# Why I don’t believe in Mormonism

J Daniel K  
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1 Intro

I would rather stand before God being able to tell Him why I believe everything that I believe. I would rather be sent to hell justified than be sent to heaven in ignorance. If I am sent to hell, then it must be a lovely place to be filled with people like.

If the LDS Church is true, should it not be taken at face value? If the gospel is not meant to be taken at face value, and is nothing more than a bunch of riddles, aren’t you better off if you don’t have it bogging you down? If the Church really did have the truth, then hiding blemishes is far worse for those of us who find out from other sources. Isn’t it hypocritical to expect others to consider your point of view, without considering theirs?

When Brigham Young says, "I have never yet preached a sermon and sent It out to the children of men, that they may not call Scripture" and Joseph Fielding Smith teaches that Brigham was wrong stating that “in all probability the sermon was erroneously transcribed”, which prophet is to be trusted? If the Church was restored to avoid confusion, then why are some teachings so confusing?

It doesn’t matter to me whether Brigham Young proclaimed Adam is our God. It matters that other prophets disagree with Brigham Young. That means you can’t trust the prophets. Trusting the prophets is the whole premise of the church. If you can’t trust the prophets, then what’s the point?

Why are Prophets held in such high regard, when I can hear more spiritual stories from a neighbor or friend? I hear almost no stories that I would consider spiritual proof from any Apostle or Prophet.

Ignoring valid arguments is part of the many faiths. We ignore many arguments: physical proof of evolution; patriarchal blessings that don’t come true; prophets who “speak as men” when they are wrong.

Why are Utah death rates not statistically different from the rest of the US? How many blessings don’t come true, for every blessing that does?

The LDS church does not have a unique or stronger feeling for the Holy Ghost compared to any other church. If the church was true, testimonies would be obtained quicker by more people.

Neither are Joseph’s visions and dreams unique for his time. There were many others who had exactly the same experiences within just miles of his home, sometimes decades before Joseph.

When Joseph Smith made his “translations”, the Rosetta stone was not yet available and would not be for another 60 years. In order to accept Joseph’s translations, you have to reject translations of the Book of Abraham. That’s pretty big cognitive dissonance.

I imagine some will look at only one section, think to themself why I am not correct - perhaps I wrote too many ...’s, or quoted from the wrong Church History, or quoted Brigham Young instead of Joseph Smith. Don’t worry, cognitive dissonance affects everyone regardless of belief system.

So, I gathered up the best evidence I could and put it in the best form that I could for the believing Mormon. So I give you so much evidence of my view point that it can’t be ignored.

I am doing what has been asked to be done by an LDS Apostle:

The Book of Mormon must be either true or false. If true, it is one of the most important messages ever sent from God. If False, it is one of the most cunning, wicked, bold, deep-laid impositions ever palmed upon the world, calculated to deceive and ruin millions... If, after a rigid examination, it be found imposition, it should be extensively published to the world as such; the evidences and arguments on which the imposition was detected, should be clearly and logically stated, that those who have been sincerely yet unfortunately deceived, may perceive the nature of deception, and to be reclaimed, and that those who continue to...

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1 Journal of Discourses, vol. 13, p. 95
2 Doctrines of Salvation, Vol. 1, p. 96
3 One explanation I’ve heard is that Adam could be “God”, but Adam is a symbol of ourselves, which could possibly make us part of the Godhead.
4 Cognitive dissonance affects everyone. Modern evangelists deny evolution; certain national leaders deny the holocaust; even a sane person would dismiss a conspiracy theorist as joking if they don’t believe a person can like them.
5 See the section on the First Vision
publish the delusion may be exposed and silenced by strong and powerful arguments - by evidences adduced from scripture and reason.  

1.1 The Church claims perfection

Joseph Smith claimed "there is no error in the revelations which I have taught."  
Brigham Young says "that I have never given counsel that is wrong." Being able to prove this claim right or wrong is very important, especially since Brigham also taught that "the man whom God calls... has the right to dictate about everything... even to the ribbons the women wear."  

The Lord will never permit me or any other man who stands as President of this Church to lead you astray. It is not in the programme. It is not in the mind of God. If I were to attempt that, the Lord would remove me out of my place, and so He will any other man who attempts to lead the children of men astray from the oracles of God and from their duty.  

1.2 Told not to think

The church does exactly what the government does in trying to teach only faith promoting stories. I am avidly against that. I want all truth, good or bad. I reject Boyd Packer’s direction that:

The writer or teacher who has an exaggerated loyalty to the theory that everything must be told is laying a foundation for his own judgment ... The Lord made it clear that some things are to be taught selectively and some things are to be given only to those who are worthy...  

That historian or scholar who delights in pointing out the weaknesses and frailties of present or past leaders destroys faith. A destroyer of faith - particularly one within the Church, and more particularly one who is employed specifically to build faith - places himself in great spiritual jeopardy. He is serving the wrong master, and unless he repents, he will not be among the faithful in the eternities. Do not spread disease germs!  

Apostle Dallin H. Oaks teaches,

Thus, if Mormon Enigma reveals information that is detrimental to the reputation of Joseph Smith, then it is necessary to try to limit its influence and that of its authors. It’s ironic that a Church that claims to be the "one true church" doesn’t wish to teach truth of its own history. The church excommunicates people like D. Michael Quinn for researching even the unsavory history. Church leaders have stated that,  

If we are so grounded, no alteration of historical facts can shake our testimonies.  

When our leaders speak, the thinking has been done. When they propose a plan-it is God’s plan. When they point the way, there is no other which is safe. When they give direction, it should mark the end of controversy. God works no other way. To think otherwise, without immediate repentance, may cost one his faith, may destroy his testimony, and leave him a stranger to the kingdom of God.  

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6 Apostle Orson Pratt, Divine Authenticity of the Book of Mormon, Liverpool, 1851, pp. 1-2
7 Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 368. Also see "The Wondrous Restoration", April 2003 Ensign.
8 Journal of Discourses, 16:161
9 Journal of Discourses, 11:298
10 Doctrine and Covenants, Official Declaration 1
12 Inside the Mind of Joseph Smith: Psychobiography and the Book of Mormon, Introduction p. xliii f28
14 "Ward Teachers Message for June, 1945," Improvement Era, 48 (June, 1945)
Is thinking contrary to God’s plan? Are we that untrustworthy that we are not supposed to think? Prophets have divine approval only because God has allowed them to be in that position. This is exactly what many unrighteous kings of the past have claimed too.

God gave us a brain to think; we should not be afraid to do so.

1.3 Summary of Criticisms

In order to prove someone wrong, you have to think like them. I hope that I still think enough like those of my Church to be able to know what they will respond to. The main claims of the Church are: the Book of Mormon and revelations from Joseph Smith are perfect; Joseph Smith was a prophet of God; the Book of Mormon is a literal record translated by the power of God; LDS prophets have more authority to speak on behalf of God; the Church is the only church authorized by God to baptize and perform other ordinances; and there was an Apostasy from the original Church given by Jesus Christ.

In this, I make arguments against Mormon scriptures coming from God by showing errors in it, by showing changed doctrine, and showing scriptures that came from God were modified (with examples from D&C, the First Vision, and most importantly, Priesthood scriptures): I make arguments against Joseph’s character and his ability to translate. All of my arguments are based on the assumption that if it really did come from God, and God is perfect, then a Prophet would take great care to get it all right - or, at least, much more correct than Joseph had done.

Whether it’s Joseph Smith claiming that evil men stole 116 pages of the Book of Mormon so it didn’t have to be translated exactly again, or claiming that “Mormon” is a contraction of Egyptian and English; whether it’s changing “Benjamin” to “Mosiah” long after Benjamin had died in the most perfect book in the world; whether the Nephites and Lamanites aren’t aware of their own prophecies; whether Nephi uses Greek and Latin words while not knowing Hebrew, or the Jaredites knowing Hebrew before the tower of Babel, whether there is no evidence of any Hebrew temples, wheels, and glass in the old America; whether Joseph has no ability to translate when tested; whether the so-called proofs of the Book of Mormon have been repeated (if only accidentally) by Dr. Seuss or other “prophets” who are not LDS; whether the Church denies science; whether all of these things really are wrong, it doesn’t matter. What matters simply is whether the church really has authority and truth. When all of the evidences are combined together, a spiritual feeling is not enough to say that it does.

I attempt to show that the Church lacks perfect revelation, or the revelation it claims. Its authority is not only wrong, but harmful, when it claims people will live and they die, or when Bishops counsel poorly. Often, members who believe they are incredibly faithful will do things that no sane person would, from abstaining from eating chocolate because of its caffeine content (and for no other reason). There are many people in the world who have the spirit that are not members of the LDS church, who feel the spirit stronger than many members - if the church was true, they why aren’t they led to it and accept it when it comes to them? Afterall, isn’t it the same spirit? The church is contradictory: it tells us to think, and then to not think; science is correct, but it isn’t; prophets should be believed, but not always.

I have heard the whisperings of the spirit many times, and those good feelings and promptings of all different kinds have led me to believe that the Church is not correct.

When there is so much evidence against the church, it’s a no wonder “apostates” believe what they do.

1.4 Assumptions

I use Mormon vernacular. I make the following assumptions below: that you are familiar with LDS culture so I don’t have to explain who Gordon B. Hinkley or some other famous LDS figure is; that the Church (and scriptures) is supposed to be perfect; and that

\[^{15}\text{Dr. Seuss from “Green Eggs and Ham” gives an excellent example of chiasmus.}\]

\[^{16}\text{Evolution doesn’t fit Adam and Eve, according to most Church Presidents.}\]

\[^{17}\text{This is something I wish to discuss another time. The spirit is a fascinating concept.}\]
science is accurate. (I'm not defending science here; I'm arguing that Church statements completely disagree with it.) All references of "him" or "he" refer to Joseph Smith.

2 Scriptural Problems

The scriptures are perfect. Or they are supposed to be, since they come from God. Here's proving that they aren't.

2.1 Significant Name Changes

2.1.1 Benjamin or Mosiah?

In the 1830 Book of Mormon, it says "King Benjamin" instead of "Mosiah" in Mosiah 21:28. Benjamin died in Mosiah 6:5. The same thing happened in Ether 4:1, where it originally was Benjamin.

"White and delightsome" was changed to "pure and delightsome" in 2 Nephi 30:6 in 1981, after the revelation that blacks could now hold the Priesthood - even though Abraham 1:26 states that they are cursed "pertaining to the Priesthood."

The Book of Commandments in 1833 does not mention Peter, James, and John nor John the Baptist restoring the Priesthood. It is missing D&C 13 and parts were later added to D&C 27.

The first historical reference of any angels giving any Priesthood to Joseph is in 1834, long after the church had been established. This is still different than the version in D&C 13, by a few words.

He called me by name, and said unto me that he was a messenger sent from the presence of God to me, and that his name was Nephi.19

JC Whitmer (whose house was used during translation) said

I have heard my grandmother (Mary M. Whitmer) say on several occasions that she was shown the plates of the Book of Mormon by an holy angel, whom she always called Brother Nephi.20

2.1.2 Nephi or Moroni?

Moroni visited Joseph Smith shortly after the First Vision. Though he seems to think it was Nephi instead.

Upon you my fellow servants, in the name of Messiah I confer this priesthood and this authority, which shall remain upon earth, that the sons of Levi may yet offer an offering unto the Lord in righteousness! 18

He called me by name, and said unto me that he was a messenger sent from the presence of God to me, and that his name was Nephi.19

Moroni visited Joseph Smith shortly after the First Vision. Though he seems to think it was Nephi instead.

2.2 Ancient Mormon prophets don’t read the scriptures

In "six hundred years from the time that my father left Jerusalem, a prophet would the Lord God raise up among the Jews - even a Messiah, or, in other words, a Savior of the world." (1 Nephi 10:4) "He cometh, according to the words of the angel, in six hundred years from the time my father left Jerusalem." (1 Nephi 19:8) "The Messiah cometh in six hundred years from the time that my father left Jerusalem." (2 Nephi 25:19)

These scriptures written by Nephi and Lehi told when the Messiah would be born. This is amazing, considering that later prophets who had and read these scriptures apparently had no clue about them.

"The time is not far distant..." (Mosiah 3:5) - just 400 years away. Alma 13:25 doesn’t mention Nephi’s prophesies, but states that it was "declared unto us by the mouth of angels, of his coming; for the time cometh, we know not how soon. Would to God that it might be in my day; but let it be sooner or later, in it I will rejoice."

It seems that everyone is unaware of Nephi’s revelations, because Samuel the Lamanite prophesies when

19The Times and Seasons Vol. III, pp. 749, 753} Also see Millennial Star, Vol 3, p 53 where the angel’s name is Nephi. Lucy Mack Smith also says the angel’s name is Nephi. Biographical Sketches, p. 79). Nephi was also published in the Pearl of Great Price 1851 edition. (also see (Textual Changes in the Pearl of Great Price, typed copy, p. 125).

20John C. Whitmer, "The Eight Witnesses", The Historical Record, Volume 7, October, 1888, p. 621
Jesus will be born. "Behold, I give unto you a sign; for five years more cometh, and behold, then cometh the Son of God." (Helaman 14:2)

Based on word usage, Joseph wrote Mosiah before 1 and 2 Nephi, although they are placed in the opposite order in the Book of Mormon. For example, Figure 2.2 shows a plot of "therefore" and "wherefore". This would explain why Mosiah and Samuel didn’t know Nephi’s prophecy - it wasn’t written yet!

2.3 Inspired Mistranslations

Joseph gives us the meaning of Sabaoth in D&C 95:7:

"...the Lord of Sabaoth, which by interpretation, the creator of the first day, the beginning and the end."

Sabaoth is written as "Sabaoth" twice in the NT (Rom 9:29, James 5:4). In the OT, it is often written as “Hosts”. Sabaoth can mean “host [military], warfare, service.”

He also interprets Golgotha for us in JST Mark 15:25,

...Golgotha, which is, (being interpreted,) The place of burial.

(Who was buried at Golgotha?) Golgotha is the place of the skull, because it looks like a skull. Matt 27:33, Mark 13:22, John 19:17 each use the greek “kranion” meaning skull as their translation of Golgotha.

Joseph Smith states: “An Evangelist is a Patriarch, even the oldest man of the blood of Joseph or of the seed of Abraham.”

He also said that the purpose of evangelists is to give blessings. Not only did he create a new meaning for a word (evangelist = preacher of the gospel), but no official title in the church is evangelist.

Malachi 4:2 has “the sun of righteousness” while 3 Nephi 25:2 has the “son of righteousness”. Apparently, the Book of Mormon was only meant for English speakers.

Abraham lived between 2100 and 1700 BC. The book of Abraham defines “Pharaoh” to mean “king by royal blood.” (Abraham 1:20), and says it was the name of Noah’s great-grandson (Abr 1:25). (Genesis 12:15 makes a similar claim.) However, Pharaoh means “great house” and was first applied to a king in 1567 BC - which would make him Abraham’s great-grandson, and Abraham lived long after Noah.

Abraham lived in the “land of the chaldeans”, governed by Pharaoh, at Potiphar’s Hill. (1:1,8-20) Chaldeans first appear in history in 1200 BC, with the first records of them in 9th century BC, and establishing themselves in 721 BC. The Land of the Chaldees did not exist until about 700 BC - about one thousand years after Abraham lived.

Egyptus, the wife of Ham, established the first government of Egypt (Abr 1:23). “Egypt” is a Greek term for Egypt. Though Abraham 1:23 claims it is a

\textsuperscript{21} Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p 151

\textsuperscript{22} http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chaldea
“Chaldean” word and means “forbidden”. The Hebrew word for Egypt is Mizraim, and the Bible says that Mizraim was a son of Ham (Gen 10:6,13). (This is like saying “Deustchland was the name of the establsher of Germany” - it doesn’t make sense if there is someone named ‘German’.)

After Joseph Smith began studying Hebrew, he incorporated it into Abrahamic scriptures, such as “kokob”, “kokaubeam”, “shinehah”, “kolob” - though Hebrew did not exist until seven centuries after Abraham.

Jarom 2 and 14, Mormon 9:32-33 all claim that Egyptian takes less space to write the same ideas. This is incorrect, and can simply be shown that there are more characters for the same sounds in demotic Egyptian compared to Hebrew, and that even hieratic Egyptian takes up more room for the same space.

Figure 2: "I have given bread" in Egyptian characters

Figure 3: "I have given bread" in Hebrew

Figure 4: "I have given bread" in Egyptian sounds, written in Hebrew

1 Nephi 19:4, 7, Mosiah 7:1, Mosiah 8:17, 11:18 each have authors who correct themselves, despite the great difficulty of engraving on plates and little extra meaning added. The Book of Mormon repeats ideas and words that could be explained in simpler, quicker terms. Ether 2:17 says “tight like unto a dish” 5 times. It’s understood well enough the first time. Authors repeat themselves a lot. (See Mosiah 7:23-24, Mosiah 15:21, 3 Nephi 11:37-38.) By writing all the things that Mormon already knew would be in our Bible, on metal plates, despite Moroni later running out of plates, makes little sense and seems like a lot of extra work for Mormon - there is no reason for Mormon to repeat large chapters of Isaiah and other scriptures, verbatim.

2.4 The Book of Mormon translates words for us

Why does the Book of Mormon translate words for us, when it was to be translated? You should expect phrases like, “and I said, let us go to Salt Lake, which, being translated, is Salt Lake.” (1 Nephi 17:5, Alma 18:13, 31:21, 37:28, Ether 2:3, 15:8) Did Mormon not realize that Joseph would have translators? If the translation was correct, then there should be links between ancient Hebrew and the words being translated. Curelom, cumom, sheum, neas have no Hebrew nor modern equivalent. Certainly Joseph knew what a monkey or potato was if any of those mean that. Why is Irreantum, the “place of many waters” defined in the Nephite language (which should still be pure Hebrew), and yet the cities of “Desolation” and “Bountiful” keep their English equivalents? Why be so inconsistent, especially if its “from god”? Interpreting what is going to be interpreted is really short-sighted and confusing. If I said, “Salz-See-Stadt’ which, being interpreted, is Salt Lake City, and also Ludwigstadt,” you would wonder if there was a place called Ludwigstadt, if I actually called St. Louis ”Ludwigstadt”.

2.5 Coincidence?

Cumorah was originally spelled Camorah. The Capital of the Camoros Islands during Joseph Smith’s times was Moroni.

The few Mormon words that correlate with Hebrew or Egyptian is insignificant compared to the number of modern places that correlate with Book of Mormon names.

\[^{23}\\text{Demotic means written like it sounds. Hieratic is written as symbols.}\]
2.6 What Mormon means according to Joseph

Before I give a definition, however, to the word, let me say that the Bible in its widest sense, means good; for the Savior says according to the gospel of John, “I am the good shepherd” and it will not be beyond the common use of terms, to say that good is among the most important in use, and though known by various names in different languages, still its meaning is the same, and is ever in opposition to bad. We say from the Saxon, good; the Dane, god; the Latin, bonus; the Greek, kalos; the Hebrew, tob; and the Egyptian, mon. Hence, with the addition of more, or the contraction, mor, we have the word MORMON; which means, literally, more good.

Yours, JOSEPH SMITH.

Wait? Did he just say that MORMON came from a contraction of English and Egyptian?

2.7 Christ is a title, not a name

In 2 Nephi 10:3, Nephi learns Christ’s name. “Wherefore, as I said unto you, it must needs be expedient that Christ - for in the last night the angel spake unto me that this should be his name - should come among the Jews”. The problem here though is that Christ is not a name. This is after he already learned the name years earlier, in 1 Nephi 12:18, which says, “even the word of the justice of the Eternal God, and Jesus Christ, which is the Lamb of God”. But this was only a problem in the 1830 Book of Mormon and was fixed years later.

2.8 Was the Priesthood really needed?

Jesus had not yet been baptized and yet he did miracles. Moses and Elijah got their keys by Christ’s spirit, since he did not have a body yet. Samson didn’t have Priesthood keys for strength. Nephi had keys to baptize after he left his “church”. Elisa didn’t
need Elijah to lay hands on his head. Missionaries have keys to seal, like the prophet. (D&C 1:8) When D&C 2 says God will reveal the Priesthood by the hand of Elijah, then why did other people - Peter, James, John, and John the Baptist - give the Priesthood? Joseph had the gift of the Holy Ghost before he had the Priesthood. (D&C 5:4, 6:23, 28, 9:2,8,10) If the keys are enough for revelation, why couldn’t Oliver translate (D&C 6:28). Keys aren’t necessary to cast out devils (Mark 9:28-29, also “forbid them not” Luke:49-51). If God gave Peter, James, and John “keys of this ministry until I come” (D&C 7:7), then why couldn’t they give them to Joseph, or why did they need to give them to Joseph?

Why does the Book of Mormon not mention keys at all? Alma baptizes people after he leaves King Noah’s court - King Noah’s priests would hold the keys, not Alma. Nephi had the power to seal the heaven up, just based on an answer given from God, without hands being laid on his head. Elisa Snow laid her hands on the head of sick cattle and revived them, although a woman does not hold the Priesthood (in most definitions of it).

How could Isaiah, Malachi, and any other Old Testament preach against the kingdom without any authority in the church?

2.9 They are the same name!

Joseph constantly uses the same biblical prophet to create two different prophets. If someone wrote half the New Testament using Joshua and the other half using Jesus, they would refer to the same person. Jesus is the Greek form of Joshua. Joseph screws this up a lot.

Esaias versus Isaiah: In D&C 84:11-13, God says that Esaias lived in the days of Abraham. Esaias is a Greek name24, and Abraham lived long before Greek existed. D&C 76:100 says both Esaias and Isaiah, which are two forms of the same name, “these are they who say they are some of one and some of another; some of Christ; and some of John; and some of Moses; and some of Elias; and some of Esaias; and some of Isaiah…“. The Book of Mormon does this too in Helaman 8:20, ”Zenos… also Zenock, and also Ezias, and also Isaiah,… “

Elias and Elijah:

And also with Elias, to whom I have committed the keys of bringing to pass the restoration of all things spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began, concerning the last days; And also John the son of Zacharias, which Zacharias he (Elias) visited and gave promise that he should have a son, and his name should be John, and he should be filled with the spirit of Elias; …And also Elijah, unto whom I have committed the keys of the power of turning the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to the fathers, that the whole earth may not be smitten with a curse; …(D&C 27:6-9; see also D&C 138:45-46)

Here Joseph refers to Elias and Elijah, though he says Elias is the same one as in Malachi (by quoting Malachi). Malachi is referring only to Elijah. I’m not sure why this is so hard - I might say 'Yacob' instead of 'Jacob' when reading a name in German. It’s exactly the same thing - just two different ways to say the same name.

Again in D&C 110:12, 13:

After this, Elias appeared, and committed the dispensation of the gospel of Abraham, saying that in us and our seed all generations after us should be blessed. After this vision had closed, another great and glorious vision burst upon us; for Elijah the prophet, who was taken to heaven without tasting death, stood before us, and said: Behold, the time has fully come, which was spoken of by the mouth of Malachi…

Joseph doesn’t seem to know which version of Elijah’s promise is inspired, since Malachi 4:6 and 3 Nephi 25:6 are exactly the same verse, yet he says Moroni gave an altered promise in JSH 1:36-39.25

24Note the ending in ‘ias’. That’s Greek to me.

25In “Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith” p. 330 he had forgotten Moroni had quoted it differently to him.
2.10 Thee is not more formal than ye

Why is “thee” and “thou” considered more sacred? Why use Biblical language? It’s like God is trying to show off, rather than get to the point and meaning.\(^{26}\) If it really is more sacred, then it should fit the “thee” and “thou” language of the Bible. In fact, “thee” and “thou” is backwards. “You” was originally the plural form of “thou”, and thus indicated more respect. It became more common to show more respect to others in English, and “you” replaced “thou”. So, God is trying to show that he is holier than everyone by using less formal terms. Book of Mormon grammar is very inconsistent. “He has” does not appear anywhere in the Bible, but over 100 times in the Book of Mormon.\(^{27}\)

2.11 Synagogues, churches and Greek

The Book of Mormon uses language that would be foreign to anyone of the time period. It uses Greek names, the word synagogue, actually says Christ is Jesus’ name\(^{28}\), and refers to a church and Bible.

(Christ is written 317 times and Messiah 25 times in the Book of Mormon. Why use both, when their meanings are the same? Perhaps if one mistook Christ for a name.) Why are there only 3 Nephite women named in the book?

There were no churches in 600 BC Israel times. Church does not occur at all in the Old Testament. So how could Joseph Smith talk of two different Churches in 1 Nephi 14? In Mosiah 25:19-21, the author defines “church” (“they did establish themselves into different bodies called churches”), as if the term had never been used before, after 1 Nephi had used it. (This lends credence to the theory that Mosiah was written before 1 Nephi.)

And he, supposing that I spake of the brethren of the church, and that I was truly that Laban whom I had slain, wherefore he did follow me. (1 Nephi 4:26)

26 This makes me think of prayer, where you are supposed to suck up to God. I believe prayer has real value, but that’s a topic for another day.
27 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thou
28 2 Nephi 25:12

In the Book of Mormon, synagogues are typically places inhabited by those who are wicked. (Alma 21:4; 6; 26:29; 31:12) “And Alma and Amulek went forth preaching repentance to the people in their temples, and in their sanctuaries, and also in their synagogues, which were built after the manner of the Jews”. (Alma 16:13.) Synagogues did not exist until after the temple was destroyed in 593 BC - after Lehi had left, so Lehi would not know to build them “after the manner of the Jews”. (Unless given a revelation to do so, in which case, he should have stated, “after the manner that God did show unto us.”)

The word synagogue is Greek, and as Joseph Smith taught,

There was no Greek or Latin upon the plates from which I, through the grace of the Lord, translated the Book of Mormon. Let the language of the book speak for itself.\(^{29}\)

The Book of Mormon contains plenty of Greek, used in only Greek forms.

2.12 So Nephi knew Greek?

If you read a vision that purported to be from Lincoln, that described the internet as being connected typewriters, you would think it was fishy. Not because the internet didn’t exist, but because typewriters didn’t exist.

Other Greek terms in the Book of Mormon are:

- Antipas - name of a mountain and general in the BoM (Alma 47:7, 10, Alma 56); in the New Testament, Herod Antipas was the son of Herod the Great, before whom Jesus appeared (Luke 23:7-15) and who imprisoned John the Baptist (Mark 6:14-20). The name of a Christian martyr in Rev. 2:13. It is a Greek name, an abbreviation for 'Antipater.'

- Archeantus - Nephite commander (Moroni 9:2); a typical Greek formation, made using the Greek

\(^{29}\) Times and Seasons, Vol.4, No.13, May 15, 1843, p.194, also History of the Church Vol. 5, p.399, in a slightly altered version
prefix 'arch-' ("great, chief"), as in the Biblical Greek names Archelaus and Archippus.

- Ezias - (Hel 8:20) probably 'Esaias,' the Greek form of 'Isaiah.'

- Jonas - two of the Nephite twelve disciples (3 Nephi 19:4); the Greek form of the Hebrew name 'Jonah'

- Judea - Nephite city (Alma 56, 57); Greek form of the Hebrew name 'Judah'

- Alpha and Omega - (3 Nephi 9:18) the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. These terms appear in the Bible only in the Book of Revelation

- Timothy - one of the twelve disciples selected by the resurrected Jesus (3 Nephi 19:4); the name is pure Greek ("Timoteus") and means "honored of God"; the name does not occur, of course, in the Old Testament

- Zenos - supposedly a Hebrew prophet, mentioned several times in the BoM, but unknown in the Old Testament; the name is Greek, either in the form 'Zeno' (the name of a Greek philosopher, 5th century B.C.) or 'Zenas,' in the New Testament at Titus 3:13.

- Angola - city name at Mormon 2:4 - Greek 'angelos', meaning "angel"

2.13 He certainly didn't know Hebrew

Isabel is a late French/Italian name. (Alma 39:3)

2 Nephi 17:14 and KJV Isaiah 7:14 both say "A virgin shall conceive". However, older manuscripts of Isaiah say "a young woman shall conceive." (The Greek Old Testament says "virgin" though.)

2 Nephi 24:12 and Isaiah 14:12 both say, "How art thou fallen from heaven O Lucifer!"). Lucifer is not a name, but means "fallen star". "Lucifer" is Latin. This word in other texts is "helel", "heosphoros", and "phosphoros" (Latin or Greek?), meaning "light bringer". Nephi knew Latin, and thought it was a name. Lucifer is a integral part of Mormonism, like in D&C 76:25-27, so God got forgot to make sure older texts were correct.

Steel in the Psalm of David, Job, and Jeremiah is "nechushah" and "nechosheth" and means "copper" or "brass". The Jaredites had steel (Ether 7:9). (Perhaps you could argue it really meant copper or brass, but then, Joseph should know the words "copper" and "brass" and so that really isn't an adequate translation. If I translated "cat" from another language to "dog", how much would you trust the rest of my translations? That's hardly fair - I don't claim to make a perfect text by the gift of God.)

2.14 The one Mormon name found really is insignificant

Just look at the the link below for interesting coincidences between Hebrew and Welsh, Japanese and Latin, English and Korean.


2.15 The Jaredites knew Hebrew too?

The Jaredites also use Hebrew names: Aaron, Levi, Ephraim (Ether 1:15-16,20-21; 7:9). The Jaredites didn’t have their language confused at the Tower of Babel, so explaining why they used Hebrew is difficult. There were 28 generations between 2200 BC and 600 BC in Ether. That’s an average of 60 years before every child was born. (That is, if the tower of Babel occurred in 2200 BC.) Speaking of Babel, Egyptian, Chinese, and Sumerians were already different cultures and languages by 4000 BC.

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While not as strong, and interesting note: "The Queen desired that Ammon should come in unto her" (Alma 19:2) - So, after being completely converted that God is real, the Queen wants to have relations with Ammon. That’s what "come in unto" means accord to Genesis 6:4, 19:31, and Ruth 4:13.
2.16 Nephi used tools from the future, and didn’t leave a trace

2.16.1 Compass

Nephi and Alma try to describe the Liahona by using a familiar term, compass. That is, compass meaning a guide or director. Too bad those kind of compasses existed only after 1200 AD. So the term was not that familiar at all. (Compas is in the Bible, but means “limit, circle, boundary”.) (See 1 Nephi 18:12,21; 2 Nephi 5:12; Alma 37:38,43,44)

This compass “pointed the way we should go in the wilderness”, gave “directions” and was a “director” (1 Nephi 16:10,30, 38). It is obvious it did not mean any of the other words for compass.

2.16.2 No evidence of wheels or temple?

Certainly an amazing invention of a wheel should still be found somewhere in Ancient America.

The BoM mentions “many horses and chariots”. No pre-Colombian wheels are known (other than as toys). They would show up in art, if they really existed then. (2 Nephi 12:7, Alma 18:9, 10, 12, 20:6, 3 Nephi 3:22, 21:14).

Where is archaeological evidence of Solomon’s temple? Certainly if it was "exceedingly fine", there should be some evidence of construction. (2 Nephi 5:16)

2.16.3 Glass window

In Ether 2:22-23, it describes windows that shatter, and so would be made of glass. “For behold, ye cannot have windows, for they will be dashed in pieces.” Translucent (ie glass) windows would not be invented for several thousand years. Windows in the Bible are openings, but they are not glass.

The Old Testament mentions windows like in Isaiah 54:12, “I will make thy windows of agates.” Too bad the word windows there means more “towers”, “battlements”, “fortresses” or “pinnacles”. The Book of Mormon has exactly the same words (3 Nephi 22:12). There is no reason for Joseph to have translated exactly the same thing.

2.17 Other things that existed in the Book of Mormon but not America

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Silk</th>
<th>Alma 1:29</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chariots</td>
<td>Alma 18:9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seven day week</td>
<td>Mosiah 13:18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cimeters</td>
<td>Mosiah 9:16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bellows</td>
<td>1 Nephi 17:11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brass, iron</td>
<td>2 Nephi 5:15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breast plates, copper</td>
<td>Mosiah 8:10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gold, silver currency</td>
<td>Alma 11; Jarom 1:8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steel swords</td>
<td>Ether 7:9; 2 Nephi 5:14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barley</td>
<td>Alma 11:7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheat</td>
<td>Mosiah 9:9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There should be paintings or sculptures of cattle, oxen, donkeys, horses, goats, sheep, swine, or elephants somewhere. Every other culture makes paintings of their animals. (Ether 9:18,19; 1 Nephi 18:25)

Ore cannot be used without leaving large amounts of evidence. You have to mine for it. (Mining is not mentioned in the Book of Mormon.) The swords themselves cannot be easily destroyed, especially for the large number of armies that used them. Furnaces and fuels used should be found. Laban’s sword should be held in high regard. The culture couldn’t have forgotten about it easily. "Bloom" from refining lasts practically forever. Yet none of this is found.

If that’s not enough, the Book of Mormon fails to mention chocolate, squash, potatoes, tomatoes, and manioc. Did Joseph not know these words? Certainly there should be some archaeological or historical evidence of some culture using the words Nephite, Lamanite, or Jaredite. It doesn’t make sense that Aztec would be the word used instead of a Book of Mormon name. Cities aren’t easily renamed either. No cities were named as such when Colombus arrived. Plus, there is confusion about where the Book of Mormon took place.

Not only mentioning things that did not exist in America, things that did exist are not mentioned.

2.18 Chiasmus

Chiasmus, a Hebrew poetry form, cannot be proof of the Book of Mormon. It occurs quite naturally in...
language. Take a poem by Dr. Seuss:

AZ I am Sam.
ZA Sam I am.

A I do not like them, Sam-I-am.
B I do not like green eggs and ham.
C Would you like them here or there?
C I would not like them here or there.
B I do not like green eggs and ham.
A I do not like them, Sam-I-am.

Solomon Spaulding’s “Manuscript Found” also contains quite a bit of chiasmus.

2.19 Indians as Lamanites

DNA shows American natives originated in Asia. However if one listens to Joseph, one would believe that all American natives were originally Hebrew. As Joseph stumbled across an excavated skeleton from an Indian mound, he proclaimed,

This man in mortal life was a white Lamanite, a large, thick-set man, and a man of God. His name was Zelf. He was a warrior and chieftain under the great prophet Onandagus, who was known from the eastern sea to the Rocky Mountains. The curse of the red skin was taken from him, or, at least in part.\(^{31}\)

2.20 The problem with Moroni’s promise

"True" is such a confusing word. Does it mean, "historically accurate", "absolutely perfect", or "a good story"? Moroni asks us to ask whether "these things are not true". If you get a negative answer to a negative question, is that a yes or no? Is it like "no, it’s not" or "it’s not not" - they have opposite meanings.

We pray to God for truth - but do we listen when it comes in nonspiritual forms? Do you pray whether the sun will rise tomorrow? You shouldn’t ask God to heal you and refuse to go to the doctor. If you ask to know whether evolution is true, and you ignore all of the evidence, then how can you say you are really listening? Perhaps if you receive no spiritual answer, it’s because you already have enough physical answers.

2.21 Other scriptural problems

This was my first inconsistency I ever found, many years back:

Now the people which were not Lamanites were Nephites; nevertheless, they were called Nephites, Jacobites, Josephites, Zoramites, Lamanites, Lemuelites, and Ishmaelites. (Jacob 1:13)

Nephi’s other brothers who followed after him are not even mentioned - Samuel and Benjamin. One can argue that they were part of the other -ites, but then it’s silly to mention Jacob and Joseph.

“He that keepeth the laws of God hath no need to break the laws of the land” (D&C 58:21,22) - terribly simple of God. Should Rosa Parks or the founding fathers not have broken the law? And God disagrees with himself too (D&C134:1).

“And now I, the Lord, give unto you a testimony of the truth of these commandments which are lying before you.”(D&C 67:4) Nice gaffe God. They are lying?

“But, behold, verily, verily, I say unto thee, no one shall be appointed to receive commandments and revelations in this church excepting my servant Joseph Smith, Jun., for he receiveth them even as Moses. ” (D&C 28:2) Taken truthfully (verily), no one else in the church can receive commandments - not even Thomas Monson.

“If it be the devil as an angel of light, when you ask him to shake hands, he will offer you his . . .” That’s incredibly simple of the devil. You can’t trust a devil to tell the truth, and neither can you trust a devil to lie because then you would know the truth. If the devil could never tell the truth, he wouldn’t get far.

\(^{31}\)History of the Church, Vol. 2, pp. 79-80; and "Elder Kimball’s Journal," Times and Seasons, Vol. 6, p. 788
“Or, if there be any among you that shall make one like unto it, then ye are justified in saying that ye do not know that they are true.” (D&C 67:7) I could make scriptures that sound better than D&C in a heartbeat.

“And now, verily, I, the Lord, will show unto you what I will concerning you, or what is my will concerning you.” (D&C 66:4) God is awfully repetitive.

“Wherefore, the land of Zion shall not be obtained but by purchase or by blood, otherwise there is none inheritance for you.” (D&C 63:29) So, in order to get the land, you have to buy it or kill someone?

“[They] shall bring forth fruits of praise and wisdom... he that .. bringeth not forth fruits, even according to this pattern, is not of me. Wherefore, by this pattern ye shall know the spirits in all cases under the whole heaven.” (D&C 52:17-19) You know it’s from God because you can praise it? Or because it’s wise? Evolution seems like a pretty intelligent (ie. wise) theory to me.

Seriously, I could go on for a really long time.

### 3 Inability to translate

There are multiple accounts of Joseph’s inability to translate. Surely, if he translated the Book of Mormon, he could translate anything else.

#### 3.1 Anthon

Anthon declared the ”Reformed Egyptian” characters taken to him to be real. Anthon did not know Egyptian and therefore could not verify Joseph’s translation. I know this because the Rosetta Stone had not been discovered yet, and no one knew Egyptian then.

#### 3.2 The Book of Abraham

Joseph added his own pictures to the facsimile’s used in Abraham. The facsimile’s date back only 2000 years - not quite old enough for Abraham to have written it. When Joseph translated the Book of Abraham, no translation for the facsimile was available in existence. However, in 1890, sixty years later, the Rosetta stone was discovered. Which are you more likely to believe gives the correct translation?

![Figure 7: The left image was in "Egyptian Alphabet and Grammar" by Joseph Smith](image)

#### 3.3 Kinderhook Plates

Joseph Smith wrote that he translated records from a descendant of Ham from bell-shaped plates.

I insert fac-similes of the six brass plates found near Kinderhook, in Pike county, Illinois, on April 23, by Mr. Robert Wiley and others, while excavating a large mound. They found a skeleton about six feet from the surface of the earth, which must have stood nine feet high. The plates were found on the breast of the skeleton and were covered on both sides with ancient characters.

I have translated a portion of them and find they contain the history of the person with whom they were found. He was a descendant of Ham, through the loins of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and that he received his kingdom from the ruler of heaven and earth.\(^{32}\)

William Clayton, Joseph’s secretary confirms this:

Prest J. has translated a portion and says they contain the history of the person with whom they were found and he was a descendant of Ham through the loins of Pharaoh

\(^{32}\)History of the Church, Vol. 5, p. 372
king of Egypt, and that he received his kingdom from the ruler of heaven and earth.  

(Don’t Joseph and William sound oddly similar?)

The Nauvoo Neighbor (approved by the prophet) in June 1843 published,

The contents of the Plates, together with a Fac-Simile of the same, will be published in the Times and Seasons, as soon as the translation is completed.

The Warsaw Signal on May 22, 1844 wrote that Joseph was “busy in translating them. The new work . . . will be nothing more nor less than a sequel to The Book of Mormon.”

Figure 8: One of the Kinderhook plates, found in a museum (and mislabelled as a Book of Mormon plate)

Unfortunately for Joseph, the plates were a fraud. WP Harris in 1856 writes in a letter:

I was present with a number at or near Kinderhook and helped to dig at the time the plates were found. [I] made an honest affidavit to the same . . . since that time, Bridge Whitten said to me that he cut and prepared the plates and he . . . and R. Wiley engraved them themselves . . . Wilbourn Fugit appeared to be the chief, with R. Wiley and B. Whitten.

One of the plates was found in the Chicago Historical Society Museum. Destructive tests were run on a small portion of it. The August 1981 Ensign published this:

A recent electronic and chemical analysis of a metal plate . . . brought in 1843 to the prophet Joseph Smith . . . appears to solve a previously unanswered question in Church history, helping to further evidence that the plate is what its producers later said it was - a nineteenth-century attempt to lure Joseph Smith into making a translation of ancient-looking characters that had been etched into the plates . . . As a result of these tests, we concluded that the plate . . . is not of ancient origin . . . we concluded that the plate was made from a true brass alloy (copper and zinc) typical of the mid-nineteenth century; whereas the 'brass' of ancient times was actually bronze, an alloy of copper and tin.

### 3.4 Curses! Fooled Again! The Greek Psalter

Surely the prophet can translate! The actual newspaper article from 1843:


**THE MORMON PROPHET AND THE GREEK PSALTER.**

We lately heard a story, which while it may make us mourn over the depravity of Human Nature, serves to show, among many similar facts, the low artifices and cunning tricks, to which the Mormon Prophet will resort, in order to impose upon the gullibility of his followers. The story is in this wise; and can be substantiated by respectable witnesses.

Some time since, Professor Caswell, late of Kemper College, near St. Louis, an Episcopal Clergyman of reputation, being about to leave this country for England, paid a visit to Smith and the Saints, in order that

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33 William Clayton’s Journal, May 1, 1843, as cited in Trials of Discipleship - The Story of William Clayton, a Mormon, p. 117.
34 The Book of Mormon?, by James D. Bales, pp. 95-96
he might be better able to represent the imposture to the British people. It so happened that the Professor had in his possession a Greek Psalter, of great age – one that had been in the family for several hundred years. This book, as a relic of antiquity, was a curiosity to any one – but to some of the Saints, who happened to see it, it was a marvel and wonder. Supposing its origin to have been as ancient, at least, as the Prophet’s Egyptian Mummy, and not knowing but the Professor had dug it from the bowels of the same sacred hill in Western New York whence sprung the holy Book of Mormon, they importuned him to allow ‘brother Joseph’ an opportunity of translating it!

The Professor reluctantly assented to the proposal; and accompanied by a number of the anxious brethren, repaired to the residence of the Prophet. The remarkable book was handed him. Joe took it – examined its old and worn leaves – and turned over its musty pages. Expectation was now upon tip-toe. brethren looked at one another – at the book – then at the Prophet. It was a most interesting scene!

Presently the spirit of prophecy began to arise within him; and he opened his mouth and spoke. That wonderful power, which enables him to see as far through a millstone as could Moses or Elijah of old, had already in the twinkling of an eye, made those rough and uncouth characters as plain to him as the nose on the face of the Professor. ‘This Book,’ said he, ‘I pronounce to be a Dictionary of Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphics!’

The brethren present were greatly astonished at this exhibition of their Prophet’s power of revealing hidden things. After their exaltation had somewhat subsided, the Professor coolly told them that their Prophet was a base impostor! – and that the book before them was but a plain Greek Psalter! – Joe ’stepped out.’

Such is the manner in which this arrant knave imposes upon his followers! and such is the manner in which his knavery is sometimes exposed! Yet, strange that people continue to believe him!

Professor Caswell, since his sojourn in England, has published a work entitled ‘Three Days at Nauvoo,’ in which this rich scene is represented in an engraving.

Grant Palmer verifies this account. Here’s what he wrote:

In order to test the scholarship of the prophet, I had further provided myself with an ancient Greek manuscript of the Psalter written upon parchment, and probably about six hundred years old.

On the following morning (Monday, April 18th), I took my venerable Greek manuscript of the Psalter, and proceeded to the ferry to obtain a passage.

Perceiving a respectable-looking store (or shop), I entered it, and began to converse with the storekeeper. I mentioned that I had been informed that Mr. Smith possessed some remarkable Egyptian curiosities, which I wished to see. I added that, if Mr. Smith could be induced to show me his treasures, I would show him in return a very wonderful book which had lately come into my possession.

The storekeeper informed me that Mr. Smith was absent, having gone to Carthage that morning; but that he would return about nine o’clock in the evening. He promised to obtain for me admission to the curiosities, and begged to be permitted to see the wonderful book. I accordingly unfolded it from the many wrappers in which I had enveloped it, and, in the presence of the storekeeper and many astonished spectators, whom the rumour of the arrival of a strange book had collected, I produced

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to view its covers of worm-eaten oak, its discoloured parchments, and its mysterious characters. Surprise was depicted on the countenances of all present, and, after a long silence, one person wiser than his fellows, declared that he knew it to be a revelation from the Lord, and that probably it was one of the lost books of the Bible providentially recovered.

The accounts were never disputed by Joseph Smith, though he would have known about them. Caswell said, “Whether he spoke as a prophet or as a mere man, he has committed himself, for he has said what is not true. If he spoke as a prophet, therefore, he is a false prophet. If he spoke as a mere man, he cannot be trusted, for he spoke positively and like an oracle respecting that which he knew nothing.”

Looking at me with a patronizing air, he assured me that I had brought it to the right place to get it interpreted, for that none on earth but the Lord’s Prophet could explain it, or unfold its real antiquity and value. “Oh,” I replied, “I am going to England next week, and doubtless I shall find some learned man in one of the universities who can expound it.” To this he answered with a sneer, that the Lord had chosen the weak things of the world to confound the mighty; that he had made foolish the wisdom of this world; and that I ought to thank Providence for having brought me to Nauvoo, where the hidden things of darkness could be revealed by divine power. All expressed the utmost anxiety that I should remain in the city until the prophet’s return. The storekeeper offered immediately to send an express eighteen miles to Carthage, to hasten the return of Joseph.

At length I yielded to their importunities, and promised that if they would bring me over from Montrose on the following morning, I would exhibit the book to the prophet.
4 The Prophets can’t prophesy
What’s the point of revelation if you can’t trust it?

4.1 The Failed Bank
Joseph predicted that his bank would “grow and flourish, and spread from the rivers to the ends of the earth, and survive when all others should be laid in ruins.”

CG Webb and others describe boxes filled with “sand, lead, old iron, stone, and combustibles,” covered in silver coins to make it look like the bank had more capital than it did. CG Webb relates:

The effect of those boxes was like magic. They created general confidence in the solidity of the bank and that beautiful paper money went like hot cakes. For about a month it was the best money in the country.

William Parrish, a secretary of Joseph’s who left the church, wrote:

I have been astonished to hear him declare that we had $60,000 in specie in our vaults and $600,000 at our command, when we had not to exceed $6,000 and could not command any more; also that we had but about ten thousand dollars of our bills in circulation when he, as cashier of that institution, knew that there was at least $150,000.

Less than a month later, Joseph had “shut up shop... saying he would not redeem another dollar except with land.”

The courts charged him $1000 and court costs for operating a bank illegally.

Heber Kimball put it best, that at this time “there were not twenty persons on earth that would declare that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God.”

Besides Joseph’s polygamy, the Nauvoo Expositor published that Joseph embezzled city funds.

4.2 Shouldn’t God know the future?
David Patten was killed before he could go on a mission. (D&C 114:1) (Is God not all powerful?)

Removed from D&C 137 (but still in History of the Church), is a vision Joseph saw of M’Lellin on a mission and healing. M’Lellin apostatized.

Joseph declared his son to be the next prophet. “I have often been asked who would succeed me as the prophet to the church. My son Joseph will be your next prophet.” Many sources confirm this.

His son said,

I was also present at a meeting in the grove near the temple, and I remember my father laying his hands on my head, and saying to the people that this was his successor, or was to be his successor.

If Joseph was a prophet, shouldn’t he know that his son would end up in an asylum, instead of becoming a prophet?

4.3 Failed Miracles
Joseph tried to straighten a cripples hand, heal a man with a lame leg, and raise a small child from the dead, all in the same meeting. None of those people were healed, not even temporarily.

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37 According to Warren Parrish, who succeeded Joseph as cashier of the bank, in a letter dated March 6, 1838 in Zion’s Watchman. This letter was certified to be a statement of fact by Luke Johnson and John F. Boynton (former apostles) and Sylvester Smith and Leonard Rich (former seventies).

38 Interview by W. Wyl. See Mormon Portraits, p. 36; also Oliver Olney: Absurdities of Mormonism Portrayed, p. 4; the letter of Cyrus Smalling in E. G. Lee, The Mormons, or Knavery Exposed, p. 14; and Fawn Brodie, No Man Knows My History, pp. 194-8

39 Letter to Zion’s Watchman, published March 24, 1838. Cyrus Smalling also wrote that Joseph had collected only $6,000 in specie. See E. G. Lee, The Mormons, or Knavery Exposed, p. 14


43 Zion’s Ensign, Vol. 12, No. 29, p. 5; Temple Lot Case, pp. 28, 180; No Man Knows My History, p. 381-2

44 Temple Lot Case, p. 79

45 As detailed through several letters from Ezra Booth to Edward Partridge, published in 1831-1832 in the Ohio Star at
4.4  The Mormon Mafia

Did Elijah need a mafia? Is forcing others really the right way?

4.4.1 The Danites

In June, 1838, at Far West, Mo., a secret organization was formed, Dr. Avard being put in as the leader of the band; a certain oath was to be administered to all the brethren to bind them to support the heads of the church in everything they should teach. All who refused to take this oath were considered dissenters from the church, and certain things were to be done concerning these dissenters, by Dr. Avard’s secret band…

Joseph wrote in his journal in July 27, 1838, that “we have a company of Danites in these times, to put right physically that which is not right.”

Though this is denied in the History of the Church, Vol 6, pg 165.

4.4.2 Killing to save

Brigham Young said,

I have known a great many men who have left this Church for whom there is no chance whatever for exaltation, but if their blood had been spilled, it would have been better for them… This is loving our neighbor as ourselves; if he needs help, help him; and if he wants salvation and it is necessary to spill his blood on the earth in order that he may be saved, spill it… That is the way to love mankind.

John D. Lee recalls one experience with blood atonement,

At one of the meetings during the reformation Anderson and his step-daughter confessed that they had committed adultery…they were rebaptized and received into full membership. They were then placed under covenant that if they again committed adultery, Anderson should suffer death. Soon after this a charge was laid against Anderson before the Council, accusing him of adultery with his step-daughter…

Without giving Anderson any chance to defend himself or make a statement, the Council voted that Anderson must die for violating his covenants. Klingensmith went to Anderson and notified him that the orders were that he must die by having his throat cut, so that the running of his blood would atone for his sins… Anderson got up… and without a word of remonstrance accompanied those that he believed were carrying out the will of the “Almighty God.” They went to the place where the grave was prepared; Anderson knelt upon the side of the grave and prayed. Klingensmith and his company then cut Anderson’s throat from ear to ear and held him so that his blood ran into the grave… It was justified by all the people, for they were bound by the same covenants, and the least word of objection to thus treating the man who had broken his covenant would have brought the same fate upon the person who was so foolish as to raise his voice against any act committed by order of the Church authorities.

And another account,

In Utah it has been the custom with the Priesthood to make eunuchs of such men as were obnoxious to the leaders. This was

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Ravenna. See also John Whitmer, History of the Church, MS., Chapter 7; and History of the Church, Vol. I, p. 176n
46 David Whitmer, An Address to All Believers in Christ, Richmond, Missouri, 1887, pp. 27-28
47 Brigham Young University Studies, Winter 1988, p. 14
48 Sermon by Brigham Young, delivered in the Mormon Tabernacle, February 8, 1857; printed in the Deseret News, February 18, 1857; also reprinted in the Journal of Discourses, Vol. 4, pp. 219-220
49 Confessions of John D. Lee, Photo-reprint of 1877 edition, pp. 282-283
done for a double purpose: first, it gave a perfect revenge, and next, it left the poor victim a living example to others of the dangers of disobeying counsel and not living as ordered by the Priesthood...

As an illustration ... Warren Snow was Bishop of the Church at Manti, San Pete County, Utah. He had several wives, but there was a fair, buxom young woman in the town that Snow wanted for a wife... She thanked him for the honor offered, but told him she was then engaged to a young man, a member of the Church, and consequently could not marry the old priest... He told her it was the will of God that she should marry him, and she must do so: that the young man could be got rid of, sent on a mission or dealt with in some way... that, in fact, a promise made to the young man was not binding, when she was informed that it was contrary to the wishes of the authorities...

(The Bishop) decided that the young man should be castrated; Snow saying, 'When that is done, he will not be liable to want the girl badly, and she will listen to reason when she knows that her lover is no longer a man.'

It was then decided to call a meeting of the people who lived true to counsel, which was held in the school-house in Manti... The young man was there, and was again requested, ordered and threatened, to get him to surrender the young woman to Snow; but true to his plighted troth, he refused to consent to give up the girl. The lights were then put out. An attack was made on the young man. He was severely beaten, and then tied with his back down on a bench, when Bishop Snow took a bowie-knife, and performed the operation in a most brutal manner, and then took the portion severed from his victim and hung it up in the school-house on a nail, so that it could be seen by all who visited the house afterwards...

(The young man) has been an idiot or quite lunatic ever since ... Brigham Young ... did nothing against Snow. He left him in charge as Bishop at Manti, and ordered the matter to be hushed up.

Former Church Historian D Michael Quinn writes,

In May 1857 Bishop Warren S. Snow’s counselor wrote that twenty-four-year-old Thomas Lewis 'has now gone crazy' after being castrated by Bishop Snow for an undisclosed sex crime. When informed of Snow’s action, Young said: 'I feel to sustain him ...' In July Brigham Young wrote a reassuring letter to the bishop about this castration: ‘Just let the matter drop, and say no more about it,’ the LDS president advised, 'and it will soon die away among the people.'

Because this was not corrected, others wished to use castration as a form of subjugation. TBH Stenhouse who left the church but never wrote any expose’s of it, received this letter:

I was at a Sunday meeting in the spring of 1857, in Provo, when the news of the San Pete castration was referred to by the presiding bishop-Blackburn. Some men in Provo had rebelled against authority in some trivial matter, and Blackburn shouted in his Sunday meeting—a mixed congregation of all ages and both sexes—'I want the people of Provo to understand that the boys in Provo can use the knife as well as the boys in San Pete. Boys, get your knives ready, there is work for you! We must not be behind San Pete in good works.” The result of this was that two citizens, named Hooper and Beauvere, both having families at Provo, left the following night... Their only offence was rebellion against the priesthood. This man,  

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50 Ibid., pp. 284-286
Blackburn, was continued in office at least a year after this... 52

Brigham Young was told of this incident as recorded in Wilford Woodruff’s journal,

I then went into the president office & spent the evening. Bishop Blackburn was present. The subject came up of some persons leaving Provo who had Apostatized. Some thought that Bishop Blackburn & President Snow was to blame. Brother Joseph Young presented the thing to presidet Young. But when the Circumstances were told Presidet Brigham Young sustained the Brethren who presided at Provo... The subjects of Eunuchs came up... Brigham said the day would come when thousands would be made Eunuchs in order for them to be saved in the kingdom of God. 53

It makes this quotation of Brigham Young very chilling.

And if the Gentiles wish to see a few tricks, we have ‘Mormons’ that can perform them. We have the meanest devils on the earth in our midst, and we intend to keep them, for we have use for them; and if the Devil does not look sharp, we will cheat him out of them at the last, for they will reform and go to heaven with us. 54

On another occasion when discussing adultery he said, “I have no wife whom I love so well that I would not put a javelin through her heart, and I would do it with clean hands.” 55

Bill Hickman confessed in Brigham’s Destroying Angel to committing murders for the church.

Another record of castration as a means of subjugation,

Saturday 27 Feb 1858. This evening several persons disguised as Indians entered Henry Jones’ house and dragged him out of bed with a whore and castrated him by a square & close amputation. 56

This was not the end of tormenting Henry Jones,

Nathaniel Case being sworn, says: that he has resided in the Territory of Utah since the year 1850; lived with Bishop Hancock (Charles Hancock) in the town of Payson, at the time Henry Jones and his mother were murdered... The night prior to the murder a secret council meeting was held in the upper room of Bishop Hancock’s house...

The next Sunday after the murder, in a church meeting in Payson, Charles Hancock, the bishop, said, as to the killing of Jones and his mother he cared nothing about it, and it would have been done in daylight if circumstances would have permitted it. This was said from the stand; there were 150 or 200 persons present. He gave no reason for killing them. And further saith not. Nathaniel Case.

Sworn to and signed before me this 9th day of April, 1859.

John Cradlebaugh, Judge 2nd Judicial District.

Former Church historian D Michael Quinn states, “As late as 1868 the Deseret News encouraged rank-and-file Mormons to kill anyone who engaged in sexual relations outside marriage...” 57

4.5 They disagree with science!

If you believe LDS prophets and scripture, you have to believe that the earth is only 7000 years old, Noah’s flood really did cover the entire earth, and all languages came from the tower of Babel. Certainly you can argue that a certain prophet wasn’t correct,

On the Mormon Frontier; The Diary of Hosea Stout, Vol. 2, p. 653
but then you must admit that the current prophet may not be correct. And if the current prophet isn’t correct, you have to at least wonder if Joseph Smith was correct in what he taught.

I start first with Kolob, since it’s only in Mormon scripture.

### 4.5.1 Kolob

Kolob, the star, rotates at a specific rate. The sun, does not, but rotates dependant on where you look at it (latitude). Kolob, the largest star, must surely be a black hole by now. Being the largest star is obviously not a good plan. In order to be the first creation and still exist, it must have been very small. Unless it’s the supermassive black hole at the center of the galaxy, at which point the gravity would not support life. 

### 4.5.2 Evolution

Death and procreation did not exist before Adam. (Moses 3:7, 5:10-11, 6:48; Alma 12:23; 2 Nephi 2:22-25; D&C 101:29; Helaman 14:16; 1 Cor 15:22.) How would the fall affect people on other planets? Are aliens only 6000 years old?

President Joseph Fielding Smith affirms that evolution and Adam cannot coexist.

Of course, I think those people who hold to the view that man has come up through all these ages from the scum of the sea through billions of years do not believe in Adam. Honestly I do not know how they can, and I am going to show you that they do not. There are some who attempt to do it but they are inconsistent - absolutely inconsistent, because that doctrine is so incompatible, so utterly out of harmony, with the revelations of the Lord that a man just cannot believe in both.

...I say most emphatically, you cannot believe in this theory [of evolution]

With the account in Genesis, Moses, Abraham, and the temple of the creation, it is hard for Mormons to dispute the young earth theory. Supposing they were true, no revelation mentions evolution in any form whatsoever. Restored knowledge from Joseph Smith should have addressed this major contradiction.

President Monson wrote as a "First Presidency Message":

Remember that faith and doubt cannot exist in the same mind at the same time, for one will dispel the other.

Should doubt knock at your doorway, just say to those skeptical, disturbing, rebellious thoughts: "I propose to stay with my faith, with the faith of my people. I know that happiness and contentment are there, and I forbid you, agnostic, doubting thoughts, to destroy the house of my faith. I acknowledge that I do not understand the processes of creation, but I accept the fact of it. I grant that I cannot explain the miracles of the Bible, and I do not attempt to do so, but I accept God’s word. I wasn’t with

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58 Perhaps this explains God? Superman came from a planet who had a different sun and gravity and so he had special powers coming to earth. Perhaps God is the same?

59 Joseph Fielding Smith, Doctrines of Salvation, section "Evolution and Religion Cannot be Harmonized", 1:141-142
Joseph, but I believe him. My faith did not come to me through science, and I will not permit so-called science to destroy it.  

4.5.3 Only 7000 Years

Mormon scripture states in D&C 77:6,

Q. What are we to understand by the book which John saw, which was sealed on the back with seven seals?
A. We are to understand that it contains the revealed will, mysteries, and the works of God; the hidden things of his economy concerning this earth during the seven thousand years of its continuance, or its temporal existence.

Scripture tells us that the earth is only about 6000 years old.

Then why does everything point to the world and life being so much older? Perhaps Adam was the first intelligent homo sapien, or perhaps God created existence to look like it had existed for billions of years. But those explanations don’t fit because they miss the point. Scriptures do not address evolution. This is probably the biggest divide between LDS theology and science, and yet, there is no scriptural explanation for it. If Joseph really knew about Adam and Eve, if he had God talk to him, then why wouldn’t he explain this very important issue? Why would his explanations never address it?

Suppose the whole universe was less than ten thousand years old. How would you explain people who lived on other planets? Did the fall of Adam apply only to the people on this planet? How would you explain that God had created uncountable civilizations before Adam?

4.5.4 The Flood

All Ensign’s have to be approved by the Prophet before publishing, and in 1998 it published this:

Still other people accept parts of the Flood story, acknowledging that there may have been a local, charismatic preacher, such as Noah, and a localized flood that covered only a specific area of the world, such as the region of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers or perhaps even the whole of Mesopotamia. Yet these people do not believe in a worldwide or global flood. Both of these groups...those who totally deny the historicity of Noah and the Flood and those who accept parts of the story...are persuaded in their disbelief by the way they interpret modern science. They rely upon geological considerations and theories that postulate it would be impossible for a flood to cover earth’s highest mountains, that the geologic evidence (primarily in the fields of stratigraphy and sedimentation) does not indicate a worldwide flood occurred any time during the earth’s existence.

There is a third group of people...those who accept the literal message of the Bible regarding Noah, the ark, and the Deluge. Latter-day Saints belong to this group. In spite of the world’s arguments against the historicity of the Flood, and despite the supposed lack of geologic evidence, we Latter-day Saints believe that Noah was an actual man, a prophet of God, who preached repentance and raised a voice of warning, built an ark, gathered his family and a host of animals onto the ark, and floated safely away as waters covered the entire earth. We are assured that these events actually occurred by the multiple testimonies of God’s prophets.

Thus, modern revelation teaches that God indeed suffered great sorrow over the Flood, which served as the baptism of the earth.  

February 2001 Ensign

If reincarnation happens, then could people on planets that had not fallen be reincarnated on a fallen planet?

January 1998 Ensign, The Flood and the Tower of Babel, Donald W. Parry

In the days of Noah the Lord sent a universal flood which completely immersed the whole earth and destroyed all flesh except that preserved on the ark. (Gen. 6-9; Moses 7:38-45; 8; Ether 13:2.) "Noah was born to save seed of everything, when the earth was washed of its wickedness by the flood." "This flood was the baptism of the earth; before it occurred the land was all in one place, a condition that will again prevail during the millennial era. (D&C 133:23-24)."

The Garden of Eden was in Missouri. Noah was taken to the Old World by the Flood. This teaching was given by Joseph Smith and is still accepted as true doctrine. Given this teaching, Mormons have to accept the flood as a global phenomenon.

Joseph Fielding Smith Jr. wrote,

FLOOD WAS BAPTISM OF EARTH. Now a word as to the reason for the flood. It was the baptism of the earth, and that had to be by immersion. If the water did not cover the entire earth, then it was not baptized, for the baptism of the Lord is not pouring or sprinkling.


If everything died in a flood, then why would we still have worms? Tree ring records go back 10000 years - how did plants survive so long? (Why are there still plants?) Why is there no evidence in ice samples or geological records? Why is there genetic diversity? How could he fit so many animals on his boat? How did sloths and penguins travel to where they live? What did koalas eat? Some animals take over others when introduced into the populations, so why are animals so diverse across the world when some groups have obvious advantages? You would expect more homogeneity. Besides fitting all the animals, he had to fit food for them. How did he prevent the food from spoiling, and the rats from eating the food? Eight people disposing of the waste for so many animals must have been impossible. How were salt and fresh water fish separated?

Why believe in Noah’s flood if you don’t believe in a flat Earth? Dan 4:10-11, Matt 4:8, 1 Chron 16:30, Psalms 93:1

God’s a genius, for asking us to have faith in something, then providing evidence to the contrary! What a test!

4.5.5 Babel

Gen 10:5, 20, 31 and 11:1 contradict Genesis 11:6-9. Why would languages continue to diversify after Babel, if Babel explains why there are so many different languages? Why explain the story through Babel, when the process is natural? Babel tries to explain other languages, without acknowledging diversification of languages afterwards.

4.6 Church Prejudice

It does not matter whether the Church’s prejudice was doctrine. It is what was taught by the leaders. And as such, they both cannot stand. Even if they had limited understanding, one should have expected them to ask God for further understanding on so important a subject. Perhaps they don’t ask God about anything, and assume they know it already?

If you cannot trust one prophet, what makes you think you can trust another? Brigham made many statements on race, such as:

4.6.1 The Prophets speak!

Brigham Young:

Shall I tell you the law of God in regard to the African Race? If the White man who belongs to the chosen seed mixes his blood with the seed of Cain, the penalty, under the law of God, is

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64Teachings, p. 12
65Mormon Doctrine, Bruce R. McConkie, p. 289
66Mormon Doctrine, Bruce McConkie, “Adam-Ondi-Ahman” p. 19-20
67Smith, Joseph Fielding, Jr., Doctrines of Salvation (Salt Lake City: BookCraft, 1955), Vol.2, p.320
death on the spot. This will always be so.\textsuperscript{68}

You see some classes of the human family that are black, uncouth, uncomely, disagreeable and low in their habits, wild, and seemingly deprived of nearly all the blessings of the intelligence ... How long is that race to endure the dreadful curse that is upon them? That curse will remain upon them, and they never can hold the Priesthood.\textsuperscript{69}

Which contradicts blacks who previously held the Priesthood under Joseph. Elijah Abel was ordained into the Seventies by Joseph Smith; Walker Lewis was ordained an Elder in 1844.

If Utah was admitted into the Union as a sovereign State, and we chose to introduce slavery here, it is not their business to meddle with it; and even if we treated our slaves in an oppressive manner, it is still none of their business and they ought not to meddle with it.\textsuperscript{70}

Brigham Young was interviewed on slavery:

H. G.-What is the position of your church with respect to slavery?

B. Y.-We consider it of divine institution, and not to be abolished until the curse pronounced on Ham shall have been removed from his descendants.

H. G.-Are any slaves now held in this territory?

B. Y.-There are.

H. G.-Do your territorial laws uphold slavery?

B. Y.-Those laws are printed—you can read for yourself. If slaves are brought here by those who owned them in the states, we do not favor their escape from the service of those owners.\textsuperscript{71}

He also wrote,

Ham will continue to be servant of servants, as the Lord decreed, until the curse is removed. WILL THE PRESENT STRUGGLE\textsuperscript{72} FREE THE SLAVE? NO: but they are now wasting away the black race by thousands ... Treat the slaves kindly and let them live, for HAM MUST BE THE SERVANT OF SERVANTS UNTIL THE CURSE IS REMOVED. Can you destroy the decrees of the Almighty? YOU CANNOT. Yet our Christian brethren think that they are going to overthrow the sentence of the Almighty upon the seed of Ham. THEY CANNOT DO THAT, though they may kill them by thousands and tens of thousands.\textsuperscript{73}

Joseph Fielding Smith said, "Not only was Cain called upon to suffer, but because of his wickedness he became the father of an inferior race."\textsuperscript{74}

Between Joseph Smith and President Kimball, it was never questioned and has been the doctrine of the church that Negroes are not entitled to the full blessings of the Gospel.\textsuperscript{75}

In 1978, BYU was in danger of losing its tax-exempt status for discrimination, colleges were boycotting BYU, the Boy Scouts put pressure on the church because blacks were discriminated against, and the church was becoming global. This all contributed to the revelation where Blacks could hold the Priesthood.\textsuperscript{76}

(See also 2 Nephi 5:21; Alma 3:6; 2 Nephi 30:6; 3 Nephi 2:15; Jacob 3:5,8-9; Moses 7:22; Abraham 1:21-24, 27)

\textsuperscript{68}Journal of Discourses 10:110
\textsuperscript{69}Journal of Discourses 7:290-291, October 9, 1859
\textsuperscript{70}Journal of Discourses 4:39-40 (Aug 31, 1856)
\textsuperscript{71}Interviewed by Horace Greeley for NY Tribune article Aug 20, 1859
\textsuperscript{72}Referring to the Civil War.
\textsuperscript{73}Millennial Star, Vol. 25, page 787; also published in Journal of Discourses, Vol. 10, page 250
\textsuperscript{74}The Way to Perfection, pages 101-102.
\textsuperscript{75}Statement of The First Presidency on the Negro Question, July 17 1947, quoted in Mormonism and the Negro, pp.46-7
\textsuperscript{76}To see how President Kimball came across the revelation, see Deseret News, Church Section, January 6, 1979, page 4.
4.6.2 Sealed as Joseph’s servant because she was black

Jane Manning was sealed to the prophet Joseph as a servant:

After Isaac died, Jane asked that they [her children] be given the ordination of adoption so they would be together in the next life. She explained in correspondence to Church leaders that Emma Smith had offered to have her sealed to the Smith family as a child. She reconsidered that decision and asked to be sealed to the Smiths.

Permission for all of these requests was denied. Instead the First Presidency 'decided she might be adopted into the family of Joseph Smith as a servant, which was done, a special...ceremony having been prepared for the purpose.'

The minutes of the Council of Twelve Apostles continued: 'But Aunt Jane was not satisfied with this, and as a mark of dissatisfaction she applied again after this for sealing blessings, but of course in vain.' 77

4.7 The Lamanite education program

I have heard from multiple families stories of rape during the Lamanite education program. If the LDS church had prophets who knew the truth or future, they should have known the possibilities of outcomes like these. 78

4.8 Sex that isn’t used to procreate is bad

This was a 1850 - 1950 phenomenon. President McKay taught,

...in most cases the desire not to have children has its birth in vanity, passion and selfishness... All such efforts, too, often tend to put the marriage relationship on a level with the panderer and the courtesan. They befoul the pure fountains of life with the slime of indulgence and sensuality... 79

This might be taken out of context, but it can be easily influence private behavior.

He had created man and woman for a purpose. That purpose was not fun... 80

5 Joseph’s Character

5.1 Emma tries to kill Joseph

Emma 81 had tried to poison Joseph. Brigham Young relates that

He (Joseph) told her where she got the poison, and how she put it in a cup of coffee; said he, 'You got that poison so and so, and I drank it, but you could not kill me.' When it entered his stomach he went to the door and threw it off. He spoke to her in that council in a very severe manner, and she never said one word in reply. I have witnesses of this scene all around, who can testify that I am now telling the truth. Twice she undertook to kill him. 82

She was described as such by one person:

Sister Emma is very plain in her personal appearance, though we hear that she is very intelligent and benevolent, has great influence with her husband, and is generally beloved. She said very little to us, her whole attention being absorbed in what Joseph was saying. Joseph talked incessantly about

78 Certainly you can question my word on this; I’m never sure why I’m told these things; and I won’t be giving out names.
80 Spencer W. Kimball, Address to Special Interest Fireside in Tabernacle, 29 Dec. 1974, pp. 4-5
81 Just a note, she described the plates as such: "They seemed to be pliable like thick paper and would rustle with a metallic sound when the edges were moved by the thumb as one does sometimes thumb the edges of a book." (Saints Herald, Vol. 26 (October 1, 1879), p. 289)
82 The Essential Brigham Young, p. 188
himself, what he had done and could do more than other mortals, and remarked that he was a giant, physically and mentally.  

5.2 Joseph doesn’t even follow the revelations

5.2.1 The Church Name

The church didn’t even follow the scriptures for four years regarding its name. (3 Nephi 27:3-11)

On May 3, 1834, Joseph Smith, as moderator, made a motion to change the name of the church to, ”The Church of the Latter Day Saints,” which was adopted by unanimous vote. He took ”Jesus Christ” right out of the name!

Four years later, on April 26, 1838, it was again changed to ”The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter day Saints” and has remained thus since.

5.2.2 The Word of Wisdom

"Wednesday 3, - Called at the office and drank a glass of wine with Sister Jenetta Richards..." He encouraged drinking:

It was reported to me that some of the brethren had been drinking whiskey that day in violation of the Word of Wisdom. I called the brethren in and investigated the case, and was satisfied that no evil had been done, and gave them a couple of dollars, with directions to replenish the bottle to stimulate them in the fatigues of their sleepless journey.

Even the night Joseph was murdered, he drank and smoked.

The guard immediately sent for a bottle of wine, pipes, and two small papers of tobacco; and one of the guards brought them into the jail... Dr. Richards uncorked the bottle, and presented a glass to Joseph, who tasted, as also Brother Taylor... As John Taylor reports of that incident, 

Sometime after dinner we sent for some wine. It has been reported that this was taken as a sacrament. It was no such thing; our spirits were generally dull and heavy, and it was sent to revive us.

5.3 Boasting

I have more to boast of than ever any man had. I am the only man that has ever been able to keep a whole church together since the days of Adam. A large majority of the whole have stood by me. Neither Paul, John, Peter nor Jesus ever did it. I boast that no man ever did such a work as I.

The followers of Jesus ran away from Him; but the Latter-day Saints never ran away from me yet.

Proofs of Joseph being a prophet come from prophecies of Joseph that came from Joseph’s own writing. That makes no sense. (JST Genesis 50, 2 Nephi 3)

5.4 Money Digging

Most members know that Joseph Smith was a money digger. It is an interesting reflection on the character of the man. This only serves to confirm that he was a supernatural treasure hunter long after his purported visions.

Joseph was a money digger after having his first vision. Josiah Stowel testified against him in court on in 1826.

85May 1843, History of the Church, Vol. 5, p. 380
86Millennial Star, Vol. 21, page 283
87History of the Church, vol. 6, p. 616
88History of the Church, vol. 7, p. 101
89History of the Church, Vol. 6, p. 408-409
90Stowel's Testimony in Bainbridge court trial of 1826. See also History of the Church, Vol. 3, p. 29
In 1831, A.W. Benton said that Joseph Smith was about the country in the character of a glass-looker: pretending, by means of a certain stone, or glass, which he put in a hat, to be able to discover lost goods, hidden treasures, mines of gold and silver, &c . . . . At length the public, . . . had him arrested as a disorderly person, tried and condemned before a court of Justice.\textsuperscript{91}

According to Emma, the seer stone was used to translate the Book of Mormon, not the Urim and Thummim.

Now the first that my husband translated, was translated by the use of the Urim and Thummim, and that was the part that Martin Harris lost, and that he used a small stone, not exactly black, but was rather a dark color.\textsuperscript{92}

6 Modern Apostates

6.1 BH Roberts

Church historian tried discussing for days with the apostles about problems with LDS history. Unresolved, he wrote “These questions are put by me at the close of this division of the ‘study’ not for self-embarrassment, surely, nor for the embarrassment of others, but to bring to the consciousness of myself and my brethren that we face grave difficulties in all these matters.”\textsuperscript{93}

One of his missionaries wrote in his journal,

Roberts went to work and investigated it from every angle but could not answer it satisfactorily to himself. At his request Pres. Grant called a meeting of the Twelve Apostles and Bro. Roberts presented the matter, told them frankly that he was stumped and ask for their aid in the explanation. In answer, they merely one by one stood up and bore testimony to the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon. George Albert Smith in tears testified that his faith in the Book had not been shaken by the question.\textsuperscript{94}

6.2 Thomas Ferguson

The first Mormon archaeologist, Thomas Ferguson, eventually left the church after finding no evidence of it. He was a very avid member. He wrote what I’m sure many feel,

Why not say the right things and keep your membership in the great fraternity, enjoying the good things you like and discarding the ones you can’t swallow (and keeping your mouth shut)? Hypocritical? Maybe, thousands of members have done, and are doing, what I suggest you consider doing. Silence is golden - etc. So why try to be heroic and fight the myths - the Mormon one or any other that does more good than ill?\textsuperscript{95}

Perhaps you and I have been spoofed by Joseph Smith. Now that we have the inside dope - why not spoof a little back and stay aboard?\textsuperscript{96}

7 Mormon History Problems

It should be noted that 60% of the seven volume ”History of the Church” was written after Joseph Smith died, but is claimed to be written by him. The LDS Church has more incentive to hide history than most apostates do. Who do you trust - the person who tries to hide everything, or those who want to really know everything?

\textsuperscript{94}Wesley Parkinson Lloyd Collection, L. Tom Perry Special Collections Library, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah. Box 1, folder 2, mss 2312. Note: Spelling and grammatical errors in the original have been corrected.)

\textsuperscript{95}I’m not convinced it does more good than ill.

\textsuperscript{96}Letter from Tom Ferguson to Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence, February 9, 1976
7.1 Just an angel in the First Vision

When Joseph was 14, both God and Jesus Christ appeared to him. This is used to prove that God and Jesus are two distinct beings. Such an important event should be remembered accurately by Joseph. Early Mormons deny that version of the First Vision, and say that only an angel appeared to him.

After having the First Vision, Joseph is instructed by God to not join any churches. Soon after he joined the Methodist church although God told him specifically that he “must join none of them, for they were all wrong”.  

William Smith said: "An angel then appeared to him and conversed with him upon many things. He told him that none of the sects were right . . . "

Brigham Young also said: "[When Mormonism began] the Lord did not come - but He did send His angel."  

John Taylor said: "None of them was right, just as it was when the Prophet Joseph asked the angel which of the sects was right that he might join it. The answer was that none of them are right."

The first first vision, transcribed by Frederick T Williams in 1831 or 1832:

. . . calling upon the Lord in the 16th year of my age a pillar of light above the brightness of the sun at noon day come down from above and rested upon me . . . and I saw the Lord and he spake unto me saying Joseph my son thy Sins are forgiven thee, go thy way walk in my statutes and keep my commandments behold I am the Lord of glory I was crucifyed for the world that all those who believe on my name may have Eternal life behold the world lieth in sin at this time and none doeth good no not one they have turned aside from the Gospel.

Another first vision account, transcribed by Warren Cowdery on November 9, 1835:

A personage appeared in the midst of this pillar of flame, which was spread all around and yet nothing consumed. Another personage soon appeared like unto the first: he said unto me thy sins are forgiven thee. He testified unto me that Jesus Christ is the son of God. I saw many angels in this vision. I was about 14 years old when I received this first communication.

Brigham Young denies the many angels: "The Lord did not come with the armies of heaven . . . But he did send his angel . . . and informed him that he should not join any of the religious sects of the day, for they were all wrong . . . "

Heber C. Kimball denies that Jesus came: "Do you suppose that God in person called upon Joseph Smith, our Prophet? God called upon him; But God did not come himself and call . . . "

The First Vision is incredibly important in Mormonism. It is one of the first things missionaries tell people when they come in the door. It’s so important that Joseph Fielding Smith says, had Joseph Smith come home from the grove and declared that Father and the Son occurred in 1820. Any other view would make liars of these witnesses . . . 


Dean C. Jesse, "The Early Accounts of Joseph Smith’s First Vision,” Brigham Young University Studies, 9:284.


appeared to him and that the Father spoke to him and answered his questions while the Son stood silently by then we could have accepted the story as a fraud.\textsuperscript{108}

It appears that the Father answered Joseph’s questions. In 1844 Hugh Nibley’s great-grandfather Alexander Neibaur recorded that

after a while a other person came to the side of the first Mr. Smith then asked must I join the Methodist Church - No- they are not my People, They have gone astray there is none that doeth good no not one, but this is my Beloved son harken ye him...\textsuperscript{109}

Such an important event should not be so confused in the minds of prophets and witnesses!

7.2 Other people had "First Visions" before Joseph

Joseph was not unique in his "First Vision". Elias Smith published his vision in 1816:

While in this situation, a light appeared from heaven...My mind seemed to rise in that light to the throne of God and the Lamb...The Lamb once slain appeared to my understanding, and while viewing him, I felt such love to him as I never felt to any thing earthly...\textsuperscript{110}

In the 1820’s, after Charles G. Finney came home from praying in the woods he said that there

...was no fire, and no light, in the room; nevertheless it appeared to me as if it were perfectly light. As I went in and shut the door after me, it seemed as if I met the Lord Jesus Christ face to face.\textsuperscript{111}

Stephen H. Bradley published in 1830 that he saw the Savior when he was fourteen years old.\textsuperscript{112} Asa Wild’s story was in the Smith’s family newspaper in 1823:

It seemed as if my mind...was struck motionless, as well as into nothing, before the awful and glorious majesty of the Great Jehovah. He then spake...He also told me, that every denomination of professing christians had become extremely corrupt...Much more the Lord revealed, but forbids my relating it in this way.\textsuperscript{113}

These stories raise a lot of questions. Why would Joseph be afraid of being persecuted when his family paper published experiences like that? Why would he keep it a secret, as the Prophet of a new religion, when others did not? How much of the First Vision was plagiarized?

7.3 Vision or dream?

The vision of Moroni could not have been an actual physical vision. Joseph says that he talked to the angel Moroni, and Moroni spoke to him, yet his family was not woken up by their voices, even though his brothers shared a room with him and Moroni spoke throughout the night (unless the angel whispered the entire time). Considering the low ceilings of that home, Moroni was either really short or only floating a few inches off the ground. The church has a photo of Moroni appearing to Joseph - high ceilings with Joseph alone, which is incorrect.\textsuperscript{114}

Dreams are a lot less convincing. Martin Harris said:

Consequently long before the idea of a Golden Bible entered their minds, in their excursions for money-digging, which I believe usually occurred in the night, that they might conceal from others the knowledge of the place, where they struck their treasures, Jo used to be usually their guide, putting into a hat a peculiar stone he had through

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{108}Doctrines of Salvation, Vol. 1, pg 28
\textsuperscript{109}Improvement Era April 1970, pg 12
\textsuperscript{110}The Life, Conversion, Preaching, Travels, and Sufferings of Elias Smith, Portsmouth, N.H., 1816, pp 5g 58
\textsuperscript{111}Charles G. Finney, pg 15
\textsuperscript{112}The Varieties of Religious Experience, pg 157
\textsuperscript{113}Wayne Sentinel, October 22, 1823.
\textsuperscript{114}Kind of like how he translates the Book of Mormon without showing the hat that he put the seer stone into.
\end{flushright}
which he looked to decide where they should begin to dig.

It was after one of these night excursions, that Jo, while he lay upon his bed, had a remarkable dream. An angel of God seemed to approach him, clad in celestial splendor. 115

Parley P. Pratt said:

This new gospel was found in Ontario Co., N.Y. and was discovered by an Angel of Light, appearing in a dream to a man by the name of Smith. 116

Martin Harris said:

he states that after a third visit from the same spirit117 in a dream he (Smith) proceeded to the spot. 118

Joseph Smith Sr said:

During his 1830 interview with Fayette Lapham, Joseph Smith Sr. referred to the Moroni visit as "a very singular dream" about "a valuable treasure, buried many years since." 119

Emma’s cousin said:

the statement that the prophet Joseph Smith made in our hearing, at the commencement of his translating his book, in Harmony (in 1828-1829), as to the manner of his finding the plates, was as follows...He said that by a dream he was informed by a ghost...120

The Ohio Star reported in 1830

In the fall of 1827, a man named Joseph Smith of Manchester, Ontario Co., NY, reported that he had three times been visited in a dream, by the spirit of the Almighty...

7.4 The Divining Rod

What is the gift of Aaron, that Oliver Cowdery "held in his hands" as mentioned in D&C 8:6-9?

...for you have another gift, which is the gift of Aaron; behold, it has told you many things; Behold, there is no other power, save the power of God, that can cause this gift of Aaron to be with you. Therefore, doubt not, for it is the gift of God; and you shall hold it in your hands, and do marvelous works...

The Book of Commandments, published before the Doctrine and Covenants, is more explicit on the subject. In chapter 7,

...behold there is no other power save God, that can cause this rod of nature, to work in your hands.

Wly, that sounds like a dowsing rod! The logical fallacy here is that God argues that “no other power save God” can make it work - suggesting that all spiritual manifestations came directly from God. According to Dan Vogel, Oliver Cowdery searched for treasure, just like Joseph Smith, using supernatural means. 121

115 Testimonies of Book of Mormon Witnesses, John Clark, Gleanings (1842), p.226 "Martin Harris Interview"
116 Reference: Letter from Amherst, Ohio, 26 Nov. 1830, "BEWARE OF IMPOSTERS," The Telegraph. Reprinted in The Reflector (Palmyra NY), 14 Feb. 1831. Also see Early Mormonism: Correspondence and a New History by Dale Morgan (Signature Books, 1986)
117 Only Moroni/Nephi visited Joseph three times in recorded Church history.
119 Early Mormon Documents, Volume 1, Page 458, reprint from Fayette Lapham’s original work from 1830. Interview with the Father of Joseph Smith, the Mormon Prophet
120 Photocopy of letter, Photocopy in fd 8, box 149, H. Michael Marquardt Papers, Manuscripts Division, J. Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah. Also see Mormon History, A New Chapter, by Joseph Lewis and Hiel Lewis and Early Mormon Documents, Volume 2
121 Dan Vogel, ed., Early Mormon Documents (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1998), 1: 603-05, 619-20
Marvin S. Hill, assistant professor of history at BYU, has admitted that "when Oliver Cowdery took up his duties as a scribe for Joseph Smith in 1829 he had a rod in his possession which Joseph Smith sanctioned...."122 He continues: "Some of the rodsmen or money diggers who moved into Mormonism were Oliver Cowdery, Martin Harris, Orrin P. Rockwell, Joseph and Newel Knight, and Josiah Stowell."123

In D&C 111:1-10, a revelation to Joseph Smith indicates where treasure could be found (yet where none was found), showing that Joseph Smith continued to search for treasure at least until 1836. (See also Helaman 13:31, Mormon 1:18.)

*Early Mormonism and the Magic World View* also discusses a possible connection between other groups of *rods men* that lived near William Cowdery (Oliver’s father).

In Apostle Anthon J. Lund’s journal for July 1901:

...in the revelation to Oliver Cowdery in May 1829, Bro. [B. H.] Roberts said that the gift which the Lord says he has in his hand meant a stick which was like Aaron’s Rod. It is said Bro. Phineas Young [brother-in-law of Oliver Cowdery and brother of Brigham Young] got it from him [Cowdery] and gave it to President Young who had it with him when he arrived in this [Salt Lake] valley and that it was *with that stick that he pointed out where the Temple should be built.*

According to Apostle Bruce R. McConkie, this means the religion is false.

False religions - whose ministers have no communion with Deity - frequently imitate the true practice by engaging in divination... *The Lord’s people are commanded not to engage in divination of any sort.* (Deut. 18:9-14.) 124

7.5 The Witnesses

Only four of the eight witnesses saw the Book of Mormon at a time.

7.5.1 Martin Harris

Martin Harris provided this information in an interview with Anthony Metcalf:

*I never saw the golden plates, only in a visionary or entranced state.* I wrote a great deal of the Book of Mormon myself, as Joseph Smith translated or spelled the words out in English. Sometimes the plates would be on a table in the room in which Smith did the translating, covered over with a cloth. I was told by Smith that God would strike him dead if he attempted to look at them, and I believed it. When the time came for the three witnesses to see the plates, Joseph Smith, my self, David Whitmer and Oliver Cowdery, went into the woods to pray. When they had engaged in prayer, they failed at the time to see the plates or the angel who should have been on hand to exhibit them. They all believed it was because I was not good enough, or in other words, not sufficiently sanctified. I withdrew. As soon as I had gone away, the three others saw the angel and the plates. In about three days I went into the woods to pray that I might see the plates. While praying I *passed into a state of entrancement, and in that state I saw the angel and the plates.* 125

John Gilbert who helped print the Book of Mormon says:

I said to him, “Martin, did you see those plates with your naked eyes?” Martin looked down for an instant, raise his eyes up, and said, 'No, I saw them with a spiritual

123More references to Peepstones and Money digging in In Mormonism-Shadow or Reality? pp.47-49
124McConkie, Mormon Doctrine, pg 202
After Joseph got the plates, Harris describes what they did:

Three of us took some tools to go to the hill and hunt for more boxes of gold or something, and indeed we found a stone box. We got quite excited about it and dug carefully around it, and by some unseen power it slipped back into the hill. We stood there and looked at it and one of us took a crowbar and tried to drive it through the lid and hold it, but the bar glanced off and broke off one of the corners of the box. Sometime that box will be found and you will see the corner broken off, and then you will know I have told you the truth.

7.5.2 David Whitmer

David Whitmer left the church because Joseph and Oliver altered the revelations of God - they altered much of the Book of Commandments from the 1833 version.

Whitmer admitted to only seeing the Book of Mormon in his mind. More importantly, he denied that there was ever any Priesthood.

Authority is the word we used for the first two years in the church - until Sydney Rigdon’s days in Ohio. This matter of the two orders of priesthood in the Church of Christ, and lineal priesthood of the old law being in the church, all originated in the mind of Sydney Rigdon. He explained these things to Brother Joseph in his way, out of the old Scriptures, and got Joseph to inquire, etc. He would inquire, and as mouthpiece speak out the revelations just as they had it fixed up in their hearts...according to the desires of the heart, the inspiration comes, but it may be the spirit of man that gives it...This is the way the High Priests and the ”priesthood” as you have it, was introduced into the Church of Christ almost two years after its beginning - and after we had baptized and confirmed about two thousand souls into the church. 130

7.6 Witnesses to other ”Prophets”

7.6.1 Jesse Strang - Joseph’s successor

After Joseph died, Jesse Strang claimed that he should be prophet. Many of Smith’s family joined Strang. Strang also claimed to have translated plates. He had witnesses too.

Be it known unto all nations, kindreds, tongues and people, to whom this Book of the Law of the Lord shall come, that James J. Strang has the plates of the ancient Book of the Law of the Lord given to Moses, from which he translated this law, and has shown them to us. We examined them with our eyes, and handled them with our hands. The engravings are beautiful antique workmanship, bearing a striking resemblance to the ancient oriental languages; and those from which the laws in this book were translated are eighteen in number, about seven inches and three-eights wide, by nine inches long, occasionally embellished with beautiful pictures.

Abd we testify unto you all that the everlasting kingdom of God is established, in which this law shall be kept, till it brings in
rest and everlasting righteousness to all the faithful.

SAMUEL GRAHAM, SAMUEL P. BACON, WARREN POST, PHINEAS WRIGHT, ALBERT N. HOSMER, EBENEZER PAGE, JEHIEL SAVAGE. 131

His plates can be seen in a museum.

7.6.2 Ann Lee

Ann Lee claimed to be Christ, and also claimed to have a sacred book. She had witnesses who saw and angel too.

We, the undersigned, hereby testify, that we saw the holy Angel standing upon the house-top, as mentioned in the foregoing declaration, holding the Roll and Book.

Betsey Boothe. Louisa Chamberlain.
Caty De Witt. Laura Ann Jacobs.
Sarah Maria Lewis. Sarah Ann Spencer.
Lucinda McDoniels. Maria Hedrick. 132

7.7 116 pages

In D&C 10, it talks about how evil men conspired to alter Joseph’s writings to show that it was fake. God is therefore unaware of “View of the Hebrews” written 20 years earlier. God was powerless to stop the pages from being lost. And God has Joseph translate the same story again, but just a little different. Where are these evil men? If they really did exist, then they used the best plan yet - let God pronounce that there are evil men who plan on showing alterations, and never show such alterations. Incredibly cunning! Mormon, who ran out of gold leaflets to tell all that he wanted to tell, told the same long story twice. Genius! Considering how minor this is to Mormon belief compared to the Book of Abraham or King Follet Discourse, God is poor at planning. 133

7.8 How the Book of Mormon was translated

David Whitmer, scribe of Joseph and Book of Mormon witness, said,

Joseph Smith would put the seer stone into a hat, and put his face in the hat, drawing it closely around his face to exclude the light; and in the darkness the spiritual light would shine. A piece of something resembling parchment would appear, and on that appeared the writing. One character at a time would appear, and under it was the interpretation in English. 134

Martin [Harris] explained the translation as follows: By aid of the seer stone, sentences would appear and were read by the prophet and written by Martin, and when finished he would say, ‘Written,’ and if correctly written, that sentence would disappear and another appear in its place, but if not written correctly it remained until corrected, so that the translation was just as it was engraved on the plates, precisely in the language then used.135

George Reynolds, First Council of Seventy, 1883:

The translation of the characters appeared on the Urim and Thummim, sentence by sentence, and as soon as one was correctly transcribed the next would appear.136

Oliver Huntington wrote in his journal in 1881 what Joseph F Smith said,

Saturday Feb. 25, 1881, I went to Provo to a quarterly Stake Conference. Heard Joseph F. Smith describe the manner of translating the Book of Mormon by Joseph Smith the Prophet and Seer, which was as follows

132The Braden and Kelly Debate, p.173
133Perhaps one of the reasons there is less detail of wars and names in 1 and 2 Nephi is that Joseph didn’t want to contradict himself if the 116 pages were ever found.
134David Whitmer, An Address to All Believers in Christ, 1887, p. 12
135Myth of the Manuscript Found, 1883 edition, p. 91
136Myth of the Manuscript Found, 1883 edition, p. 71
as near as I can recollect the substance of his description. Joseph did not render the writing on the gold plates into the English language in his own style of language as many people believe, but every word and every letter was given to him by the gift and power of God. So it is the work of God and not of Joseph Smith, and it was done in this way... The Lord caused each word spelled as it is in the book to appear on the stones in short sentences or words, and when Joseph had uttered the sentence or word before him and the scribe had written it properly, that sentence would disappear and another appear. And if there was a word wrongly written or even a letter incorrect the writing on the stones would remain there. Then Joseph would require the scribe to spell the reading of the last spoken and thus find the mistake and when corrected the sentence would disappear as usual.137

8 Interesting Sidenotes

8.1 Observations about the temple

It is clear that Joseph Smith took temple ceremonies from the Masons. However, the apron used by the devil in the ceremony has symbols of the Masons. This is very insulting to Masons.

Joseph Smith included Masonic rituals two months after becoming a Mason. FAIR acquiesces that the ceremonies don’t go back to Solomon’s time 138. Temples seem a natural way to keep polygamy a secret.

If the temple really existed in Solomon’s time, then someone has to explain how the ceremony incorporates Peter, James, and John heavily, despite not being born until 1500 years after Solomon, without finding other historical evidence somewhere about them. At least, Peter, James, and John should be more famous to ancient Jews. Even such “secret”, sacred information should have historical records, even if by apostates. There should be more Jewish traditions of the endowment if it really did happen in Solomon’s temple. There would be some reference to it some place.

The Book of Mormon warns of secret combinations, although the temple ceremony seems like a ”secret combination”. Google undermines the secrets of the ceremony. If everyone who wants to know the signs to get into heaven by doing a google search, then what’s the point in having a ceremony? The temple covenants are manipulative - you are forced to make covenants with no knowledge of what will happen next, just prior to some great event in your life that you have been planning for a long time (marriage, mission) that would disappoint everyone if you didn’t follow through. It’s not a fair oath.139

Initiatories put people into an embarrassing position.140 They initially involved being blessed while bathing completely nude. Heber C. Kimball’s journal in 1845 says:

... John D Lee and others have been fitting up stoves in the two west rooms [of the temple]. As they will be devoted to washing and Anointing and to heat water. We have two Large traves [troughs]... Three men can wash in either of them at the same time...

The ceremonies have changed since Joseph restored them. One of the big claims the church makes is that it has restored altered ordinances. Why do they change ceremonies, removing pieces from them, and hide history?

Women have to veil their faces when praying, while men do not. A woman tells her name to her husband, but men tell no one. Women promise to obey their husbands. Temple ceremonies suggest women have a lower role than men.

The name you receive in the temple is the same name that everyone else receives that day. Considering that they are only scriptural names that are

137 Journal of Oliver B. Huntington, p. 168 of typed copy at Utah State Historical Society)
138 http://www.mormonthink.com/templeweb.htm#didthemasons
139 If the end goal of being a member in the church is the temple, then why shouldn’t investigators know of the ceremony, before they are even baptized?
140 http://www.whymormons.net/2008/03/history-of-initiatory-ordinances.html.
reused, a good portion of us share the same name. Many people teach that this is the name we were known by in the pre- or post- mortal life. That will be very confusing when millions of us have the same name.

Joseph was superstitious. This explains the garments. When he was killed, a Jupiter Talisman was found on his body.

8.2 Adoption

I include this here because not many know about it.

In the commencement of adopting men and women in the temple at Nauvoo, a great many persons were adopted to different men who were not of the lineage of their fathers, and there was a spirit manifested by some in that work that was not of God. Men would go out and electioneer and labor with all their power to get men adopted to them. One instance I will name here: A man went around Nauvoo asking every man he could, 'You come and be adopted to me, and I shall stand at the head of the kingdom, and you will be there with me.'... Men are in danger sometimes in being adopted to others, until they know who they are and what they will be... President Young was not satisfied in his mind with regard to the extent of this matter; President Taylor was not. ...

We all have, more or less. But I have had peculiar feelings about it, especially lately. There are men in this congregation who wish to be adopted to me. I say to them today, if they can hear me, Go and be adopted to your fathers, and save your fathers... A man may say, 'I am an Apostle and if I am adopted to my father, will it take any honor from me?' I would say not... You will lose nothing by honoring your fathers and redeeming your dead. 141

8.3 Brigham Young was anti-democratic

... every government lays the foundation of its own downfall when it permits what are so called democratic elections. If a party spirit is developed, the formation of one party will be speedily followed by another, and furthermore, the very moment that we admit this, we admit the existence of error and corruption somewhere.142

What does opposition bring? It certainly brings anger and strife, and of what use are they?143

Different historians have commented how early Utah elections were not secret, and few would vote differently from the Church stance, since doing so would brand one as an apostate.144 Being an apostate in early Utah could not be easy.

Brigham was also opposed to term limits for government offices:

Should they make a clause in their Constitution that a President shall serve at most for only two terms without a vacation in his services? That is an item that should not be found in the Constitution of the United States... when we get a President that answers our wishes to occupy the executive chair, there let him sit to the day of his death...145

Brigham Young attempted to excommunicate Moses Thatcher, an apostle, for campaigning for the Democrats, when Brigham Young said there should be more Republicans. Moses was then defamed in the 1896 Conference.

141 The Discourses of Wilford Woodruff, Bookcraft, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1946, pp. 154-157
142 Journal of Discourses, Vol 14, pg 93
143 Journal of Discourses, Vol 13, pg 219
144 The Moses Thatcher Case, by Stanley Ivins, pg 2-3; History of Utah, Hubert Bancroft, pg 483; Reminiscences of Early Utah, pg 73
145 Journal of Discourses, Vol 7, pg 11 & 14
9 Polygamy

By two or three witnesses shall every word be established. Well, I've got at least two.

9.1 People who left when Joseph tried to take their wives

- William Law: Second Counselor to Joseph. 146
- Dr Robert D Foster147
- Austin Cowles - First Counselor to Joseph. Both published in the only issue of the Nauvoo Expositor.
- Hiram Kimball - his wife sworf:

  Early in 1842 Joseph taught me the principle of marriage for eternity, and the doctrine of plural marriage. I asked him to teach it to someone else. He looked at me reprovingly, [saying] 'I will not cease to pray for you.' 148

- Todd Compton writes in “In Sacred Loneliness” that eleven of Joseph’s plural wives were married civilly to other men. Of his first 12, nine were polyandrous. (Orson Hyde, Johnathan Holmes, Windsor Lyon, David Sessions, Henry Jacobs, George W Harris were the husbands, and one even loaned Joseph money after the marriage.)

Fanny Alger, a 17 year old orphan, was the first “wife”. 149 It is difficult to determine how many wives Joseph had, but it is between 27 and 60.

Jedediah Grant in 1854 gave this sermon,

Now suppose Joseph should come and say he wanted your wife, what would you say to that? 'I would tell him to go to hell.' This was the spirit of many in the early days of this Church...

What would a man of God say, who felt right, when Joseph asked him for his money? He would say, 'Yes, and I wish I had more to help to build up the kingdom of God.' Or if he came and said, 'I want your wife?' 'O yes,' he would say, 'here she is, there are plenty more.'...If such a man of God should come to me and say, 'I want your gold and silver, or your wives,' I should say, 'Here they are, I wish I had more to give you, take all I have got.' 150

One of Brigham Young’s former wives,

One woman said to me not very long since, while giving me some of her experiences in polygamy: 'The greatest trial I ever endured in my life was living with my husband and deceiving him, by receiving Joseph’s attentions whenever he chose to come to me.'

This woman, and others, whose experience has been very similar, are among the very

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147 Fawn Brodie, No Man Knows My History, p. 371

148 Historical Record, Vol. 6, p. 232

149 Letter from Benjamin Johnson to George Gibbs, 1903; Joseph Smith the Mormon Prophet, pp. 103-104

150 Journal of Discourses, vol. 2, pp. 13-14
best women in the church; they are as pure-minded and virtuous women as any in the world. They were seduced under the guise of religion.

Some of these women have since said they did not know who was the father of their children; this is not to be wondered at, for after Joseph’s declaration annulling all Gentile marriages, the greatest promiscuity was practiced; and, indeed, all sense of morality seemed to have been lost by a portion at least of the church.\footnote{Wife No. 19, 1876, pp. 70-71}

Patty Bartlett Sessions was married to David Sessions when she was sealed to Joseph. She records in her journal,

I was sealed to Joseph Smith by Willard Richards Mar 9, 1842, in Newel K. Whitney’s chamber, Nauvoo, for time and all eternity…Sylvia my daughter was present when I was sealed to Joseph Smith.\footnote{Journal of Patty Sessions, as quoted in Intimate Disciple, Portrait of Willard Richards, 1957, p. 611}

Mary Elizabeth Rollins Lightner was married to Adam Lightner when sealed to Joseph. She records in her journal,

Joseph said I was his before I came here and he said all the Devils in Hell should never get me from him, I was sealed to him in the Masonic Hall…by Brigham Young in February 1842 and then again in the Nauvoo Temple by Heber C. Kimball…\footnote{Affidavit of Mary Elizabeth Rollins Lightner, as cited in No Man Knows My History, p. 444}

Joseph even disobeyed the law as given to him in D&C 132, where the first wife must agree for future spouses. Emma did not agree to the first few wives. D&C 132 also is a mind game, for time if the first wife disagrees, “she shall be destroyed” (verse 54).

When Joseph was writing down D&C 132,

Hyrum very urgently requested Joseph to write the revelation by means of the Urim and Thummim, but Joseph, in reply, said he did not need to, for he knew the revelation perfectly from beginning to end. Joseph and Hyrum then sat down and Joseph commenced to dictate the revelation on celestial marriage, and I wrote it, sentence by sentence, as he dictated.\footnote{William Clayton Affidavit, 1874, p. 225}

9.2 Lying about it

Joseph pretended to marry one of his wives, Sarah Ann Whitney to Joseph C. Kingsbury to hide his own relationship with her. Joseph wrote:

…on 29th of April 1843 I according to President Joseph Smith Counsil & others agreed to Stand by Sarah Ann Whityn as supposed to be her husband & had a prete[n]ded marriage for the purpose of Bringing about the purposes of God.\footnote{The History of Joseph C. Kingsbury,” a document that is now in the Western Americana section of the University of Utah Library:}

Joseph lied in 1844 about having multiple wives:

What a thing it is for a man to be accused of committing adultery, and having seven wives, when I can only find one. I am the same man, and as innocent as I was fourteen years ago; and I can prove them all perjurers…\footnote{Joseph Smith, History of the Church, Vol. 6, pp. 410-411}

9.3 Polygamy Wrong

Joseph’s niece, Mary Baily, stated in 1908 that Joseph “…awoke to a realization of the whole miserable affair [and]…tried to withdraw from and put down the Evil into which he had fallen.”\footnote{Newel and Avery 1984, p. 179}

According to Nauvoo Stake President William Marks, Joseph said,

We are a ruined people. This doctrine of polygamy, or spiritual wife-system, that has been taught and practiced among us, will...
prove our destruction and overthrow. I have been deceived... it is wrong; it is a curse to mankind, and we shall have to leave the United States soon, unless it can be put down, and its practice stopped in the Church.\textsuperscript{158}

Fear of death can be a powerful motivator to stop doing something.

It was never legal at any time, as polygamy was both illegal in US territories and Mexico. It contradicts the 12th article of faith. It is also a lie that polygamy was done because there was more women then men.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1850</td>
<td>6,020</td>
<td>5,310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1860</td>
<td>20,178</td>
<td>19,947</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td>43,451</td>
<td>42,503</td>
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<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>73,477</td>
<td>68,946</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>108,943</td>
<td>96,982</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>138,923</td>
<td>133,542</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Population of Utah:

There is far too much on polygamy to address it all. I highly recommend Fawn Brodie’s \textit{No Man Knows My History}. Fawn Brodie was the niece of David O. McKay and had access to archives that others did not and do not.\textsuperscript{159}

9.4 Martyrdom or why was Joseph Killed?

Suppose you had been a Mason for 20 years, joined the Mormon church and deposited all of your money in its bank. You enter the temple, to find out that your Masonry symbols have been denigrated, being on Satan’s clothes. Your wife or 14 year old daughter has been having relations with the Prophet, and is \textit{eternally} married to him, without your knowledge or consent. You lose all your money in Joseph’s bank. Meanwhile, he denies practicing polygamy, sends Danites out to harm apostates, and your family’s house burned down because you still lived among the believers. He has started an army to wipe out unbelievers and protect himself, expecting himself to be rescued while in jail. It’s amazing Joseph lived so long.

10 Spiritual Evidence

10.1 All spiritual experiences are used as proof

Whenever I ask someone if they’ve had a specific experience that convinces them of the church, they begin telling a random experience about how the spirit led them to call someone, heal someone, or gave them some knowledge they didn’t already have. They use these as proofs that the Church is true. Any spiritual evidence is used in favor of the church, but that is not the case. They don’t have spiritual statistics from other beliefs - if the same proportion of spiritual people who are not LDS have the same (if not more) number of spiritual experiences as LDS people, then the Priesthood is not real. (It’s a shame such experiences are held incredibly private.)

I’ve heard people talk from a variety of different churches and have felt a variety of different spiritual feelings. (Basically warmth and tingling in all their different forms, inside the body and out, a feeling in the air, and incredible impressions.) I have not heard of anything within the Church that I have not heard of without the church. Since some Buddhist monks can cause warmth just by thinking, and praying for someone might make them feel the spirit, spiritual evidence is hardly unique. Many feelings can come from goodwill, companionship, etc. They tend to vary in style from person to person, but patterns are basically the same. An interesting question arises, can someone else cause you to feel the spirit just by thinking? If so, then how do you know the spirit is specifically testifying of what you think it is?

The church makes the claim that no one can receive a revelation for another. It also makes the contradictory claim that by “the power of the spirit ye may know all things”. My first incredible impression was when a seminary teacher read D&C 28:2 - I received a revelation of something that would happen in a year.

\textsuperscript{158}Zion’s Harbinger and Baneemy’s Organ, Vol. 3 (July 1853), pp. 52-53

\textsuperscript{159}Which raises an interesting question - where was David McKay’s spirit of discernment?
to a different person. 160

During near-death experiences, some people ask the Jesus-figure that they meet which religion is best. Typically, that figure will answer whichever one makes them the best person. If a person asks whether a specific religion is true, that person will typically receive a 'yes'. The problem with asking whether it's 'true' is that 'true' is very loaded. If you ask whether the basic physics is true, you would probably get a yes, even though it contradicts quantum mechanics one small scales. Better questions would be asking specific points, like if its historically accurate, is the priesthood really necessary, etc.

10.2 Spirits look like perfect humans

The belief that spirits all look like perfect humans bothers me. Mostly because one member I visited on my mission said that she saw hundreds of little angels fly around her shortly after she joined the Church. And another member said he has a spiritual visitor who was crippled. Another said that the devil appeared like a huge serpent head when he tried to pray. ( Granted, they could be imagining it, but if you believe that, then what’s the difference with spiritual feelings?)

And then how would a full grown spirit fit into a baby body? Not to mention that interacting with the brain becomes a huge problem. If you move your spiritual hand, then your physical hand would move, then there should be no reason for a brain. The spirit becomes insignificant since a lobotomy or removing a small part of the brain can completely change a person’s personality while the rest of the body is intact. "Free will" becomes meaningless if behaviors can be changed so simply.

10.3 Praying to know

If praying to know worked was the ultimate test for truth, then spiritual feelings should come more often while praying. The feelings should be unique, and not the same feelings you get while watching a movie.

I’ve tested experimentally with investigators on my mission. I did not have a big sample ( ¡14 people), but when I prayed with investigators on whether the Church was true, they received no answer. When I prayed with them whether God lived, they often had an amazing experience. 161

11 Conclusion

11.1 What supposedly happens to Apostates

Spencer Kimball said, "Apostasy usually begins with question and doubt and criticism. It is a retrograding and devolutionary process... They convince themselves that there are discrepancies between the practices of the deceased and the leaders of the present... [The apostate] begins to expect persecution and adopts a martyr complex..." 162

From Brigham Young we have, "I say, rather than that apostates should flourish here, I will unsheath my bowie knife, and conquer or die." 163 On a different occasion he said, "let them apostatize, and they will become gray-haired, wrinkled, and black, just like the Devil." 164

Joseph Field Smith said, "We have apostates... Because they haven’t the faith nor the background in knowledge..."165 166

11.2 Apostles and Prophets Today

Joseph Smith taught that "it is contrary... for any one to receive instruction for those in authority,

161I’ve had my share of warmth and other feelings. I felt incredible warmth and love that lasted for a week after seeing "The Testaments". I thought I was going to go crazy my first day in the MTC because all sorts of tinglings, warmths, and inner bubbly feelings happened to me. I was ready to check myself into the psychiatrist, but greatly I they stopped. I do not believe that they testify of truth, but only that I was on the right path at the time. There is a difference. Considering other parts of my life, those aren’t as significant as you might think.

162 The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball, p. 462
163 Journal of Discourses 1:83
164 Journal of Discourses, 5:332
165 Conference Reports, Oct 1961, p. 20
166 Most who know me should know that I have plenty of knowledge about the Church. They should also know that I have plenty of faith in God and miracles.
higher than themselves.”

I’ve always wondered what would happen if someone started preaching on Temple Square a specific prophecy like, “A hurricane will come over California next year. If it comes in August, then be afraid for the great hurricane to come in September.” And then having it come true. That’s pretty vague, yet it seems better than anything they’ve ever done. How would they explain it, when he shouldn’t have near the same power that they do? What if it was more specific? Would they ignore a boy who saw a crack in a dam? If so, they have already lost their claimed authority.

Do the apostles believe what they say? Do they believe in Joseph Smith? Some may, others may not. Perhaps some even disagree, but believe it’s ok, because their job is to testify of Christ. To teach true principles. And to ignore what may bring unrest. Because if they denied it now, they might have guilty consciences.

“The Plan of Happiness” is what Mormons teach to tell people about the Church. They make promises that if you will live their religion, God will bless you. If you pay your tithing, you will be happier. You will be unhappy if you leave the Church. You will not have the Spirit if you leave.

Can prophets make mistakes? Many in the present church disagree with statements from previous prophets and apostles. Since prophets can make mistakes, then how much should we trust them? Each mode of revelation should be scrutinized.

11.3 My theory of the Book of Mormon

Joseph’s father and brother were educators during the off season, so he had some education. Sidney Rigdon and Oliver Cowdery knew each other before they met Joseph. Perhaps they hatched up a scheme to get money and teach their own principles. Sidney was a Campbellite - whenever the Book of Mormon (and Moses) uses “children of men” a lot, it’s Sidney preaching his spiritual philosophies to you. Since many others of the time believed that Christ could have visited American natives, that became the story. 1 and 2 Nephi copied a lot of scripture to fill in what previously was the 116 lost pages. They used a lot of different sources for other parts, including Joseph seeing visions in his seer stone (without actually “translating” anything). So people would listen to him, he came up with an amazing story. They invented miracles so people would listen to them.

Since Joseph was a money digger who claimed lots of visions and spiritual power, Sidney and Cowdery used him. Their philosophies grew and grew. Changes in doctrine can be seen and sources traced. Being superstitious, they each got caught into the others’ fraud. Eventually Joseph began to do things that they didn’t like. The only way to ruin Joseph was to admit that they had been in on the scheme, and that would ruin them.

11.4 Beliefs now

While the Church does many good things, so does McDonald’s and McDonald’s isn’t a beacon of truth. The Church does ask people to question God and listen to feelings, which is good. But it fills people with incredible guilt. It hides its own history in an attempt to look good.

Religious beliefs determine a lot of culture. Spirituality can be good, while there are downsides like "holier than thou" attitudes, and judging those who are just doing something that is against the culture. I like having different perspectives to argue.

I don’t know how much of the Bible that I believe. Were the books of Moses and the Chronicles of the kings part of some grand scheme to bring pride to a culture? Was there really a Jesus who was raised from the dead? Is there a single being who controls

167 Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 21
168 D&C 121 states that authority is lost whenever pride and vain ambitions are pursued.

169“I know McDonald’s is true, because they give millions of dollars to charity, have an amazing organization structure with a way for someone new to take over, and consistency across the world.”
170Granted, there are some things that are just too human nature to avoid, regardless of culture.
171It appears Moses occurred at the “Sea of Reeds” instead of “Red Sea”, and could possibly have been caused by a volcano. That has a lot of implications.
the universe? I don’t know. But I can tell you what I do believe.

I have had a lot of spiritual feelings and unexplainable events. I believe most spiritual experiences that I’m told (though I don’t agree they mean what someone believes they mean). I can disagree with practically anyone. Based on all the stories I’ve read, I’ve come to my own conclusions (which may be very similar to other people’s) about God, etc.

I believe in the afterlife. When you die, you will encounter exactly what you expect to encounter when you die, be it praising Jesus, darkness, family, or whatever. I believe even the worst person in the world deserves mercy, as they are not completely separated from circumstance and decisions. I believe we all existed before we were born as spirits. Before life, we understood what joys and pains we would have in life, and even chose what we wanted to experience. The point of life is to learn, to love, to enjoy, and to live for others. A god who requires some esoteric belief in order to really enjoy the afterlife is not a god worth worshipping.

I reason there are three different possible “gods”. There is the power that permeates the universe and is the law of all things. I figure much of the universe is planned by councils of spirits - these councils and spirits might be considered types of gods, but there may also be a source where all spiritual creations emanate.172

Since science is not straightforward, I see no reason for spiritual things to be.

If anyone is interested in discussing this further, I would enjoy the conversation. Shucks, I’ll even pray about almost anything, and even can promise that you’ll feel something grand if you’ll pray with me.

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172 There’s so many different possible ideas with regards to all of this. Most importantly, I am uncertain how to resolve the problem of evil with the existence of any god. The problem is that as long as I believe in some spiritual power, there must be a greatest spiritual power, and so there must be a reason why that power does not intervene in our lives. The easiest explanation that I can come up with is that everything always existed, which means that God did not create evil, he just overcame it. But then that creates the problem that everything is not at equilibrium. If everything has always existed, then all good and evil should have settled, so that one already knows what place in the good / evil chain of things, and it would be difficult to advance. That would lead crede to believing that the universe was created, but then why create evil? Evil is not entirely necessary, since a life could be imagined where there was no pain whatsoever - a person could have morphine constantly pumped to their brain. And then answering the question of what the ultimate purpose of existence (or God) is, is difficult. Does God get bored? Or does God have constant amnesia, so that he forgets all the pain and joy that he had previously, and then repeats it again, so that he could enjoy it again. Perhaps that is the ultimate point of existence - to forget it constantly so we can relive it constantly, and still enjoy pain and pleasure. However, I doubt that. The big problem with all of this is that one might assume infinity, omnipotence, omniscience, and evil - each of them together creates a complication for the others. So, to answer, what the ultimate point of existence is - I don’t know. But there is some point.