith, but I must practise the same. I also read in John, Chapter 8, where our blessed Savior says, "if ye were Abraham's children you would do the works of Abraham." In Luke, he says, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you shall see Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and ye yourselves cast out. But this is not all, as I have previously told you by letter. God has commanded us through Joseph Smith, our martyred prophet, that we must obey this law, as did his ancient servants and handmaidens that we may become one with him, or where He dwells we cannot come. For us as a people to ignore or set aside this principle would be to incur the displeasure of an offended God.*

—Nancy Arete Clark, "Letter on Plural Marriage", *Woman's Exponent* (Salt Lake City: 15 Aug. 1882).

Historian B. Carmon Hardy observed:

*Joseph displayed an astonishingly principled commitment to the doctrine [of plural marriage]. He had to overcome opposition from his brother Hyrum and the reluctance of some of his disciples. Reflecting years later on the conflicts and dangers brought by plural marriage, some church leaders were struck with the courage Joseph displayed in persisting with it.*

—B. Carmon Hardy, *Solemn Covenant* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 9.

One can read volumes of the early Saints public writings, extemporaneous sermons, and private journals. One can reflect on the hundreds or thousands of miles of travel on missionary journeys and Church business. If the writings of Joseph Smith, Brigham Young, John Taylor, Wilford Woodruff, Heber C. Kimball, George Q. Cannon, Helen Mar Kimball, Zina D. Young, Martha Q. Cannon and many others cannot persuade someone that they were honest men and women (even if mistaken) then one should sincerely question whether such a person is capable of looking charitably upon any human, let alone any Mormon.

But, the producers of *Search for the Truth* have already demonstrated that they will not treat Latter-day Saints or their beliefs with honesty and respect, much less charity. As a result, their conclusion is unsurprising, even though the historical record tells a different story.

**To read more:**

- [Lustful motives?](#)



**Claim: "Warren Jeffs has been wanted by the FBI, he's been profiled on *America's Most Wanted*, he's been in the headlines a lot lately and the Mormon Church tries real hard to distance themselves from him." [Images of Warren Jeffs and Joseph Smith side by side on screen.] - Brian Mackert (Former Fundamentalist Mormon)**

It is not surprising that the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints does not wish to be mistaken for Jeffs, since Jeffs is not a member of the Church and never has been. [off-site](#)

The video now slanders Joseph Smith through the tactic of "guilt by association" by pointing out to the viewer that Jeffs appeals to some of Joseph Smith's teachings.

Christians ought to realize the dangers of such tactics. The name and teachings of Jesus Christ Himself have been invoked for such purposes as:

- the Crusades
- the persecution and murder of Jews
- the persecution, torture, and murder of "heretics" or "witches" by Catholics and such Protestant Reformers as Calvin and Zwingli
- justifying and protecting slavery by Southern Baptists prior to the American Civil War
- acts of political terrorism

Because these evils were done by those claiming justification in the name of Jesus, is He therefore to be condemned?

Warren Jeffs claims to follow Joseph Smith, but ignores key aspects of Joseph's teaching and doctrine. For instance, a revelation to Joseph Smith made it clear that:

it shall not be given to any one to go forth to preach my gospel, or to build up my church, *except he be ordained by some one who has authority, and it is known to the church that he has authority* and has been regularly ordained by the heads of the church.

— [DC 42:11](#) (emphasis added)

Jeffs claims priesthood authority gained via a 'secret' ordination by past Church leaders, but Joseph Smith made it clear that no such ordination would be performed or considered valid.



**To read more:**

- ["Fundamentalist" splinter groups](#)

**The amazing thing to me is that Warren Jeffs simply is following in the footsteps of Joseph Smith. Joseph Smith married underage girls...." - Brian Mackert (Former Fundamentalist Mormon)**

This is a textbook example of judging a historical figure by modern cultural standards rather than the standards of the society they lived in to ensure that they will be found wanting.

The DVD wants its modern viewers to judge the age of Joseph's marriage partners by modern standards rather than the standards of the 19th century. From a 21st century perspective the reader is likely to see marriages of young women to much older men as inappropriate, since under 21st century law, for example, older men marrying younger women could be found guilty of statutory rape.

The video will not point out to its viewers that this is a modern cultural and legal framework.

The age of consent under English common law was *ten*. United States law did not raise the age of consent until the late 19th century. In Joseph Smith's day, most states still had declared age of consent to be ten. Some raised it to twelve, and Delaware lowered it to *seven*. [off-site](#)

It is significant that none of Joseph's contemporaries complained about the age differences between polygamous or monogamous marriage partners. This was simply part of their environment and culture; it is unfair to judge 19th century members by 21st century social standards.

**To read more:**

- [Marriages to young women](#): includes charts showing age differences in monogamous marriages in and out of the Church.

**Joseph Smith went to other women and said that their salvation was dependent upon them entering into plural marriage. - Brian Mackert (Former Fundamentalist Mormon)**

The video's producers do not want viewers to know that Joseph generally

approached a close male relative before approaching a woman about plural marriage—a strange choice for a seducer, since men zealously guarded the virtue and reputation of the female relatives. Joseph also promised those involved that God would tell them what He wanted them to do.

The video does not want its viewers to read the many first-person testimonies available from those who entered plural marriage.

The video also neglects the fact that Joseph Smith did not simply begin teaching plural marriage in a vacuum. Joseph had already produced many witnesses of his prophetic calling:

- the translation of the Book of Mormon
- divine and physical confirmation of the Book of Mormon's reality with the Three and Eight witnesses
- multiple revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants
- restoration of the Aaronic and Melchizedek priesthood, with Oliver Cowdery
- numerous miraculous healings by the restored priesthood
- other visions shared by others (e.g., the three degrees of glory in [DC :76](#) with Sidney Rigdon)
- the pentecostal experiences and visions associated with the Kirtland temple

Besides claiming authority from a secret ordination—something precluded by Joseph in [DC 42:11](#)—Warren Jeffs has no such record supporting his prophetic *bona fides*.

#### To read more:

- [Plural marriage spiritual manifestations](#)

**Joseph Smith went to other men's wives and said that God had revealed to him that they were supposed to be his spiritual wives. - Brian Mackert (Former Fundamentalist Mormon)**

As noted above, the critics neglect to mention that those who were taught plural marriage bore witness that they had been told by God to obey regardless of how difficult it was for them to comply.

The video does not want viewers to know that faithful *husbands* of these women were also aware of the sealings, and often stood as witnesses.

The video also does not wish its viewers to understand that Joseph's plural marriages were motivated by the doctrine of sealing rather than carnal motives.

Members of the Church believed then, as now, that the entire human family must be sealed together in order to return to God's presence. Rather than deferring such sealing until family history work is completed during the Millennium, they would seal families to each other, and then seal a family member to Joseph Smith—given that those so sealed to Joseph were usually close friends, this might be called a kind of "adoptive friendship."

Members do not seem to have understood this process as one of abandoning an earthly spouse for Joseph, but rather a desire to be with Joseph and his close friends, by having them all sealed together by the Melchizedek priesthood, the Holy Priesthood after the Order of the Son of God ([DC 76:57](#), [DC 107:3-4](#), [Alma 13:1-9](#)).

The point was that by sealing together through Joseph (holder of the dispensational keys) into the family of Christ, the *entire family* was confident of being together in the eternities, not only with each other, but with their dear friend and prophet Joseph Smith.

Members have, since the administration of Wilford Woodruff, refrained from sealing their family lines to Church leaders, and await more family history information—during the Millennium, if need be—to complete the sealing of the human family back to Adam, who will then present his posterity to the Lord Jesus Christ.

#### To read more:

- [Sealing to married women? \(PDF file\)](#)
- [Further resources](#)

### Concluding Observations

Plural marriage as practiced by 19th century Latter-day Saints is an uncomfortable topic for many because it is easier to revile it than to understand it. Understanding plural marriage requires the compilation and mastery of a great deal of historical information. Many credible historians and scholars are attempting to do this but the film producers do not use them. They have relied on accusations and innuendo designed to shock rather than inform the viewer. Helen Mar Kimball, a plural wife of Joseph Smith, expresses the sentiments of those men and women who suffered the censure of others who so freely judged them:

*If those not of our faith, who visit our cities, came with a determination to lay aside their prejudices, to learn the facts concerning us, or our religion, nothing would give more pleasure than to tell it them; but too many who have come here, after being treated with every politeness and escorted to seats in our tabernacle which are reserved for the stranger, sit there, under the very altar of the Lord's Supper, in the hearing of Saints who assemble to worship God, and spit out their venom, or make ridicule of everything that we hold sacred.*

*But the most despicable characters are the overly righteous souls, who are filled with such holy horror at the mention of "Mormon" polygamy, and are the ones whom we look upon with suspicion, and set them down as among the most corrupt of hypocrites."*

—Helen Mar Kimball, *Woman's Exponent* 10/13 (1 December 1881): 97–99.

The FAIR website has extensive resources on the issue of polygamy, and interested readers are encouraged to follow the links provided below for a more in-depth view of polygamy.

**To read more:**

- [Plural marriage wiki resources](#)
- FAIR Topical Guide: **Plural marriage resources** [FAIR link](#)
- [Lengthy paper on polygamy's history: 1830–1904 PDF format](#)

### **Do You Have Questions?**

If you have questions about anything you read on this page, we encourage you to ask. FAIR is a volunteer organization, and our members are glad to answer questions. You can ask by using our [handy contact page](#). You will get one or more answers, via e-mail, usually within a short time after asking.

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## **Search for the Truth DVD:First Vision**

**From FairWiki.org**

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# Joseph Smith's Character: The First Vision

*Note:* Perhaps hoping that repetition can replace evidence, the video returns to these themes again [here](#) in less detail.

**CLAIM: Joseph Smith said that a mortal person had to have the priesthood in order to see God and live. But since he didn't have the priesthood in 1820 he could not have really seen God as he claimed.**

When D&C 84:21-22 is analyzed in context, it is apparent that the critics have misread LDS scripture. The pertinent passage says:

And this greater [i.e., Melchizedek] priesthood administereth the gospel and holdeth the key of the mysteries of the kingdom, even the key of the knowledge of God. Therefore, in the ordinances thereof, *the power of godliness* is manifest. And without the ordinances thereof, and the authority of the priesthood, *the power of godliness* is not manifest unto men in the flesh; For without *this* no man can see the face of God, even the Father, and live. ([DC 84:19-22](#))

The word "this" in verse 22 does not refer to the Melchizedek Priesthood, but rather to "the power of godliness." This power becomes available to mortals when they become one with the Spirit of God. As the Lord explained in an 1831 revelation, "no man has seen God at any time in the flesh, except quickened by the Spirit of God" ([DC 67:11](#)). Joseph Smith described this quickening in several of his First Vision recitations. He was thereby enabled to see God face to face and live.

**To read more:**

- [D&C 84 says God not seen without priesthood?](#)

**CLAIM: Joseph Smith gave nine different accounts of what happened during the First Vision. He just couldn't keep his**

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## Special Features

- [The Good](#)

## story straight, even when it came to who his heavenly visitors were.

- The first three non-Mormon accounts listed (Willard Chase - written 6 years after the fact; John Clark - written 15 years after the fact; Peter Bauder - written 4 years after the fact) are obviously not about the 1820 First Vision, but rather the 1823 angel Moroni visitation. Either the critics are misinformed or they want to make it appear as though Joseph Smith's first claimed visionary experience was of an angel and that he later changed it into an encounter with Deity to be more impressive—the angel story then being refashioned as a second meeting with divine beings. The records do not support this scenario.
- The fourth account listed is from an 1832 unpublished history which was written partly by the Prophet himself. Critics focus on the fact that in this text, only Jesus Christ is described as making an appearance to Joseph Smith—the Father is mentioned by name but not as a visitor. But they fail to notice that the testimony given by the Father during the First Vision (which is recited in the 1838 account as, "This is my Beloved Son") is, in fact, referred to in the opening paragraph of the 1832 document and directly precedes the recounting of the First Vision event. And they also do not seem to be aware of the fact that the Prophet deliberately constructed the 1832 narrative to parallel the theophany experienced by the apostle Paul (which accounts for the document's focus on the appearance of the Savior but not the Father). [FAIRWiki link](#)
- The fifth account listed onscreen as 1834 was produced by Oliver Cowdery in 1834 and 1835. The critics do not tell their audience that this two-part narrative began by telling the orthodox First Vision story but then suddenly switched over to the Book of Mormon story because of a written request made by William W. Phelps. When this document is carefully evaluated its usefulness for the anti-Mormon agenda quickly evaporates. [FAIRWiki link](#)
- The sixth account is 1835*a*. It could also be labeled as the Robert Mathias interview of November 9th. The two personages who are listed as appearing in this recital are obviously the Father and the Son. This becomes apparent when the text is compared to Joseph Smith's 1832, 1838, and 1842 accounts.

1835*a* - "another personage soon appeared like unto the first"

1842 - "two glorious personages who exactly resembled each other in features, and likeness"

1835*a* - "he testified unto me that Jesus Christ is the Son of God"

- [Test](#)
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### Other Materials

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1838 - "This is my beloved Son"

1835a - "he said unto me thy sins are forgiven thee"

1832 - "he spake unto me saying, 'Joseph, my son, thy sins are forgiven thee'"

- The seventh account is 1835b. It could be referred to as the Erastus Holmes interview of November 14th. The critics cry "inconsistency" when they point out that the Prophet says in this text that when he was fourteen years old he had his "first visitation of angels." But just five days previous—in the 1835a account—the Prophet stated that he saw "many angels" *in addition to* the two main personages of the vision. Thus, it is proper to say that Joseph Smith's first visitation of angels occurred during the First Vision experience, but they were not the only heavenly beings who were present.
- The eighth account listed on the DVD is the 1838 recital which was eventually included in the canon of the LDS Church. The two celestial visitants are clearly identifiable in this document as the Father and the Son.
- The ninth account is from an 1844 book on religions in the United States by I. Daniel Rupp. The statement in the DVD that the two personages in this account are "unidentified" is quite pointless since Rupp's book simply reprinted a slightly modified version of the Prophet's 1842 Wentworth Letter. This letter was published in the LDS Church's newspaper exactly one month before Joseph Smith printed the *History of the Church* First Vision recital (initially written down in 1838) which clearly identifies the Father and the Son.

The DVD fails to mention a substantial number of additional First Vision recitals given during the Prophet's lifetime:

- 1831 sermon by the Prophet reported by Lorenzo Snow
- 1833 remarks by the Prophet reported by John Alger
- 1834 sermon by the Prophet reported by Joseph Curtis and Edward Stevenson
- 1835 missionary statements reported by Samuel Richards
- 1837 sermon by the Prophet reported by Mary Horne
- 1839 interview with the Prophet's parents reported by Wandle Mace
- 1840 missionary pamphlet published by Orson Pratt
- 1842 missionary pamphlet published by Orson Hyde
- 1843 sermon by the Prophet reported by Levi Richards
- 1843 interview with Joseph Smith published in the *Pittsburgh Gazette*

- 1844 interview with the Prophet reported by Alexander Neibaur

These eyewitnesses badly damage the anti-Mormon viewpoint on Joseph Smith's First Vision story because they demonstrate consistency in identifying the visitors in the Sacred Grove.

The DVD producers have indicated that they gathered information for this section of their movie from the website of the Institute for Religious Research. It is curious that they have left out item #10 on the website from their onscreen list of alleged First Vision accounts. This item is an interview with Martin Harris which was published in *Tiffany's Monthly* in the year 1859. A simple comparison of the principal story elements of this account with Harris' 1827 account makes it clear that he was talking about the same thing in both instances - the coming forth of the Book of Mormon, not the First Vision.

**CLAIM: Joseph Smith was "known around the country as a fabricator of stories." Even his own mother was concerned about his habit of making things up.**

The claim of Joseph Smith being known "around the country" as a liar is not backed up with any specific reference in the DVD. Joseph's father-in-law is mentioned as a source for this accusation, but the audience is not told that he (Isaac Hale) was an embittered man because Joseph Smith eloped with his daughter when he would not consent to their marriage. Isaac did not believe in the divine calling of his son-in-law but his daughter Emma (Joseph's wife) did because she played an active role in the restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ and gained a witness of its truthfulness for herself. It is extremely difficult for critics to pretend that Joseph Smith was a bare-faced liar about his divine calling when other people stood in the presence of angels with him, saw the same heavenly visions that he beheld, and heard the audible voice of God at the same time that he did.

The claim of the DVD that Joseph Smith's mother was "concerned" about Joseph telling stories is a case of wrenching a quotation out of proper context. Lucy Mack Smith simply said in her autobiography that her son told the family about information connected with the angel and the Book of Mormon plates (see Anderson, ed., *Lucy's Book*, 345). Lucy told the same information to Wandle Mace about seven years prior to producing her 1845 autobiography and clarified that this information was connected with the Book of Mormon "Nephites" and was shown to her son by vision.

In Joseph Smith's own official history he confirmed that he learned this information through the power of visions (*Times and Seasons*, vol. 3, no. 9, 1 March 1842, 707) and Oliver Cowdery made note of the same thing (*Messenger*

*and Advocate*, vol. 1, no. 7, April 1835, 112). Thus, the origin of the stories mentioned by Joseph's mother in her autobiography was a heavenly one—she was not even remotely implying that her son was a teller of tall tales.

**CLAIM: There is inconsistency in Joseph Smith's dating of the First Vision event and also in the message that was said to be delivered during the experience.**

These are oft-repeated charges, despite the fact that they have been repeatedly and publicly debunked.

See the following articles:

- [Different age provided in the 1832 text](#)
- [1832 account doesn't mention new dispensation](#)
- [1832 account doesn't forbid joining a church](#)
- [1832 says wicked will be destroyed but 1838 doesn't](#)

For several detailed charts demonstrating the consistency of the elements contained within Joseph Smith's First Vision recitals see the following:

- Michael R. Ash, "The First Vision [PDF link](#)
- James B. Allen and John W. Welch, "The Appearance of the Father and Son to Joseph Smith in 1820," in *Opening the Heavens: Accounts of Divine Manifestations 1820–1844 (Documents in Latter-day Saint History)*, edited by John W. Welch with Erick B. Carlson, (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press / Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret Book Company, 2005), 56, 60, 62, 66–68. [ISBN 0842526072](#).

**Claim: President Brigham Young "denied that the Lord came to Joseph Smith in the First Vision. Young stated that Joseph had actually been visited by an angel, [who] informed him that he should not join any of the religious sects of the day."**

The edited version of Brigham Young's remarks that critics like to use read as follows:

*the Lord did not come...but He did send His angel to this same obscure person, Joseph Smith...and informed him that he should not join any of the religious sects of the day....*

—Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses* 2:171. [off-site wiki](#) (8 April 1855)

Note the use of ellipses in this quote, indicating that information has been left out

from the original source. A reading of the unedited quote indicates that Brigham Young was not saying that the Lord didn't come—just that the "Lord *did not come with the armies of heaven, in power and great glory,*" to visit Joseph Smith. This is true; He did not. What did He do? He visited simply, along with His Son, and then He sent further messengers, just as Brigham stated.

It is clear from other sermons delivered by Brigham Young that he was well aware of the details of the First Vision as published by Joseph Smith in 1842—long before the 1855 address cited above. President Young taught:

- Joseph Smith was called at age fourteen: *JD* 8:353–54 (1861); *JD* 12:67–68 (1867).
- He was called as a youth: *JD* 2:171 (1855); *JD* 7:243 (1859).
- There was a revival or reformation involved: *JD* 12:67–68 (1867).
- Joseph was told the churches were wrong, and not to join any of them: *JD* 2:171 (1855); *JD* 12:67–68 (1867).

Late in his life Brigham Young stated:

*Why was Joseph Smith persecuted? Why was he hunted from neighborhood to neighborhood, from city to city, and from State to State, and at last suffered death? Because he received revelations from the Father, from the Son, and was ministered to by holy angels.*  
—Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses* 18:231. [off-site wiki](#) (17 September 1876)

The charge that President Brigham Young said an angel inaugurated the last dispensation instead of Deity cannot be supported. Evidence suggests that President Young's 1855 sermon is closely paraphrasing distinct First Vision story elements that were publicly available to all of the Saints many years before in 1842.

**To read more:**

- [Brigham Young said Lord didn't appear?](#)
- [Brigham Young never mentioned the First Vision?](#)

**For further reading on the First Vision, please see:**

- [First Vision accounts](#)

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## Search for the Truth DVD: The "Occult"

From FairWiki.org

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# Joseph Smith's Character: The Occult

### Symbols and practices with an "occult" connection?

This section of the video is a good example of a common error: using modern standards to pass judgment on historical figures. The segment opens with the portrayal of an inverted pentagram, with sinister flames behind the symbol. The DVD obviously hopes that the viewer will conclude this is an "evil" symbol.

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Congressional Medal of Honor

The inverted pentagram has a long history, and only took on negative connotations in the last one hundred years, well after Joseph Smith's death. Joseph Smith and others of his day would have known the symbol from its use in many aspects of American life. Many Americans were Masons, and used this symbol to represent light from the heavens to man.

The inverted pentagram is found in many contexts, including the Congressional Medal of Honor, on the Great Star Flag of the United States (used from 1837 to 1845), as well as in the cathedrals of Chartes and Amiens in France. Do the producers of this DVD expect us to believe that all these groups are, in fact, part of the "occult"?

Some occult groups have even used the symbol of the cross as part of their symbolism. Does this make all Christians "occult" by association? Such an idea is laughable.

The meaning of a symbol can only be defined by the person or group using it. If others find different meanings in that particular symbol it does not negate the meaning to the first group. For thousands of years the swastika had been used as a symbol of good fortune and well being by numerous societies. Does that mean we need to believe that the German Nazis, by their use of the swastika, wanted nothing but good fortune and well being for the countries they overran during WWII, or the millions of people they murdered in the Holocaust? The idea is nonsense. In the same way the cross, before it was utilized by Christians all over the world, was the symbol known as the "Staff of Apollo" and was used in the

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worship of that deity. The cross was also used by the people of pre-Columbian America, and people in other parts of the world, to signify the sun. Does that suggest that we ought to criticize those who use the cross to signify the Savior's atonement and suggest that they take their symbols from pagan worship? Of course not, that would be ridiculous. It is just as nonsensical to apply a later interpretation to symbols used by the Latter-Day Saints, and then attack the Latter-Day Saints for something which they do not believe.

**To read more:**

- Matthew B. Brown, [Inverted Stars on LDS Temples](#)
- [Symbols on the Nauvoo Temple](#)

**Claim: Money digging was an example of Joseph Smith being involved in the occult.**

The video's first attempt to tie Joseph Smith to the "occult" uses the Smith family's involvement in "money digging." The video takes a practice common to the nineteenth century, and turns it into something sinister.

During the nineteenth century, belief in folk magic of this kind was common in the United States. Indeed, in parts of New England it is still a common practice with so-called "water witches" still listed in the phone book. (See, for example, the 2007 phone book published by Verizon, Inc., for Augusta, Maine.)

Dowsing or water witching was—and to some degree still is—used to locate wells, buried objects such as pipes or utility lines, and lost valuables. It was not then, and is not now (where it is still practiced), considered sinister or "occult." For these people, they simply consider it to be "how the world works." By analogy, such people might not understand the principles of magnetism behind a mariner's compass, but still use it because "that's how the world is."

The fact that Joseph Smith and his family were involved in seeking for buried valuables is not unusual. When Joseph was 16 years old, his local newspaper printed such remarks as the following:

- *"digging for money hid in the earth is a very common thing and in this state it is even considered as honorable and profitable employment"*
- *"One gentleman...digging...ten to twelve years, found a sufficient quantity of money to build him a commodious house."*
- *"another...dug up...fifty thousand dollars!"*

—*Palmyra Herald* (24 July 1822); cited in Russell Anderson, "The 1826 Trial of Joseph Smith," (2002 FAIR Conference presentation.) [FAIR link](#)

Given how common and respectable such an activity was, it is hardly surprising that the poverty-stricken Smith family took a legitimate opportunity to improve their station in life. Despite all their toil, they lost their farm because they could not make the final mortgage payment.

**To read more:**

- [Joseph Smith and money digging](#)

**Claim: "On March 15th, 1842, Joseph joined the Masons which is an organization that believes Jesus is not divine and is on the same level as Buddha, Muhammad or any other religious teacher."**

This is a severe misrepresentation of Masonry. Masonry is not a religion and has never claimed to be a religion. Masonry only requires that its members profess belief in a Supreme Being: Christians, Buddhists, Jews, and Muslims are all eligible. In this respect, Masonry is like many other such fraternal organization, or even the Boy Scouts. The policy of open membership does not make Masonry "an organization that believes Jesus is not divine." The millions of Christian Freemasons down through the centuries would find such a statement an insult to themselves and to Freemasonry.

For example, many prominent Baptists over the last two hundred years were also Masons. Robert E. Baylor, founder of Baylor University, was both a Baptist and a Mason. One of the university's presidents, William R. White (served from 1948 to 1961) was a 33rd-degree Mason and served as pastor of First Baptist Church of Austin, First Baptist Church of Oklahoma City, First Baptist Church of Lubbock, and Broadway Baptist Church of Fort Worth. He also served as executive secretary, and later as president, of The Baptist General Convention of Texas.

George W. Truett, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Dallas, was also a Mason and remained such as he served as president of the Southern Baptist Convention from 1927 to 1929, president of the Baptist World Alliance from 1934 to 1939, and trustee of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Are these men no longer Christians, or somehow involved in the "occult"?

These are just a few of the many prominent individuals who saw no conflict between their Baptist brand of Christianity and Freemasonry. Since their participation in Masonry would presumably not taint the roots of the Baptist faith, why would the several Baptist ministers associated with *Search for the Truth* find it necessary to insist that Masonry cast a sinister shadow over the roots of the

Church?

**To read more:**

- *Famous Baptists Who Were Freemasons* (Adherents.com) [off-site](#)

**Claim: "Within one day Smith rose to the highest degree which is the sublime degree."**

Church critics commonly make this error. The visual accompanying this claim shows an old Masonic chart showing the *supplemental degrees* of Scottish and York Rite Freemasonry, thereby implying that Joseph Smith was a member of these bodies. This would have been impossible, since Masonry in Illinois at the time (1842) did not have the Scottish Rite at time and there is no record of Joseph being a member of any of York rite supplemental bodies which existed in Springfield.

The video makes much of the fact that Joseph was raised in a single day, as if this was unusual and a sign of someone of great "occult" status, but fails to point out that Joseph's raising was actually done in two days and in complete accord with the Masonic practice of making a person a Mason "upon sight." The *Sixth Landmark of Freemasonry* states:

*The prerogative of the Grand Master to grant Dispensations for conferring degrees at irregular times, is another and a very important Landmark. The statutory law of Masonry requires a month, or other determinate period, to elapse between the presentation of a petition and the election of a candidate. But the Grand Master has the power to set aside or dispense with this probation, and allow a candidate to be initiated at once. This prerogative he possessed in common with all Masters, before the enactment of the law requiring a probation, and as no statute can impair his prerogative, he still retains the power, although the Masters of Lodges no longer possess it.*  
—*The Landmarks of Freemasonry* [off-site](#)

This was the process followed in Joseph Smith's case. While rare, it is not an unheard of or unprecedented procedure, and Grand Master Abraham Jonas (the grand lodge of Illinois grand master who raised the Prophet) was well within his rights in making Joseph a Mason "upon sight" without any sinister undertones.

**Claim: "Joseph's Masonic membership affected the development of the Mormon church in many ways but the most significant area appears to be in the development of the**

## Mormon temple ceremonies."

Masonry and the teaching methods it employs may well have had some influence in the development of the temple endowment ritual. The degree of that influence is a debated issue among Mormon scholars and laymen alike. The video does the subject a grave disservice by not acknowledging complexity of this issue. There are many more points of dis-similarity between the endowment and the rites of Freemasonry than there are of apparent parallel.

The video shows re-enactments of some LDS temple rituals (borrowed directly from the notorious anti-Mormon film *The God Makers II*) and implies that these originated in Masonry. This is simply not the case. The ordinances shown in the video (washing and anointing) actually first appeared in the Kirtland, Ohio, temple, many years before Joseph's involvement with Masonry.

Latter-day Saints consider the temple ceremony to be the most sacred expression of their religious worship. To have it held up for public display and discussion in this manner is in extremely poor taste. It is difficult to feel "loved" by those presenting the video when they do something which they know will be offensive and hurtful to most devout Mormons.

### To read more:

- [The Temple Endowment and Freemasonry](#)

**Statement: "I suggest that enough evidence presently exists to declare the entire institution of the political kingdom of God, including the Council of Fifty, the living constitution, the proposed flag of the kingdom and the anointing and coronation of a king had its genesis in connection with Masonic thoughts and ceremonies." - Dr. Reed Durham**

It is important to note that many of Dr. Durham's conclusions were subsequently thought by some to be premature and somewhat ill-advised. And Dr. Durham wrote a letter wherein he distanced himself from some of the things that he had said during his presentation. [off-site](#)

It seems that the producers of the *Search for Truth* video believe that Dr. Durham's statement somehow taints Mormonism. Even if it is true—a supposition open to debate among scholars—that does not mean much within the context of the times. Modern Americans are often unaware of it, but many elements of our society that we take for granted today have their roots in early American practices, and most have Masonic overtones. A quick examination of United

States currency, for instance, will find many Masonic elements, such as the all-seeing eye, pyramids, and mottoes. These same elements (and more) are found on many governmental buildings.

There is some evidence that these symbols may have had their roots in Masonry or may have been heavily influenced by Masonry. Thus, it would not be surprising if some aspects of LDS governmental theory—wittingly or unwittingly—invoked some Masonic themes. Does this reality of nineteenth century life and thought mean that, somehow, the roots of American society are based in the occult?

Joseph Smith also spoke English, because it was the language of his time and place, but this does not mean that he had no divine revelations given to him. Prophets—Biblical and otherwise—express themselves in the idiom of their own culture.

**Statement: "...included in the actual vocabulary of Joseph Smith's counsel and instructions to the sisters were such words...indicating that the society's orientation possessed Masonic overtones." - Dr. Reed Durham**

Dr. Durham's assertions regarding the formation of the Nauvoo Relief Society are certainly interesting, but they are far from representing a scholarly consensus on the topic.

Dr. Durham, in other places, suggested a connection between the Relief Society and the Masonic "Lodges of Adoption" with women members—which were founded in revolutionary France. The problem with this theory is that there is no indication that Joseph Smith or anyone else in Nauvoo at the time (in the early 1840s) intended this. Lodges of Adoption never found their way to the United States and disappeared from France within a few years of their formation, well before the establishment of the LDS Church in 1830.

**Claim: The Jupiter Talisman was evidence of Joseph's belief and participation in occultic rituals.**

The final issue of purported "occult" evidence against Joseph Smith used by the video is perhaps the least significant of all. Strangely, it is the one upon which the most time is spent. The Jupiter Talisman allegedly belonging to Joseph Smith is an item which at one time was on public display in the old Church Museum on Temple Square. The carrying of tokens supposed to bring a person luck (like a rabbit's foot or a four-leaf clover) has been common practice throughout much of American history, and particularly in the nineteenth century.

Commentators in the video draw all sorts of conclusions about the Jupiter Talisman which are not supported by the available facts. Many respected LDS scholars do not believe that Joseph Smith actually owned the Jupiter Talisman, since it is claimed by some that he had it in his possession when he died but *it was not actually listed among the objects found upon his person after he was murdered*. Even if Joseph did own and carry the Jupiter Talisman, there is no record of what Joseph might have believed or not believed about it.

One video commentator, Sandra Tanner, claims that "The fact that [Joseph] died with the Jupiter Talisman on his body shows that throughout his life he continued to hang on to that hope and that trust in that magic object." Realistically, the only thing that it may show (if substantiated) is that he had it in his possession when the mob attacked. We do not know where the talisman came from, who gave it to Joseph, or what significance, if any, he applied to it.

It is telling that the only person who claimed that the Jupiter Talisman (a) belonged to Joseph, and (b) was on Joseph's person when he died was Emma's second husband's son. *He made this claim over ninety years after the Prophet's martyrdom when he was trying to sell the item.*

**To read more:**

- [Joseph Smith and the Jupiter Talisman](#)
- The Jupiter Talisman Myth [off-site](#)

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## Search for the Truth DVD: The Translator

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# Joseph Smith's Character: The Translator

**Claim: "The Book of Mormon was not translated from the golden plates. According to his scribes the plates were usually either hidden in the woods or covered by a cloth in the room during translation. However, Joseph Smith actually did his translating by looking into a magical peepstone placed into a hat."**

Joseph Smith's translation method was not a typical one. Most conventional translations take place with the translator reading the source document and then rendering it in a second language. Joseph, however, translated "by the gift and power of God" ([DC 135:3](#)) — he did not know the language on the plates, so simply looking at the plates while attempting to translate them would not have done him any good. (Many LDS artists have portrayed the Prophet translating by staring intently at the open plates, but such depictions are incomplete and do not account for other processes that were involved during different periods of the translation.)

In the beginning of the translation process Joseph used the Urim and Thummim, and later a seerstone (what the video's producers pejoratively call a "magical peepstone"), to translate the record on the plates. We are not certain exactly how the seerstone worked, but it seems to have provided a means for him to focus and eliminate distractions so he could concentrate more fully on the translation given to him by the Holy Spirit.

There are several examples of biblical prophets using physical materials to divine God's will; Joseph Smith's experience fits in very well with theirs.

## To read more:

- [Joseph Smith and seer stones](#)

**Claim: "In 1826, four years before the publication of the Book of Mormon, Joseph was arrested and charged for using his**

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## peep stone method to deceive the elderly Josiah Stowell while attempting to locate buried treasure on his farm."

The video carefully avoids describing the nature and outcome of this legal proceeding. The producers apparently want the viewers to conclude that Joseph was *found guilty* in court.

In fact, the appearance before the judge was not a trial, it was a hearing. No verdict was rendered upon Joseph; he was simply charged for court costs and the case was not pursued further. Joseph was never convicted of any crime.

The video also does not tell its viewers that Josiah Stowell testified *for Joseph* as a defense witness at this hearing, and did not believe that Joseph had defrauded him at all. Stowell testified of Joseph's claims, "Do I believe it? No, it is not a matter of belief: I positively know it to be true." The charges were brought by Stowell's family members, who appear to have been worried that Josiah would accept Joseph's religious claims. Stowell himself joined the Church founded by Joseph and remained a faithful member to the day of his death.

Would the video's authors condemn Paul because he was brought before many courts because of religious persecution? ([Acts 23:6](#).) Would they condemn Jesus Christ because he would brought before the highest court in Jerusalem and condemned to death?

(*Note*: the video also mentions the Stowell incident of 1826 in the [polygamy](#) section, and does not disclose the facts of the matter there either.)

### To read more:

- [History of 1826 court appearance](#)
- [Joseph Smith and money digging](#)

**Claim: "Joseph Smith boasted the bold claim that the Book of Mormon was the most accurate book in existence. If this book was translated by the gift and power of God we must ask the question why have there been thousands of corrections to the Book of Mormon many of which were related to doctrinal and historical issues?"**

Joseph Smith *never* said "the Book of Mormon [is] the most accurate book in existence." The video's producers are putting words in his mouth. He *did* say that "the Book of Mormon was the most correct of any book on earth, and the

- [What is Hell?](#)
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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* 4:461.) As the end of his quote clarifies, by "most correct" he meant *in principle, teaching, and doctrine*.

Contrary to what the video claims, the vast majority of modifications to the Book of Mormon text are minor corrections in spelling, punctuation, and grammar. Joseph Smith himself made a handful of significant modifications to clarify the meaning of the text, but these do not affect the authenticity of the Book of Mormon in any way.

**To read more:**

- [Book of Mormon textual changes](#)

**Claim: "The Bible tells us that 'All Scripture is given by inspiration of God.' ([2 Timothy 3:16](#)) and that 'Prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit' ([2 Peter 1:21](#)). In other words, God's Spirit directly inspired the prophets to write the scriptures. Biblical revelations never involved occult rituals or objects."**

The two scriptures the video produces on revelation don't say anything, positive or negative, about the use of physical objects in the revelation process. In fact, there are numerous examples from the scriptures of objects being used to divine the will of God, including the Urim and Thummim ([Numbers 27:21](#); [1 Samuel 28:6](#)). By referring to this as "involv[ing] occult rituals and objects," the video's producers are trying to win the argument by limiting the process of God's revelation and placing a negative "spin" on how Joseph received it.

**To read more:**

- [Joseph Smith and the occult](#)

**Claim: "Initially, Joseph's witnesses vouched for Joseph and the Golden Plates. But when pressed by the public, Joseph's witnesses stated that they saw the golden plates through the eyes of faith and never physically saw or handled them."**

This is a false claim.

There are numerous accounts of the witnesses physically seeing, hefting, turning pages, and feeling the engravings on the plates. Martin Harris said he saw them with a "Spiritual eye," but when questioned about it, he clarified his meaning and reaffirmed the physical nature of his seeing the plates. He stated it was as real as his seeing the hand in front of his face. He also complained about having to hold the plates on his lap for an hour and a half and they were heavy.

There were three witnesses that saw the plates, and other artifacts, while being visited by an angel. That was a spiritual experience, and it was couched in spiritual language, but they still saw the plates. In contrast, there were eight witnesses that saw, felt, lifted, inspected and turned the pages of the plates without any of the spiritual trappings. Still other witnesses, other than the official eleven, lifted, moved, felt and leafed through the pages of the plates.

The charge that the Book of Mormon witnesses never claimed to have seen physical plates or only saw them in vision is simply false, and a gross distortion of the historical record.

**To read more:**

- [Book of Mormon witnesses: literal or imaginary?](#)
- [John Whitmer shown the plates "by a supernatural power"](#)

**Claim: "[Paul] wrote [in] Galatians chapter one [verse eight]...if somebody comes to you with any other gospel...even if I do it, another person, or an angel from heaven — just like Moroni — he says it is not a real gospel it's a false gospel; let that person be accursed." - Scott Gallatin (Pastor, Calvary Chapel)**

Pastor Gallatin expects the viewer to assume that *his* version of the gospel is the true one, and that "Mormonism" is the "other gospel."

The Bible contains a test to enable us to test spirits "whether they are of God" ([1 John 4:1](#)). John tells us:

Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God. ([1 John 4:2-3](#).)

If Moroni or any of the other messengers who appeared to Joseph Smith failed this test we would know they were ministers of Satan. But they don't — they all testified in the strongest words possible that Jesus Christ *did* "come in the flesh," that he was the literal, physical Son of God who brought eternal life to all those who believe.

Pastor Gallatin ridicules the Book of Mormon for claiming to be "Another Testament of Jesus Christ," but he completely fails to explain how it is *not* exactly that.

**To read more:**

- [Moroni as an angel of Satan](#)
- [Plain and Precious Book of Mormon doctrines](#)

**Claim: "The Kinderhook Plates which were found authentic and partially translated by Joseph Smith were a hoax."**

Joseph Smith did not translate the Kinderhook plates. Claims by Nauvoo residents that he did translate them have been shown to be products of the "rumor mill." Even William Clayton's entry in his diary, which the video quotes at length and erroneously attributes to Joseph Smith, conflicts with other news sources.

In the height of disingenuousness, the video references Dr. Stanley Kimball's research on the plates, and even directly quotes the article he wrote about it for the *Ensign*, but it omits Dr. Kimball's conclusion:

*The central issue in the whole question of Joseph Smith's involvement in the Kinderhook plate episode is that the expected "translation" did not appear. And this fact may well explain the characteristic that has made this hoax most interesting — that it was never carried to completion.*

\* \* \*

*So it is that in the 100-year battle of straw men and straw arguments, Joseph Smith needs no defense — he simply did not fall for the scheme.*  
—Stanley B. Kimball, "Kinderhook Plates Brought to Joseph Smith Appear to Be a Nineteenth-Century Hoax," *Ensign*, August 1981, pp. 66–74. [off-site](#))

**To read more:**

- [Kinderhook Plates](#)

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## Search for the Truth DVD:DNA

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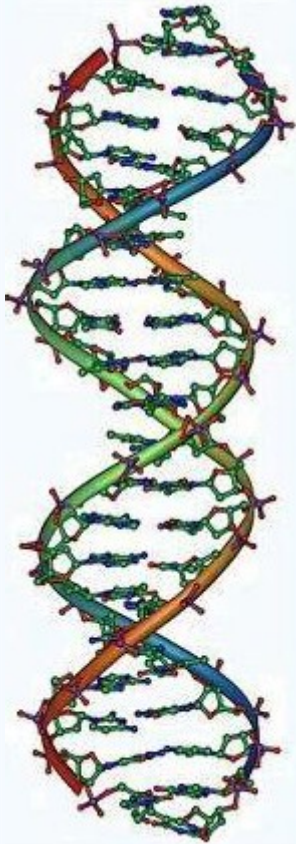
# DNA

**Claim: "Prisoners are routinely freed from crimes they supposedly committed many years before when scientific experts prove conclusively that the DNA found on the victim did not match the DNA of the convict."**

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The video's producers hope that the viewer will be impressed by the use of DNA in legal proceedings (which is very precise) and assume that the science as (mis)applied to the Book of Mormon is equally solid.

The video's producers did not, of course, mention the work of Dr. John M. Butler, PhD. Dr. Butler is an internationally-renowned expert in the use of DNA for forensic work, and a member of the FBI's Scientific Working Group on DNA Analysis Methods (SWGAM). (See Dr. Butler's vita [here](#).) He is also an LDS bishop.

He literally "wrote the textbook" used to train law enforcement personnel on DNA:

- Butler, J.M. (2001) *Forensic DNA Typing: Biology and Technology behind STR Markers*. Academic Press, London, 335 pages
- Butler, J.M. (2005) *Forensic DNA Typing: Biology, Technology, and Genetics of STR Markers* (2nd Edition). Elsevier Academic Press, New York, 688 pages.

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Dr. Butler, along with many other specialists and scientists, utterly rejects the implied claim that 'DNA works for crime scenes, so it should work for the Book of Mormon.' And, he should know better than anyone—especially those who promote the superficial treatment of DNA science relative to the Book of Mormon, as is done in the video.

**To read more:**

- John M. Butler, "A Few Thoughts From a Believing DNA Scientist," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 12/1 (2003): 36–37. [off-site PDF link](#) [wiki](#)
- John M. Butler, "Addressing Questions surrounding the Book of Mormon and DNA Research," *FARMS Review* 18/1 (2006): 101–108. [off-site PDF link](#) [wiki](#)

**Claim: "The introduction to the Book of Mormon says after thousands of years all were destroyed except the Lamanites and they are the principal ancestors of the American Indians." - Pamela Robertson**

The introduction to the Book of Mormon is not part of the scripture. Elder Bruce R. McConkie, who helped write the introduction and other aids for the current edition of the scriptures, was quite clear that the non-scriptural textual items were helps, not canon, and even granted they could well contain mistakes. This likely applies to the introduction, which was only inserted in 1981. (See: Mark McConkie (editor), *Doctrines of the Restoration: Sermons and Writings of Bruce R. McConkie* (Salt Lake City, Utah: Bookcraft, 1989), 250, 289–290. [ISBN 978-0884946441](#). [GospeLink](#))

It is significant that Ms. Robertson appeals to something that is *not* in the Book of Mormon. This seems to indicate a hope that the matter can be settled without even addressing the Book of Mormon text itself.

It is true that some LDS members and leaders have believed that the Book of Mormon teaches that *all* Amerindians are entirely descended from Book of Mormon peoples. But, as early as 1928, a completely different view was taught in General Conference by Elder Levi Edgar Young:

*There must be a clear distinction, it grows every year more evident, between the origins of America's ancient people and the sources of their culture. The human material of the pre-Columbian societies probably came from Asia by way of Alaska, the orthodox route long accepted for the American Indians.... Among many social belongings abandoned along*

*the route seem to have been most of the things called intellectual. The men and women who peopled America arrived, intellectually, with the clothes they stood in.... Dr. Uhle urges an alternative [theory for how high culture arose in the Americas].... Occasional cultured mariners from India, China, Japan or other lands may have landed, he believes, few in numbers, but full of ideas, to bring to the rude American societies...just the hint that culture was possible. **Small numerically as this source of inspiration must have been, it may conceivably have been the seed from which sprouted the great achievements of Peru and Central America....***

—Levi Edgar Young, *Conference Report* (October 1928): 103–106, emphasis added.

Clearly, Elder Young did not feel that there was any "official" or "required" view of what percentage of American Indians are Lamanites—Church members are not bound by the interpretations of men, but only by what the scripture *says*.

Why did early members assume that the entirety of the Amerindian population was descended from the Lamanites? In the nineteenth century, it was “common knowledge” that the Indians were a single racial group, and so most likely to have a single origin. Since the Book of Mormon taught that at least some Indians must have come from Israel, it was a natural conclusion to see them all as coming from Israel. Most early Saints likely did not even conceive of there being multiple “groups” of Indians at all. To explain some was to explain them all.

As members came to understand the variety of Amerindian groups, it became easier for them to read the Book of Mormon text without the "one group of Indians only" assumption that came from their culture.

Simply put, despite the claims of Ms. Robertson, the Church has no official position on the matter. When asked, a spokesman for the Church said:

*As to whether these were the first inhabitants...we don't have a position on that. Our scripture does not try to account for any other people who may have lived in the New World before, during or after the days of the Jaredites and the Nephites, and we don't have any official doctrine about who the descendants of the Nephites and the Jaredites are. Many Mormons believe that American Indians are descendants of the Lamanites [a division of the Nephites], but that's not in the scripture.*

—Stewart Reid, LDS Public Relations Staff, quoted by William J. Bennetta in *The Textbook Letter* (March-April 1997), published by The Textbook League (P.O. Box 51, Sausalito, California 94966).

Note too that both the public affairs statement—and Elder Young's talk—came well before any DNA attacks on the Book of Mormon. These are not, as some critics have complained, attempts to hide from DNA 'science.'

### To read more:

- [American Indians as Lamanites](#) (short summary version)
- [American Indians as Lamanites](#) (longer version)

### **Claim: "The Lamanites are described by Joseph as ancestors to the Israelites inhabiting all of North and South America from sea to sea." - Pamela Robertson**

Whoever wrote the script for Ms. Robertson really should have studied better. It has been well documented that Joseph Smith modified his ideas about Book of Mormon geography over the course of his life, indicating that he had no more information on the matter than the other members did.

Despite incorrect assertions of what the Church really believes, critics will necessarily be disappointed to learn that the Church has no official position on Book of Mormon geography, because it has not been revealed:

*The First Presidency has often been asked to prepare some suggestive map illustrative of Nephite geography, but have never consented to do so. Nor are we acquainted with any of the Twelve Apostles who would undertake such a task. The reason is, that without further information they are not prepared even to suggest [a map]. The word of the Lord or the translation of other ancient records is required to clear up many points now so obscure.*

—George Q. Cannon, "Editorial Thoughts: The Book of Mormon Geography," 25/1 *The Juvenile Instructor* (1 January 1890): 18–19.

Elder Anthony Ivins of the First Presidency would later confirm this stance:

*There is a great deal of talk about the geography of the Book of Mormon. Where was the land of Zarahemla? Where was the City of Zarahemla? and other geographic matters. It does not make any difference to us. There has never been anything yet set forth that definitely settles that question. So the Church says we are just waiting until we discover the truth. All kinds of theories have been advanced. I have talked with at least half a dozen men that have found the very place where the City of Zarahemla stood, and notwithstanding the fact that they profess to be Book of Mormon students, they vary a thousand miles apart in the places they have located. We do not offer any definite solution. As you study the Book of Mormon keep these things in mind and do not make definite statements concerning things that have not been proven in advance to be true.*

—Anthony W. Ivins, *Conference Report* (April 1929): 16.

And, the present-day Church repeated it in the *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*:

*The Church has not taken an official position with regard to location of geographical places [of the Book of Mormon].*

—John E. Clark, "Book of Mormon Geography," *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 4 vols., edited by Daniel H. Ludlow, (New York, Macmillan Publishing, 1992), 1:178. [ISBN 002904040X](https://www.isbn-international.org/product/002904040X).

The First Presidency gets to determine official LDS teaching, not Ms. Robertson or the DVD producers.

**To read more:**

- [Joseph Smith's adaptable views on geography](#)
- [Book of Mormon geography: New World](#)

**If it could be proven absolutely that the American Indians were not descendants of the Lamanites then Joseph Smith perpetrated a gigantic fraud.... Such irrefutable evidence has been found using one of our strongest technological discoveries—DNA.**

This wildly irresponsible claim fails on numerous grounds:

- *What are we looking for?* Lehi and his family are clearly not *Jews*, but descendants of Ephraim and Manasseh. What does this DNA look like? What are we comparing to?
- *What does Jewish DNA look like?* Despite the critics' claims, attempts to use genetic testing to trace known groups (such as Jews) through history have been problematical.
- *What studies were done?* The video does not want the viewer to know that they base their arguments on DNA data that has never been shown to be even relevant to the issue of Book of Mormon genetics, let alone conclusive. Such critics have cobbled together DNA data gathered from unrelated studies to produce arguments with the appearance of scientific weight but having no real significance. *No genetic studies have been designed and performed to test the hypothesis that Native Americans were of Lehite descent and that this inheritance is detectable today.*

**To read more:**

- [DNA and the Book of Mormon](#) (shorter summary article)

- [DNA and the Book of Mormon](#) (longer article)
- [What are we looking for?](#)
- [What Jewish DNA?](#)
- [What studies?](#)

**Claim: "When the Y-chromosomes or mitochondrial DNA are tested in hundreds of even thousands of individuals from two different races the results can be compared to see how similar or dissimilar these intact DNA markers are between people groups."**

Once again, the science is distorted almost beyond recognition when this is applied to the Book of Mormon

### **Y-chromosomes**

Despite claims that Y-chromosome data do not support Book of Mormon claims, there are some markers which should be considered in another light:

*Douglas Forbes points out that Y-chromosome SNP biallelic marker Q-P36 (also known by the mutation marker M-242), postulated by geneticist Doron Behar and colleagues to be a founding lineage among Ashkenazi Jewish populations, is also found in Iranian and Iraqi Jews and is a founding lineage group present in 31 percent of self-identified Native Americans in the U.S.*

—See "Y-Chromosome Data," in David G. Stewart, Jr., "DNA and the Book of Mormon," *FARMS Review* 18/1 (2006): 109–138. [off-site PDF link](#) [wiki](#) [FAIR link](#)

The DVD is either not up to date on the science, or those associated with the DVD are bearing false witness.

### **Mitochondrial DNA**

Mitochondrial DNA is passed only from mothers to their children. It has been used in attacks on the Book of Mormon, and yet even known *Jewish* populations do not share mtDNA. That is, some groups that are both *known to be Jewish* do not share any mitochondrial DNA. So, how can this count against an Ephraim or Manasseh origin for some Amerindians?

### **To read more:**

- [Y-chromosome issues](#)



- [Mitochondrial DNA issues](#)

**Claim: "The DNA issue of whether Native Americans come from a Hebrew descent is not an issue. Once you get outside of Mormonism it is not an issue, it is not a debate. Nobody is debating out in the scientific realm of whether or not Native Americans came from Israelites. Nobody. Or Middle-Easterners. Nobody." - Joel Kramer, Director, Living Hope Ministries**

Despite the implication, no informed person in LDS circles is expecting DNA data to be able to prove a Middle Eastern origin for Amerindians *either*. Latter-day Saint authors do not consider it to be something which could be proved *or* disproved by current genetic methods.

As Michael F. Whiting, Ph.D (an LDS genetics scientist at BYU) noted:

*I...serve as a member of a scientific review panel for the Systematic Biology program of the National Science Foundation. The NSF is a major source of basic research funding available to scientists in the United States, and every six months the NSF brings in a panel of researchers to review grant applications and provide recommendations for funding.... Would a proposal to test the validity of the Book of Mormon by means of DNA sequence information have a sufficiently solid base in science to ever be competitive in receiving funding from a nationally peer-reviewed scientific funding agency such as the NSF?.... Is testing the Book of Mormon by means of genetic information a fundable research project? I do not think so.... It is very unclear what would constitute sufficient evidence to reject the hypothesis that the Lamanite lineages were derived from Middle Eastern lineages, since there are so many assumptions that must be met and so many complications that we are not yet capable of sifting through. [From Whiting's paper below.]*

The critics are the only ones claiming that DNA can do things that it can't. Members of the Church do not make the same error.

#### To read more:

- Michael F. Whiting, "DNA and the Book of Mormon: A Phylogenetic Perspective," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 12/1 (2003): 24–35. [off-site PDF link](#) [wiki](#)
- John L. Sorenson, "The Problematic Role of DNA Testing in Unraveling

Human History," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 9/2 (2000): 66–74.  
[off-site](#) [No PDF link] [wiki](#)

## What does DNA say about conservative Christian beliefs?

A question that is definitely *not* asked by the video is what DNA can say about the beliefs of conservative Protestant Christians. This is not surprising, because it is not a pretty picture.

Fundamentalist Christian critics are happy to use DNA as a stick to beat the Book of Mormon, but the video does not inform viewers that there is much *stronger* DNA evidence for concepts which fundamentalist Christian readers might not accept, such as:

- evolutionary change in species
- human descent from other primates

And, despite being inconsistent with DNA data, fundamentalist critics do not call on their congregations to abandon such literalistic Biblical concepts as:

- the earth being only 6,000 years old
- a Biblical Adam and Eve were the parents of all humanity only 4,000 years before Christ
- a world-wide, Noachian flood which exterminated all life except that which was in the Ark, occurred approximately 5,000 years ago

The critics are often hypocritical—they claim the Saints should abandon the Book of Mormon on flimsy, dubious science, and yet do not tell their audience that *they* should (by the same logic) abandon religious beliefs of their own that have much *more* DNA evidence against them.

For example, the producers of this video enlist the assistance of Dr. John Whitcomb, a founder of modern creationism, a staunch advocate of a young earth, and an opponent of evolution. Dr. Whitcomb acts as a commentator on several issues critical of Mormonism throughout the video. Ironically, the very DNA science that this video claims to refute the Book of Mormon would more easily refute many of the beliefs held by Dr. Whitcomb (see [here](#)).

Do those who produced the video expect Dr. Whitcomb to abandon the Christian beliefs that DNA science has "disproved"? Why not?

### To read more:

- Daniel C. Peterson, "Editor's Introduction," *FARMS Review* 15/2 (2003):

ix–lxii. [off-site PDF link](#)

- David G. Stewart, Jr., "DNA and the Book of Mormon," *FARMS Review* 18/1 (2006): 109–138. [off-site PDF link](#) [wiki FAIR link](#)

**Claim: "Modern scientists have conclusively proven Joseph to be a deceiver in his allegation that the Indians were descendants of the Hebrews."**

This claim is utterly false, as demonstrated. The DVD producers are either scientifically incompetent or being dishonest.

Genetics is a complex subject. Applying genetic data to the Book of Mormon also requires a thorough understanding of the Book of Mormon text. The video has not even attempted to provide viewers with the required background in the Book of Mormon *or* genetics needed to evaluate the genetics arguments for themselves.

Many authors with the needed training—including world-class experts in the use of forensic DNA—have dissected the DNA arguments offered by the critics, and found them lacking. The video's claims are wholly without scientific merit.

Rather, the DVD hopes that readers will simply trust them to be honest and get the science right. But, as we have seen, that trust would be gravely misplaced.

**To read more:**

- [Extensive DNA resources](#)
- FAIR Topical Guide: **DNA** [FAIR link](#)
- [FARMS DNA papers](#)
- *Note:* Perhaps hoping that repetition can replace evidence, the video returns to these themes again [here](#) in less detail.

**Do You Have Questions?**

If you have questions about anything you read on this page, we encourage you to ask. FAIR is a volunteer organization, and our members are glad to answer questions. You can ask by using our [handy contact page](#). You will get one or more answers, via e-mail, usually within a short time after asking.

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# Search for the Truth DVD:Book of Abraham

From FairWiki.org

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## Book of Abraham

**Claim: "For generations scholars have shown irrefutable evidence that the ...Pearl of Great Price... [is] faulty" and that the translation is "completely false."**

### The Church always forthright

The Church has always been frank and open about what is on the papyri in its possession. When the papyri were rediscovered in the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art and donated to the Church on 27 November, 1967, the Church immediately published an article in their official magazine less than two months later. A follow-up article on an additional papyrus fragment was published the following month, complete with photos:

- Jay M. Todd, "Egyptian Papyri Rediscovered," *Improvement Era* (January 1968): 12–16. [Gospelink](#)
- Jay M. Todd, "New Light on Joseph Smith's Egyptian Papyri: Additional Fragment Disclosed," *Improvement Era* (February 1968): 40. [Gospelink](#)
- Jay M. Todd, "Background of the Church Historian's Fragment," *Improvement Era* (February 1968): 40A–40I. [Gospelink](#)

LDS scholar Hugh Nibley began a series of articles in the January 1968 edition which ran for months. Nibley was not hesitant in explaining what was on the papyri in the Church's possession. In August 1968, he repeatedly emphasized that much of the text was the Egyptian Book of the Dead:

- "...the texts of the 'Joseph Smith Papyri' identified as belonging to the *Book of the Dead*" (p. 55)
- "...The largest part of the Joseph Smith Papyri in the possession of the Church consists of fragments from the *Egyptian Book of the Dead*, the fragments having been recently translated and discussed by no less a scholar than Professor John A. Wilson." (p. 57)
- "These points can be illustrated by the most easily recognized section of the

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### Special Features

- [The Good Test](#)

*Joseph Smith papyri, namely, the fragment with the picture of a swallow, Chapter 86 of the Book of the Dead..."(p. 57)*

- *"..we may take the best-known picture from the Book of the Dead, the well-known judgment scene or 'Psychostasy,' a fine example of which is found among the Joseph Smith papyri." (p. 59)*

Lest the reader miss this claim in the small print, it was reprinted in large bold type across two pages:

- *"The largest parts of the...papyri in possession of the Church consists of fragments from the Egyptian Book of the Dead..." (pp. 56-57) [See image](#) (680 KB).*

### **Oversimplifying the translation issues**

The issues surrounding the translation of the Egyptian papyri that resulted in the Book of Abraham are much more complex than critics would like us to believe. Foremost, it is significant to realize that we don't have all the papyri that were originally owned by Joseph. Of the five scrolls originally owned by Joseph, only eleven fragments of two scrolls have survived—one of which is an Egyptian *Sensen* text containing the vignette for Facsimile 1 from the LDS Book of Abraham. Basically, we don't know exactly what was missing, so we can't say for certain that Joseph Smith's papyri collection didn't contain a document that could translate into the Book of Abraham.

But why, some might ask, would a Book of Abraham be present among ancient Egyptian funerary scrolls? We know from other ancient documents that sometimes scrolls with different material were attached together. Some ancient copies of the Egyptian *Book of the Dead*, for example, have been found to contain a variety of other non-funerary texts including stories similar to the sacrifice of Abraham (involving different personalities), temple rituals, and more. Yale-trained, professional Egyptologist Dr. John Gee estimates that about 40% of known *Sensen* texts have other texts attached to them.

Some Egyptian papyri, for example, contain Egyptian instructions on one side and Semitic writings on the back side—in one case Psalms chapters 20–55. One Egyptian temple archive (with an extensive collection of Egyptian rituals), provides an early copy of the “Prayer of Jacob” and two copies of the “Eight Book of Moses” with a discussion of the initiation into the temple at Jerusalem. Both Moses and Abraham are mentioned in this collection and the most commonly invoked deity is Jehovah.

Finally, we know that ancient Israelites sometimes used Egyptian symbols to convey religious teachings. Many Biblical scholars, for instance, believe that an

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- [The Priesthood?](#)
- [What is Hell?](#)
- [A New Beginning](#)

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#### Other Materials

- [Letter](#) given to distributors
- [Annotated](#) with comments
- [Producers' press release](#) with comments
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ancient Egyptian book—the Instructions of Amenemope—may have been the source for portions of the biblical book of Proverbs. An ancient *Testament of Abraham* also seems to have a connection to the Egyptian Book of the Dead.

It is not unlikely—in fact it seems plausible in light of other documentary discoveries—that an ancient Book of Abraham was attached to the Egyptian papyri owned by Joseph Smith. Properly interpreting the Egyptian elements in the Facsimiles may well require that we understand how *Jewish* authors understood and adapted such elements.

The critics' "irrefutable evidence" is anything but.

#### To read more:

- Daniel C. Peterson, "News from Antiquity: Evidence supporting the book of Abraham continues to turn up in a wide variety of sources," *Ensign* (January 1994): 16–21. [off-site](#)
- Kevin L. Barney, "The Facsimiles and Semitic Adaptation of Existing Sources," [off-site](#)
- [Book of Abraham](#)
- [Book of the Dead not hidden](#)

**Claim: "Part of the papyri translated by Joseph allegedly shows a priest about to sacrifice Abraham on an altar, but in reality it has been discovered that the papyri actually depicts a common funeral text many centuries after Abraham's time."**

There are two issues in the above accusation. (1) The Sensen text (from where we get Facsimile 1 showing the near-sacrifice of Abraham) is supposedly a "common" Egyptian "funeral text", and (2) this text dates "many centuries after Abraham's time." Both issues are examined below:

1. The late Dr. Klaus Baer, a renowned non-LDS Egyptologist from the University of Chicago, claimed that the Book of Abraham's Facsimile 1 is *not* typical of similar vignettes found among Egyptian papyri. While other "lion couch" scenes can be found in Egyptian papyri, the Book of Abraham's "lion couch" scene is *unique*. Dr. Gee knows of no other instance where it is included in a Sensen text or in a copy of the Book of the Dead.
1. While the date of the actual papyri and style of the vignette date to many centuries after Abraham's time, we find the same thing among most ancient manuscripts—even biblical manuscripts. The earliest manuscript



we have of Matthew, for instance, is a third-century copy. This doesn't negate the fact that Matthew's original copy was penned centuries earlier, probably in the first century A.D. It seems only reasonable that followers of Abraham continued to preserve copies of the Book of Abraham for centuries after the original account was recorded (we find the same thing among nearly all Old Testament manuscripts).

#### To read more:

- Daniel C. Peterson, "News from Antiquity ['Evidence supporting the book of Abraham continues to turn up in a wide variety of sources']," *Ensign* (January 1994): 16–21. [off-site](#)
- Kevin L. Barney, "The Facsimiles and Semitic Adaptation of Existing Sources," [off-site](#)
- [Book of Abraham](#)

**Claim: "We have not found one non-LDS Egyptologist who supports [Joseph Smith's] translation [of the Book of Abraham papyri]." [Video cuts to Charles Larson, credited as "Historian, Author. "] LARSON: "I first became aware that the Book of Abraham had a problem when I had been studying other Mormon literature and anthropology...."**

By mentioning "non-LDS Egyptologists" and then immediately transitioning to Charles Larson, the video implies that Larson is, himself, an Egyptologist, or at least qualified to speak on Egyptology. Unfortunately, nothing could be further from the truth—he has no training in these fields.

Larson is the author of the well-known but deeply flawed anti-Mormon book *"By His Own Hand Upon Papyrus": A New Look at the Joseph Smith Papyri*. This book has been reviewed by LDS Egyptologists who hold degrees in the field. One reviewer summed up Larson's work:

*Larson's historical method is as follows: Invent evidence, read minds, attribute motives, misquote sources, argue from circumstantial evidence—or better yet—argue from no evidence....*

*If Larson stumbles as a historian, he falls flat on his face as an Egyptologist. He betrays no knowledge of any foreign language, yet offers to guide us through Egyptian, "a unique area of study that is extremely difficult to master."*

—John Gee, "A Tragedy of Errors," p. 99.

The only qualifications listed for Larson at his publisher's web site are "former

Mormon and Brigham Young University graduate." If the producers of the video can dismiss trained Egyptologists only because they are Mormon, is it reasonable to likewise dismiss critics like Larson because of his religious beliefs? Or should we add to those critical religious beliefs the fact that he is not trained in Egyptology at all? The producers willingly apply a double standard here.

**To read more:**

- John Gee, "A Tragedy of Errors (Review of *By His Own Hand Upon Papyrus: A New Look at the Joseph Smith Papyri* by Charles M. Larson)," *FARMS Review of Books* 4/1 (1992): 93–119. [off-site PDF link](#)
- Michael D. Rhodes, "The Book of Abraham: Divinely Inspired Scripture (Review of *By His Own Hand upon Papyrus: A New Look at the Joseph Smith Papyri* by Charles M. Larson)," *FARMS Review of Books* 4/1 (1992): 120–126. [off-site PDF link](#)
- [Book of Abraham](#)
- *Note:* Perhaps hoping that repetition can replace evidence, the video returns to these themes again [here](#) in less detail.

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## Search for the Truth DVD: Witnessing to Mormons

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# Witnessing to Mormons

## Attacks on Joseph Smith

**Claim: "Joseph Smith was a liar, again and again he lied. Joseph Smith said that there were cities all over America that held many, many people in South and Central America. Not one city has ever been found. Not one crumb, not one remain, and yet in the Bible multitudes of cities have been found just as the Bible said." - Floyd McElveen**

Despite the assertion to the contrary, cities existed throughout South and Central America during the Book of Mormon timeframe and these cities were in fact filled with people. Whether or not Book of Mormon people lived in a particular city is debatable and has been addressed [here](#).

Joseph Smith's conception of what pre-Columbian America was like was unusual for his era. When he discovered an 1842 book describing Central American ruins, he was surprised and pleased to have someone from the secular world confirm the Book of Mormon's portrait of pre-Columbian life. When the Book of Mormon was published, Amerindians were perceived as being generally without high culture, writing, cities, and other trappings of advanced civilization.

### To read more:

- John E. Clark, "Archaeology, Relics, and Book of Mormon Belief," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 14/2 (2005): 38–49. [off-site PDF link](#) [wiki](#)
- [Book of Mormon and Biblical archaeology](#)
- Daniel C. Peterson, "Mounting Evidence for the Book of Mormon," *Ensign* (January 2000): 18–24. [off-site](#)

**Claim: "Joseph Smith was a complete deceiver. He deceived people into believing that he had a revelation from God when he did not. The Book of Abraham has been proven false and Joseph Smith along with it. The DNA evidence showed he was false about what he said that the Lamanites and then the Indians descended from Israel—from the Jews. It was proven that they did not. He lied about that. He was a liar from the very beginning." - Floyd McElveen**

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### Other Materials

- [Letter](#) given

These issues have all been addressed in the sections referenced below.

**To read more:**

- [Prophecy and revelation](#)
- [First Vision](#)
- [Book of Abraham](#)
- [DNA](#)

**Claim: "Now I just ask you a simple question, do you want to trust Joseph Smith who is a fraud, a womanizer, many wives, a false prophet, the Book of Mormon? There's nothing to support it, all the evidence says to the contrary. Or would you trust Jesus Christ who is the Savior, who is God, who became a man? ...Now where do you want to rest your hope for eternity? In Joseph Smith or in Jesus Christ and His word?" - Dave Hunt (Author and Founder, Berean Ministries)**

Once again this is a false dilemma and begs the question of Joseph's prophetic authority. Was Joseph Smith an imperfect mortal? Certainly. Was Paul an imperfect mortal? Of course. Do we trust Paul's record of his encounter with the divine? Is there evidence to support Paul's theophany? Do we trust Paul instead of Christ?

The charges which Mr. Hunt hopes will stick if he just repeats them often enough have all been answered earlier.

**To read more:**

- [Prophecy and revelation](#)
- [First Vision](#)
- [Book of Abraham](#)
- [DNA](#)

**Claim: "Why would you trust Joseph Smith over the Bible?" - Sandra Tanner (President, Utah Lighthouse Ministry)**

This is a false dilemma and begs the question. If Joseph Smith is a prophet of God, then we can trust him and the Bible.

Latter-day Saints do not choose between the two, any more than they choose

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between Peter and Paul, or Matthew and Mark.

**Claim: "What is the criteria for testing a prophet? Let's look at that and I would hope the person would then be able to see Joseph Smith doesn't deserve the honor and recognition that they've always given to him. He doesn't measure up against what God said in the Bible." - Sandra Tanner (President, Utah Lighthouse Ministry)**

No examples are given here, so one cannot assess the claim that Joseph does not match "what God said in the Bible."

It is easy to guess, though, that the critics have a self-serving interpretation of what makes a prophet, and the Latter-day Saints have a different interpretation.

As Joseph Smith noted, settling such questions by an appeal to the Bible is futile. The Holy Bible can provide guidance and insight, but we must check our conclusions with God. Only revelation can guide us into correct conclusions and then confirm them.

**Claim: "I would greatly encourage any Mormon or any person who is thinking about Mormonism to examine objectively the life of Joseph Smith, the reliability and the teachings of the Book of Mormon over against the Jesus of the New Testament and the reliability of the Bible and its truthfulness." - Dr. Phil Roberts (President, Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary)**

Latter-day Saints also encourage Mormons and investigators to examine, as objectively as possible, the life of Joseph Smith. This requires accurate information, not sensationalized distortions. And, it requires a willingness to seek God's opinion during the process.

**To read more:**

- "Joseph Smith: Prophet of God" [off-site](#)
- Matthew Brown, "Historical or Hysterical—Anti-Mormons and Documentary Sources" [FAIR link](#)

**Claim: "It's a question of what the truth is. It's a question of what the evidence is. It's a question of, did a man come along 1800 years into the history of Christianity and totally revise**

## what Christianity says and what the Bible says? And that's what we believe Joseph Smith did." - Dr. Phil Roberts (President, Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary)

Joseph did not claim to revise Christianity, or alter what the Bible says. He claimed to restore Christianity to its original state. LDS doctrine does not alter Biblical doctrines, but it does offer a different interpretation of the Biblical data.

Dr. Roberts' Baptist denomination is hardly younger than Joseph Smith's denomination, with historical roots in the 17th century at the earliest. Are we to instead believe that someone could reform Christianity without prophetic authority? Either Christianity persisted, uncontaminated, from the days of the apostles, or it was corrupted. If it became corrupted, by what authority did Dr. Roberts' denomination correct it? And, how can a neutral observer know if that authority is legitimate?

If Christian doctrines were altered since Jesus and the apostles taught them, should they not be revised (or, more properly, restored) to their previous state?

### To read more:

- FAIR Topical Guide: **Apostasy and restoration** [FAIR link](#)
- Roger Keller, "The Apostasy" [FAIR link](#)



### *Apostasy on-line articles*

- Richard L. Anderson, "Clement, Ignatius, and Polycarp: Three Bishops between the Apostles and Apostasy," *Ensign* (August 1976): 51. [off-site](#)
- Kent P. Jackson, "Early Signs of the Apostasy," *Ensign* (December 1984): 8. [off-site](#)
- Roger D. Cook, "How Deep the Platonism? A Review of Owen and Mosser's Appendix: Hellenism, Greek Philosophy, and the Creedal "Straightjacket" of Christian Orthodoxy," *FARMS Review of Books* 11/2 (1999): 265–299. [off-site PDF link](#)
- William J. Hamblin and Daniel C. Peterson, "The Evangelical Is Our Brother (Review of *How Wide the Divide? A Mormon and an Evangelical in Conversation*)," *FARMS Review of Books* 11/2 (1999): 178–209. [off-site PDF link](#)
- Kent P. Jackson, "Early Signs of the Apostasy," *Ensign* (December 1984): 8. [off-site](#)
- Hyde M. Merrill, "The Great Apostasy as Seen by Eusebius," *Ensign* (November 1972): 34. [off-site](#)
- Dallin H. Oaks, "Apostasy and Restoration," *Ensign* (May 1995): 84. [off-](#)



- [site](#)
- Barry Robert Bickmore, *Restoring the Ancient Church: Joseph Smith and Early Christianity* (FAIR, 1999). [ISBN 1893036006](#). [FAIR link](#)

## Claims of Biblical Inerrancy

**Claim: "Do you want to know truth about who God is and how to know Him and how to be with Him forever? Then listen to this book, which is free of error because God can't lie. He makes no mistakes." - Dr. John Whitcomb**

Latter-day Saints accept the Bible as the Word of God. We, like other Christians, believe that studying the Bible will draw us closer to the divine. We also agree that God doesn't lie or make mistakes. Can a book, however, that was written by imperfect mortals, in imperfect languages, copied by imperfect copyists, translated by imperfect translators, and interpreted by imperfect readers be "free of error"? The Bible itself does not claim to be error-free, and studies of the Bible and the inherent ambiguity which exists in all languages demonstrates that no writing is truly free of error.

Furthermore, even if one could have a perfect scripture, one would still have to interpret it. Even the most well-intentioned people (as most Christians have been) do not agree on the proper interpretation of many Biblical passages.

As one non-Mormon scholar noted:

*Christians have argued, often passionately, over every conceivable point of Christian doctrine from the filioque to the immaculate conception. There is scarcely an issue of worship, theology, ethics, and politics over which some Christians have not disagreed among themselves.*  
—David Steinmetz, "Christian Unity: A Sermon by David Steinmetz," *News and Notes* 5/6 (April 1990)

This constant disagreement between Christians demonstrates that interpretation of the Bible is not straightforward, and leads honest men and women to many different places.

**To read more:**

- [Biblical inerrancy](#)
- FAIR Topical Guide: **Biblical inerrancy** [FAIR link](#)

**Claim: "Virtually every verse I quote in scripture is [given to my congregation] because you need to go home and check me out. You need to see what the Bible has to say not what John says, not what Joseph says, not what anybody says but God. What does God say about these issues? You need to check these things out. It is your soul—your eternal soul—that is on the line and there is no reset button at the judgment. There is no finger pointing: 'But he misled me.' You have an obligation for the sake of your soul as well as to be able to share the truth with your family, people you love, to check out what God's word has to say on these issues and not what somebody else had to say and the answers are found only in the word of God which is the Bible." - Jon McCartney (Pastor, First Baptist Church of Tooele, Utah)**

Sincere seekers of truth should verify the claims made by others. FAIR has prepared these resources so that no one need rely on the word of those who distort the teachings, beliefs, and history of the Church of Jesus Christ.

Teachings should be compared with the Bible, but this is not the final step. How can we know if our interpretation of the Bible is the correct one? There are thousands of Christian sects, each with their own interpretation of certain scriptures.

The only way in which we can be assured of following God's will is to have God Himself tell us. He has promised that He will. The DVD producers hope that you will not do this, and spend a great deal of time [here](#) trying to convince you that revelation from God cannot be relied upon.

**Claim: "And the Bible is supported by hundreds, even thousands of prophecies, proofs, evidence, history, archaeology—we can prove it." - Dave Hunt (Author and Founder, Berean Ministries)**

While Latter-day Saints would agree that there is evidence—both secular and spiritual—to support the Bible as a mostly accurate narrative and as the Word of God, it is false to imply that the Bible has been proven to be the Word of God by secular means. It is likewise inaccurate to claim that we can "prove" the Bible by archaeology and history. Many biblical scholars and archaeologists believe that numerous Bible stories are myths or fabrications. Some question various parts of its history or doubt the reality of miracles and the resurrection. Archaeology and

history certainly can not prove that Jesus is the Son of God, or that He atoned for our sins.

Only a witness from the Spirit of God can prove spiritual things:

Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. ([1 Corinthians 2:13-14](#))

**To read more:**

- [Biblical inerrancy](#)
- [Open canon vs. closed canon](#)
- FAIR Topical Guide: **Biblical inerrancy** [FAIR link](#)

## Saved by Faith Alone?

**Claim: "My faith that I will be spending eternity in heaven with Jesus Christ is dependent upon understanding who He is and what He's done. The shed blood of Jesus Christ, His life was sacrificed upon the cross, His blood was shed, He died, He is resurrected—He lives today. And if I would believe in Him and who He is and what He's done and acknowledge who I am and what I've done and ask for forgiveness then I can spend eternity with him." - Roger Oakland (President, Understand the Times)**

Latter-day Saints believe all of these things.

The only additional belief is that Latter-day Saints insist that because they love Jesus and believe what He tells them, they should strive to obey the commandments He gives them. Critics try to portray this as a rejection of Christ's grace—it is not. It is an expression of our gratitude for it.

Distorted ideas about the Latter-day Saints' views on salvation have already been addressed [here](#).

**Claim: "All you have to do is believe in Christ and be saved and**

## **confess it and then that's it." - Tim Howard (Former Mormon)**

Mr. Howard is entitled to his opinion. Of course, hundreds of millions of other Christians—such as the Roman Catholics, the Orthodox, the early Christians, and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints—have the same Bible scriptures, and come to a different conclusion.

This demonstrates that Biblical interpretation is the key issue. Even those who agree that the Bible is the Word of God cannot agree on what it means.

### **To read more:**

- Does the Church [neglect](#) the doctrine of grace?
- [Salvation by faith alone](#)
- [Born again](#)
- "Are We Saved by Grace Alone?" [FAIR link](#)

## **Distorting the LDS View of Salvation**

**Claim: "It don't have to be I've got to join this Church and then on top of that I've got to pay my tithing to get a Temple recommend and then I've got to have a Temple recommend to get into the Temple and then I've got to go to the Temple so that I can live with God so that I can become a God so that I can go have a planet to not be with God. It just don't make sense." - Tim Howard (Former Mormon)**

Mr. Howard's distortion of the early Christian and Latter-day Saint doctrine of theosis makes it clear that he does not understand it.

Latter-day Saints do not view such matters as joining Christ's church, worshipping Christ in the temple, or making financial donations to the cause of Christ to be things they have "got to" do.

Rather, they are things which they do joyfully because:

- they express their love for Christ and His marvelous atonement
- they wish to imitate Christ and act as much like Him as possible
- the Lord gives His Spirit in even greater abundance when they obey Christ's teachings

- serving the Lord and others gives them joy.

They do not do these things hoping that Christ will forgive them. They do them because they have been forgiven.

**To read more:**

- Dallin H. Oaks, "Have You Been Saved?," *Ensign* (May 1998): 55. [off-site](#)
- [Theosis/human deification](#)

**Claim: "There is a tremendous amount of respect that I have for them and their dedication and how hard they are seeking and the burden that they are willing to carry in their impossible attempt to live up to their impossible gospel demands." - Joel Kramer (Director, Living Hope Ministries)**

Latter-day Saints do not consider the demands which a merciful Christ puts upon them to be impossible, or even onerous. As Jesus taught, "My yoke is easy, and my burden is light" ([Matthew 11:30](#)).

Distorted ideas about the Latter-day Saints' views on salvation have already been addressed [here](#).

**Claim: "And so my heart is that any Mormon who would be hearing this would be going back to the scriptures, challenging the words of Joseph Smith, comparing them to the words of Jesus—the one who died for you, the one who loves you. The one who is praying for you right now, interceding, he ever lives to make intercession for you right now."**

These are all doctrines believed and taught by the Latter-day Saints:

- Christ died for us ([Jacob 1:8](#), [Mosiah 3:7](#), [Helaman 14:20](#))
- Christ loves us ([3 Nephi 17:5-22](#), [Moroni 7:48](#))
- Christ prays for us to the Father ([3 Nephi 17:15-22](#), [3 Nephi 18:23-25](#)).
- Christ makes intercession for us ([2 Nephi 2:9-10](#), [Mosiah 14:12](#), [Mosiah 15:5](#), [DC 45:3-5](#).)

More attempts to dismiss LDS ideas about salvation through Jesus Christ—which are strikingly similar to the views advocated by the DVD—can be seen [here](#).

**Claim: "And I'm sure that if you do that if you truly seek Him**

**out in the Bible I'm sure that Jesus would begin to speak to you and you would know the truth." - Scott Gallantin (Pastor, Calvary Chapel)**

How does Pastor Gallantin know that Jesus does not speak to the Latter-day Saints as they read the Bible? (According to a Christian research group, a Latter-day Saint is statistically more likely to read the Bible during the week than Catholics or Protestants.) [off-site](#)

Unless Pastor Gallantin is getting revelation from God (i.e., not from the Bible) he cannot know what God does or does not tell the Latter-day Saints.

**Claim: "When Jesus says if the Son set you free you should be free indeed He really means it. The thing that broke forth on me was that the Bible really is the real thing there's no fantasy to it. It reveals reality to us." - Randy Gavin (Former Salt Lake Stake Mission President)**

Latter-day Saints likewise believe that the Bible is the real thing, with no fantasy to it as it reveals reality to us. They also believe that they have been made free by Jesus Christ.

## Claims about Family

**Claim: "I was born and raised a Mormon for 37 years.... Everything took a back seat to the Church including, as I look back, my family." - Randy Gavin (Former Salt Lake Stake Mission President)**

If Mr. Gavin put his family in the back seat to Church duties, the Church is not to blame for that. In fact, Mr. Gavin violated the clear teachings of the Church by not putting family before Church duties.

Interested readers may wish to review the Church's teachings on family below.

For those who might be unfamiliar with the LDS church and its lay ministry, a stake mission president was a part-time position held by assignment, for a period of time, in every LDS stake. The person in this position helped coordinate member-missionary efforts within the stake boundaries. A stake is an ecclesiastical unit of roughly ten congregations. Thus, in Salt Lake City alone there were dozens of stakes and hundreds of stake mission presidents. The position of stake mission president was done away with in approximately 2001,



and missionary work focused within wards instead of stakes.

**To read more:**

- [Church over family?](#)

**Claim: "You know, I thought to myself I'm teaching these kids, let alone my own kids, this song about a prophet that I don't even believe is true." - Karen Howard (Former Mormon)**

This is a bizarre objection. Ms. Howard was teaching her children something she didn't believe? No parent ought to teach children things that they don't believe are true. However, that Ms. Howard did so is no fault of the Church's. The Church constantly emphasizes the necessity of knowing for oneself if one is following the path approved by God.

Ms. Howard's belief or disbelief says nothing about the truth or falsehood of any belief. It merely says that in her case she was relying on poor grounds for her actions.

## Denying Testimony and the Witness of the Spirit

**Claim: "What I've discovered is when you counter Mormon theology with biblical fact and you back them up into a corner they most always go back to, 'Well I've experienced a testimony.'" - Roger Oakland (President, Understand the Times)**

The reader is invited to consider whether any reply to any of the so-called facts presented by the *Search for the Truth* DVD have been answered with "Well, we at FAIR have a testimony."

Members of FAIR do have testimonies, but there are legitimate Biblical and historical answers to all the questions posed by the critics. No member can answer every objection from a hostile critic, especially one who is so convinced that their interpretation of the Bible is the only way in which an honest, Christian, God-fearing person could understand the text. But, an individual's inability to answer to the satisfaction of self-appointed "Christian" judges says nothing about the

merits of any position.

Above all else, the DVD producers want you to rely on them and their interpretations of scripture, history, and doctrine. They spend a lot of effort [here](#) trying to convince you that getting answers directly from God is unreliable.

**Claim: "...when you ask them, 'Well what do you mean by "the testimony?"' Is that the burning in the bosom?' They say, 'Yes, of course, and you too could have the experience of the burning in the bosom all you need to do is ask God if what Joseph Smith said is true.' Now isn't this amazing? To stake your eternal life based on some kind of a feeling, a subjective feeling? Where would you find that in the scriptures? Absolutely nowhere." - Roger Oakland (President, Understand the Times)**

Note that the DVD intro text says: *We pray that it will touch the hearts of all who watch through the grace and truth of Christ Jesus.*

The DVD spends much effort [here](#) trying to convince the Latter-day Saints not to trust their feelings. Why, then, do they hope their feelings are touched?

Could it be that they realize that the Holy Ghost does work (in part) through the sentiments of the heart?

At any rate, basing one's eternal life on direct revelation from God is a thoroughly Biblical doctrine, as discussed at length [here](#).

## Lying

**Claim: "I remember sitting on the edge of my bed and weeping as the recognition that I had been lied to crept in upon me." - Randy Gavin (Former Salt Lake Stake Mission President)**

If Mr. Gavin believed he was lied to, then he can doubtless understand how offensive it is for the Latter-day Saints when their doctrine and their history is repeatedly lied about over the course of a ninety minute DVD.

What is harder to understand is why Mr. Gavin would participate in a venture which lies about the beliefs of others.

One can only hope that he still does not understand LDS doctrine and practice, as he evidently did not prior to leaving the Church.

**Claim: "My heart, to see that people could know the truth because Jesus said if you know the truth the truth will set you free." - Scott Gallantin (Pastor, Calvary Chapel)**

If the truth is all that is necessary to set us free (and Latter-day Saints believe that it is), why has Pastor Gallantin chosen to lend his name to a DVD that blatantly (and demonstrably) misrepresents the faith of the Latter-day Saints?

Why does he not refuse to associate with those who bear false witness?

Why does he not present all the facts?

Why does he help those who will not?

### Do You Have Questions?

If you have questions about anything you read on this page, we encourage you to ask. FAIR is a volunteer organization, and our members are glad to answer questions. You can ask by using our [handy contact page](#). You will get one or more answers, via e-mail, usually within a short time after asking.

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## Search for the Truth DVD:Summary

From FairWiki.org

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# Summary

### Has the video's stated purpose been accomplished?

The producers undertook their task with a bold and noble purpose:

*This video has been produced out of love for our Lord Jesus Christ and love for our Mormon and Christian friends. We pray that it will touch the hearts of all who watch through the grace and truth of Christ Jesus.*

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However, we find such declarations of love inconsistent with their disappointing behavior as they revile and demean what Latter-day Saint Christians hold dear and sacred. Perhaps we should be asking *how* the video's purpose was accomplished rather than if the video's purpose was accomplished. The viewer need only look to their abuse of scripture as we reinstate the apostle Paul's words (in brackets) that they removed in their video presentation.

"God's word warns: "Do you not know do that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, [nor adulterers, nor homosexuals,] nor thieves, [nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers,] will inherit the kingdom of God." ([1 Corinthians 6:9-10](#))

The producers simply removed several words, including "revilers," to avoid implicating themselves in the same condemnation they pronounce on others. This will put the observant viewer on notice that they must carefully research each scripture and claim that this video makes.

**Claim: "From his fabrication of the First Vision to his reconstruction of the Christian faith and his desire for women it is clear that Joseph centered his life around lust, wealth, and power. Joseph Smith joins a long list of those who have used the name of Christ to enrich themselves."**

We have shown that these claims about the First vision and Joseph's reasons for practicing polygamy are false and rely upon a distorted, twisted, or incomplete reading of the historical record.

Joseph Smith's life demonstrated selflessness, humility, and a desire to serve God and his fellow man. He wasn't without sin, and he never claimed to be. But despite his weaknesses, he was a prophet of God.

Joseph published numerous revelations calling him personally to repent. ([DC 3:9-10](#), [DC 5:21](#) for example) He was quick to aid the poor, and the early Church had many poor. As members came, leaving homes and family and most of their worldly possessions behind, they were welcomed, fed, and clothed by the Church and by the Prophet Joseph Smith.

In the end, he gave his life for his testimony of Jesus Christ when he could have preserved it by recanting what he claimed to have witnessed.

- [God?](#)
- [Eternal Life](#)
- [Archaeology](#)
- [Prophecies & Revelations](#)
- [Polygamy](#)
- [The First Vision](#)
- [The Occult](#)
- [The Translator](#)
- [DNA](#)
- [Book of Abraham](#)
- [Witnessing to Mormons](#)
- [Summary](#)
- [Call to LDS Leaders](#)
- [Music Video](#)
- [Credits](#)

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#### Special Features

- [The Good Test](#)
- [Burning in the Bosom](#)
- [The Priesthood?](#)
- [What is Hell?](#)
- [A New Beginning](#)

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#### Other Materials

- [Letter](#) given to distributors
- [Annotated](#) with comments
- [Producers' press release](#) with

### To read more:

- **LDS.org:** Character of Joseph Smith [Church site](#)
- Reply to DVD on [First Vision](#)
- Reply to DVD on ["occult"](#)
- Reply to DVD on [plural marriage](#)
- Reply to DVD on [translation](#)
- [Joseph Smith resources](#)
- [Personal failings of Joseph Smith](#)

comments

- [Selected reader comments](#)
- [Distorted quotes](#)

**Claim: "It's no coincidence that Joseph was murdered in the Carthage jail. Why was Joseph in jail? He destroyed a small paper press called the *Nauvoo Expositor* because he didn't like what they had written about him in their one and only publication." – Patrick Powell**

Joseph Smith was in jail because he went to answer manufactured charges of treason against the state. He voluntarily surrendered to a state official who had guaranteed him and his brother Hyrum protection.

The call for the destruction of the *Nauvoo Expositor* was not taken by "Joseph Smith," but by the Nauvoo city council, of which Joseph was a member. The council—which included non-members of the Church—voted to suppress the *Expositor* as a public nuisance.

The video will not tell you that some scholars have argued that the city council's action was *legal* according to Nauvoo city charter. Nor will they tell you that the council's concern was that the paper was so inflammatory that it might stir up violence.

The viewer also won't be told that Joseph was released by the Nauvoo municipal court on 13 June 1844. Anti-Mormons claimed this court was biased, so Joseph and others again appeared before non-Mormon judge Daniel H. Wells on 17 June, who discharged them (he did not have power to acquit them, so this was deferred).

Governor Ford of Illinois then asked Joseph to appear before the Carthage judge to satisfy the anti-Mormons. Joseph did so, and was freed on bail. Joseph and Hyrum were then *arrested again* because of a writ issued by Robert F. Smith, a Methodist minister, justice of the peace, and captain of the Carthage Grays militia.

The DVD will not reveal that Joseph was twice released by legal courts. It will

not reveal that he was out on bail awaiting trial in a *third* court when he was *rearrested* by a religious enemy. Governor Ford broke his promise to protect Joseph and Hyrum, and the Carthage Grays conspired to help murder Joseph.

It almost sounds as if the video is endorsing what happened to Joseph, or saying he "deserved it." Such an attitude shows contempt for the law and Christian ethics.

**To read more:**

- [Nauvoo Expositor](#)
- [Nauvoo city charter](#)
- [Murder of Joseph and Hyrum Smith](#)
- Dallin H. Oaks, "The Suppression of the Nauvoo Expositor," *Utah Law Review* 9 (1965):874.
- Dallin H. Oaks and Marvin S. Hill, *Carthage Conspiracy, the Trial of the Accused Assassins of Joseph Smith* (Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1979), y. [ISBN 025200762X](#).

**Claim: "But this was not the first time Joseph was arrested. He had been arrested many times throughout his adult life for things like defrauding people while he was using his glass-looking techniques and creating an illegal bank in Kirtland, Ohio, and fleeing with its monies." – Patrick Powell**

Joseph was arrested many times. John the Baptist was arrested. Peter and the apostles were arrested. The apostle Paul was arrested many times. Even Jesus was arrested. (Ironically, two of this video's contributors have been arrested.) Does this mean that John, Peter, Paul, and Jesus are to be condemned? Did they "deserve" what happened to them? Should the producers of this video repudiate the ministries of two of their contributors (Joel Kramer and Chip Thompson) because they have been arrested for exercising what they viewed as their religious rights?

The video carefully avoids mentioning that Joseph was never found guilty by any court of the charges for which he was arrested. But, for the DVD producers, the mere fact of being arrested and charged with a crime is adequate—Joseph Smith is "guilty until proven innocent."

As previously discussed, Joseph was not found guilty in the matter of the "glass-looking," and the person he had supposedly "defrauded" testified in his behalf and joined the Church. (Review treatment of this issue [here](#).)



The Kirtland Safety Society is not an example of Joseph "defrauding" people. Joseph put more of his own money into the bank than any other person, save one. He paid more for his stock than 85% of the other owners. The bank failed, as did hundreds of other banks, because of a nation-wide banking panic.

Joseph did not "flee...with its monies"—he went further into debt trying to save the bank, and owed over \$100,000 when it finally failed. Joseph had enough goods and lands to meet that debt, but converting these into cash was difficult in the early 19th-century economy following the collapse.

Joseph continued to pay his creditors after fleeing for his life. In 1843 he was far away, safe in Nauvoo, and yet continued to settle his debts from the Kirtland period. These are not the actions of a man trying to "get rich quick" or swindle others.

Once again, the DVD has distorted historical facts and omitted all information that conflicts with their conclusions.

**To read more:**

- [1826 'glass-looking' hearing](#)
- [Kirtland Safety Society](#)
- [Joseph Smith and legal trials](#)

**Claim: "So why do so many people follow this man? Because they don't know the truth about the character of Joseph Smith." – Pamela Robertson**

The DVD producers would profit by asking members of the Church why they follow Joseph Smith. They would learn that they follow Joseph's teachings because:

- Joseph's teachings are consistent with the Holy Bible.
- Joseph's teachings bring them closer to their Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
- The power of the Holy Spirit has witnessed to their minds and hearts that Joseph is a Prophet and disciple of Jesus Christ, and the Book of Mormon stands with the Bible as a witness to the word of God.

The Saints accept that Joseph was imperfect—all men have weaknesses. But it is the doctrine of Christ which Joseph taught, and the influence of the Holy Spirit which Joseph brought, which members cherish and follow.

Brigham Young described an encounter with the 19th-century version of the

### Search for the Truth DVD:

*I recollect a conversation I had with a priest who was an old friend of ours, before I was personally acquainted with the Prophet Joseph. I clipped every argument he advanced, until at last he came out and began to rail against "Joe Smith," saying, "that he was a mean man, a liar, moneydigger, gambler, and a whore-master;" and he charged him with everything bad, that he could find language to utter.*

*I said, hold on, Brother Gillmore, here is the doctrine, here is the Bible, the Book of Mormon, and the revelations that have come through Joseph Smith the Prophet. I have never seen him, and do not know his private character. The doctrine he teaches is all I know about the matter, bring anything against that if you can.*

*As to anything else I do not care. If he acts like a devil, he has brought forth a doctrine that will save us, if we will abide it. He may get drunk every day of his life, sleep with his neighbor's wife every night, run horses and gamble, I do not care anything about that, for I never embrace any man in my faith.*

*But the doctrine he has produced will save you and me, and the whole world; and if you can find fault with that, find it.*

—Brigham Young, "The Gospel Like a Net Cast Into the Sea, Etc.," *Journal of Discourses*, reported by G.D. Watt (9 November 1856), Vol. 4 (London: Latter-day Saint's Book Depot, 1857), 77–78. [off-sitewiki](#) (paragraph breaks added) (emphasis added)

### To read more:

- [Personal failings of Joseph Smith](#)

**Claim: "As a Mormon, you cannot question the Church on issues such as these because you run the risk of excommunication." – Pamela Robertson**

This is complete nonsense.

The DVD wants its viewers to trust only its sources—they know that if viewers ask knowledgeable LDS members or leaders about these issues, they will receive information that shows the DVD to be dishonest and inaccurate.

The Church has a lay clergy—this means that its leaders do not spend time in seminaries and degree programs. They come from many occupations and social backgrounds. Many leaders—like many members—are not experts in matters of early Mormon history.

Some leaders, like some members, may be unaware of the historical details which

are so regularly distorted by the DVD. If a leader is unable to provide an answer to a sincere question, this does not mean that an answer does not exist. No one knows everything.

FAIR exists to fill any such "knowledge gaps" by providing accurate, well-researched information about LDS history and doctrine. Anti-Mormon attacks are repetitive; most were asked and answered decades ago.

No one will be excommunicated for asking questions. Excommunication occurs only for cases of severe unrepentant sin, or in cases where a member is guilty of *apostasy*. Apostasy is the public teaching of doctrines believed to be false by the Church, even after being corrected by Church leaders.

If one were to repeatedly preach the nonsense taught by the *Search for the Truth* DVD, one could conceivably be excommunicated for apostasy. But despite anti-Mormon claims to the contrary, Latter-day Saints are not disciplined merely for not believing Church doctrine nor for believing things contrary to Church teachings.

**To read more:**

- Do Mormons Believe in Blind Obedience? [FAIR link](#)
- [Click here](#) to ask questions of FAIR. You will receive one or more e-mail replies, with additional references shortly, usually within less than 24 hours.

**Claim: "This video has been sent to Mormon leaders knowing that they will try to destroy and discredit its message but this will not change the fact that the content within is true." –**

**Pamela Robertson**

This statement presents a clear problem for the producers of this video. Contrast the statement with another statement made in the [letter that accompanied the DVD](#), sent to recipients before the video was released:

*CAUTION: This video is to be viewed by CHRISTIANS ONLY until AFTER the nation-wide distribution which is scheduled for March 25, 2007. In-other-words, DO NOT ALLOW ANY MORMON PEOPLE to view the video or learn of our intended evangelistic outreach until after March 25, 2007.*

*Why such extreme caution? If the leadership of the Mormon cult learns of our plans, they will publicly instruct their people not to watch the video and many Mormons will blindly obey.*

The clear problem? Either it is true that the DVD was sent to LDS leaders, or it is true that it was kept from LDS leadership for fear they would instruct members not to watch the video. It would seem that both statements cannot be true. Rather than accuse the producers of the DVD of lying—which would be assigning intent to these incompatible statements—it seems more prudent to say that this is a clear case of them misleading either one their hosts (Pam Robertson) or their recipients (of the pre-release letter).

Fortunately, the DVD's message discredits itself rather well, and all members need do is to continue doing what we've always done: share the truth.

And the only ones being asked to "blindly obey" are those asked to distribute the DVD on doorknobs across the country and those being asked to believe the DVD's version of LDS doctrine and history.

**Note:** FAIR is not owned, affiliated with, or controlled by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. These replies were not prepared at the behest of the Church, and do not represent official statements. They are the opinions only of the authors, who are believing and committed members of the Church.

#### To read more:

- Daniel C. Peterson and Stephen D. Ricks, *Offenders for a Word: How Anti-Mormons Play Word Games to Attack the Latter-day Saints* (Provo, Utah: FARMS (reprint edition), 1992), 1. [ISBN 0934893357](http://www.amazon.com/dp/0934893357).

**Claim: "Do not trust your eternity to a burning in the bosom which can be felt by simply watching a Hollywood movie. Even terrorists believe and are willing to die for something which is not of the Lord."— Patrick Powell**

Comparing Latter-day Saint convictions to those of "terrorists" is inflammatory and absurd. Terrorists lie to achieve their goals; does that mean that the DVD producers should be compared to terrorists?

It is strange that sectarian critics fault appeals to a "burning in the bosom."

#### Would they reject a witness of Jesus?

Following Jesus' resurrection, He walked with two disciples on the road to Emmaus. They did not recognize Jesus, but listened to Him as "he expounded

unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself" ([Luke 24:27](#)).

After breaking bread with them, Jesus was revealed to the disciples, and vanished.

Interestingly, the disciples did not say to each other, "We should have known it was Jesus because of his scriptural teaching." Rather, they said:

Did not our heart *burn within us*, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures? ([Luke 24:32](#), emphasis added)

Would the critics likewise dismiss Jesus' disciples' witness because it was a "burning in the bosom"? Would they characterize this experience as merely the emotional rush of a Hollywood film?

The experience on the road to Emmaus illustrates another important point: a witness of the Holy Ghost is not "just a feeling." The Holy Ghost is both a "feeling" or "experiencing" process, but it is not empty emotion. Rather, *information* is always transmitted with it. Thus, Jesus did not just give the disciples a "feeling," but taught them information from the scriptures which gave intellectual or mental insight and satisfaction.

### **Mind and heart**

LDS scripture understands a spiritual witness as always consisting of these two things: mind and heart unified:

Verily, verily, I say unto you, if you desire a further witness, cast your mind upon the night that you cried unto me in your heart, that you might know concerning the truth of these things.

Did I not speak peace to your mind concerning the matter? What greater witness can you have than from God? ([D&C 6:22-23](#)).

Notice the information spoken to the "mind," and the peace then follows. And, the solution for later doubts or concerns is not reliance on "a feeling," but an admonition to recall specific information communicated earlier.

This matches a later description:

Behold, you have not understood; you have supposed that I would give it unto you, when you took no thought save it was to ask me.

But, behold, I say unto you, that you must study it out in your mind; then you must ask me if it be right, and if it is right I will cause that your bosom shall burn within you; therefore, you shall feel that it is right.

But if it be not right you shall have no such feelings, but you shall have a

stupor of thought that shall cause you to forget the thing which is wrong...  
([D&C 9:7-9](#)).

### Following Jesus' command to ask

Because the video's producers haven't experienced the testimony of the Spirit, they want you to ignore it. But what did Christ say?

And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever....

But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. ([John 14:16,26](#))

So, we are to heed the whisperings of the Holy Ghost, not ignore them. Instead, the video's producers want you to believe that God would give us a stone when we ask for bread (see [Matthew 7:9](#)).

And then we have the admonition of James:

If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. ([James 1:5](#))

Are we to believe then that God will not answer when we knock at the door? That he who asketh will not receive? Latter-day Saints believe in these Biblical admonitions to seek God, to commune with the Spirit, and to trust in Him.

### To read more:

- [Burning in the bosom](#)

**Claim: "Jesus alone is without sin, as we read in 1 John 3:5—'And you know that He was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him there is no sin.' Only Jesus could live a sinless life."**

The DVD wants you to believe that this description of Christ is different from LDS beliefs of Christ. Once again, this is false—hardly an act of love. Latter-day Saints believe that Jesus Christ was the only sinless person to ever live and that his sinlessness was one of the attributes that allowed him to make an atonement for all mankind.

### To read more:



### *The Book of Mormon*

- [Click here](#) for free copy of the Book of Mormon: Another Testament of Jesus Christ, with no obligation
- [Click here](#) to listen to or download Book of Mormon in audio format (no charge)
- [Click here](#) for an on-line searchable Book of Mormon (no charge)

### *Other resources*

- **LDS.org:** Jesus Christ [Church site](#)
- Reply to DVD on [Jesus Christ](#)
- Reply to DVD on [Beliefs about salvation](#)
- [Book of Mormon doctrines about Jesus Christ](#)

**Claim: "If someone today would model their life after Joseph Smith they would have to be an adulterer, a thief, a fraud and a liar.... You must choose to follow Joseph or follow Jesus but you cannot follow both."**

More verbal tar and feathers for the prophet Joseph.

Of course, Latter-day Saints do not strive to "model their lives" on Joseph Smith, but on the sinless, perfect life of the Lord Jesus Christ. They imitate Joseph only to the extent that Joseph was a faithful disciple of Christ.

Throughout his life, Joseph had to endure the slurs and allegations of creedal religionists—things certainly haven't changed after more than 150 years.

Was Joseph dragged into jail many times on religiously-motivated charges? Yes, and so was Peter, so was Paul, and so even was Christ Himself.

Christ was murdered by those who hated Him, and Joseph Smith—like others persecuted for their beliefs about Christ—eventually followed the Master into violent death at the hands of those who hated his message.

Those who attack the faith of others, especially through dishonesty and misrepresentation, should remember Christ's denunciation of those who fought His message in His day:

Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the

tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous, And say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets. Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers. Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell? Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city. ([Matthew 23:28-34](#))

If one wants to *Search for the Truth* about Joseph Smith, one will need to look much further than the superficial slogans, distortions, and untruths presented in this DVD.

As President Boyd K. Packer remarked:

*There has been no end to opposition. There are misinterpretations and misrepresentations of us and of our history, some of it mean-spirited and certainly contrary to the teachings of Jesus Christ and His gospel. Sometimes clergy, even ministerial organizations, oppose us. They do what we would never do. We do not attack or criticize or oppose others as they do us.... Strangest of all, otherwise intelligent people claim we are not Christian. This shows that they know little or nothing about us. It is a true principle that you cannot lift yourself by putting others down.*  
—Boyd K. Packer, "A Defense and a Refuge," *Ensign* (November 2006): 85–88. [off-site](#)

### **Claim: "Jesus Christ...Joseph Smith...Choose!"**

It should be clear by now that members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints do not have to choose between Jesus and Joseph.

### **"If you don't believe the things stated in this program look them up for yourself." – Pamela Robertson**

At last, something with which we can agree. If you have questions, you *should* get the facts—all the facts.

But, you won't get them from this DVD or the ministries that support anti-Mormon propaganda.

### Do You Have Questions?

If you have questions about anything you read on this page, we encourage you to ask. FAIR is a volunteer organization, and our members are glad to answer questions. You can ask by using our [handy contact page](#). You will get one or more answers, via e-mail, usually within a short time after asking.

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## Search for the Truth DVD:Call to Leaders

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# Call to LDS Leaders

**This portion of the video calls for LDS leaders to stop the supposed deception of Mormonism. "You'd be the hero of all time to the LDS people if you finally admitted Joseph Smith was a false prophet. Beloved you know that. That Mormonism is not true. The Book of Mormon is not true. Joseph Smith is not true. Joseph Smith deceived you and deceived your people. Don't go on with this deception. So we pray of you, Mormon leaders, have the courage to admit that you're wrong." (Floyd McElveen)**

This charges that leaders actually know that Joseph Smith was a fraud and that the Book of Mormon is false, and that LDS leaders simply need to *admit* the deception and take the steps necessary to lead Mormons out of the Church. Who granted the critics insight into the minds, beliefs, hearts, and souls of the leaders of The Church of Jesus Christ?

Critics should recall the admonition of Jesus:

Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to

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you again. ([Matthew 7:1-2](#))

The poisonous accusation that LDS leaders actually know that Mormonism is false has become fashionable in some anti-Mormon circles. This claim is designed to add credibility to the anti-Mormon accusation that the LDS Church is not only wrong, but deceptive.

The fact is, however, that LDS leaders give of their time (a tremendous amount of time) and talents, because they love Christ, they love God's children, and they believe that the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is true. Many LDS leaders give up lucrative professions and sacrifice time they could be spending in retirement or with family, to dedicate themselves to the Restored Gospel. They really believe in the teachings of the Church and they labor continuously leading people to Christ and the fulness of the Gospel as found in the latter-day church that Christ restored.

Brigham Young, like many Church leaders, repeatedly taught that no member should rely on their leader's convictions— each member must seek a spiritual witness:

*The First Presidency have of right a great influence over this people; and if we should get out of the way and lead this people to destruction, what a pity it would be! How can you know whether we lead you correctly or not? Can you know by any other power than that of the Holy Ghost? I have uniformly exhorted the people to obtain this living witness each for themselves; then no man on earth can lead them astray.*

—Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses* 6:100. [off-site wiki](#)

#### To read more:

- [More quotes by Church leaders](#) about not being deceived.
- "The Living Christ: Testimony of the Apostles of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints" [off-site](#)

- [Summary](#)
- [Call to LDS Leaders](#)
- [Music Video](#)
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#### Special Features

- [The Good Test](#)
- [Burning in the Bosom](#)
- [The Priesthood?](#)
- [What is Hell?](#)
- [A New Beginning](#)

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#### Other Materials

- [Letter](#) given to distributors
- [Annotated](#) with comments
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### Do You Have Questions?

If you have questions about anything you read on this page, we encourage you to ask. FAIR is a volunteer organization, and our members are glad to answer questions. You can ask by using our [handy contact page](#). You will get one or more answers, via e-mail, usually within a short time after asking.

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# Search for the Truth DVD:Music Video

From FairWiki.org

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## Music Video

**A very nice music video showing some of God's wonderful creations and a few text-overlay quotations from the Bible reminding us that it is through Christ that we are saved. "Give Me Jesus" is sung by Stephanie LeBarge.**

We appreciate the reminder of God's beautiful creations and that accepting Christ is the path to happiness both in this life and in our life after death. This portion of the video is well-done, includes some gorgeous scenery and lovely music, and we certainly agree with the Bible quotations that admonish us to seek and follow Christ.

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## Search for the Truth DVD:Credits

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# Credits

It may be helpful to those viewing the video to know a little more about some of the people who participated in the making of this video. The credits list people associated with the production of the video. There is one section of the credits, entitled "Special Thanks" that lists people who provided commentary on the video. Individuals are highlighted, below, in alphabetical order.

## Marvin Cowan



*Marvin Cowan*

Marvin is the director or owner of Utah Christian Publications. This organization sells exclusively anti-Mormon books and materials. Many of the books sold by Utah Christian Publications are written by the other people listed in the credits of this DVD.

## Scott Gallatin



*Scott Gallatin*

Scott Gallatin is the pastor of Calvary Chapel Finger Lakes in Farmington, New York.

## Dennis and Rauni Higley

Dennis and Rauni Higley live in Sandy, Utah. Rauni is originally a Finnish citizen and served as a Mormon missionary in Finland. Dennis is an American who also

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served as a Mormon missionary in Finland. They eventually met and were married in Utah. Together, they left the Church in the 1980s and became evangelical Christians. They later established HIS (He is Savior) Ministries.



*Dennis and Rauni Higley*

The Higleys have been highly influenced by the evangelical countercult arguments of the 1980s. During Rauni's stay in Finland in 1984 she was instrumental in the inception of a highly sensationalistic article on the Mormons in a religious magazine. The material relied on the book and movie *The God Makers*, with in-temple screenshots provided as illustrations. A typical statement related by a reviewer is: "The truth is kept secret on purpose. It is not meant but for the few and chosen, for Mormonism is a pagan religion tied to secret doctrines, mysteries, and occultism. On its most secret levels, a Luciferian doctrine is unveiled as the background.... Mormonism is based on a secret for the simple reason of the truth being too gruesome for a normal, ordinary person"  
—Kim Östman, "An International Perspective: Opposition to Mormonism in Finland, 1845-2006" (presentation at the 2006 FAIR Conference).

In 2004 the Higleys wrote a thirty-page booklet, *The Truth about Mormonism*, published by The Berean Call, a ministry outlet closely associated with Dave Hunt.

## Tim and Karen Howard



*Tim and Karen Howard*

Tim and Karen Howard are former members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

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## Dave Hunt

Dave Hunt has been actively involved in the countercult movement for over two decades. He is the coauthor, with Ed Decker, of both the original and the "updated and expanded" version of *The God Makers*. He is described as "an internationally recognized cult expert." The 1984 edition says he's the author of 10 books in 20 languages, and the 1994 edition gives him "20-plus books [with] combined sales of more than 3 million copies."



*Dave Hunt*

In commenting on the "problem of authority and credibility" within the Christian countercult movement (of which *Search for the Truth* is a product), one non-LDS scholar comments on Dave Hunt's place within the movement:

Robert Wise begins his critique of *The Seduction of Christianity* in what seems an obvious, if often overlooked, place: who are Dave Hunt and Thomas Aloysius McMahon? Noting that "Hunt and McMahon define truth in a way peculiar to themselves," Wise continues: "We are never told who Hunt and McMahon are nor what credentials they have. Apparently, Hunt is a self-certified authority on cults" (1986: 40). DeMar and Leithart complain similarly: "That Dave Hunt, a man with a bachelor's degree in mathematics, is now the most prominent theologian of the dispensationalist movement...indicates the extent of the crisis" (1988: xvii).

—Douglas E. Cowan, *Bearing False Witness: An Introduction to the Christian Countercult* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger Publishers, 2003), 199.

*The God Makers* was characterized by the US National Council of Christians and Jews as follows:

"The Godmakers"...does not, in our opinion, fairly portray the Mormon Church, Mormon belief, or Mormon history. It makes extensive use of 'half-truth', faulty generalizations, erroneous interpretations, and sensationalism...not reflective of the genuine spirit of the Mormon faith.... It appears to us to be a basically unfair and untruthful presentation of what Mormons really believe and practice.

— National Council of Christians and Jews, "Programs in Pluralism," April 1994. [off-site](#)

Mr. Hunt believes that all religions outside of his own have their roots in Satanism, including Catholicism. According to one non-Mormon observer,

[Hunt] presents the darkest possible version of Roman Catholic history, laying responsibility squarely at Rome's door for, among other things, the rise of Nazism in Germany (elsewhere he claims Hinduism is responsible; cf. Hunt 1983); the implementation of the Final Solution (Hunt 1994:265-93); and the Ustaschi (Croat) massacres of Yugoslavian Serbs in the early 1940s (Hunt 1994: 297-307). For Hunt...the syllogism is simple: Because there were at least nominal Catholics involved in these atrocities, therefore the Roman Catholic Church as an institution supported and encouraged their actions--a convenient, monocausal explanation for these various atrocities.

—Douglas E. Cowan, *Bearing False Witness: An Introduction to the Christian Countercult* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger Publishers, 2003), 187.

#### To read more:

- Gilbert W. Scharffs, "The Truth About 'The Godmakers'" (a line-by-line refutation) [FAIR link](#)
- Craig L. Foster, "Old Themes and Stereotypes Never Die: The Unchanging Ways of Anti-Mormons," [FAIR link](#)
- Robert Brown and Rosemary Brown, *They Lie In Wait to Deceive: Vol. 4* [FAIR link](#)

## Joel Kramer



*Joel Kramer*

Joel Kramer is the Director of Living Hope Ministries from Brigham City, Utah. Their mission statement is: "Living Hope Ministries exists to share biblical truths with Mormons, and to educate and equip Christian individuals, ministries and churches to reach Mormons for the biblical Jesus Christ. " Living Hope Ministries has produced several anti-Mormon DVDs.

In August 2006 Joel was arrested for disorderly conduct because he refused to comply with a police officer as he was allegedly unlawfully video taping an LDS pageant in Clarkston, Utah. Charges were subsequently dropped.

**To read more:**

- Brant Gardner, "Behind the Mask, Behind the Curtain: Uncovering the Illusion (*Review of The Bible vs. the Book of Mormon*) [FAIR link](#)
- David E. Bokovoy, "*The Bible vs. the Book of Mormon: Still Losing the Battle: Review of The Bible vs. the Book of Mormon* by Joel P. Kramer and Scott R. Johnson," *FARMS Review* 18/1 (2006): 3–19. [off-site PDF link](#) [wiki](#)
- Louis Midgley, "Orders of Submission: Review of "Essays on Mormonism," *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 9/2 (Summer 2005): 1–81.," *FARMS Review* 18/2 (2006): 189–228. [off-site PDF link](#) [wiki](#)

## Charles Larson



*Charles Larson*

Charles Larson is the author of *By His Own Hand Upon Papyrus: A New Look at the Joseph Smith Papyri*. An LDS scholar who holds a Ph.D. in egyptology from Yale summed up Larson's work:

*Larson's historical method is as follows: Invent evidence, read minds, attribute motives, misquote sources, argue from circumstantial evidence—or better yet—argue from no evidence....*

*If Larson stumbles as a historian, he falls flat on his face as an Egyptologist. He betrays no knowledge of any foreign language, yet offers to guide us through Egyptian, "a unique area of study that is extremely difficult to master."*

—John Gee, "A Tragedy of Errors," p. 99.

The publisher's web site for Larson's book lists his credentials as "former Mormon and Brigham Young University graduate."

### To read more:

- John Gee, "A Tragedy of Errors (Review of *By His Own Hand Upon Papyrus: A New Look at the Joseph Smith Papyri* by Charles M. Larson," *FARMS Review of Books* 4/1 (1992): 93–119. [off-site PDF link](#)
- Michael D. Rhodes, "The Book of Abraham: Divinely Inspired Scripture (Review of *By His Own Hand upon Papyrus: A New Look at the Joseph Smith Papyri* by Charles M. Larson)," *FARMS Review of Books* 4/1 (1992): 120–126. [off-site PDF link](#)
- [Reviews of Charles Larson](#)

### Living Hope Ministries

Living Hope Ministries is a Utah-based anti-Mormon ministry. To accomplish their goal of discrediting Mormonism they have produced and distributed several videos and plan on doing even more.

- **To read more:**
- Brant Gardner, "Behind the Mask, Behind the Curtain: Uncovering the Illusion (Review of *The Bible vs. the Book of Mormon* [FAIR link](#)
- David E. Bokovoy, "*The Bible vs. the Book of Mormon*: Still Losing the Battle: Review of *The Bible vs. the Book of Mormon* by Joel P. Kramer and Scott R. Johnson," *FARMS Review* 18/1 (2006): 3–19. [off-site PDF link](#) [wiki](#)
- Louis Midgley, "Orders of Submission: Review of "Essays on Mormonism," *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 9/2 (Summer 2005): 1–81.," *FARMS Review* 18/2 (2006): 189–228. [off-site PDF link](#) [wiki](#)

### Brian Mackert



*Brian Mackert*

Brian J. Mackert was born a member of the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints church (FLDS), which believes that the LDS Church



is in apostasy. According to his online biography, his great grandfather was excommunicated from the LDS Church in 1934 after publishing a book in support of polygamy, and his grandparents were excommunicated because they "would not comply with the current LDS Churches [sic] position on polygamy."

Mackert abandoned the FLDS and joined the LDS Church in his late teens. Shortly thereafter he stopped attending the LDS Church and became converted to born-again evangelical Christianity and started attending local Baptist churches.

According to Brian's Web site:

*Brian is now a licensed minister working in Prison Ministry preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ and sharing the forgiveness that only comes through the shed blood of Jesus Christ with prisoners and especially sex offenders.*

*Brian is available upon request to give presentations concerning the beliefs, practices of Mormons and to give witnessing tips for those wanting to reach the Mormon People with the true gospel of Jesus Christ.*

## Jon McCartney



*Jon McCartney*

Jon (incorrectly spelled "John" in the video) McCartney is pastor of the First Baptist Church in Tooele, Utah.

## Floyd McElveen



### *Floyd McElveen*

Floyd McElveen wrote a book that was distributed in Utah about 20 years ago titled *God's Word, Final, Infallible and Forever* and published by Gospel Truths Ministries in Grand Rapids, MI. The book includes two other titles, *The Mormon Illusion*, and *From Mormon Illusion to God's Love*. McElveen was described as "the national evangelist for the Conservative Baptist Home Mission Society."

McElveen also contributed a chapter to Charles Larson's *By His Own Hand Upon Papyrus*.

### **Roger Oakland**



*Roger Oakland*

Roger Oakland is with Understanding the Times International, a countercult ministry. He has a number of articles at the organization's Web site, including many that attack Catholics, Mormons, Muslims, science, and New Age religious movements.

### **Phil Roberts**



*Phil Roberts*

Phil Roberts is president of Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, in Kansas City. He has written or contributed to at least two anti-Mormon books—*Mormonism Unmasked* and *The Counterfeit Gospel of Mormonism*.

Roberts served as director of the Interfaith Witness Department of the North American Mission Board for the Southern Baptist Convention where, in 1998, he

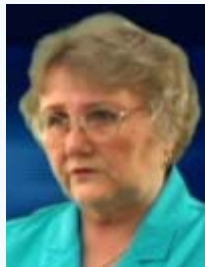
was responsible for producing the video *The Mormon Puzzle*. Roberts has also authored several other articles that are anti-Mormon in tone and focus.

#### To read more:

- Daniel C. Peterson, "What Certain Baptists Think They Know about the Restored Gospel (Review of *The Mormon Puzzle: Understanding and Witnessing to Latter-day Saints* by North American Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention)," *FARMS Review of Books* 10/1 (1998): 12–96. [off-site PDF link](#)
- Louis Midgley, "Orders of Submission (Review of *essays on Mormonism*, *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 9/2 (Summer 2005): 1–81)," *FARMS Review* 18/2 (2006): 189–228. [off-site PDF link](#)

## Sandra Tanner

Sandra Tanner and her late husband, Jerald Tanner, are among the most prolific anti-Mormon authors. Sandra maintains The Utah Lighthouse Ministry which exists "to document problems with the claims of Mormonism and compare LDS doctrines with Christianity." A non-LDS scholar gave the following assessment of the Tanners' work:



*Sandra Tanner*

*[The Tanners] always assume the worst possible motives in assessing the actions of Mormon leaders, even when those leaders faced extremely complex problems with no simple solutions.... Every bit of evidence, even if it could be most plausibly presented in a positive way, is represented as yet another nail in the coffin being prepared for the Mormon Church. There is no spectrum of colors, only blacks and whites, good guys and villains in the Tanners' published writings.... The Tanners have repeatedly assumed a holier-than-thou stance, refusing to be fair in applying the same debate standards of absolute rectitude which they demand of Mormonism to their own actions, writings, and beliefs.*

—Lawrence Foster, "Career Apostates: Reflections on the Works of Jerald and Sandra Tanner," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 17:2 (Summer 1984): 45–46. [off-site](#)

### To read more:

- [Reviews of Jerald and Sandra Tanner](#)

## Chip Thompson



*Chip Thompson*

Chip Thompson is director of Tri-Grace Ministries in Ephraim, UT. Tri-Grace Ministries runs a college house facility, which is "intended to be safe haven for all Christian students who attend Snow College." His advisory board consists solely of professional anti-Mormon ministry leaders:

- Bill Mckeever, (Mormon Research Ministries, Sandy, UT)
- Luke Wilson, (Institute for Religious Research, Grand Rapids, MI)
- Keith Walker, (Evidence Ministries, San Antonio, TX)
- Bob Betts, (Board Member, Concerned Christians, Mesa, AZ)
- Timothy Oliver, (Utah Director, Watchman Fellowship, Santaquin, UT)

In August 2006 Chip was arrested for criminal trespass because he refused to comply with a police officer who ordered him to leave an area where he was passing out anti-Mormon literature at an LDS pageant in Clarkston, Utah. Charges were subsequently dropped.

## John Whitcomb



*John Whitcomb*

Dr. John Whitcomb, Th.D., is president of Whitcomb Ministries and former



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professor of Theology and Old Testament studies at Graceland Theological Seminary. Whitcomb is also co-author of *The Genesis Flood* which helped play a founding role in the modern "Creation Science" movement (although Whitcomb is a theologian rather than a scientist). Whitcomb believes in a young earth, a global flood, the preservation of dinosaurs on the ark, and an inerrant Bible that should be interpreted literally. He is critical of not only evolution, but also of progressive creationism and intelligent design.

It should be noted that Graceland Theological Seminary is not associated with Graceland College (Lamoni, Iowa), which is sponsored by the Communities of Christ, formerly known as the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.

**To read more:**

- [DNA](#)

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