

annotated Plural Marriage in Kirtland and Nauvoo

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Black Text: Original content

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Latter-day Saints believe that monogamy—the marriage of one man and one woman—is the Lord’s standing law of marriage.¹ (except for proxy plural marriages which are still practiced today for widowers and men who are civilly divorced) In biblical times, the Lord commanded some of His people to practice plural marriage—the marriage of one man and more than one woman.² (This footnote refers to D&C 132:34-39, which states that God commanded Abraham to take a second wife, Hagar. But according to the Bible it was Abraham’s wife Sarai who told Abraham to take her handmaiden so that Abraham would be able to have children.(See Genesis 16:1-3 (KJV). Nowhere in the Bible are men commanded by God to take plural wives. In the Book of Mormon Jacob strongly condemned polygamy, and specifically, David’s and Solomon’s practice, which Jacob characterized as an “abomination” before God. (See Jacob 2:24). But Jacob did allow for this ‘loophole’: “For if I will, saith the Lord of Hosts, raise up seed to me, I will command my people, otherwise they shall hearken unto these things.”.(See Jacob 2:30). More on this later.

Some early members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints also received and obeyed this commandment given through God’s prophets.

After receiving a revelation commanding him to practice plural marriage, Joseph Smith married multiple wives and introduced the practice to close associates. This principle was among the most challenging aspects of the Restoration—for Joseph personally and for other Church members. Plural marriage tested faith and provoked controversy and opposition. Few Latter-day Saints initially welcomed the restoration of a biblical practice entirely foreign to their sensibilities. But many later testified of powerful spiritual experiences that helped them overcome their hesitation and gave them courage to accept this practice.

Although the Lord commanded the adoption—and later the cessation—of plural marriage in the latter days, He did not give exact instructions on how to obey the commandment. (This seems like an odd statement, considering that the polygamy revelation itself states “Behold, mine house is a house of order, saith the Lord God, and not a house of confusion.” (D&C 132:8). Why would God not give instructions

for such an important, difficult and controversial commandment when the D&C is full of very specific instructions about mission callings, the buying and selling of property, exact amounts that specific people should invest in the Nauvoo House, etc. But this statement is mostly odd because God actually did give exact instructions to Joseph. The problem is that Joseph didn't follow them. The actual words in D&C 132 are VERY clear on how polygamy was to be practiced. First, D&C 132 states that Joseph was to marry only virgins (see verses 61-62), but this essay later admits that many of his wives were already married. It also specifies that he should obtain the consent of his first wife (verse 61), but with the loophole in verse 65 that if the first wife does not accept polygamy, then the husband can take virgin brides without her consent. It is interesting that Joseph had many wives before he even revealed the idea of polygamy to Emma, so he completely ignored the first commandment and went straight to the loophole. D&C 132 also explicitly declares that if she stands in the way, Emma will be "destroyed." In addition to these very specific instructions, God revealed to Joseph the very words for the plural marriage ceremony. (See Brian Hales, "Bio of Sarah Ann Whitney," www.josephsmithspolygamy.com, citing an unpublished revelation).

Significant social and cultural changes often include misunderstandings and difficulties. Church leaders and members experienced these challenges as they heeded the command to practice plural marriage and again later as they worked to discontinue it after Church President Wilford Woodruff issued an inspired statement known as the Manifesto in 1890, which led to the end of plural marriage in the Church. (Actually the manifesto was a claim to the outside world that the church had ended polygamy while church leaders continued to perform secret plural marriages until the Second Manifesto ended polygamy "for reals" in 1904. Well mostly, there were still occasional authorized polygamous marriages up until 1920) Through it all, Church leaders and members sought to follow God's will.

Many details about the early practice of plural marriage are unknown. Plural marriage was introduced among the early Saints incrementally, and participants were asked to **keep their actions confidential**. They did not discuss their experiences publicly or in writing until after the Latter-day Saints had moved to Utah and Church leaders had publicly acknowledged the practice. The historical record of early plural marriage is therefore thin: few records of the time provide details, and later reminiscences are not always reliable. Some ambiguity will always accompany our knowledge about this issue. Like the participants, we "see through a glass, darkly" and are asked to walk by faith.³

The preceding paragraph is a safety net to make you feel comfortable that nobody really has solid facts about Joseph's polygamy, and to prepare you for the wishy-washy answers that are about to be presented to you. And to suggest to you that faith in the current church leadership is more important than the truly disturbing nature of what you're about to read.

The Beginnings of Plural Marriage in the Church

The revelation on plural marriage was not written down until 1843, but its early verses suggest that part of it emerged from Joseph Smith's study of the Old Testament in 1831. (Actually, this

date was inferred because Joseph was already being accused of polygamy in the early thirties and claimed his first wife - his 16-year old live-in maid Fanny Alger - in 1833-34. There were accusations of other incidents besides Fanny. For instance, the famous mob attack in which Joseph was tarred and feathered was led by the Johnson brothers, fueled by their accusations that Joseph had been indecently involved with their little sister. It is significant that they brought a doctor along to castrate Joseph. What kind of behavior warrants punishment by castration?) People who knew Joseph well later stated he received the revelation about that time.⁴ (The people referred to here are W.W. Phelps, Oliver Cowdery and five other men who received instruction for their mission to the Indians to take "wives of the Lamanites and Nephites, that their posterity may become white, delightsome and Just". This is probably not mentioned in the essay because of its racist overtones.) The revelation, recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 132, states that Joseph prayed to know why God justified Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David, and Solomon in having many wives. The Lord responded that He had commanded them to enter into the practice.⁵

Here we have a problem in that God seems to have changed his mind somewhere between the Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and Covenants to comply with Joseph's interest in polygamy.

Compare:

Jacob 2:24 - Behold, David and Solomon truly had many wives and concubines, which thing was abominable before me, saith the Lord.

with:

D&C 132: 38 - David also received many wives and concubines, and also Solomon and Moses my servants, as also many others of my servants, from the beginning of creation until this time; and in nothing did they sin save in those things which they received not of me. 39- David's wives and concubines were given unto him of me...

Latter-day Saints understood that they were living in the latter days, in what the revelations called the “dispensation of the fulness of times.”⁶ Ancient principles—such as prophets, priesthood, and temples—would be restored to the earth. Plural marriage was one of those ancient principles. (There is no biblical support for this concept. In the Bible God did not command men to take multiple wives. It was not a “principle,” but rather a practicality that allowed men to expand their tribe, particularly when a wife could not conceive).

Polygamy had been permitted for millennia in many cultures and religions, but, with few exceptions, was rejected in Western cultures.⁷ In Joseph Smith’s time, monogamy was the only legal form of marriage in the United States. Joseph knew the practice of plural marriage would stir up public ire. After receiving the commandment, he taught a few associates about it, but he did not spread this teaching widely in the 1830s.⁸ (This is an admission that Joseph was blatantly breaking the law - keep this in mind when legality is mentioned later in the essay)

When God commands a difficult task, He sometimes sends additional messengers to encourage His people to obey. Consistent with this pattern, Joseph told associates that an angel appeared to him three times between 1834 and 1842 and commanded him to proceed with plural marriage when he hesitated to move forward. During the third and final appearance, the angel came with a drawn sword, threatening Joseph with destruction unless he went forward and obeyed the commandment fully.⁹

Is this really how God does things, or is this a sales pitch to persuade someone to do something that is otherwise contrary to their morals? Why didn’t God instead send the angel to the girls to inspire them, rather than coerce them with a scary story about something that could only be seen by the man making the demand?

Fragmentary evidence suggests that Joseph Smith acted on the angel’s first command by marrying a plural wife, Fanny Alger, in Kirtland, Ohio, in the mid-1830s. Several Latter-day Saints who had lived in Kirtland reported decades later that Joseph Smith had married Alger, who lived and worked in the Smith household, after he had obtained her consent and that of her parents.¹⁰

Why did the angel first appear in 1834 and keep returning to threaten him after he had already complied by marrying Fanny? In fact, Joseph continued to use this line with women even after he had 20 wives. As in Fanny’s case, Joseph sometimes obtained his teenage brides by promising their parents a guarantee of exultation in the Celestial Kingdom as a reward for sacrificing their daughter to him

Little is known about this marriage (actually, quite a bit is known about it from the journals of several people), and nothing is known about the conversations between Joseph and Emma regarding Alger (Except that Emma, who had previously loved Fannie like a daughter, immediately kicked her out of the house upon discovering her relationship with Joseph. This is the relationship that Oliver Cowdery described as a “dirty, nasty, filthy affair.” (See Richard L. Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling*, p. 323).an accusation that resulted in Oliver’s excommunication. Fanny was the first of many teenage

girls that Joseph first brought into his home as a servant or foster child and then later married, usually without Emma's knowledge or approval. Another example is the Partridge sisters, who Joseph and Emma took into their home after the death of their father. Joseph secretly married them and then later, during the brief period when Emma tried to go accept polygamy, a second mock marriage was conducted for Emma's benefit, without her realizing the two girls were already married to her husband). After the marriage with Alger ended in separation, Joseph seems to have set the subject of plural marriage aside until after the Church moved to Nauvoo, Illinois. (The "separation" consisted of Emma throwing Fanny out of the house in the middle of the night after she caught them in the act by peeking through a gap in the barn wall (See Compton, In Sacred Loneliness, p. 34).

So we must ask, what kind of "marriage" did Joseph have with Fanny Alger? It was not a legal marriage, because he was already legally married to Emma. According to the laws of Ohio and the United States this relationship was considered adultery. Neither can we call this a celestial marriage, because the Fanny affair happened around 1833-34 and the sealing power would not be restored until 1836 with the visit of Elijah. Joseph's own reason, as stated to Levi Hancock, who performed the marriage was simply that he was in love with Fanny.

Another teenage bride who married Joseph with her parents' approval in trade for eternal glory, was Sarah Ann Whitney who married Joseph when she was 17 years old.

On August 18th, several weeks after the marriage, Joseph Smith wrote a letter to his new bride and her parents. He was hiding from the law at a home on the outskirts of Nauvoo: *"...my feelings are so strong for you since what has passed lately between us...it seems, as if I could not live long in this way; and if you three would come and see me...it would afford me great relief...I know it is the will of God that you should comfort me now in this time of affliction...the only **thing to be careful of; is to find out when Emma comes then you cannot be safe, but when she is not here, there is the most perfect safty...burn this letter as soon as you read it; keep all locked up in your breasts...You will pardon me for my earnestness on this subject when you consider how lonesome I must be...I think emma wont come tonight if she dont dont fail to come tonight...**"*

Plural Marriage and Eternal Marriage

The same revelation that taught of plural marriage was part of a larger revelation given to Joseph Smith—that marriage could last beyond death and that eternal marriage was essential to inheriting the fullness that God desires for His children. As early as 1840, Joseph Smith privately taught Apostle Parley P. Pratt that the "heavenly order" allowed Pratt and his wife to be together "for time and all eternity."¹¹ Joseph also taught that men like Pratt—who had remarried following the death of his first wife—could be married (or sealed) to their wives for eternity, under the proper conditions.¹² (Pratt met an untimely death when he was killed by the legal husband of the woman Pratt took for his 12th wife).

The sealing of husband and wife for eternity was made possible by the restoration of priesthood keys and ordinances. On April 3, 1836, the Old Testament prophet Elijah appeared to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery in the Kirtland Temple (two or three years after Joseph's marriage to Fanny!) and restored the priesthood keys necessary to perform ordinances for the living and the dead, including sealing families together.¹³ Marriages performed by priesthood authority could link loved ones to each other for eternity, on condition of righteousness; marriages performed without this authority would end at death.¹⁴

Marriage performed by priesthood authority meant that the procreation of children and perpetuation of families would continue into the eternities. Joseph Smith's revelation on marriage declared that the "continuation of the seeds forever and ever" helped to fulfill God's purposes for His children.¹⁵ This promise was given to all couples who were married by priesthood authority and were faithful to their covenants.

The revelation on eternal marriage was first written down in 1843 because Emma demanded to see a revelation before she would agree to let Joseph marry plural wives (the Partridge sisters). Joseph produced the document and Hyrum delivered it to Emma. She burned it. Fortunately Hyrum had another copy and it is now preserved as Section 132 of the Doctrine and Covenants. A careful reading of this section makes it clear that the "new and everlasting covenant" refers specifically to plural marriage, not to monogamous temple marriage. Brigham Young later clearly differentiated between "celestial marriage" (i.e. polygamy) and monogamy. (See Journal of Discourses, vol. 14, p. 43 (May 8, 1870) and openly derided monogamy and identified it as an evil practice: "... this monogamic system which now prevails throughout all Christendom, and which has been so fruitful a source of prostitution and whoredom throughout all the Christian monogamic cities of the Old and New World, until rottenness and decay are at the root of their institutions both national and religious." (Brigham Young, Journal of Discourses, v. 11, p. 128)

Plural Marriage in Nauvoo

For much of Western history, family "interest"—economic, political, and social considerations—dominated the choice of spouse. Parents had the power to arrange marriages or forestall unions of which they disapproved. By the late 1700s, romance and personal choice began to rival these traditional motives and practices.¹⁶ By Joseph Smith's time, many couples insisted on marrying for love, as he and Emma did when they eloped against her parents' wishes.

Latter-day Saints' motives for plural marriage were often more religious than economic or romantic. Besides the desire to be obedient, a strong incentive was the hope of living in God's presence with family members. In the revelation on marriage, the Lord promised participants "crowns of eternal lives" and "exaltation in the eternal worlds."¹⁷ Men and women, parents and children, ancestors and progeny were to be "sealed" to each other—their commitment lasting into the eternities, consistent with Jesus's promise that priesthood ordinances performed on earth could be "bound in heaven."¹⁸

The first plural marriage in Nauvoo took place when Louisa Beaman and Joseph Smith were sealed in April 1841.¹⁹ (Although before moving to Nauvoo Joseph apparently married his second plural wife Lucinda Pendleton Morgan Harris in Missouri as early as 1838. This was also his first polyandrous marriage, as Lucinda was already married to a devout LDS member and leader, George Washington Harris)

Joseph married many additional wives (Footnote 24 below says: “Careful estimates put the number between 30 and 40. See Hales, *Joseph Smith’s Polygamy*, 2:272–73.)” and authorized other Latter-day Saints to practice plural marriage. The practice spread slowly at first. By June 1844, when Joseph died, approximately 29 men and 50 women had entered into plural marriage (no explanation of why this math doesn’t add up, but note that Joseph had nearly as many wives as the rest of the polygamists combined), in addition to Joseph and his wives. When the Saints entered the Salt Lake Valley in 1847, at least 196 men and 521 women had entered into plural marriages.²⁰ Participants in these early plural marriages pledged to keep their involvement confidential, though they anticipated a time when the practice would be publicly acknowledged.

Nevertheless, rumors spread. A few men (specifically, the former mayor of Nauvoo and Joseph’s once good friend Dr. John C. Bennett and Joseph’s brother William, who was also an apostle and served for a while as the church’s patriarch) unscrupulously used these rumors to seduce women to join them in an unauthorized practice sometimes referred to as “spiritual wifery.” When this was discovered, the men were cut off from the Church.²¹ (It is important to note that the ONLY difference between these marriages and Joseph’s marriages is that they were done without Joseph’s express permission. Joseph’s marriages were equally secret and illegal) **The rumors prompted members and leaders to issue carefully worded denials that denounced spiritual wifery and polygamy but were silent about what Joseph Smith and others saw as divinely mandated “celestial” plural marriage.**²² **The statements emphasized that the Church practiced no marital law other than monogamy while implicitly leaving open the possibility that individuals, under direction of God’s living prophet, might do so.**²³

This strikes me as the most egregious statement in this essay. I have underlined the words “carefully worded denials.” The footnote below explains these denials thus: “In the denials, “polygamy” was understood to mean the marriage of one man to more than one woman but without Church sanction.” Just to make it clear the “members and leaders” mentioned here refers mostly to Joseph himself. In other words **he lied publicly**, both in printed articles and public speeches about his plural marriages by playing the politician’s game of having a different definition in his head from the definition that he knows you have in your head. When Bill Clinton said, “I did not have sexual relations with that woman,” he was excluding oral sex from his personal definition of sexual relations. This is a ploy that later came to be known among the church leadership as “**lying for the lord**” and there are many examples of it. Remember, this essay was approved by the First Presidency and Apostles. It flatly states that Joseph committed a serious crime and then lied about it. In order to convince us that the so-called “carefully worded denials” weren’t so bad, the Essay **redefines a very important word** (buried in an endnote, which most will not read):

“In the denials, “polygamy” was understood to mean the marriage of one man to more than one woman but without Church sanction. (See Essay p. 7 n.22) “ In other words, if Joseph Smith chooses to call it celestial marriage it’s ok for him to act like he doesn’t know what you’re saying when you accuse him of polygamy.

Here is an example of one of Joseph’s public “carefully worded denials: "What a thing it is for a man to be accused of committing adultery, and having seven wives,when I can only find one" - (Joseph Smith - LDS History of the Church 6:411). Joseph had over 20 wives at the time he made this statement.

From the Gospel Principles Manual lesson 31: Honesty.

Complete honesty is necessary for our salvation. President Brigham Young said, “If we accept salvation on the terms it is offered to us, we have got to be honest in every thought, in our reflections, in our meditations, in our private circles, in our deals, in our declarations, and in every act of our lives” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Brigham Young* [1997], 293).”

Satan would have us believe it is all right to lie. He says, “Yea, lie a little; ... there is no harm in this” (2 Nephi 28:8). Satan encourages us to justify our lies to ourselves. Honest people will recognize Satan’s temptations and will speak the whole truth, even if it seems to be to their disadvantage.

There are many other forms of lying. When we speak untruths, we are guilty of lying. We can also intentionally deceive others by a gesture or a look, by silence, or by telling only part of the truth. Whenever we lead people in any way to believe something that is not true, we are not being honest.

In 1842 Emma, although she knew about some of Joseph’s previous indiscretions with other women and girls, was still unaware that Joseph was practicing polygamy, but the persistent rumors motivated her to commit the relief society to the purpose of eradicating polygamy from Nauvoo. Here is a statement that was published in the church newspaper and signed by Emma and the rest of her Relief Society presidency:

“We the undersigned members of the ladies’ relief society, and married females do certify and declare that we know of no system of marriage being practiced in the church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints save the one contained in the Book of Doctrine and Covenants... [i.e., Section 101:4]...” (See *Times & Seasons*, vol. 3, p. 940 (Oct. 1, 1842)

Emma Smith, President,
Elizabeth Ann Whitney, Counselor,
Sarah M. Cleveland, Counselor,
Eliza R. Snow, Secretary

What Emma did not know at the time was that all three of the other members of her presidency were secretly committed to polygamy and two were already clandestinely married to Joseph:

- Elizabeth Ann Whitney was an eyewitness to her daughter Sarah Ann's plural marriage to Joseph Smith on July 27, 1842 (see Compton, In Sacred Loneliness, p. 347);
- Sarah M. Cleveland was married to Joseph Smith on June 29, 1842 (officiated by Brigham Young and witnessed by Eliza Snow) (see id., p. 277);
- Eliza R. Snow was married to Joseph Smith also on June 29, 1842 (officiated by Brigham Young and witnessed by Sarah M. Cleveland) (see id., p. 313).

How can anyone know this information without feeling horribly saddened and embarrassed for Emma?

Joseph Smith and Plural Marriage

During the era in which plural marriage was practiced, Latter-day Saints distinguished between sealings for time and eternity and sealings for eternity only. Sealings for time and eternity included commitments and relationships during this life, generally including the possibility of sexual relations. Eternity-only sealings indicated relationships in the next life alone.

This paragraph is intended to help get your mind off sex by opening the door to the idea that some of the marriages might not have had a sexual component. For some reason the author thinks that if he can convince you that some of the marriages didn't involved sex you won't care so much that the rest did.

Evidence indicates that Joseph **Smith participated in both types of sealings**. The exact number of women to whom he was sealed in his lifetime is unknown because the evidence is fragmentary.²⁴ Some of the women who were sealed to Joseph Smith later testified that their marriages were for time and eternity (i.e. **they explicitly stated that they had sex with him**), while others indicated that their relationships were for eternity alone (**no sex specifically mentioned**).²⁵

Most of those sealed to Joseph Smith were between 20 and 40 years of age at the time of their sealing to him. The oldest, Fanny Young, was 56 years old. The youngest was Helen Mar Kimball, daughter of Joseph's close friends Heber C. and Vilate Murray Kimball, who was sealed to Joseph several months before her 15th birthday (**the author really, really, really does not want to admit that Helen was just 14 years old when she married the 37-year old Joseph Smith. He could have just as accurately said "several months from being a 13-year old"**). Marriage at such an age, inappropriate by today's standards, was legal in that era, and some women married in their mid-teens.²⁶

Notice the emphasis is made here on the legality of marrying a 14-year old, as if the fact that its legality is the real concern. Notice also that the author fails to point out that this marriage was already illegal

because of its polygamous nature. The essay also fails to mention Joseph's other 14-year old wife, Nancy Maria Winchester.

I would also like to challenge the common excuse for Joseph's marriage to Helen and other teenagers that it was common for older men to marry 14 and 15-year olds at the time. This is absolutely not true. Yes, it was legal but it was rare and it was no less scandalous in Victorian America than it is today. The average marriage age for women was around 20 and for men around 24, almost always marrying someone near their own age. It must also be pointed out that 19th Century girls typically had their first period three years later than they do today. So in terms of sexual maturity, marrying a 19th Century 14-year old was the equivalent of marrying a 21st Century 11-year old. These were prepubescent girls.

To put it in more modern, church-relevant terms, Joseph's wives break down like this:

Mia Maids: 2

Laurels: 5

YSA girls: 7

Relief Society sisters: 20-something (half of them already married)

We must also consider the circumstances around Helen's betrothal to Joseph. First Joseph commanded Helen's father, Heber C. Kimball to turn his own wife, Vilate, over to Joseph to be his wife.. Heber finally agreed after a great deal of anguish. When he saw the how distraught the Kimballs were when they came to to hand Vilate over, Joseph showed mercy and told Heber the request had only been a test of his loyalty. He could keep his wife, but if he would offer up his daughter instead, Joseph would guarantee a glorious place in the Celestial Kingdom for the entire Kimball family. Who could turn down such a generous offer?

Helen Mar Kimball spoke of her sealing to Joseph as being "for eternity alone," suggesting that the relationship did not involve sexual relations.²⁷ After Joseph's death, Helen remarried and became an articulate defender of him and of plural marriage.²⁸

This is a reference to a poem Helen wrote in which she complains that she was told that the marriage was for "eternity alone" but afterward found that she was removed from society, became the target of "slanderous tongues" and realized that she had made a "generous sacrifice" without weighing the "bitter price."

She also wrote: "My father had but one Ewe Lamb, but willingly laid her upon the alter: how cruel this seemed to the mother whose heartstrings were already stretched until they were ready to snap asunder, for he had taken Sarah Noon to wife & she thought she had made sufficient sacrifice, but the Lord required more... I will pass over the temptations which I had during the twenty four hours after my father introduced to me this principle & asked me if I would be sealed to Joseph, who came next morning & with my parents I heard him teach & explain the principle of Celestial marriage -- after which he said to me, "If you will take this step, it will ensure your eternal salvation and exaltation & that of your father's household & all of your kindred." This promise was so great that I willingly gave myself to purchase so glorious a reward. None but God & his angels could see my mother's bleeding heart — when Joseph asked her if she was willing, she replied "If Helen is willing I have nothing more to say." She had witnessed the sufferings of others, who were older & who better understood the step they were taking, & to see her

child, who had scarcely seen her fifteenth summer, following in the same thorny path, in her mind she saw the misery which was as sure to come as the sun was to rise and set; but it was all hidden from me. This was written almost 40 years later, after she had become an “articulate defender” of polygamy. (See Helen Mar Whitney, Autobiogrpp. 1-2aphy, (March 30, 1881)

Following his marriage to Louisa Beaman and before he married other single women, Joseph Smith was sealed to a number of women who were **already married**.²⁹ Neither these women nor Joseph explained much about these sealings, though several women said they were for eternity alone.³⁰ Other women left no records, making it unknown whether their sealings were for time and eternity or were for eternity alone.

This is a misleading statement. True, other women left no record, but some did! For example, Joseph’s polyandrous wife Patty Bartlett Sessions wrote 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** ... (See Claire A.W. Noall, Intimate Disciple, Portrait of Willard Richards, p. 611 (U. of U. Press 1957). Other polyandrous wives indicated that their marriage was more than just dynastic in nature. After Joseph was martyred some of these women were claimed by Brigham Young and had children with him. Louisa bore 5 children to Brigham.

Besides, what is the point of an “eternity alone” marriage? First, it defies the proclaimed purpose of polygamy, which is to “raise up righteous seed.” Second, is it really more honorable to take a man’s wife for all of eternity, rather than for just a few decades?

Regardless of whether or not Joseph had sex with Helen, the church today recognizes that he did have sex with other young wives because they testified that he did and some signed affidavits to that effect as a response to the claims of the Reorganized church that Joseph was not a polygamist. But why should this be such a surprise? There is no argument that Brigham Young and later prophets’ marriages, many of them to teenagers, were not sexual in nature. Brigham had his own version of polyandry; he would simply take men’s wives away from them if he desired them. He even gave a conference talk about it: “If a woman can find a man holding the keys of the priesthood with higher power and authority than her husband, and he is disposed to take her, he can do so, otherwise she has got to remain where she is. (See George D. Watts, Conference Reports, Oct. 8, 1861)

There are several possible explanations for this practice. These sealings may have provided a way to create an eternal bond or link between Joseph’s family and other families within the Church.³¹ These ties extended both vertically, from parent to child, and horizontally, from one family to another. Today such eternal bonds are achieved through the temple marriages of individuals who are also sealed to their own birth families, in this way linking families together. Joseph Smith’s sealings to women already married may have been an early version of linking one family to another. In Nauvoo, most if not all of the first husbands seem to have continued living in the same household with their wives during Joseph’s lifetime, and complaints about these sealings with Joseph Smith are virtually absent from the documentary record.³² (But not entirely absent. Even less absent are the complaints from very upset husbands whose wives rejected Joseph’s proposals, including Orson Pratt, Albert Smith, William Law and Hiram Kimball).

These sealings may also be explained by Joseph's reluctance to enter plural marriage because of the sorrow it would bring to his wife Emma. He may have believed that sealings to married women would comply with the Lord's command without requiring him to have normal marriage relationships.³³ This could explain why, according to Lorenzo Snow, the angel reprimanded Joseph for having "demurred" on plural marriage even after he had entered into the practice.³⁴ After this rebuke, according to this interpretation, Joseph returned primarily to sealings with single women.

Another possibility is that, in an era when life spans were shorter than they are today, faithful women felt an urgency to be sealed by priesthood authority (if these women were actually pursuing Joseph why did he need the angel-with-sword story to convince them?). Several of these women were married either to non-Mormons or former Mormons, and more than one of the women later expressed unhappiness in their present marriages. Living in a time when divorce was difficult to obtain, these women may have believed a sealing to Joseph Smith would give them blessings they might not otherwise receive in the next life.³⁵

It is deceptive misdirection to suggest that Joseph was rescuing these women from substandard husbands. Take for example Sarah Pratt. Joseph started making proposals to her (which she rejected) while her husband Orson was on a mission. Orson was one of the founding apostles. Did Sarah need Joseph because her husband wasn't a worthy priesthood holder? Or Marinda Johnson Hyde, who Joseph married while her husband Orson, also an apostle, was in Jerusalem where he had been sent as the Lord's emissary to consecrate Palestine for the gathering of Israel. Not a worthy priesthood holder?

Do you notice how many times the paragraphs above use phrases like "may be," "may have," "another possibility," "several possible explanations..." This essay, sanctioned by the Prophet and Apostles cannot answer the most basic and important questions. Instead it gives you a "choose your own adventure" approach to the problem. In fact, the entire thing is a multiple choice test. Do we give Joseph a pass because he wasn't perfect and he was a product of his times or do we proclaim that he was following God's commands and faithfully performing a repugnant duty in opposition to his own conscience as part of an Abrahamic test. Those are mutually-contradictory answers.

But if plural marriage was intended only to link families together, why did so many of Joseph's wives have to be young girls and other men's wives? The Law of Adoption, which Joseph also practiced, allowed men to be sealed to other men as adopted sons. Why didn't Joseph seal himself to these girls as daughters, rather than wives? Why remove them from a normal social life and prevent them from finding companionship with someone their own age (Helen made it very clear that she was completely removed from the society of her peers once she was Joseph's wife)? Or why not limit the sealings to older women and widows if there was no sexual component to these relationships?

The women who united with Joseph Smith in plural marriage risked reputation and self-respect in being associated with a principle so foreign to their culture and so easily misunderstood by others. "I made a greater sacrifice than to give my life," said Zina Huntington Jacobs, "for I never anticipated again to be looked upon as an honorable woman." ([Does this sound like she merely participated in an "eternity only" ceremony?](#)) Nevertheless, she wrote, "I searched the scripture & by humble prayer to my Heavenly Father I obtained a testimony for myself."³⁶ After Joseph's death, most of the women sealed to him moved to Utah with the Saints, remained faithful Church members, and defended both plural marriage and Joseph.³⁷ ([Once isolated in Utah these woman, who had mostly been passed on to Brigham Young, John Taylor and Heber C. Kimball, had little choice but to become defenders of plural marriage.](#))

This might be a good time to point out that Joseph Smith was not only breaking the laws of the land and lying to Emma, the Saints and the world at large, he was also disobeying the every revelation he had received on the subject of marriage. We have already seen how he was disobeying the requirement to marry only virgins, as commanded in D&C 132 (12 -15 of his wives were already married to other men). But worse, he made these statements while the Doctrine and Covenants still contained the original Section 101, which is not found in today's version of the D&C. Former Section 101 was replaced in the 1876 version of the D&C by the Section 132 we have today. Why the change? Because former Section 101 was in complete contradiction to Joseph's behavior. It contained the unambiguous statement that all members of the LDS Church practice ONLY monogamy. Here is the relevant verse: "Inasmuch as this church of Christ has been reproached with the crime of fornication, and polygamy: we declare that we believe, that one man should have one wife; and one woman, but one husband, except in the case of death, when either is at liberty to marry again. (D&C 101:4 (1835 ed.) .

Joseph and Emma

Plural marriage was difficult for all involved. For Joseph Smith's wife Emma, it was an excruciating ordeal. Records of Emma's reactions to plural marriage are sparse; she left no firsthand accounts, making it impossible to reconstruct her thoughts. Joseph and Emma loved and respected each other deeply. After he had entered into plural marriage, he poured out his feelings in his journal for his "beloved Emma," whom he described as "undaunted, firm and unwavering, unchangeable, affectionate Emma." After Joseph's death, Emma kept a lock of his hair in a locket she wore around her neck.³⁸

Emma approved, at least for a time, of four of Joseph Smith's plural marriages in Nauvoo, and she accepted all four of those wives into her household.

This is generally accurate, but also a bit misleading. Two of these four marriages were "redos." Emily and Eliza Partridge, who were living with the Smiths as foster daughters, originally married Joseph without the knowledge or consent of Emma; however, two months later, when Joseph had finally convinced Emma (at least temporarily) to allow him to take plural wives so long as Emma chose them, Emma selected Emily and Eliza Partridge. As a charade for Emma's sake, Emily and Eliza were married for a second time to Joseph. (See Compton, In Sacred Loneliness, p. 409). So Joseph actually had permission from Emma for only two out of 30 or 40 marriages.

She may have approved of other marriages as well.³⁹ But **Emma likely did not know about all of Joseph's sealings.**⁴⁰ (This might be a good time to point out that Joseph didn't rush right out and get sealed to Emma as soon as he received the sealing keys. In fact he waited 7 years. Joseph and Emma were sealed on May 28, 1843. By that date Joseph had around 25 plural wives, to whom he WAS, according to this essay, sealed). She vacillated in her view of plural marriage, at some points supporting it and at other times denouncing it.

In the summer of 1843, Joseph Smith dictated the revelation on marriage, a lengthy and complex text containing both glorious promises and stern warnings, some directed at Emma (specifically that she was denied her request to take William Law as a second husband and that she would be "destroyed" if she didn't submit to Joseph's plural marriages. If you look at footnote 41 referenced here you will see that it is a warning that this threat of destruction is still considered relevant to YOU if you are a woman. It reads: "Doctrine and Covenants 132:54, 64. The warning to Emma Smith also applies to all who receive sacred ordinances by authority of the priesthood but do not abide the covenants associated with those ordinances.")⁴¹ The revelation instructed women and men that they must obey God's law and commands in order to receive the fulness of His glory (and stresses that women must obey the man to whom they are "given").

The revelation on marriage required that a wife give her consent before her husband could enter into plural marriage.⁴² Nevertheless, toward the end of the revelation, the Lord said that if the first wife "receive not this law"—the command to practice plural marriage—the husband would be "exempt from the law of Sarah," presumably the requirement that the husband gain the consent of the first wife before marrying additional women.⁴³ After Emma opposed plural marriage, Joseph was placed in an agonizing dilemma, forced to choose between the will of God and the will of his beloved Emma. He may have thought Emma's rejection of plural marriage exempted him from the law of Sarah. Her decision to "receive not this law" permitted him to marry additional wives without her consent (a handy loophole in a revelation that was written after Joseph had already married 20 or so women and girls behind Emma's back). Because of Joseph's early death and Emma's decision to remain in Nauvoo and not discuss plural marriage (her heart was broken and she knew that polygamy had been the cause of Joseph's death) after the Church moved west, many aspects of their story remain known only to the two of them.

Part of Emma's short-lived agreement to accept polygamy was a contractual agreement that she would be taken care of financially regardless of what happened to Joseph. Joseph's personal secretary William Clayton recorded that only hours after Emma rejected the polygamy revelation, "Joseph told me to deed all the unencumbered lots to Emma and the children. He appears much troubled about Emma." Three days later, Clayton recorded: "Made Deed for 1/2 Steam Boat Maid of Iowa from Joseph to Emma. Also a Deed to Emma for over 60 city lots." William Law remembered that Emma confided to him in a conversation that probably occurred in the fall of 1843: "Joe and I have settled our troubles on the basis of equal rights."

Trial and Spiritual Witness

Years later in Utah, participants in Nauvoo plural marriage discussed their motives for entering into the practice. God declared in the Book of Mormon that monogamy was the standard; at times, however, He commanded plural marriage so His people could “raise up seed unto [Him].”⁴⁴ Plural marriage did result in an increased number of children born to believing parents.⁴⁵ (This is an intentionally misleading statement. The footnote reroutes us to a footnote in another essay which informs us that: “Studies have shown that **monogamous women bore more children per wife** than did polygamous wives except the first.” In other words, the entire premise for polygamy to grow the church more quickly is in error and this essay uses a “carefully worded denial” to misdirect us.)

Some Saints also saw plural marriage as a redemptive process of sacrifice and spiritual refinement. According to Helen Mar Kimball, Joseph Smith stated that “the practice of this principle would be the hardest trial the Saints would ever have to test their faith.” Though it was one of the “severest” trials of her life, she testified that it had also been “one of the greatest blessings.”⁴⁶ Her father, Heber C. Kimball, agreed. “I never felt more sorrowful,” he said of the moment he learned of plural marriage in 1841. “I wept days. ... I had a good wife. I was satisfied.”⁴⁷

But the essay doesn't explain how Heber found out about polygamy and why he was so sorrowful. It was because Joseph had ordered Heber to hand over his own wife Vilate, whom he loved dearly, to be one of Joseph's wives. After Joseph reframed it as a test of loyalty he later revealed that it would be sacrifice enough for them to give him their 14-year old daughter.

The decision to accept such a wrenching trial usually came only after earnest prayer and intense soul-searching. Brigham Young said that, upon learning of plural marriage, “it was the first time in my life that I had desired the grave.”⁴⁸ “I had to pray unceasingly,” he said, “and I had to exercise faith and the Lord revealed to me the truth of it and that satisfied me.”⁴⁹ (But went on to be the world's most famous and enthusiastic polygamist). Heber C. Kimball found comfort only after his wife Vilate had a visionary experience attesting to the rightness of plural marriage. “She told me,” Vilate's daughter later recalled, “she never saw so happy a man as father was when she described the vision and told him she was satisfied and knew it was from God.”⁵⁰

Why was Heber so happy? His wife had given him permission to start bringing other women into their marriage. Heber went on to marry 43 women. One of the things he is remembered for was repeatedly chastising missionaries for marrying the pretty girls and send the ugly ones back to Utah for Heber and the other General Authorities to pick from. Here's one of several comments that have been documented: “The brother missionaries have been in the habit of picking out the prettiest women for themselves before they get here, and bringing on the ugly ones for us; hereafter you have to bring them all here before taking any of them, and let us all have a fair shake.” - Apostle Heber C. Kimball, *The Lion of the Lord*, New York, 1969, pp.129-30.

Lucy Walker recalled her inner turmoil when Joseph Smith invited her to become his wife. “Every feeling of my soul revolted against it,” she wrote. Yet, after several restless nights on her knees in prayer, she

found relief as her room “filled with a holy influence” akin to “brilliant sunshine.” She said, “My soul was filled with a calm sweet peace that I never knew,” and “supreme happiness took possession of my whole being.”⁵¹ (as recounted decades later in Utah while she was married to Heber C. Kimball for time only)

Not all had such experiences. Some Latter-day Saints rejected the principle of plural marriage and left the Church, while others declined to enter the practice but remained faithful.⁵² Nevertheless, for many women and men, initial revulsion and anguish was followed by struggle, resolution, and ultimately, light and peace. Sacred experiences enabled the Saints to move forward in faith.⁵³

Conclusion

The challenge of introducing a principle as controversial as plural marriage is almost impossible to overstate. A spiritual witness of its truthfulness allowed Joseph Smith and other Latter-day Saints to accept this principle. Difficult as it was, the introduction of plural marriage in Nauvoo did indeed “raise up seed” unto God (but fewer than monogamous marriages would have yielded). A substantial number of today’s members descend through faithful Latter-day Saints who practiced plural marriage.

Church members no longer practice plural marriage.⁵⁴ Consistent with Joseph Smith’s teachings, the Church permits a man whose wife has died to be sealed to another woman when he remarries. Moreover, members are permitted to perform ordinances on behalf of deceased men and women who married more than once on earth, sealing them to all of the spouses to whom they were legally married. The precise nature of these relationships in the next life is not known, and many **family relationships will be sorted out in the life to come**. Latter-day Saints are encouraged to trust in our wise Heavenly Father, who loves His children and does all things for their growth and salvation.⁵⁵

So the essay’s conclusion is that, regardless of what went on in Kirtland and Nauvoo, God will sort it out in the end anyway. The question I ask is, why then did Joseph Smith have to do all of this stuff? Why all of these secret acts and deceits? Why secretly marry these women and girls behind Emma’s back? Why marry women who already had worthy and devoted husbands? Why did he destroy the Nauvoo Expositor press, which this essay verifies was actually telling the truth about him, and which resulted in his arrest and murder? Why any of these shenanigans if God is just going to sort things out in the end anyway?

Despite all of this the church does not give us any satisfying answers. Again we are left with a multiple choice question. Should we forgive Joseph Smith and later prophets because they were imperfect men and a products of their times (as previous essays claim) or should we accept the apologetic of this essay and admire Joseph for sacrificing himself, his wife, his morals and the lives of many other people as a test to prove his devotion to God? It has to be one or the other. Actually, there is a third option but we won’t go there.

I am extremely grateful to the church for releasing this and the other essays because I feel like it has removed a huge burden from the shoulders of me and others like me. People have been been treated as traitors by the church and its members, accused of lying, compared to Judas and even excommunicated,

not only for talking openly about these things, but for simply going far enough outside of the correlated materials to even know about them. I praise the church for having the courage to take this step.

But there is something else going on here that I find very unsettling. This essay reveals some very difficult truths. It admits that Joseph Smith married teenage girls and women who were already married - a lot of them. It suggests that he may not have had sexual relationships with some of them but agrees that he did with others. It admits that he publicly lied about these relationships and it confesses that he did most of this behind Emma's back. Anyone with the kind of morals the church demands from its members should be screaming no! no! no! on the inside as they read these things. But the insidious thing about this essay, and the intentions of the people behind it, is that it excuses this behavior and even ask us to accept it as righteous and godly. The creators of this essay take those values that you cherish most and tell you to ignore them - that in this one instance it's ok for you to look the other way. This is a dangerous path to take because it teaches people to ignore their inner moral compass. It makes them even more dependent on the church to tell them what is right and what is wrong and that they should no longer trust their own feelings and values.

I will end with a statement that I once believed to be a perfect description of Joseph Smith and his successors, but now I fear is a condemnation of them - the 13th Article of Faith:

We believe in being honest, true, chaste, benevolent, virtuous, and in doing good to all men; indeed, we may say that we follow the admonition of Paul-We believe all things, we hope all things, we have endured many things, and hope to be able to endure all things. If there is anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy, we seek after these things.

Resources

1. See "The Family: A Proclamation to the World"; Jacob 2:27, 30.
2. Doctrine and Covenants 132:34–39; Jacob 2:30; see also Genesis 16.
3. 1 Corinthians 13:12; Jeffrey R. Holland, "Lord, I Believe," *Ensign*, May 2013.
4. See Andrew Jenson, "Plural Marriage," *Historical Record* 6 (May 1887): 232–33; "Report of Elders Orson Pratt and Joseph F. Smith," *Millennial Star* 40 (Dec. 16, 1878): 788; Danel W. Bachman, "New Light on an Old Hypothesis: The Ohio Origins of the Revelation on Eternal Marriage," *Journal of Mormon History* 5 (1978): 19–32.
5. See Doctrine and Covenants 132:1, 34–38.
6. Doctrine and Covenants 112:30; 124:41; 128:18.

7. "Polygamy," in *The Oxford Dictionary of World Religions*, ed. John Bowker (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 757; John Cairncross, *After Polygamy Was Made a Sin: The Social History of Christian Polygamy* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974).
8. Lorenzo Snow, deposition, United States Testimony 1892 (Temple Lot Case), part 3, p. 124, Church History Library, Salt Lake City; Orson Pratt, in *Journal of Discourses*, 13:193; Ezra Booth to Ira Eddy, Dec. 6, 1831, in *Ohio Star*, Dec. 8, 1831.
9. See Brian C. Hales, "Encouraging Joseph Smith to Practice Plural Marriage: The Accounts of the Angel with a Drawn Sword," *Mormon Historical Studies* 11, no. 2 (Fall 2010): 69–70.
10. See Andrew Jenson, Research Notes, Andrew Jenson Collection, Church History Library, Salt Lake City; Benjamin F. Johnson to Gibbs, 1903, Benjamin F. Johnson Papers, Church History Library, Salt Lake City; "Autobiography of Levi Ward Hancock," Church History Library, Salt Lake City.
11. Parley P. Pratt, *The Autobiography of Parley Parker Pratt, One of the Twelve Apostles of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. Parley P. Pratt Jr. (New York: Russell Brothers, 1874), 329.
12. Hyrum Smith, sermon, Apr. 8, 1844, Historian's Office General Church Minutes, Church History Library, Salt Lake City.
13. These were the same priesthood keys Elijah had given to Apostles anciently. (See [Matthew 16:19](#); [17:1–9](#); [Doctrine and Covenants 2](#).)
14. [Doctrine and Covenants 132:7](#); [131:2–3](#).
15. [Doctrine and Covenants 132:19–20](#), 63; see also "[Becoming Like God](#)."
16. Stephanie Coontz, *Marriage, A History: From Obedience to Intimacy, or How Love Conquered Marriage* (New York: Viking Penguin, 2005), 145–60; Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England, 1500–1800*, abridged ed. (Middlesex, UK: Penguin Books, 1985), 217–53.
17. [Doctrine and Covenants 132:55](#), 63.
18. [Doctrine and Covenants 132:46](#); [Matthew 16:19](#).
19. Joseph Smith's practice of plural marriage has been discussed by Latter-day Saint authors in official, semi-official, and independent publications. See, for example, Jenson, "Plural Marriage," 219–34; B. H. Roberts, *A Comprehensive History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 6 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1930), 2:93–110, Daniel W. Bachman and Ronald K. Esplin, "Plural Marriage," in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 4 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1992), 2:1091–95; and Glen M. Leonard, *Nauvoo: A Place of Peace, a People of Promise* (Salt Lake City and Provo, UT: Deseret Book and Brigham Young University, 2002), 343–49.
20. Brian C. Hales, *Joseph Smith's Polygamy*, 3 vols. (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2013), 1:3, 2:165.
21. Joseph Smith, Journal, May 19, 24, and 26, 1842; June 4, 1842, available at josephsmithpapers.org. Proponents of "spiritual wifery" taught that sexual relations were permissible outside of legalized marital relationships, on condition that the relations remained secret.

22. In the denials, “polygamy” was understood to mean the marriage of one man to more than one woman but without Church sanction.
23. See, for example, “On Marriage,” *Times and Seasons*, Oct. 1, 1842, 939–40; and Wilford Woodruff journal, Nov. 25, 1843, Church History Library, Salt Lake City; Parley P. Pratt, “This Number Closes the First Volume of the ‘Prophet,’” *The Prophet*, May 24, 1845, 2. George A. Smith explained, “Any one who will read carefully the denials, as they are termed, of plurality of wives in connection with the circumstances will see clearly that they denounce adultery, fornication, brutal lust and the teaching of plurality of wives by those who were not commanded to do so” (George A. Smith letter to Joseph Smith III, Oct. 9, 1869, in Journal History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Oct. 9, 1869, Church History Library, Salt Lake City).
24. Careful estimates put the number between 30 and 40. See Hales, *Joseph Smith’s Polygamy*, 2:272–73.
25. See Hales, *Joseph Smith’s Polygamy*, 2:277–302. Despite claims that Joseph Smith fathered children within plural marriage, genetic testing has so far been negative, though it is possible he fathered two or three children with plural wives. (See Ugo A. Perego, “Joseph Smith, the Question of Polygamous Offspring, and DNA Analysis,” in Newell G. Bringhurst and Craig L. Foster, eds., *The Persistence of Polygamy: Joseph Smith and the Origins of Mormon Polygamy* [Independence, MO: John Whitmer Books, 2010], 233–56.)
26. J. Spencer Fluhman, “A Subject that Can Bear Investigation’: Anguish, Faith, and Joseph Smith’s Youngest Plural Wife,” in Robert L. Millet, ed., *No Weapon Shall Prosper: New Light on Sensitive Issues* (Provo and Salt Lake City: Brigham Young University Religious Studies Center and Deseret Book, 2011), 104–19; Craig L. Foster, David Keller, and Gregory L. Smith, “The Age of Joseph Smith’s Plural Wives in Social and Demographic Context,” in Bringhurst and Foster, eds., *The Persistence of Polygamy*, 152–83.
27. Helen Mar Kimball Whitney, *Autobiography*, [2], Church History Library, Salt Lake City.
28. Helen Mar Kimball Whitney, *Plural Marriage as Taught by the Prophet Joseph: A Reply to Joseph Smith, Editor of the Lamoni (Iowa) “Herald”* (Salt Lake City: Juvenile Instructor Office, 1882); Helen Mar Kimball Whitney, *Why We Practice Plural Marriage* (Salt Lake City: Juvenile Instructor Office, 1884).
29. Estimates of the number of these sealings range from 12 to 14. (See Todd Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness: The Plural Wives of Joseph Smith* [Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1997], 4, 6; Hales, *Joseph Smith’s Polygamy*, 1:253–76, 303–48.) For an early summary of this practice, see John A. Widtsoe, “Evidences and Reconciliations: Did Joseph Smith Introduce Plural Marriage?” *Improvement Era* 49, no. 11 (Nov. 1946): 766–67.
30. Hales, *Joseph Smith’s Polygamy*, 1:421–37. Polyandry, the marriage of one woman to more than one man, typically involves shared financial, residential, and sexual resources, and children are often raised communally. There is no evidence that Joseph Smith’s sealings functioned in this way, and much evidence works against that view.

31. Rex Eugene Cooper, *Promises Made to the Fathers: Mormon Covenant Organization* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1990), 138–45; Jonathan A. Stapley, “Adoptive Sealing Ritual in Mormonism,” *Journal of Mormon History* 37, no. 3 (Summer 2011): 53–117.
32. For a review of the evidence, see Hales, *Joseph Smith’s Polygamy*, 1:390–96.
33. Richard Lyman Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling* (New York: Knopf, 2005), 440.
34. See Lorenzo Snow, deposition, United States Testimony 1892 (Temple Lot Case), part 3, p. 124.
35. The revelation on marriage provided powerful incentives for a marriage performed by priesthood authority. (See Doctrine and Covenants 132:17–19, 63.)
36. Zina Huntington Jacobs, autobiographical sketch, Zina Card Brown Family Collection, Church History Library, Salt Lake City; spelling modernized.
37. The historical record is striking for the lack of criticism found among those who had once been Joseph Smith’s plural wives, although most of the wives left no written record.
38. Joseph Smith, Journal, Aug. 16, 1842, in Andrew H. Hedges, Alex D. Smith, and Richard Lloyd Anderson, eds., *Journals, Volume 2: December 1841–April 1843*, vol. 2 of the Journals series of *The Joseph Smith Papers*, edited by Dean C. Jessee, Ronald K. Esplin, and Richard Lyman Bushman (Salt Lake City: Church Historian’s Press, 2011), 93–96, available at josephsmithpapers.org; Mary Audentia Smith Anderson, ed., *Joseph Smith III and the Restoration* (Independence, MO: Herald House, 1952), 85.
39. Jenson, “Historical Record,” 229–30, 240; Emily Dow Partridge Young, deposition, United States Testimony 1892 (Temple Lot Case), part 3, pp. 365–66, 384; Orson Pratt, in *Journal of Discourses*, 13:194.
40. Hales, *Joseph Smith’s Polygamy*, 2:8, 48–50, 80; Bushman, *Rough Stone Rolling*, 473.
41. [Doctrine and Covenants 132:54, 64](#). The warning to Emma Smith also applies to all who receive sacred ordinances by authority of the priesthood but do not abide the covenants associated with those ordinances. See, for example, [Psalm 37:38](#); [Isaiah 1:28](#); [Acts 3:19–25](#); and [Doctrine and Covenants 132:26, 64](#).
42. [Doctrine and Covenants 132:61](#). In Utah, the first wife was part of the plural marriage ceremony, standing between her husband and the bride and placing the hand of the bride in the hand of the husband. “Celestial Marriage,” *The Seer* 1 (Feb. 1853): 31.
43. [Doctrine and Covenants 132:65](#); see also [Genesis 16:1–3](#).
44. [Jacob 2:30](#).
45. On the question of children, see note 6 of “[Plural Marriage and Families in Early Utah](#).”
46. Helen Mar Kimball Whitney, *Why We Practice Plural Marriage*, 23–24.
47. Heber C. Kimball, Discourse, Sept. 2, 1866, George D. Watt Papers, Church History Library, Salt Lake City, transcribed from Pitman shorthand by LaJean Purcell Carruth.
48. Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses*, 3:266.
49. Brigham Young, Discourse, June 18, 1865, George D. Watt Papers, Church History Library, Salt Lake City, transcribed from Pitman shorthand by LaJean Purcell Carruth; see also Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses*, 11:128.

50. Orson F. Whitney, *Life of Heber C. Kimball, an Apostle: The Father and Founder of the British Mission* (Salt Lake City: Kimball Family, 1888), 338; see also Kiersten Olson, “‘The Embodiment of Strength and Endurance’: Vilate Murray Kimball (1806–1867),” in *Women of Faith in the Latter Days, Volume One, 1775–1820*, ed. Richard E. Turley Jr. and Brittany A. Chapman (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2011), 137.
51. Lucy Walker Kimball, “Brief Biographical Sketch,” 10–11, Church History Library, Salt Lake City.
52. Sarah Granger Kimball, for example, rejected plural marriage in Nauvoo but came west with the Saints. Many of the individuals who rejected plural marriage, including Emma Smith, later became members of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.
53. For example, see “Evidence from Zina D. Huntington-Young,” *Saints’ Herald*, Jan. 11, 1905, 29; Mary Elizabeth Rollins Lightner, “Mary Elizabeth Rollins,” Susa Young Gates Papers, Utah State Historical Society.
54. Gordon B. Hinckley, “[What Are People Asking about Us?](#)” *Ensign*, Nov. 1998; “[Polygamy](#),” Newsroom, topics page.
55. [Alma 26:35](#); [Doctrine and Covenants 88:41](#); [1 Nephi 11:17](#).

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