

A Letter to a CES Director

Bulleted List

– December 2013 –



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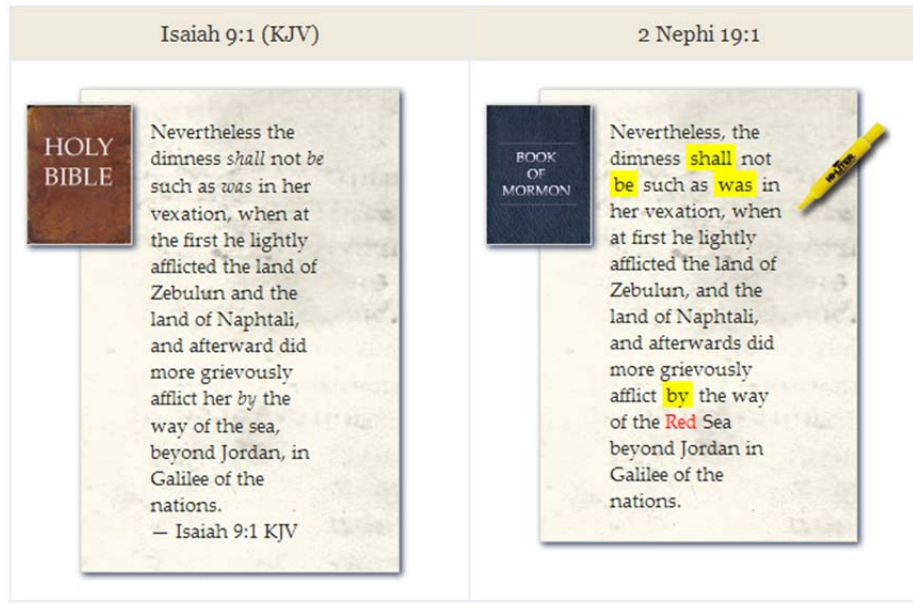
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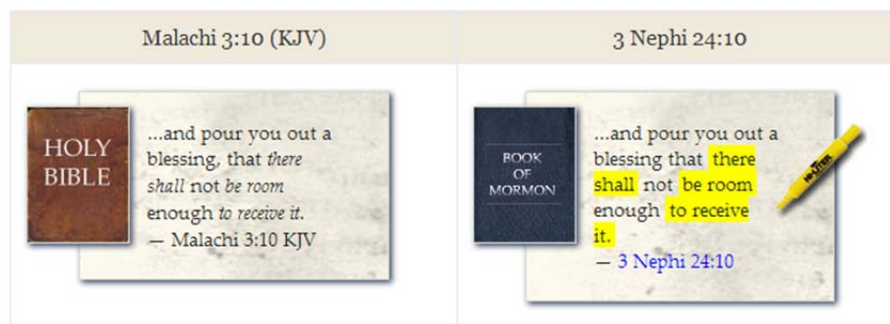
Book of Mormon Concerns & Questions:

- 1769 King James Version edition errors in the Book of Mormon
- 17th century italicized words added by King James translators in the Book of Mormon

Examples:



The above example, 2 Nephi 19:1, dated in the Book of Mormon to be around 550 BC, quotes nearly verbatim from the 1611 AD translation of Isaiah 9:1 KJV – including the translators' italicized words. Additionally, Joseph qualified the sea as the Red Sea. The problem with this is that (a) Christ quoted Isaiah in Matt. 4:14-15 and did not mention the Red Sea, (b) "Red" sea is not found in any source manuscripts, and (c) the Red Sea is 250 miles away.



In the above example, the KJV translators added 7 italicized words not found in the source Hebrew manuscripts to its English translation.

- Text that was corrected in the JST appear uncorrected in the Book of Mormon. A typical example of the differences between the KJV, the BOM, and the JST:

[3 Nephi 13:25-27:](#)

25: ...Therefore I say unto you, take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?

26: Behold the fowls of the air, for they sow not, neither do they reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?

27: Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?

[Matthew 6:25-27 \(from the King James Version bible – not the JST\):](#)

25: Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?

26: Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?

27: Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?

[Joseph Smith Translation of the same passages in the LDS bible for Matthew 6:25-27:](#)

25: And, again, I say unto you, Go ye into the world, and care not for the world: for the world will hate you, and will persecute you, and will turn you out of their synagogues.

26: Nevertheless, ye shall go forth from house to house, teaching the people; and I will go before you.

27: And your heavenly Father will provide for you, whatsoever things ye need for food, what ye shall eat; and for raiment, what ye shall wear or put on.

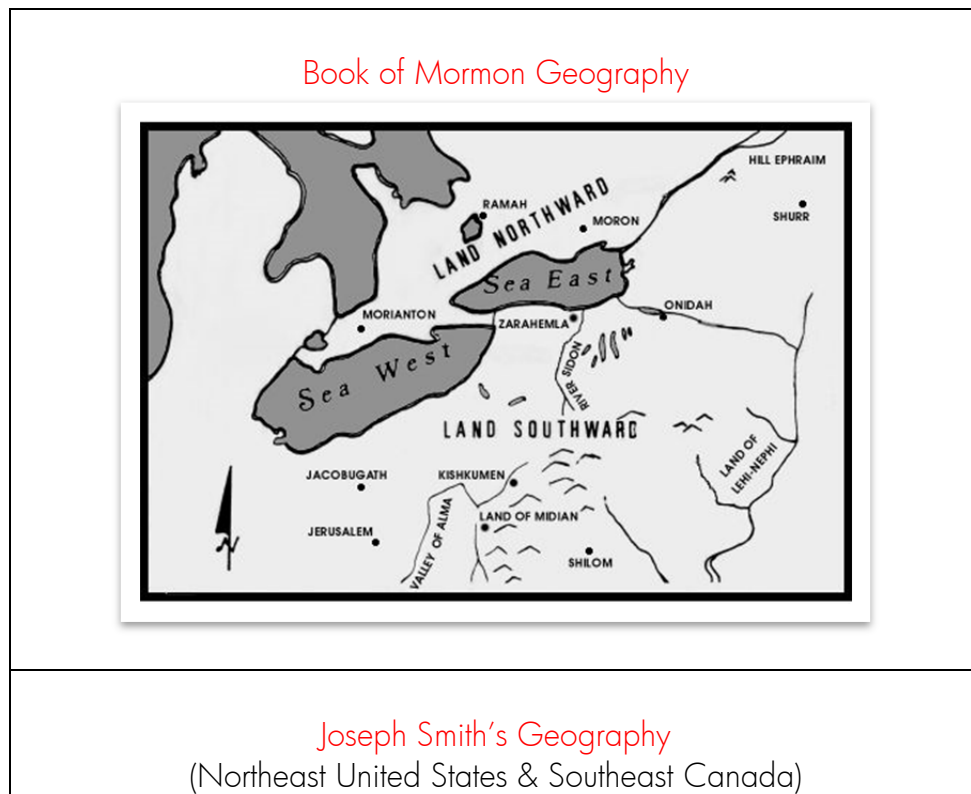
- [DNA analysis](#) showing Native Americans come from Asia, not from the Middle East or from Israelites.
- The Church changed the following section of the introduction page in the [2006 edition](#) Book of Mormon shortly after the DNA results were released:

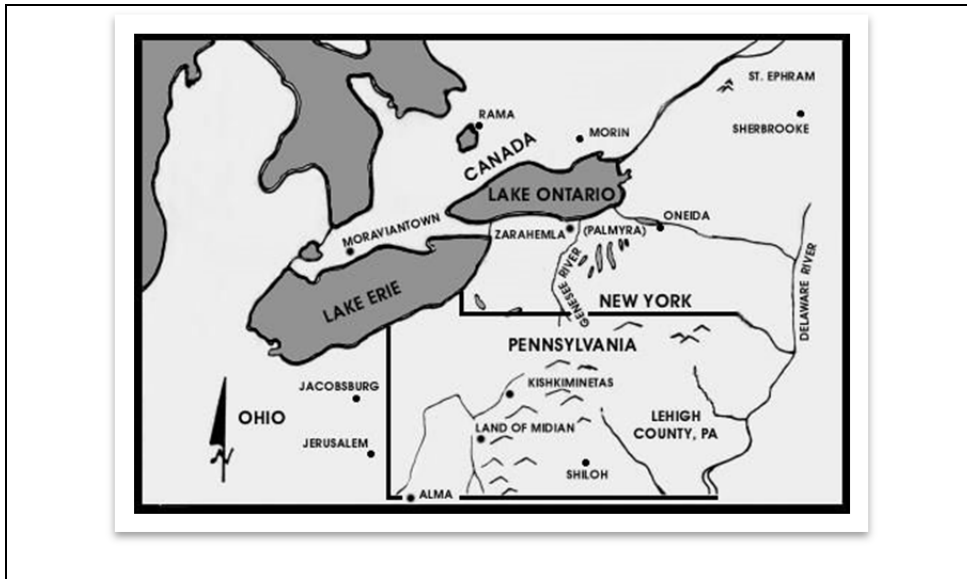
“...the Lamanites, and they are **the principal** ancestors of the American Indians”
to

“...the Lamanites, and they are **among the** ancestors of the American Indians”

- **Anachronisms:** Horses, cattle, oxen, sheep, swine, goats, elephants, wheels, chariots, wheat, silk, steel, glass, and iron [did not exist in pre-Columbus America](#) during Book of Mormon times. Not only that, but many things that did exist, like corn, beans, squash, avocados, and chili peppers are not mentioned. In all, the Book of Mormon fails four tests for evidence: plant life, animal life, metallurgy, and script writing.

- **Archaeology:** [No archaeological evidence](#) to directly support the Book of Mormon or the Nephites/Lamanites who numbered in the millions.
- Apologetic explanations for the above like the [Limited Geography Model](#) (it happened in Central or South America, etc.) and [Two Cumorahs theory](#) that are in direct contradiction to what Joseph Smith and other prophets have taught. In addition, placing the Book of Mormon events anywhere other than in the United States suggest that the United States of America is not the promised land spoken of in the Book of Mormon.
- Two major war battles took place at the Hill Cumorah (Ramah to the Jaredites) that numbered in the deaths of at least 2,000,000 people, yet no bones, hair, chariots, swords, armor, or any other evidence found.
- Latter-day Saint Thomas Stuart Ferguson was BYU's archaeology division (New World Archaeological Funding) founder. NWAFF was financed by the Church. NWAFF and Ferguson were tasked by BYU and the Church in the 1950's and 1960's to [find archaeological evidence](#) to support the Book of Mormon, yet never found any. While not leaving the church, Ferguson remained a closeted non-believer the rest of his life.
- Similarities between many Book of Mormon names and places and local names and places of the region where Joseph Smith lived. Vern Holley constructed the following two maps show Book of Mormon geography compared to Joseph Smith's geography:





The first map is the "proposed map," constructed from internal comparisons in the Book of Mormon.

Other similarities include:

Actual Place Names	Book of Mormon Place Names
Alma	Alma, Valley of
Antrim	Antum
Antioch	Anti-Anti
Boaz	Boaz
Conner	Comner
Ephrem, Saint	Ephraim, Hill
Hellam	Helam
Jacobsburg	Jacobugath
Jerusalem	Jerusalem
Jordan	Jordan
Kishkiminetas	Kishkumen
Lehigh	Lehi
Mantua	Manti
Monroe	Moroni
Minoa	Minon
Moraviantown	Morianton
Morin	Moron
Noah Lakes	Noah, Land of
Oneida	Onidah
Oneida Castle	Onidah, Hill
Omer	Omner
Rama	Ramah
Ripple Lake	Ripliancum, Waters of

Sodom	Sidom
Shiloh	Shilom
Land of Midian	Land of Midian

Source: *Book of Mormon Authorship: A Closer Look*, Vernal Holley

- An 1808 map of Africa that refers to the island of “Camora” with the capital city Moroni:



Camora is near center in the above [1808 Map of Africa](#)

- “Camora” and settlement “Moroni” were common names in pirate and treasure hunting stories involving Captain William Kidd (a pirate and treasure hunter) which many 19th century New Englanders – especially treasure hunters – were familiar with.
- Uniform spelling for Hill Cumorah in the 1830 edition of the Book of Mormon spelled as “[Camorah](#)”.
- Pomeroy Tucker claimed Joseph Smith knew about Captain Kidd in [Mormonism: Its Origin, Rise, and Progress, p.17](#)
- LDS General Authority B.H. Roberts quoted Tucker for background information on Joseph and FAIR has an [article](#) where they quoted Tucker 4 times from his book as support for Joseph and even referred to Tucker as an “eye witness” to Joseph and his family, in spite of claims from some apologists that Tucker’s book is anti-Mormon.
- The following quote demonstrates the popularity of Captain Kidd stories in New England in 1825:

“We are sorry to observe, even in this enlightened age, so prevalent a disposition to credit the accounts of the marvellous. Even the frightful stories of money being hid under the surface of the earth, and enchanted by the Devil or Robert Kidd (Captain Kidd), are received by many of our respectable fellow citizens as truths.” – [Wayne Sentinel, Palmyra, New York, February 16, 1825](#)

- Similarities between Ethan Smith's "[View of the Hebrews](#)" and the Book of Mormon:

	View of the Hebrews Online Source	Book of Mormon Online Source
Published	1823, first edition 1825, second edition	1830, first edition
Location	Vermont Poultney, Rutland County Note: Oliver Cowdery, one of the Book of Mormon witnesses, lived in Poultney when "View of the Hebrews" was published.	Vermont Sharon, Windsor County Note: Windsor County is adjacent to Rutland County.
The destruction of Jerusalem	✓	✓
The scattering of Israel	✓	✓
The restoration of the Ten Tribes	✓	✓
Hebrews leave the Old World for the New World	✓	✓
Religion a motivating factor	✓	✓
Migrations a long journey	✓	✓
Encounter "seas" of "many waters"	✓	✓
The Americas an uninhabited land	✓	✓
Settlers journey northward	✓	✓
Encounter a valley of a great river	✓	✓
A unity of race (Hebrew) settle the land and are the ancestral origin of American Indians	✓	✓
Hebrew the origin of Indian language	✓	✓
Egyptian hieroglyphics	✓	✓
Lost Indian records	✓ A set of "yellow leaves" buried in Indian hill. Elder B.H. Roberts noted the "leaves" may be gold.	✓ Joseph Smith claimed the gold plates were buried in Hill Cumorah.
Breastplate, Urim & Thummim	✓	✓
A man standing on a wall warning the people saying, "Wo, wo to this city...to this people" while subsequently being attacked.	✓ Jesus, son of Ananus, stood on the wall saying "Wo, wo to this city, this temple, and this people." - Came to preach for many days - Went upon a wall - Cried with a loud voice - Preached of destruction of Jerusalem - Had stones cast at him Source: View of Hebrews, p.20	✓ Samuel the Lamanite stood on the wall saying "Wo, wo to this city" or "this people". - Came to preach for many days - Went upon a wall - Cried with a loud voice - Preached of destruction of Nephites - Had stones cast at him Source: Helaman 13 - 16
Prophets, spiritually gifted men transmit generational records	✓	✓
The Gospel preached in the	✓	✓

Americas		
Quotes whole chapters of Isaiah	✓	✓
Good and bad are a necessary opposition	✓	✓
Pride denounced	✓	✓
Polygamy denounced	✓	✓
Sacred towers and high places	✓	✓
Messiah visits the Americas	✓	✓
	Quetzalcoatl, the white bearded "Mexican Messiah"	
Idolatry and human sacrifice	✓	✓
Hebrews divide into two classes, civilized and barbarous	✓	✓
Civilized thrive in art, written language, metallurgy, navigation	✓	✓
Government changes from monarchy to republic	✓	✓
Civil and ecclesiastical power is united in the same person	✓	✓
Long wars break out between the civilized and barbarous	✓	✓
Extensive military fortifications, observations, "watch towers"	✓	✓
Barbarous exterminate the civilized	✓	✓
Discusses the United States	✓	✓
Ethan/Ether	Elder B.H. Roberts noted: "Ethan is prominently connected with the recording of the matter in the one case, and Ether in the other."	
Source: B.H. Roberts, Studies of the Book of Mormon, p.240-242,324-344		

- Oliver Cowdery, also a Poultney, Vermont resident, was [a member of Ethan's congregation](#) during this time and before he went to New York to join his cousin Joseph Smith.
- [Elder B.H. Roberts](#) researched the link between the Book of Mormon, the "View of the Hebrews", Joseph's father having the same dream in 1811 as Lehi's dream, etc. that were available to Joseph Smith, Oliver Cowdery, Martin Harris and others before the publication of the Book of Mormon. He pointed out the many similarities between three anti-Christ in the Book of Mormon: Sherem, Nehor, and Korihor, even though the three were from completely different time periods. He also demonstrated that even though the Book of Mormon time period spanned a thousand years, there was little to no evolution of thought or technological progress among the people. His work has been documented in "Studies of the Book of Mormon". Elder B.H. Roberts came to the following conclusion:



Did Ethan Smith's *View of the Hebrews* furnish structural material for Joseph Smith's *Book of Mormon*? It has been pointed out in these pages that there are many things in the former book that might well have suggested many major things in the other. Not a few things merely, one or two, or half dozen, but many; and it is this fact of many things of similarity and the cumulative force of them that makes them so serious a menace to Joseph Smith's story of the Book of Mormon's origin.

B.H. Roberts - Mormon Seventy and LDS church historian
Studies of the Book of Mormon, p.240

- Recent discoveries show the Book of Mormon also shares similarities with the following books:
 - "Late war, between the United States and Great Britain, from June, 1812, to February, 1815" by Gilbert Hunt
 - "The First Book of Napoleon, the Tyrant of the Earth: Written in the 5813th Year of the World" by Modeste Gruau
- The Book of Mormon taught and still teaches a Trinitarian view of the Godhead. Joseph Smith's early theology also held this view. Examples include:

Original 1830 Edition Text

[View Online](#)

Current, Altered Text

[View Online](#)

[1 Nephi 3 \(p.25\):](#)

And he said unto me, Behold, the virgin whom thou seest, is the mother of God, after the manner of the flesh.

[1 Nephi 11:18:](#)

And he said unto me: Behold, the virgin whom thou seest is the mother of the Son of God, after the manner of the flesh.

[1 Nephi 3 \(p.25\):](#)

And the angel said unto me, behold the Lamb of God, yea, even the Eternal Father!

[1 Nephi 11:21:](#)

And the angel said unto me: Behold the Lamb of God, yea, even the Son of the Eternal Father!

[1 Nephi 3 \(p.26\):](#)

And I looked and beheld the Lamb of God, that he was taken by the people; yea, the Everlasting God, was judged of the world;

[1 Nephi 11:32:](#)

And I looked and beheld the Lamb of God, that he was taken by the people; yea, the Son of the everlasting God was judged of the world;

[1 Nephi 3 \(p.32\):](#)

These last records...shall make known to all kindreds, tongues, and people, that the Lamb of God is the Eternal Father and the Savior of the world;

[1 Nephi 13:40:](#)

These last records...shall make known to all kindreds, tongues, and people, that the Lamb of God is the Son of the Eternal Father, and the Savior of the world;

The following verses in the current Book of Mormon hold a Trinitarian view of the Godhead:

[Alma 11:38-39:](#)

38: Now Zeezrom saith again unto him: Is the Son of God the very Eternal Father?

39: And Amulek said unto him: Yea, he is the very Eternal Father of heaven and of earth, and all things which in them are; he is the beginning and the end, the first and the last;

[Mosiah 15:1-4:](#)

- 1: And now Abinadi said unto them: I would that ye should understand that God himself shall come down among the children of men, and shall redeem his people.
- 2: And because he dwelleth in flesh he shall be called the Son of God, and having subjected the flesh to the will of the Father, being the Father and the Son –
- 3: The Father, because he was conceived by the power of God; and the Son, because of the flesh; thus becoming the Father and Son –
- 4: And they are one God, yea, the very Eternal Father of heaven and of earth.

[Mosiah 16:15:](#)

15: Teach them that redemption cometh through Christ the Lord, who is the very Eternal Father. Amen."

- The Trinitarian view of the Godhead held by Joseph Smith and in the first version of the Book of Mormon contradicts the official [1838 First Vision account](#).
- Over [100,000 changes](#) to the Book of Mormon since its first publication. While most of these were minor grammatical corrections, there were major changes made to reflect Joseph's evolved view of the Godhead.

Book of Mormon Translation Concerns & Questions:

- Joseph Smith [placed a seer stone in a hat to translate](#) the Book of Mormon instead of the Urim and Thummim as portrayed in church media, often while the gold plates were covered or put in another room or buried in the woods while translating the Book of Mormon.
- These translation details are listed in "Rough Stone Rolling" (p. 71-72), in articles by FAIR [here](#) and [here](#), by [Neal Maxwell Institute \(FARMS\)](#), and in an obscure [1992 talk given by Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles](#).

First Vision Concerns & Questions:

- At least 4 different First Vision accounts by Joseph Smith:
 - [1832 account](#)
 - [Two 1835 accounts](#)
 - [1838 account \(official version\)](#)
 - [1842 account](#)
- No contemporary accounts of the First Vision for twelve to twenty-two years after it supposedly occurred.
- In the [1832 account](#), Joseph said that his primary purpose in going to prayer was to seek forgiveness of his sins, not to know which church to join.
- In the official [1838 account](#), Joseph said his "object in going to inquire of the Lord was to know which of all the sects was right, that I might know which to join"... "(for at this time it had never entered into my heart that all were wrong)".

- Inconsistencies in dates / his age at the time of the vision.
- Inconsistencies in who appears to him: a spirit, an angel, two angels, Jesus, many angels, the Father and the Son.
- The historical record shows that there was no revival in Palmyra in 1820 consistent with the experience Joseph described. There were revivals in 1817 and 1824.
- Discrepancies in records from William Smith and Lucy Mack Smith stating that the family joined Presbyterianism after Alvin Smith's death in November 1823, while Joseph Smith claimed in the official [1838 account](#) that they joined in 1820, before Alvin's death.

Book of Abraham Concerns & Questions:

- Despite Joseph's claim that this record was written by Abraham "[by his own hand, upon papyrus](#)", scholars have found the original papyrus Joseph translated and have dated it in first century AD, nearly 2,000 years after Abraham could have written it.
- Egyptologists have found the source material for the Book of Abraham to be a common Egyptian funerary text for a deceased man named "Hor" in 1st century AD. In other words, it was a common Breathing Permit that the Egyptians buried with their dead.
- **Facsimile 1:** Discrepancies between the rediscovered papyri including what was penciled in by Joseph Smith and his associates and other papyri discovered elsewhere in Egypt:



Above: Rediscovered papyrus and canonized Facsimile 1 in the Book of Abraham
 Below: Other papyri from the same period from Egypt



The following is a side-by-side comparison of what Joseph Smith translated in Facsimile #1 versus what it actually says according to Egyptologists and modern Egyptology:

The Book of Abraham

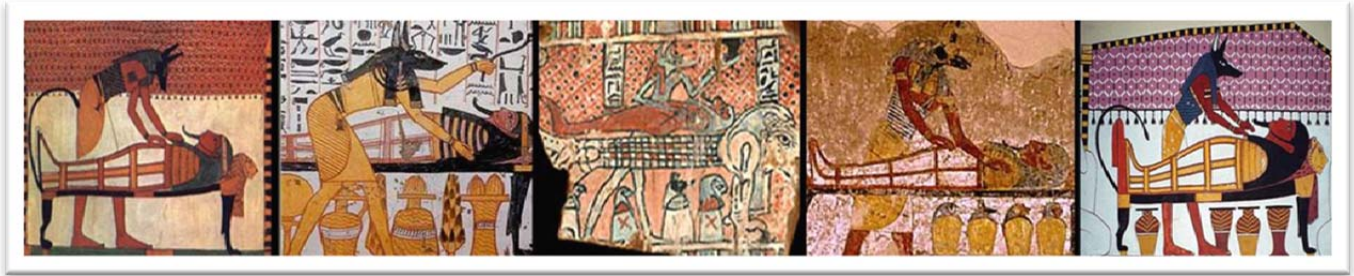
A common funerary document.

Joseph Smith's Interpretation	Translated Correctly? Facsimile #1, Book of Abraham	Modern Egyptological Interpretation
The Angel of the Lord.	1	1 The spirit or "ba" of Hôr (The deceased fellow)
Abraham fastened upon an altar	2	2 The deceased: His name was "Hôr"
The idolatrous priest of Elkenah	3	3 Anubis (see original image not facsimile, this figure was originally portrayed with the head of a Jackal)
The altar for sacrifice by the idolatrous priests, standing before the gods of Elkenah, Libnah, Mahmackrah, Korash, and Pharaoh.	4	4 A common funerial bier or "lion couch"
The idolatrous god of Elkenah.	5	5
The idolatrous god of Libnah.	6	6 Canopic jars containing the deceased's internal organs.
The idolatrous god of Mahmackrah.	7	7
The idolatrous god of Korash.	8	8
The idolatrous god of Pharaoh.	9	9 This is the god "Horus"
Abraham in Egypt	10	10 A libation table bearing wines, oils, etc.
Designed to represent the pillars of heaven, as understood by the Egyptians.	11	11 A palace façade, called a "serekh"
Raukeeyang, signifying expanse, or the firmament over our heads; but in this case, in relation to this subject, the Egyptians meant it to signify Shaumau, to be hig, or the heavens, answering to the Hebrew word Shaumahveen.	12	12 This is just the water that the crocodile swims in.

Joseph Smith's Interpretation available at: <http://www.lds.org/scriptures/pgp/abr/fac-1>
 Modern Egyptological Interpretation compiled at: http://www.bookofabraham.com/boamathie/BOA_6.html
 FAIR LDS explanation at http://en.fairmormon.org/Book_of_Abraham/Joseph_Smith_Papvri/Facsimiles/Facsimile_1

Panel Comparison by: mormoninfographics.com

Figure #3 is supposed to be the jackal-headed Egyptian god of mummification and afterlife, [Anubis](#), who is not a human. The following images shows the same funeral scene which has been discovered elsewhere in Egypt. Notice that the jackal-headed Egyptian god Anubis is consistent in every funerary scene.



- Facsimile #2: The following is a side-by-side comparison of what Joseph Smith translated in Facsimile #2 versus what Egyptologists and modern Egyptology claim:

The Book of Abraham

Hypocephalus; a funerary amulet

Joseph Smith's Interpretation	Translated Correctly? Facsimile #2, Book of Abraham	Modern Egyptological Interpretation
Kolob, The residence of God	1	1 The god Khnumu.
Stands next to Kolob	2	2 "Amun-Re", god with two faces representing rising & setting sun.
God sitting on his throne, clothed with power and authority	3	3 "Horus-Re" riding in his boat
Raukeeyang; also the number 1,000; The measuring of time of Oliblish	4	4 Represents Sokar, not a number
Enish-go-on-dosh; a governing planet	5	5 Cow of Hathor, behind which stands a uzat-headed goddess holding a sacred tree.
Represents this earth in it's four quarters	6	6 The four (4) sons of Horus, they can represent the four cardinal points of earth
God sitting on his throne, revealing through the heavens the grand Key-words of the Priesthood	7	7 The god "Min", an ithyphallic god, that is, a sexually aroused male deity.
Contains writings that can only be revealed in the temple.	8	8 "grant that the soul of Osiris Shechonk may live."
Ought not to be revealed at the present time.	9	9 "the netherworld (below the earth) and his great waters"
	10	10 "O might god, lord of heaven and earth"
	11	11 "O god of the sleeping ones from the time of creation" (Read in order 11, 10, 9, 8)
	12	12 "near" and "wrap"
	13	13 "which made by"
	14	14 "breathings"
	15	15 "this book"
	16	16 "and may this soul and its possessor never be desecrated in the netherworld"
Will be given in the own due time of the Lord	17	17 "May this tomb never be desecrated"
	18	18 "I am Djabyt in the house of Benben in Heliopolis, so exalted and glorious. [I am] copulating bull without equal. [I am] that mighty god in the house of Benben of Heliopolis... that might god..."
	19	19 "You shall be as that god, the Busirian"
	20	20 Writing: "The name of this mighty god"
	21	21 Figures 22,23; Baboons are adoring souls of that realm
No Annotation Given	22	22
	23	23

Joseph Smith's Interpretation available at: <http://www.lds.org/scriptures/ptp/abrac-2>
 Modern Egyptological Interpretation compiled at: http://www.bookofabraham.com/boamathief/BDA_7.html
 FAIR LDS explanation at http://en.fairmormon.org/Book_of_Abraham/Joseph_Smith_Papyri

• Facsimile #3:

The following is a side-by-side comparison of what Joseph Smith translated in Facsimile #3 versus what Egyptologists and modern Egyptology claim:

The Book of Abraham

Facsimile #3, The Breathing Permit

Figure #1

Interpreter	Translation
Joseph	Abraham
Egyptologist	Osiris

Figure #2

Interpreter	Translation
Joseph	Male - Pharaoh
Egyptologist	Female - Isis

Figure #3

Interpreter	Translation
Joseph	Abraham in Egypt
Egyptologist	Libation Table

Figure #4

Interpreter	Translation
Joseph	Male - Prince
Egyptologist	Female - Maat

Figure #5

Interpreter	Translation
Joseph	Shulem, a waiter
Egyptologist	Hôr, the deceased

Figure #6

Interpreter	Translation
Joseph	Olimlah, a slave
Egyptologist	Anubis, a god

Joseph offered no translation of Lower Vignette	"O gods of the necropolis, gods of the caverns, gods of the south, north, west, and east, grant salvation to the Osiris Hôr, the justified, born by Taikhibit."	Egyptologist Translation of Lower
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Joseph Smith's Interpretation

Modern Egyptological Interpretation

Joseph Smith's Interpretation	#	Modern Egyptological Interpretation
Abraham sitting upon Pharaoh's throne, by the politeness of the king, with a crown upon his head, representing the Priesthood, as emblematical of the grand Presidency in Heaven; with the scepter of justice and judgment in his hand.	1	This is Osiris Writing above figure: "Recitation by Osiris, Foremost of the Westerners" The "atef" crown also identifies him as Osiris
King Pharaoh, whose name is given in the characters above his head.	2	This figure is female not male. Writing above figure: "Isis the great, the god's mother"
Signifies Abraham in Egypt as given also in Figure 10 of Facsimile No. 1.	3	This is a libation table (wine, oils, etc.)
Prince of Pharaoh, King of Egypt, as written above the hand.	4	This figure is female not male. Writing above figure: "Maat, mistress of the gods."
Shulem, one of the king's principal waiters, as represented by the characters above his hand.	5	This is the deceased individual wearing the traditional cone of perfumed grease and lotus flower on his head. Writing above figure: "The Osiris Hôr, justified forever"
Olimlah, a slave belonging to the prince.	6	Not a slave, this is Anubis, guide of the dead, who is there to support the deceased. Writing above figure: "Recitation by Anubis, who makes protection(?), foremost of the embalming booth..."

Joseph Smith's Interpretation available at: <http://www.lds.org/scriptures/abram/abrfac-3>
 Modern Egyptological Interpretation compiled at: http://www.bookofabraham.com/boamathie/BDA_6.htm
 FAIR LDS explanation at http://en.fairmormon.org/Book_of_Abraham/Joseph_Smith_Papyrus

Panel Comparison by: mormoninfographics.com

- Egyptologists strongly disagree with Joseph Smith's translation of the papyri and facsimiles:
 - Facsimile #1:
 - The names are wrong.
 - The Abraham scene is wrong.

- He names gods that are not part of the Egyptian belief system or of any known mythology or belief system.
 - Facsimile #2:
 - Joseph translated 11 figures on this facsimile. None of the names are correct as each one of these gods does not even exist in Egyptian religion or any recorded mythology.
 - Facsimile #3:
 - Misidentifies the Egyptian god [Osiris](#) as Abraham.
 - Misidentifies the Egyptian god [Isis](#) as the Pharaoh.
 - Misidentifies the Egyptian god [Maat](#) as the Prince of the Pharaoh.
 - Misidentifies the Egyptian god [Anubis](#) as a slave.
 - Misidentifies the dead Hor as a waiter.
 - Misidentifies – twice – a female as a male.
- The Book of Abraham teaches a Newtonian view of the universe, including astronomy concepts, mechanics, and models of the universe that have been discredited by 20th century Einsteinian physics.
- 86% of Book of Abraham chapters 2, 4, and 5 contain King James Version Genesis chapters 1, 2, 11, and 12. Sixty-six out of seventy-seven verses are quotations or close paraphrases of King James Version wording (*An Insider's View of Mormon Origins*, p.19).
- Anachronisms in the Book of Abraham, including Chaldeans, Egyptus, and Pharaoh.
- Facsimile 2, Figure #5 states the sun gets its light from Kolob. We now know that the sun shines because of thermonuclear fusion; not because it gets its light from any other star as claimed by the Book of Abraham.
- Comparisons between Book of Abraham cosmology and a book published in 1830 by Thomas Dick entitled "[The Philosophy of the Future State](#)". Joseph Smith owned a copy of the book and Oliver Cowdery quoted some lengthy excerpts from the book in the [December 1836 Messenger and Advocate](#).
- Elder Jeffrey R. Holland was directly asked about the papyri not matching the Book of Abraham in a March 2012 [BBC interview](#):
 - **Sweeney:** Mr. Smith got this papyri and he translated them and subsequently as the Egyptologists cracked the code something completely different...
 - **Holland:** (Interrupts) All I'm saying...all I'm saying is that what got translated got translated into the word of God. The vehicle for that, I do not understand and don't claim to know and know Egyptian.
- Statements by Egyptian scholars/Egyptologists statements regarding Joseph Smith and the Book of Abraham:

"...these three facsimiles of Egyptian documents in the Pearl of Great Price depict the most common objects in the Mortuary religion of Egypt. Joseph Smith's interpretations of them as part of a unique revelation through Abraham, therefore, very clearly demonstrates that he was totally unacquainted with the significance of these documents and absolutely ignorant of the simplest facts of Egyptian writing and civilization."

– Dr. James H. Breasted, University of Chicago

"It may be safely said that there is not one single word that is true in these explanations"

– Dr. W.M. Flinders Petrie, London University

“It is difficult to deal seriously with Joseph Smith’s impudent fraud...Smith has turned the goddess [Isis in Facsimile #3] into a king and Osiris into Abraham.”

– Dr. A.H. Sayce, Oxford professor of Egyptology

- Unlike the Book of Mormon, the Book of Abraham provides a clear example of Joseph Smith’s ability to translate because we have the original source material.

Polygamy/Polyandry Concerns & Questions:

- According to Todd Compton in his book “In Sacred Loneliness”, Joseph Smith was married to at least 33 women.
- Polyandry: Of those 33 women, 11 of them were married to other living men, including Apostle Orson Hyde, who was sent on his mission to dedicate Israel while Joseph secretly married his wife, Marinda Hyde.
- Marrying other married women violates [D&C 132:61](#).
- Evidence of polyandry not disputed by most apologists, including [FAIR](#).
- Of the 33 women, 7 of them were teenage girls, including two 14-year-olds. Joseph was 37-years-old when he married 14-year-old [Helen Mar Kimball](#). That these were considered marriages suggests these were sexual relationships, although there is no direct evidence.
- Among the women was a mother-daughter set and three sister sets. Several of these women included Joseph's foster daughters.
- Some of the marriages to these women included promises by Joseph of eternal life to the girls and their families, threats of loss of salvation, and threats that he (Joseph) was going to be slain by an angel with a flaming sword if the girls didn't marry him.
- Discrepancy between [Doctrine & Covenants 132](#) still being in the LDS canon and President Hinckley publicly stating that polygamy is not doctrinal.
- Many of Joseph Smith’s marriages occurred without his wife Emma’s knowledge, in violation of [D&C 132:63](#) where it states the first wife must at least have the opportunity to consent.
- In [D&C 132:41](#), it states that if the first wife doesn’t consent, she will be “destroyed”. This could be seen as an attempt by Joseph to coerce Emma into allowing him to practice polygamy.
- D&C 132 is unequivocal on the point that polygamy is permitted only “to multiply and replenish the earth” and “bear the souls of men”. This would be consistent with the Book of Mormon prohibition on marriage except in the case where God commands it to “[raise up seed](#)”, in spite of the current evidence that none of Joseph’s polygamous marriages produced any offspring.
- Dishonesty in public sermons, the 1835 version D&C 101:4 denying the practice of polygamy, denials by Joseph Smith denying he was a polygamist, and 31 people/witnesses signed an affidavit published in the LDS [October 1, 1842 Times and Seasons](#) stating that Joseph did *not* practice polygamy. Several of the signatories were secret polygamists or knew that Joseph was a polygamist at the time they signed the affidavit.
- As mayor of Nauvoo, Joseph ordered the destruction of the [Nauvoo Expositor](#) that threatened to expose his polygamy.
- Marriages to young women living in Joseph’s home as foster daughters (Lawrence sisters, Partridge sisters, Fanny Alger, Lucy Walker).

- Joseph's marriage to [Fanny Alger](#) was described by Oliver Cowdery as a "[dirty, nasty, filthy affair](#)" (Rough Stone Rolling, p.323).
- Joseph was practicing polygamy before the sealing authority was given. LDS historian, Richard Bushman, said "There is evidence that Joseph was a polygamist by 1835" (Rough Stone Rolling, p.323). It can be argued that plural marriages are rooted in the notion of "sealing" for both time and eternity, although some apologists dispute this. The "sealing" power was not restored until [April 3, 1836 when Elijah appeared to Joseph in the Kirtland Temple](#) and conferred the sealing keys upon him. Therefore, assuming that plural marriages are linked to the sealing power, Joseph's marriage to Fanny Alger in 1833 was illegal under *both* the laws of the land and under any theory of divine authority.
- [Familysearch.org](#) – an LDS-owned genealogy website – lists Joseph Smith's plural wives.
- Pattern of keeping secrets, using deception and dishonesty – both privately and publicly – calls into question Joseph's character.
- Other church presidents had questionable practices concerning polygamy. Namely, as president of the church, Lorenzo Snow married a [16 year old girl](#) when he was 57 and fathered 5 children with her, although the first child wasn't born until she was 21.

Prophets Concerns & Questions:

- **Adam-God:** President Brigham Young taught what is now known as "Adam-God theory". He taught that Adam is "our Father and our God, and the only God with whom we have to do". Young taught this doctrine at the [1852](#) and [1854](#) General Conferences and as the [Lecture at the Veil](#) in the endowment ceremony of the Temple. Prophets and apostles after Young, including President Spencer W. Kimball and Elder Bruce R. McConkie, renounced Adam-God theory as false doctrine and claimed that Brigham Young was speaking "as a man", in spite of Brigham's claim that he was acting as a prophet:

"I have never yet preached a sermon and sent it out to the children of men, that they may not call scripture." – [Journal of Discourses 13:95](#)

- Ironically, McConkie's June 1980 condemnation asks members to trust him and Kimball as today's living prophet. Further, McConkie is pointing to the endowment ceremony as a source of factual information.
- Bruce R. McConkie's 1980 [private letter](#) to Eugene England claims that the standard works trump what a current prophet claims, in direct contradiction to Ezra Taft Benson's [14 Fundamentals](#) talk delivered around the same time at Brigham Young University claiming that a current prophet trumps both a dead prophet and the scriptures.
- **Blood Atonement:** Brigham Young taught a doctrine known as "[Blood Atonement](#)" where a person's blood had to be shed to atone for their own sins because such sins were beyond the atonement of Jesus Christ.

"There are sins that men commit for which they cannot receive forgiveness in this world, or in that which is to come, and if they had their eyes open to see their true condition, they would be perfectly willing to have their blood spilt upon the ground, that the smoke thereof might ascend to heaven as an offering

for their sins; and the smoking incense would atone for their sins, whereas, if such is not the case, they will stick to them and remain upon them in the spirit world.

I know, when you hear my brethren telling about cutting people off from the earth, that you consider it is strong doctrine; but it is to save them, not to destroy them...

And furthermore, I know that there are transgressors, who, if they knew themselves, and the only condition upon which they can obtain forgiveness, would beg of their brethren to shed their blood, that the smoke thereof might ascend to God as an offering to appease the wrath that is kindled against them, and that the law might have its course. I will say further;

I have had men come to me and offer their lives to atone for their sins.

It is true that the blood of the Son of God was shed for sins through the fall and those committed by men, yet men can commit sins which it can never remit.... There are sins that can be atoned for by an offering upon an altar, as in ancient days; and there are sins that the blood of a lamb, or a calf, or of turtle dove, cannot remit, but they must be atoned for by the blood of the man." – [Journal of Discourses, Vol. 4, p. 53-54](#)

There are several [historical examples](#) of the Blood Atonement doctrine being practiced. The doctrine was later declared false by future prophets and apostles.

- **Polygamy:** Brigham Young, John Taylor, Wilford Woodruff, Lorenzo Snow, and Joseph F. Smith taught the doctrine that polygamy is required for exaltation:

"The only men who become Gods, even the Sons of God, are those who enter into polygamy." – [Journal of Discourses 11:269](#)

- Plural marriage still practiced in the Temple, where a living man can be sealed to another wife after his first wife dies. Apostles Dallin H. Oaks and Russell M. Nelson are modern examples of LDS polygamists in that they're sealed to multiple women.
- **Priesthood/Temple Ban:** For nearly 130 years, African-americans were banned from holding the priesthood and blocked from receiving Temple ordinances. Joseph Smith permitted the priesthood to at least two black men: [Elijah Abel](#) and [Walker Lewis](#). The ban was formally instituted by Brigham Young in a [January, 1852 address to the Utah legislature](#). Spencer W. Kimball referred to the ban as a "possible error" (Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball, p. 448-449). This contradicts the Book of Mormon scripture: "[...denieth none that come unto him, black and white, bond and free, male and female](#)".
- There have been suggestions the repeal of the ban came due to outside pressure, including the IRS threatening to revoke the Church's tax-exempt status, Stanford and other universities boycotting BYU athletics, uncertainty over African ancestry among church members in Brazil, and that post-Civil Rights societal trends were against the Church's stance.

- The Mark Hofmann documents/forges:



- In the early to mid-1980's, the Church shelled out close to \$900,000 in antiquities and cash to [Mark Hofmann](#) – a conman and soon-to-be serial killer – to purchase and suppress bizarre and embarrassing documents into the Church vaults that undermined and threatened the Church's story of its origins. The documents were later proven to be forgeries.
- Lack of discernment by the Brethren on such a grave threat to the Church.
- Talks by [Dallin H. Oaks](#) and [Gordon B. Hinckley](#) offering apologetic explanations for troubling documents ([Salamander Letter](#) and [Joseph Smith III Blessing](#)), including the following [1985 defense](#) by Elder Oaks of the Salamander letter (which Oaks evidently thought was real and legitimate at the time):

“Another source of differences in the accounts of different witnesses is the different meanings that different persons attach to words. We have a vivid illustration of this in the recent media excitement about the word salamander in a letter Martin Harris is supposed to have sent to W. W. Phelps over 150 years ago. All of the scores of media stories on that subject apparently assume that the author of that letter used the word salamander in the modern sense of a ‘tailed amphibian.’

One wonders why so many writers neglected to reveal to their readers that there is another meaning of salamander, which may even have been the primary meaning in this context in the 1820s. That meaning, which is listed second in a current edition of Webster's New World Dictionary, is ‘a spirit supposed to live in fire’ (2d College ed. 1982, s.v. ‘salamander’). Modern and ancient literature contain many examples of this usage.

A spirit that is able to live in fire is a good approximation of the description Joseph Smith gave of the angel Moroni: a personage in the midst of a light, whose countenance was “truly like lightning” and whose

overall appearance “was glorious beyond description” (Joseph Smith-History 1:32). As Joseph Smith wrote later, “The first sight [of this personage] was as though the house was filled with consuming fire” (History of the Church, 4:536). Since the letter purports only to be Martin Harris’s interpretation of what he had heard about Joseph’s experience, the use of the words white salamander and old spirit seem understandable.

In view of all this, and as a matter of intellectual evaluation, why all the excitement in the media, and why the apparent hand-wringing among those who profess friendship with or membership in the Church? The media should make more complete disclosures, but Latter-day Saint readers should also be more sophisticated in their evaluation of what they read.”

- Dishonesty by Hinckley on his relationship with Hofmann, his meetings, and which documents the Church had and didn’t have.
 - The Church was forced to produce, albeit reluctantly, documents that it had previously denied existed after Hofmann leaked to the media that he sold the documents to the Church.
 - While church leaders were being duped and conned by Mark Hofmann’s forgeries, Jerald and Sandra Tanner – considered enemies of the Church – claimed the Salamander Letter was a [fake](#).
- The idea that prophets are only prophets when acting as such, and that the sayings of past prophets like Brigham Young are products of their time.

Kinderhook Plates and Translator/Seer Claims Concerns & Questions:

- **Kinderhook Plates:** “Church historians continued to insist on the authenticity of the Kinderhook plates until 1980 when an examination conducted by the Chicago Historical Society, possessor of one plate, proved it was a nineteenth-century creation.” – LDS Historian Richard Bushman, *Rough Stone Rolling*, p. 490

Testimony/Spiritual Witness Concerns & Questions:

- Feelings as a valid form of epistemology.
- The church’s claim to be the “one and only true and living church” is similar to claims made by members of nearly every major religion.
- Latter-day Saints deny validity of spiritual experiences and testimonies of members of other religions.
- Every religion cannot be right together.
- Other churches that formed during the secession crisis make similar testimony claims, but claim their branch of Mormonism is the correct one. Praying about and receiving a spiritual witness of the Book of Mormon or the First Vision doesn’t necessary lead to proof that the Salt Lake City-based LDS church is the true church of the restoration.

- Only .002% of the world's populations are members of the LDS Church.
- Praying about and receiving a spiritual witness of the First Vision doesn't necessarily indicate which version is the correct one.
- The failed trip by Hiram Page and Oliver Cowdery to Toronto, Canada to sell the copyright of the Book of Mormon led to the following Joseph Smith quote according to David Whitmer:

"...and behold the following revelation came through the stone: 'Some revelations are of God; and some revelations are of man: and some revelations are of the devil.' So we see that the revelation to go to Toronto and sell the copy-right was not of God, but was of the devil or of the heart of man."

– [David Whitmer, An Address to All Believers in Christ, p.31](#)

- While some things must be taken on faith, there are many church claims that can be reasonably demonstrated to be false, such as the Book of Mormon as an ancient document. Some members and apologists try to prove the church true using evidence instead of spiritual promptings.
- [Paul H. Dunn](#): Dunn was a General Authority of the Church for many years. He was a very popular speaker who told incredible faith-promoting war and baseball stories. Unfortunately, Dunn was later caught lying about all his war and baseball stories and was forced to apologize to the members. He became the first General Authority to gain "emeritus" status and was removed from public Church life. Many members claimed to have felt the Spirit from Dunn's fabricated and false stories.
- The role of [Confirmation Bias](#) in gaining a testimony. The following are counsel from Elder Boyd K. Packer and Elder Dallin H. Oaks on how to gain a testimony:

"It is not unusual to have a missionary say, 'How can I bear testimony until I get one? How can I testify that God lives, that Jesus is the Christ, and that the gospel is true? If I do not have such a testimony, would that not be dishonest?' Oh, if I could teach you this one principle: a testimony is to be found in the bearing of it!"

– Boyd K. Packer, [The Quest for Spiritual Knowledge](#)

"Another way to seek a testimony seems astonishing when compared with the methods of obtaining other knowledge. We gain or strengthen a testimony by bearing it. Someone even suggested that some testimonies are better gained on the feet bearing them than on the knees praying for them."

– Dallin H. Oaks, [Testimony](#)

As a result, many members claim in Fast and Testimony meeting that they "know" the church is true when they really don't and are trying to gain a testimony.

- The unreliability of a spiritual witness in making life decisions or managing temporal affairs. There are many anecdotal stories of members who share their testimonies that the Spirit told them who they were to marry, which college to attend, where to relocate, or starting businesses or making investment choices. When the decision turns out to be not only incorrect but disastrous, the fault lies on the individual and never on the Spirit.

- Feeling the spirit while engaging in activities that have been discouraged by church leaders, such as while watching R-rated movies or inappropriate music, or while watching media or participating in experiences that have profound meaning to the individual without having a gospel context.

Priesthood Restoration Concerns & Questions:

- No contemporary accounts prior to 1834 about a priesthood restoration from John the Baptist or Peter, James, and John.
- Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery did not teach anyone or record anything prior to 1834 that men ordained to offices in the Church were receiving “priesthood authority”.
- Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery changed the wording of earlier revelations when they compiled the 1835 Doctrine & Covenants, retroactively adding verses about the appearances of John the Baptist and Peter, James, and John.
- The restoration of the Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthoods does not appear in the Book of Commandments or the original Church history as published in “The Evening and Morning Star”.
- David Whitmer, one of the witnesses to the Book of Mormon, had this to say about the Priesthood restoration:

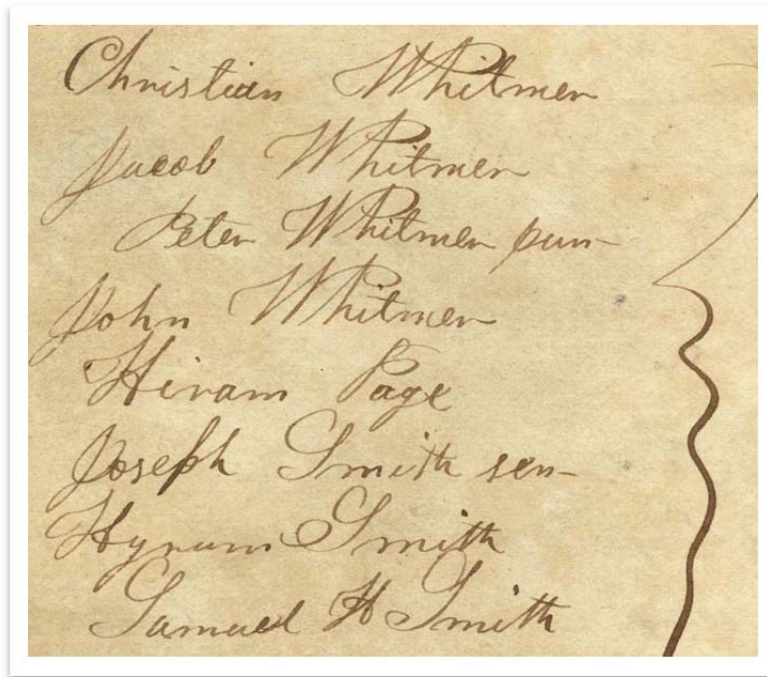
“I never heard that an Angel had ordained Joseph and Oliver to the Aaronic Priesthood until the year 1834[,] [183]5, or [183]6 – in Ohio...I do not believe that John the Baptist ever ordained Joseph and Oliver...”

– Early Mormon Documents, 5:137

Witnesses Concerns & Questions:

- **Magical Worldview:** People in early 19th century New England believed in folk magic, divining rods, visions, second sight, peep stones in hats, treasure hunting (money digging or glass looking), and the ability to see spirits and their dwelling places within the local hills and elsewhere.
- Joseph Smith, his father, and his brother Hyrum had a family business treasure hunting from 1820 – 1827. Joseph was hired by folks like Josiah Stowell, who Joseph mentions in his [history](#).
- In 1826, Joseph was [arrested](#) and brought to court in Bainbridge, New York, for trial on fraud. He was arrested on the complaint of Stowell’s nephew who accused Joseph of being a “disorderly person and an imposter”.
- The closest thing we have in existence to an original document of the testimonies of the witnesses is a [printer’s manuscript written by Oliver Cowdery](#). Every witness name on that document is not signed; they are written in Oliver’s own handwriting. Further, there is no

testimony from any of the witnesses directly attesting to the direct wording and claims of the manuscript or statements in the Book of Mormon.



[Closest Original to Testimony of Witnesses](#)

- From a legal perspective, the statements of the testimonies of the Three and Eight witnesses hold no credibility or weight in a court of law as there are a) no signatures, b) no specific dates, c) no specific locations, and d) most of the witnesses made statements after the fact that contradict and cast doubt on the specific claims made in the statements contained in the preface of the Book of Mormon.
- The divining rod used by Oliver Cowdery is mentioned in the original version of the Doctrine & Covenants section 8. In later editions, the reference to the rod was changed to the “gift of Aaron”. Cowdery’s use of a divining rod to search for buried treasure evokes similar images of Joseph Smith hunting for treasure with a stone in a hat. Oliver also wished to use his divining rod in the same way Joseph Smith used his stone and hat to translate ancient documents. Doctrine & Covenants 8 indicates that the Lord through Joseph Smith granted Oliver’s request to translate using a rod.
- Martin Harris was known by many of his peers as an unstable, gullible, and superstitious man. Reports assert that he and the other witnesses never literally saw the gold plates, but only an object said to be the plates, covered with a cloth.
- Additionally, Martin Harris had a direct conflict of interest in being a witness. He was deeply financially invested in the Book of Mormon as he mortgaged his farm to finance the book.
- Before Harris became a Mormon, he had [changed his religion](#) at least five times. After Joseph’s death, Harris continued this earlier pattern by joining and leaving five additional sects, including the Strangites (for whom Harris served a mission to England), other Mormon offshoots, and the Shakers.
- David Whitmer claimed in early June 1829 before their group declaration that he, Cowdery, and Joseph Smith observed “one of the Nephites” carrying the records in a

knapsack on his way to Cumorah. Several days later this trio perceived "that the Same Person was under the shed" at the Whitmer farm. (An Insider's View of Mormon Origins, p.179)

- In 1880, David Whitmer was asked for a description of the angel who showed him the plates. Whitmer responded that the angel "had no appearance or shape." When asked by the interviewer how he then could bear testimony that he had seen and heard an angel, Whitmer replied, "Have you never had impressions?" To which the interviewer responded, "Then you had impressions as the Quaker when the spirit moves, or as a good Methodist in giving a happy experience, a feeling?" "Just so," replied Whitmer. (Interview with John Murphy, June 1880, EMD 5:63)
- A young Mormon lawyer, James Henry Moyle, who interviewed Whitmer in 1885, asked if there was any possibility that Whitmer had been deceived. "His answer was unequivocal...that he saw the plates and heard the angel with unmistakable clearness." But Moyle went away "not fully satisfied....It was more spiritual than I anticipated." (Moyle diary, June 28, 1885, EMD 5:141)
- Like Joseph and most of the Book of Mormon witnesses, Oliver Cowdery and his family were treasure hunters. Oliver's preferred tool of trade, as mentioned above, was the divining rod. He was known as a "rodsman". Along with the witnesses, Oliver held a magical mindset.
- Oliver Cowdery was not an objective and independent witness. As scribe for the Book of Mormon and cousin to Joseph Smith, there was a serious conflict of interest in Oliver being a witness.
- **Second Sight:** People believed they could see things as a vision in their mind. They called it "second sight". We call it "imagination". It made no difference to these people if they saw with their natural eyes or their spiritual eyes as they both were one and the same. This supernatural way of seeing the world is also referred in Doctrine & Covenants as "[the eyes of our understanding](#)".
- The following statements from witnesses seem to indicate the experience was more spiritual or magical than physical:

"While praying I passed into a state of entrancement, and in that state I saw the angel and the plates."

– Martin Harris, (Anthony Metcalf, Ten Years Before the Mast, n.d., microfilm copy, p. 70-71)

"I never saw the gold plates, only in a visionary or entranced state." – EMD 2:346-47

"He only saw the plates with a spiritual eye" – Joseph Smith Begins His Work, Vol. 1, 1958

"As shown in the vision" – Zenas H. Gurley, Jr., Interview with David Whitmer on January 14, 1885

"Never saw the plates with his natural eyes but only in vision or imagination"

– Letter from Stephen Burnett to "Br. Johnson," April 15, 1838, in Joseph Smith Letter Book, p. 2

"I did not see them uncovered, but I handled them and hefted them while wrapped in a tow frock." – EMD 1:497

"They were shown to me by a supernatural power"

– [History of the Church Vol. 3, Ch. 21, p. 307-308](#)

“...when I came to hear Martin Harris state in public that he never saw the plates with his natural eyes only in vision or imagination, neither Oliver nor David & also that the eight witnesses never saw them & hesitated to sign that instrument for that reason, but were persuaded to do it, the last pedestal gave way, in my view our foundation was sapped & the entire superstructure fell in heap of ruins, I therefore three week since in the Stone Chapel...renounced the Book of Mormon...after we were done speaking M Harris arose & said he was sorry for any man who rejected the Book of Mormon for he knew it was true, he said he had hefted the plates repeatedly in a box with only a tablecloth or a handkerchief over them, but he never saw them only as he saw a city throught [sic] a mountain. And said that he never should have told that the testimony of the eight was false, if it had not been picked out of———[him/me?] but should have let it passed as it was...”

– Letter from Stephen Burnett to "Br. Johnson," April 15, 1838, in Joseph Smith Letter Book, p. 2

The foreman in the Palmyra printing office that produced the first Book of Mormon said that Harris “used to practice a good deal of his characteristic jargon and ‘seeing with the spiritual eye,’ and the like.” – [Mormonism: Its Origin, Rise, and Progress, p.71](#)

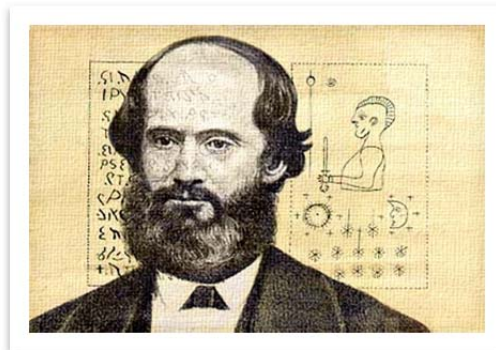
Two other Palmyra residents said that Harris told them that he had seen the plates with “the eye of faith” or “spiritual eyes” – EMD 2:270 and 3:22

John H. Gilbert, the typesetter for most of the Book of Mormon, said that he had asked Harris, “Martin, did you see those plates with your naked eyes?” According to Gilbert, Harris “looked down for an instant, raised his eyes up, and said, ‘No, I saw them with a spiritual eye.’” – EMD 2:548

Martin Harris was asked, “But did you see them [plates] with your natural, your bodily eyes, just as you see this pencil-case in my hand? Now say no or yes to this.” Martin answered, “I did not see them as I do that pencil-case, yet I saw them with the eye of faith; I saw them just as distinctly as I see anything around me, though at the time they were covered over with a cloth.”

([Origin and History of the Mormonites, p. 406](#))

- James Strang and the Voree Plates Witnesses:



Like Joseph Smith, [James Strang](#) did the following:

- Claimed that he was visited by an angel who reserved plates for him to translate into the word of God. "The record which was sealed from my servant Joseph. Unto thee it is reserved."
- Received the "Urim and Thummim".
- Produced 11 witnesses who testified that they too had seen and inspected ancient metal plates.
- Introduced new scripture. After unearthing the plates (the same plates as Laban from whom Nephi took the brass plates in Jerusalem), Strang translated it into scripture called the "[Book of the Law of the Lord](#)".
- Established a new Church: [The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints \(Strangite\)](#). Its headquarters are in Voree, Wisconsin.
- Like the Book of Mormon, the **Book of the Law of the Lord** has the testimony of its Witnesses in its preface:

TESTIMONY

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-eighths wide, by nine inches long, occasionally embellished with beautiful pictures.

And 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.

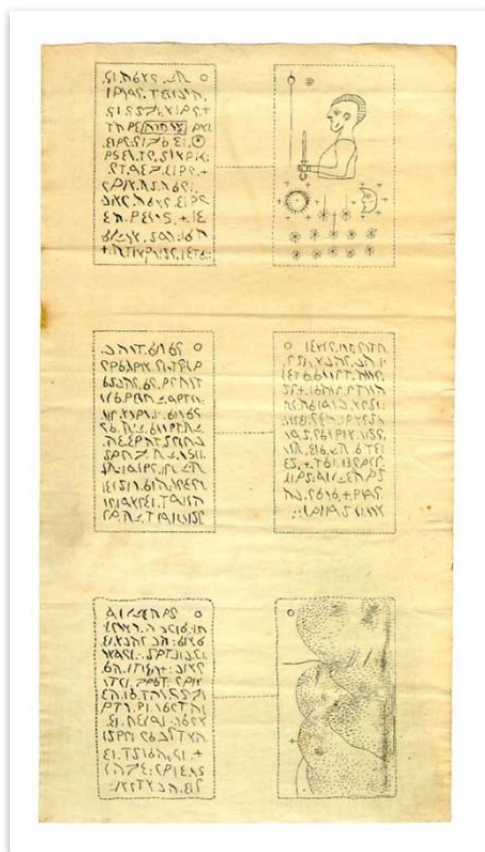
In addition to the above 7 witnesses, there were 4 witnesses who went with Strang as they unearthed the [Voree Plates](#):

TESTIMONY OF WITNESSES TO THE VOREE PLATES

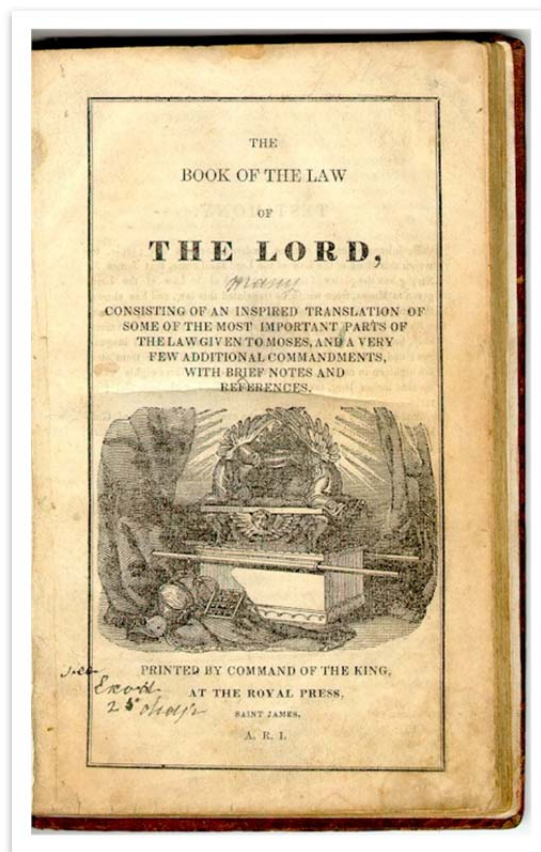
1. On the thirteenth day of September, 1845, we, Aaron Smith, Jirah B. Wheelan, James M. Van Nostrand, and Edward Whitcomb, assembled at the call of James J. Strang, who is by us and many others approved as a Prophet and Seer of God. He proceeded to inform us that it had been revealed to him in a vision that an account of an ancient people was buried in a hill south of White River bridge, near the east line of Walworth County; and leading us to an oak tree about one foot in diameter, told us that we would find it enclosed in a case of rude earthen ware under that tree at the depth of about three feet; requested us to dig it up, and charged us to so examine the ground that we should know we were not imposed upon, and that it had not been buried there since the tree grew. The tree was surrounded by a sward of deeply rooted grass, such as is usually found in the openings, and upon the most critical examination we could not discover any indication that it had ever been cut through or disturbed.
2. We then dug up the tree, and continued to dig to the depth of about three feet, where we found a case of slightly baked clay containing three plates of brass. On one side of one is a landscape view of the south end of Gardner's prairie and the range of hills where they were dug. On another is a man with a crown on his head and a scepter in his hand, above is an eye before an upright line, below the sun and moon surrounded with twelve stars, at the bottom are twelve large stars from three of which pillars arise, and closely interspersed with them are seventy very small stars. The other four sides are very closely covered with what appear to be alphabetic characters, but in a language of which we have no knowledge.
3. The case was found imbedded in indurated clay so closely fitting it that it broke in taking out, and the earth below the soil was so hard as to be dug with difficulty even with a pickax. Over the case was found a flat stone about one foot wide each way and three inches thick, which appeared to have undergone the action of fire, and fell in pieces after a few minutes exposure to the air. The digging extended in the clay about eighteen inches, there being two kinds of earth of different color and appearance above it.
4. We examined as we dug all the way with the utmost care, and we say, with utmost confidence, that no part of the earth through which we dug exhibited any sign or indication that it had been moved or disturbed at any time previous. The roots of the tree stuck down on every side very closely, extending below the case, and closely interwoven with roots from other trees. None of them had been broken or cut away. No clay is found in the country like that of which the case is made.
5. In fine, we found an alphabetic and pictorial record, carefully cased up, buried deep in the earth, covered with a flat stone, with an oak tree one foot in diameter growing over it, with every evidence that the sense can give that it has lain there as long as that tree has been growing. Strang took no part in the digging, but kept entirely

away from before the first blow was struck till after the plates were taken out of the case; and the sole inducement to our digging was our faith in his statement as a Prophet of the Lord that a record would thus and there be found.

AARON SMITH,
JIRAH B. WHEELAN,
J. M. VAN NOSTRAND,
EDWARD WHITCOMB.



Facsimiles from the Voree Plates



The Book of the Law of the Lord

- Like Joseph, Strang had a scribe (Samuel Graham) who wrote as Strang translated. Along with several of the witnesses, Graham was later excommunicated from Strang's Church.
- There is no direct evidence that any of the above 11 Strang [witnesses ever denied](#) their testimony of James Strang, the Voree Plates, Strang's church or Strang's divine calling.
- Every living Book of Mormon witness except Oliver Cowdery accepted Strang's prophetic claim of being Joseph's true successor and joined him and his church.
- Every member of Joseph Smith's family except for Hyrum's widow also endorsed, joined, and sustained James Strang as "Prophet, Seer, and Revelator".

- The Shakers and Ann Lee:



- The Shakers felt that "Christ has made his second appearance on earth, in a chosen female known by the name of Ann Lee, and acknowledged by us as our Blessed Mother in the work of redemption" (Sacred Roll and Book, p.358).
- The Shakers had a book entitled "A Holy, Sacred and Divine Roll and Book; From the Lord God of Heaven, to the Inhabitants of Earth".
- More than 60 individuals gave testimony to the **Sacred Roll and Book**, which was published in 1843. Although not all of them mention angels appearing, some of them tell of many angels visiting them. One woman told of eight different visions.
- Here is the testimony statement:

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.

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

- Joseph Smith only had three witnesses who claimed to see an angel. The Shakers, however, had a large number of witnesses who claimed they saw angels and the

Sacred Roll and Book. There are over a hundred pages of testimony from "Living Witnesses."

- The evidence seems to show that Martin Harris accepted the Sacred Roll and Book as a divine revelation. Clark Braden stated: "Harris declared repeatedly that he had as much evidence for a Shaker book he had as for the Book of Mormon" (The Braden and Kelly Debate, p.173).

- Christopher Nemelka and the Worldwide United Foundation:



- Christopher Nemelka currently lives in Salt Lake City. Among other things, he has worked as a security guard at the Salt Lake LDS Temple.
 - Nemelka claims to be Hyrum Smith reincarnated
 - While working for the LDS church, he claimed he had a visit from a resurrected Joseph Smith. He has produced a [translation](#) of the [sealed portion](#) of the Book of Mormon that is longer than the Book of Mormon itself. It uses Jacobean English, contains biblical references, and frequently uses [Chiasmus](#).
 - Among his followers are [Ida Smith](#), great-great-granddaughter of Hyrum Smith and cousin of current LDS Apostle M. Russell Ballard, who has provided financial support to Nemelka and his organization, the [Worldwide United Foundation](#).
 - Nemelka has limited formal education, tried practicing polygamy for a short period and has also served time in jail for attempting to defraud others.
 - In spite of the similarities to Joseph Smith, both Apostle Jeffrey R. Holland and former U.S. Senator and prominent Latter-day Saint Bob Bennett have called Nemelka a fraud.
- All of the Book of Mormon Witnesses – except Martin Harris – were related to either Joseph Smith or David Whitmer.
 - The mistake that is made by 21st century Mormons is that they're seeing the Book of Mormon Witnesses as empirical, rational, twenty-first century men instead of the nineteenth-century magical thinking men they were. They have ignored the peculiarities of their worldview, and by so doing, they misunderstand their experiences as witnesses.

Temples & Freemasonry Concerns & Questions:

- Just seven weeks after [Joseph's Masonic initiation](#), Joseph introduced the LDS endowment ceremony in [May 1842](#).
- President Heber C. Kimball, a Mason himself and a member of the First Presidency for 21 years, made the following statement:

“We have the true Masonry. The Masonry of today is received from the apostasy which took place in the days of Solomon, and David. They have now and then a thing that is correct, but we have the real thing.”

– Stanley B. Kimball, Heber C. Kimball and Family: The Nauvoo Years, p.458

- The LDS ceremony doesn't resemble an earlier form of Masonry, which would be more correct rather than the exact version that Joseph Smith was exposed to in his March 1842 Nauvoo, Illinois initiation.
- Freemasonry has zero links to 1st and 2nd period Temple Judaism. Although more a Church folklore, with origins from comments made by early Mormon Masons such as Heber C. Kimball, than being Church doctrine, it's a myth that the endowment ceremony has its origins from Solomon's temple or that Freemasonry passed down parts of the endowment over the centuries from Solomon's temple.
- The rituals performed in 1st period Temple Judaism were all concerned with animal sacrifice. Freemasonry traces its origins to stone tradesmen in medieval Scotland – not in 950 BC Jerusalem.
- The Church removed the blood oath penalties and the 5 Points of Fellowship at the veil from the endowment ceremony in 1990.
- Joseph Smith said he restored the temple ordinances and they would never again be taken away from the earth.
- If secret handshakes are required to enter the Celestial Kingdom, Masons, former Mormons, anti-Mormons, unworthy Mormons as well as non-Mormons who've seen the endowment on YouTube or read about the signs/handshakes/tokens online should be able to enter.
- Family separation in the next life due to some family members not receiving or rejecting the temple ordinances.

Science Concerns & Questions:

- Many of Mormonism's claims are within the realm of scientific study, and as such, can be proven or disproven. To cling to faith in these areas, where the overwhelming evidence is against it, is willful ignorance, not spiritual dedication.
- [2 Nephi 2:22](#) and [Alma 12:23-24](#) state there was no death of any kind (humans, all animals, birds, fish, dinosaurs, etc.) on this earth until the “Fall of Adam”, which according to [D&C 77:6-7](#) occurred 7,000 years ago. It is scientifically established there has been life and death on this planet for billions of years.

- In his book "[Man: His Origin and Destiny](#)", President Joseph Fielding Smith strongly argued against evolution, claimed the earth is no more than 13,000 years old, and claimed that if evolution were true, there would be no possibility or need for an atonement.
- Massive fossil evidence shows not only animal death but also the deaths of at least [14 other Hominin species](#) over the span of 250,000 years prior to Adam
- Science has proven that there was no worldwide flood 4,500 years ago.
- Ark had dimensions that equate to about 450 feet long, 75 feet wide and 45 feet deep.
- Noah and his very small family would have taken two of each unclean creature and seven of every clean creature and all the food and fresh water that would be needed on board for 6 months.
- After the flood, Noah and his family released the animals and they, along with Noah's family of eight repopulated – via incest – the entire planet
- There would not have been nearly enough herbivores to sustain the carnivores during the voyage and the months after the ark landed.
- The notion that God would wipe out the entire planet and kill millions of women and innocent children for the actions of others.
- Confounding of languages in Tower of Babel. Scientific research shows human language originated independently in three locations over thousands of years.
 - People who lived to be 600+ years old in the Bible
 - It is scientifically impossible, for example, for the bear to have evolved into several species (Sun Bear, Polar Bear, Grizzly Bear, etc.) from common ancestors from Noah's time.
 - The story of Jonah and the whale as literal history
 - People turning into salt when Sodom & Gomorrah were destroyed
 - As mentioned in Book of Abraham section, the sun getting its light from Kolob.
 - Carrying swarms of honey bees across the ocean ([Ether 2:3](#)).
 - Drilling holes in the top and bottom of a submarine-like vessel, which implies that the vessel's occupants could be upside-down without knowing it ([Ether 2:19-20](#)).

Scriptures Concerns & Questions:

- Believing in a god who does the following: endorsed murder, genocide, infanticide, rape, slavery, selling daughters into sex slavery, polygamy, child abuse, stoning disobedient children, pillage, plunder, sexism, racism, human sacrifice, animal sacrifice, killing people who work on the Sabbath, death penalty for those who mix cotton with polyester, and so on.
- [Numbers 31](#): Under God's direction, Moses' army defeats the Midianites. They kill all the adult males, but take the women and children captive. When Moses learns that they left some alive, he angrily says: "Have you saved all the women alive? Kill every male among the little ones, and kill every woman that hath known man by lying with him. But all the women children, that have not known a man by lying with him, keep alive for yourselves." So they went back and did as Moses – the Lord's prophet – commanded, killing everyone except for the virgins. In this way, they got 32,000 virgins.
- [1 Nephi 4](#): The Lord commands Nephi to murder (decapitate) Laban for the brass plates, even though Laban was drunk and defenseless. [This story has been used as a defense in killings by religious people.](#)

- [Exodus 12:12](#): God kills all the firstborn children in Egypt except for those who put blood on their doors.
- [Deuteronomy 21:18-21](#): Permits stoning disobedient children
- [Exodus 35:1-2](#): God commands death penalty for those who work on the Sabbath trying to support their families.
- [Number 21:5-9](#): God doesn't like to hear whining and ingratitude so he sends out a bunch of snakes to kill the people. When the people had enough of the snakes, they ask Moses to tell God to quit it. God decides Moses is persuasive and tells Moses to put a snake a pole and tell the people to look at the pole and they won't die. So, the pole is built, the people look at it and they don't die.
- [Judges 19:22-29](#): After picking up his concubine from his father-in-law's house, a certain Levite settles in Gibeah for the night. The men of the city attempt to sodomize him, but end up raping the concubine until her death. As a response, the Levite dismembers his wife's corpse and sends her body parts throughout the land of Israel.
- LDS belief that the Jehovah who gave the orders in the previously listed scriptures was [the premortal Jesus Christ](#).

LGBT / Marriage Equality Concerns & Questions:

- The church's recommendations to its gay and lesbian members have changed over time. At one time, church leaders believed gays could change and encouraged them to marry straight members of the opposite sex. This counsel led to many failed marriages and broken homes. Now the church insists that gays remain celibate for life and requires that they observe a stricter law of chastity than straight unmarried members that is similar to what full-time missionaries do (no dating, holding hands, kissing or hugging)
- Researchers at Brigham Young University conducted experiments involving [electroshock therapy](#) to the genitals of gay male Mormons in the 1970s to see if it would make them straight.
- Although [Reparative Therapy](#) has been rejected by the [American Psychiatry Association](#) and others, [Evergreen International](#), an LDS affiliated organization, [still promotes it](#) and the idea that gays can become straight.
- The church's stance towards LGBT members along with hostility and bullying from members has led many LGBT members to commit or attempt suicide, including [Stuart Matis](#), who killed himself on the steps of an LDS chapel.
- The church created a new website [mormonsandgays.org](#) that gives the impression the church is softening its stance towards LGBT members, but the church is still lobbying against marriage equality, most recently in [Hawaii](#).

Other Concerns & Questions:

- The 2013 Official Declaration 2 [header update](#) claims that Church records offer no clear insights into the origins of the priesthood ban. This is contradicted by the [1949 First Presidency Statement](#) that states that the priesthood ban was a direct commandment from the Lord and that several prophets had made statements as to the operation of the principle.
- Zina Diantha Huntington Young was married for 7.5 months and was 6 months pregnant with her first husband, Henry Jacobs, when she married Joseph Smith after being told Joseph's life was in danger from an angel with a flaming sword. After Joseph's death, she married Brigham Young and had Young's baby while her first husband, Henry, was on a mission. Zina would eventually become the Third General Relief Society President of the Church. Zina's biographical page on [LDS.org](#) omits and distorts much of the historical record about her, including:
 - In the "Marriage and Family" section, it does not list Joseph Smith as a husband or concurrent husband with Henry Jacobs.
 - In the "Marriage and Family" section, it does not list Brigham Young as a concurrent husband with Henry Jacobs.
 - There is nothing in there about the polyandry.
 - It is deceptive in stating that Henry and Zina "did not remain together" while omitting that Henry separated only after Brigham Young took his wife and told Henry that Zina was now only his (Brigham) wife.
 - On Zina's index file on LDS-owned [FamilySearch.org](#), It clearly shows all of Zina's husbands, including her marriage to Joseph Smith.
- In the Church's Sunday School manual, [Teachings of the Presidents of the Church: Brigham Young](#), the Church changed the word "wives" to "[wife]".
- Not only is the manual deceptive in disclosing whether or not Brigham Young was a polygamist but it's deceptive in hiding Brigham Young's real teaching on marriage: "The only men who become Gods, even the Sons of God, are those who enter into polygamy." – [Journal of Discourses 11:269](#)
- There is zero financial transparency to members of the Church. History has shown time and time again that corporate secret wealth is a breeding ground for corruption.
- The Church stopped being transparent with its finances in [1959](#), around the time the church was suffering some financial upheaval due to an aggressive building program and baseball baptisms.
- Estimated [\\$5 billion](#) megamall City Creek Center
- Total Church humanitarian aid from 1985-2011: [\\$1.4 billion](#)
- The church asks its members to sacrifice greatly for Temple building, such as the case of [Argentians giving the Church gold from their dental work](#) for the São Paulo Brazil Temple, and then builds an expensive shopping mall.
- President Thomas S. Monson's statement, "[Let's go shopping!](#)" during the mall ribbon cutting ceremony.
- President Gordon B. Hinckley made the following statement in a [2002 interview](#) to a German journalist. While stated in the context that each member can see their individual contributions, Hinckley gives the impression to outsiders that members have full access to church finances similar to what other churches provide:

Reporter: In my country, the...we say the people's Churches, the Protestants, the Catholics, they publish all their budgets, to all the public.

Hinckley: Yeah. Yeah.

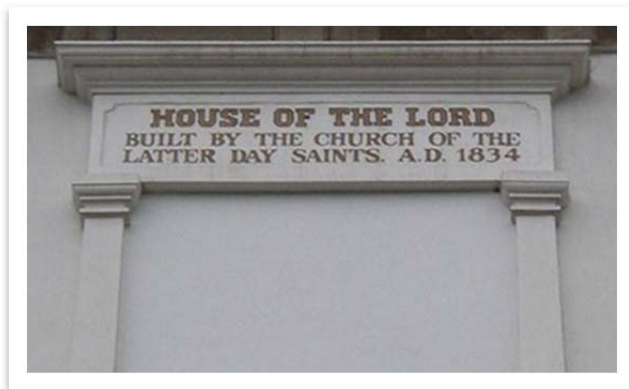
Reporter: Why is it impossible for your Church?

Hinckley: Well, we simply think that the...that information belongs to those who made the contribution, and not to the world. That's the only thing. Yes.

- Extreme sacrifice to pay tithing, as illustrated by following quote in the [December 2012 Ensign](#):

"If paying tithing means that you can't pay for water or electricity, pay tithing. If paying tithing means that you can't pay your rent, pay tithing. Even if paying tithing means that you don't have enough money to feed your family, pay tithing. The Lord will not abandon you."

- It has been estimated by outside researchers that the church that receives [\\$8,000,000,000 in annual tithing receipts](#).
- Involvement in politics in Utah and elsewhere, particularly concerning the [Equal Rights Amendment \(ERA\)](#) in the 1970s and [marriage equality](#).
- **Names of the Church:**
 - 1830: Church of Jesus Christ
 - 1834: [The Church of the Latter Day Saints](#)
 - 1838: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints



Kirtland, Ohio Temple

- **Anti-Intellectualism:**

"Some things that are true are not very useful":

- Boyd K. Packer gave an eye-opening talk to Church Education System Instructors and faculty at a CES Symposium on the Doctrine & Covenants and Church History on August 22, 1981 entitled "[The Mantle is Far, Far Greater Than the Intellect](#)".

Packer said the following:

“There is a temptation for the writer or the teacher of Church history to want to tell everything, whether it is worthy or faith promoting or not. Some things that are true are not very useful. ...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.”

Criticizing leaders:

- Dallin H. Oaks made the following disturbing comment in the PBS documentary, [“The Mormons”](#):

“It is wrong to criticize the leaders of the Church, even if the criticism is true.”

Researching “unapproved” materials on the internet:

- Elder Quentin L. Cook made the following comment in the [October 2012](#) Conference:

“Some have immersed themselves in internet materials that magnify, exaggerate, and in some cases invent shortcomings of early Church leaders. Then they draw incorrect conclusions that can affect testimony. Any who have made these choices can repent and be spiritually renewed.”

- Elder Dieter Uchtdorf said the following in his CES talk [“What is truth?”](#):

“...Remember that in this age of information there are many who create doubt about anything and everything at any time and every place. You will find even those who still claim that they have evidence that the earth is flat. That the moon is a hologram. It looks like it a little bit. And that certain movie stars are really aliens from another planet. And it is always good to keep in mind just because something is printed on paper, appears on the internet, is frequently repeated or has a powerful group of followers doesn't make it true.”

“And it is always good to keep in mind just because something is printed on paper, appears on the internet, is frequently repeated or has a powerful group of followers doesn't make it true.” The exact same thing can be said of Mormonism and LDS.org.

Disciplining members who publish questions, concerns, and doubts:

- [September Six](#):
“The September Six were six members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints who were excommunicated or disfellowshipped by the LDS in September 1993, allegedly for publishing scholarly work on Mormonism or critiquing Church doctrine or leadership.”

A few months before the September Six, Boyd K. Packer made the following comment regarding the three “enemies” of the Church:

“The dangers I speak of come from the gay-lesbian movement, the feminist movement (both of which are relatively new), and the ever-present challenge from the so-called scholars or intellectuals.”

– [Boyd K. Packer, All-Church Coordinating Council, May 18, 1993](#)

- [Strengthening the Church Members Committee](#):
The spying and monitoring arm of the Church. It is secretive and most members have been unaware of its existence since its creation in 1985 after President Ezra Taft Benson took over. [Elder Jeffrey R. Holland admitted it still exists](#) in March 2012. The historical evidence and the September Six points to SCMC’s primary mission being to hunt and expose intellectuals and/or disaffected members who are influencing other members to think and question, despite Holland’s claim that it’s a committee primarily to fight against polygamy.

“When the prophet speaks the debate is over”:

- N. Eldon Tanner, 1st Counselor in the First Presidency, gave a First Presidency Message in the [August 1979 Ensign](#) that includes the following statement:

“When the prophet speaks the debate is over.”