

What Is Wrong With Mormonism?

Deuteronomy 13

1 “If there arises among you a prophet or a dreamer of dreams, and he gives you a sign or a wonder, **2** and the sign or the wonder comes to pass, of which he spoke to you, saying, ‘Let us go after other gods’—which you have not known—‘and let us serve them,’ **3** you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams, for the Lord your God is testing you to know whether you love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul.”

Deuteronomy 18

20 “But the prophet who presumes to speak a word in My name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or who speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die.” **21** And if you say in your heart, ‘How shall we know the word which the Lord has not spoken?’— **22** when a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the thing does not happen or come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him.”

I History Of Mormonism

Joseph Smith, 1805-1844

Father: mystic...dug for buried treasure

Mother: extreme religious views, superstitions

Joseph Smith helped father / brother dig for Capt. Kidd's treasure ... 'peep' stones

1820: Smith's call – *Pearl of Great Price*, 46

1823: angel Moroni appeared at bedside – *Pearl*, 50

1829: Aaronic Priesthood – *Pearl*, 56

1830: Book of Mormon... Church...

Joseph Smith, 1805-1844

Soon after moved to Kirtland, OH (due to Smith's extreme unpopularity...)

62 residents of Palmyra, NY statement ...
(entirely destitute of moral character...)

Smith received revelation: move to Ohio

Smith and Rigdon bought about 63 acres
in MO – 'holy ground'

Marked spot where temple of Zion
(earthly headquarters of Lord's
kingdom) would be built

Joseph Smith, 1805-1844

1842: Nauvoo, IL – John Bennett exposed Smith's polygamy in his paper.

Smith destroyed Bennett's press

Joe & Hiram jailed in Carthage for trial

June 27, 1844: mob of 200 stormed jail, murdered both

Forty-three year old Brigham Young became leader

Brigham Young, 1801-1877

1846: Young announced they would leave Nauvoo

1847: Great Salt Lake (later became Utah)

1857: Young ordered John D. Lee to murder 100+ helpless non-Mormon immigrants on wagon trail

I History Of Mormonism

II Book Of Mormon

Smith claimed vision of God

- What evidence?
- What proof his writings are genuine?
 - NT: revelation has ceased,
Jn.16:13; Hb.13:20; Jd.3

Smith claimed vision of God

Jn.16:13 – However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.

Smith claimed vision of God

Jn.16:13

Hebrews 13²⁰ Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, ²¹ make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

Smith claimed vision of God

Jn.16:13

Hebrews 13:20-21

Jude 3– Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.

Smith claimed vision of God

- What evidence?
- What proof his writings are genuine?
 - NT: revelation has ceased, Jn.16:13; Hb.13:20; Jd.3
- “Have you examined BOM witnesses?”
 - Yes. All recanted; some changed stories
 - Solomon Spaulding manuscript
 - Chauncey Sanders, military historian

1. Bibliographical Evidence

BOOK	DATE WRITTEN	EARLIEST COPY	NUMBER
Herodotus	450 BC	AD 900	9
Xenophon	360 BC	AD 1320	6
NT	1 st Century	AD 117	5000+

No classical scholar would doubt authenticity of Herodotus / Xenophon

To deny NT is to plunge antiquity into obscurity

2. Internal Evidence

- Aristotle's dictum:

Benefit of doubt to be given to document itself, not arrogated by critic to himself.

- Do not assume fraud unless author disqualifies himself
- We can 'know' . . . Lk.1:1-4

Luke 1

¹ Inasmuch as many have taken in hand to set in order a narrative of those things which have been fulfilled among us, ² just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word delivered them to us, ³ it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write to you an orderly account, most excellent Theophilus, ⁴ **that you may know the certainty** of those things in which you were instructed.

2. Internal Evidence

- Aristotle's dictum:

Benefit of doubt to be given to document itself, not arrogated by critic to himself.

- Do not assume fraud unless author disqualifies himself . . .
- We can 'know' . . .
 - Lk.1:1-4 . . . Ac.2:22
 - Jn.3:2 . . . Ac.26:26

3. External Evidence

- Does other historical material confirm or deny internal testimony?
 - Papias: Hierapolis, AD 130 – Mark = secretary for Peter
 - Polycarp: Philippians; quotes 1 John
 - Josephus: AD 37-100
 - Famine, Ac.11:28
 - James' death, Ac.12
 - Herod's death, Ac.12

Smith claimed vision of God

Bibliographical evidence:

- Claimed visitations from 1819-1827
...no witnesses
- 1829: decided he needed witnesses
 - 2 Nephi 27:12-14 [only three]
 - Doctrine & Covenants 30:1-2 [wrong]
 - Roberts / Cowdery / Whitmer / Harris

Smith claimed vision of God

Internal evidence:

- Ezk.37:19-22
 - *stick of Judah: Bible
 - *stick of Joseph: BOM
- Sticks, not scrolls
- Write on them (not written on before)
- Ephraim and Judah
- King: David, 24 (1 Pt.2:9)



Smith claimed vision of God

Internal evidence:

- Ezk.37:19-22
- 1 Pt.2:9
- John 10:16 – And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd



Smith claimed vision of God

Internal evidence:

- Ezk.37:19-22
- 1 Pt.2:9
- John 10:16
- Acts 2:5 – And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven



Smith claimed vision of God

Internal evidence:

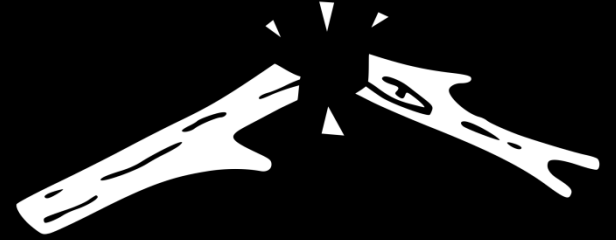
- Ezk.37:19-22
- 1 Pt.2:9
- John 10:16
- Acts 2:5
- Ep.2¹² that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. ¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.



Smith claimed vision of God

Internal evidence:

- Ezk.37:19-22
- 1 Pt.2:9
- John 10:16
- Acts 2:5
- Ep.2:12-13
- Ep.2¹⁷ And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near.



Smith claimed vision of God

External evidence:

- Does other historical material confirm or deny internal testimony?
 - Smithsonian
 - Joseph Fielding Smith (d. 1972)

‘We have no authentic evidence that archaeologists have depended on what is written in the BOM to aid them in their scientific research. It is the personal opinion of the writer that the Lord does not intend that the BOM, at least at the present time, shall be proved true by any archaeological findings’ – *Answers to Gospel Questions*, 1958 II, p.95f.

The Story

First Nephi describes family of Lehi, descendant of Joseph, Son of Jacob, and wife Sariah, who lived in Jerusalem about 600 B.C. Lord warned Lehi to leave Jerusalem, because they were seeking to kill him because he had prophesied to people concerning their iniquity. Lehi had four sons. Lehi's youngest son, Nephi, was more righteous than Laman, the firstborn, so he became the leader. Nephi was told to build a ship to travel to new promised land. He, his brothers and their wives & a few other people landed in the Americas ~592 B.C.

The Story

Division arose among Nephi and Laman. The Nephites kept the law of Moses, constructed a temple. The unbelief of Lamanites led God to put a curse of black skin on them, whereas the Nephites were still 'white, and exceedingly fair and delight-some.' Lamanites battled Nephites; in AD 326 killed all except Moroni, who was given the account by his father Mormon, who wrote on gold plates and buried them at Cumorah Hill in New York State. J. Smith said he was told about these plates, and spent three years translating them by help of God. The accounts of these plates became the *Book of Mormon*.

External evidence: DNA (1 Jn.4:1)

- Ancestors of American Indians (BOM preface, 1-2)
- 2012: Scientific studies on DNA prove conclusively: the major claim of BOM (Israelites are ancestors of Native Americans) is false
- Mormon scientists are disturbed that church leadership is not changing their story
- Solomon Spaulding wrote book of fiction
 - Smith tried to turn it into history / revelation
 - Now all know he lied...again