

# Was Joseph Smith a Prophet of God? Is the Mormon Church the Lord's Church?

By: Allan McNabb

“Was Joseph Smith a prophet of God?” is possible the single most important question relating to Mormonism.

If Joseph Smith, the founder of the Mormon religion, was a true prophet of God, his writings must be obeyed to be saved.

- Mormons believe there is no salvation without accepting Joseph Smith as a prophet of God (*Doctrines of Salvation*, Vol. 1, p. 188).

If Joseph Smith was a false prophet, his writings must be disobeyed (2 Jn. 1:9).

- Everyone obeying his writings is lost in sin (Heb. 5:9).
- The Mormon church is neither the Lord’s church nor the Lord’s kingdom.

## Joseph Smith’s History

Joseph Smith, Junior, was born December 23, 1805 in Vermont. He was known as “Peep-Stone Joe” following in his father’s footsteps as a roving water witch who claimed to have miraculously discovered a “peep-stone.”

As a young man, Smith says he was disturbed by all the different Christian denominations and wondered which was true. At age fourteen, he claims to have gone into the woods to pray about which church was the true church, when the Father and Jesus appeared to him. Smith says they told him *not* to join any of the denominational churches.

Three years later, on September 21, 1823 at age seventeen, he allegedly had a vision one night in which Moroni (an angel) appeared to him and revealed the hiding place of gold plates on which the gospel was inscribed. Moroni was allegedly the son of Mormon, the leader of the people called the Nephites who had lived in the Americas. In the vision, Smith says he was told he had been chosen to translate the Book of Mormon which had been compiled by Moroni’s father around the fourth century. The book was allegedly written on golden plates and hidden near Smith’s home in Palmyra, New York.

Smith claims to have received the plates on September 22, 1827, and the angel instructed him to begin translating them. During the translation process, Smith claims John the Baptist appeared to him and ordained him to accomplish the divine work of restoring the true church by preaching the true gospel which had been lost. With the aid of Harris, Cowdery, and Whitmer, Smith supposedly translated the gold plates. Smith’s translation was published in 1830 as the Book of Mormon.

Joseph Smith organized the Mormon Church in April 6, 1830 in Fayette, New York with six members. In 1831, Smith moved to Kirtland, Ohio with a small group of followers, then to Missouri, and then to Nauvoo, Illinois because of various troubles. In Nauvoo, the doctrine of polygamy became public knowledge resulting in extreme negative public opinion of Mormons. After being accused of destroying a printing press used to publish harmful information on

Mormonism, Smith and his brother, Hyrum, were arrested and jailed. While in jail, a mob approach the jail and a gun fight ensued. Smith fired his gun killing at least two men, and was eventually killed himself (*History of the Church*, Vol. 6, Ch. 34, pp. 617-618; *History of the Church*, Vol. 7, Ch. 9, p. 103).

After Smith's death, the Mormon Church split into two groups. One group was led by Smith's widow and went back to Independence Missouri claiming to be the true church. They are known as the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and claim legal succession of the church presidency which Smith personally bestowed upon his son. The other group was formed under the leadership of Brigham Young and went to Utah, finally settling in Salt Lake City in 1847.

### **Distinctive Religious Doctrines**

Some of the more distinctive doctrines of Joseph Smith and the Mormon Church include:

- There is a plurality of gods (*Mormon Doctrine*, p. 163).
- There is a mother god (goddess) (*Articles of Faith*, by James Talmage, p. 443).
- God used to be a man on another planet (*Mormon Doctrine*, p. 321. Joseph Smith; *Times and Seasons*, Vol. 5, pp. 613-614; Orson Pratt, *Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 2, p. 345; Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 7, p. 333).
- After you become a good Mormon, you have the potential of becoming a god (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, pages 345-347, 354).
- God the Father had a Father (*Joseph Smith, History of the Church*, Vol. 6, p. 476; Heber C. Kimball, *Journal of Discourses*, vol. 5, p. 19; Milton Hunter, *First Council of the Seventy, Gospel through the Ages*, pp. 104-105).
- God resides near a star called Kolob (*Pearl of Great Price*, pp. 34-35; *Mormon Doctrine*, p. 428).
- God the Father has a body of flesh and bones (*Doctrine and Covenants*, 130:22).
- God is in the form of a man (*Joseph Smith, Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 6, p. 3).
- God is married to his goddess wife and has spirit children (*Mormon Doctrine*, p. 516).
- We were first begotten as spirit children in heaven and then born naturally on earth (*Journal of Discourse*, Vol. 4, p. 218).
- The first spirit to be born in heaven was Jesus (*Mormon Doctrine*, page 129).
- The devil was born as a spirit after Jesus "in the morning of pre-existence" (*Mormon Doctrine*, p. 192).
- Jesus and Satan are spirit brothers and we were all born as siblings in heaven to them both (*Mormon Doctrine*, p. 163).
- A plan of salvation was needed for the people of earth so Jesus offered a plan to the Father and Satan offered a plan to the Father, but Jesus' plan was accepted. In effect the Devil wanted to be the Savior of all Mankind and to "deny men their agency and to dethrone god" (*Mormon Doctrine*, page 193; *Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 6, p. 8).
- God became the Father of Jesus according to the flesh. He had sexual relations with Mary to make the body of Jesus (*Orson Pratt, The Seer*, p. 158; *Doctrines of Salvation*, Vol. 1:18; Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 4, p. 218, 1857; Vol. 8, p. 115).
- Jesus was a polygamous (*The Seer*, Vol. 1, pp. 158-159).
- Jesus' sacrifice was not able to cleanse us from all our sins - murder and repeated adultery are exceptions (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 3, p. 247, 1856).

- Good works are necessary for salvation (*Articles of Faith*, p. 92).
- There is no salvation without accepting Joseph Smith as a prophet of God (*Doctrines of Salvation*, Vol. 1, p. 188).
- Baptism for the dead (*Doctrines of Salvation*, Vol. 2, p. 141). This is a practice of baptizing each other in place of non-Mormons who are now dead; whereby, the “newly baptized” person will be able to enter into a higher level of heaven.
- There are three levels of heaven: telestial, terrestrial, and celestial (*Mormon Doctrine*, p. 348).
- The Holy Ghost is a male personage (*A Marvelous Work and a Wonder*, by Le Grand Richards, Salt Lake City, 1956, p. 118; *Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 5, p. 179).
- Women cannot enter heaven without being brought up by their husbands. “No woman will get into the celestial kingdom, except her husband receives her, if she is worthy to have a husband; and if not, somebody will receive her as a servant” (“*Mormon*” *Doctrine Plain and Simple, or Leaves from the Tree of Life*, by Apostle Charles W. Penrose, 1897, Salt Lake City, UT; *Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 5, p.291).
- Polygamy (*The Seer*, Vol. 1. p. 158). Joseph Smith is reported to have had twenty-seven wives. Brigham Young had twenty-five wives.
- The Bible is not all of God’s word (*Book of Mormon*, 2 Nephi 12:53-54; *Doctrine and Covenants*, 42:17).
- To be saved, a person must confess that Joseph Smith is a prophet and the Book of Mormon is true (*Millennial Star*, Col. 5, p. 118).
- Water is served with the Lord’s Supper in place of fruit of the vine (*Doctrine and Covenants* 20:75; 27:1-4; 89:5-6).

### **If We Accept the New Testament, We Must Reject the Book of Mormon**

God, though the apostle Paul, tells us that if we follow a gospel other than that preached by inspired men in the first century, we have deserted Him. Thus, the teachers of the *different gospel* are accursed (Gal. 1:6-9).

The Book of Mormon was first published in 1830. Even today, the Book of Mormon professes to be new, and an addition to God’s word.

In due course the plates were delivered to Joseph Smith, who translated them by the gift and power of God. The record is not published in many languages as a new and additional witness that Jesus Christ is the Son of the living God and that all who will come unto him and obey the laws and ordinances of his gospel will be saved (Book of Mormon, Copyright 1981 by the Corporation of the President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Published 1989, Introduction).

Since the book of Mormon is new, it’s a different gospel. Thus anyone teaching the gospel of the Book of Mormon is accursed (Gal. 1:6-9).

And since the Book of Mormon is an addition to the word of God, anyone teaching it, or living by it, will not go to heaven since they have added to the word of God (Rev. 22:18-19; cf. 1 Cor. 4:6; 2 Jn. 1:9-10).

Anyone trying to serve God by following the teachings in the Book of Mormon has deserted God. They are severed from Christ and fallen from grace, if they were ever saved (Gal. 5:4).

### **Mormons Believe the Book of Mormon is Greater than the Bible**

The Mormon Church (The Church of Jesus Christ of Later-day Saints) believes the Book of Mormon is greater than the Bible. If they perceive a conflict between the two, they believe the Book of Mormon is superior to the Bible.

In the Introduction to the Book of Mormon, it says:

Concerning this record the Prophet Joseph Smith said: “I told the brethren that the Book of Mormon was the most correct of any book on the earth, and the keystone of our religion, and a man would get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book” (Book of Mormon, Copyright 1981 by the Corporation of the President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Published 1989, Introduction).

Though the Mormons accept the Bible, they believe the Book of Mormon is superior to the Bible as the most correct book on earth. They abide by the Book of Mormon above all other books on earth, even the Bible.

As a result, Mormons disobey the word of God to keep the precepts of the Book of Mormon, much the same as Jews disobeyed God’s word to keep their traditions, resulting in vain worship (Mk. 7:6-9, 13).

### **Joseph Smith Doesn’t Pass the Bible’s Test: He is a False Prophet**

One of the fundamental doctrines of the Mormon Church is that John Smith was a prophet, and his book (Book of Mormon), must be obeyed to be saved.

In due course the plates were delivered to Joseph Smith, who translated them by the gift and power of God. The record is not published in many languages as a new and additional witness that Jesus Christ is the Son of the living God and that all who will come unto him and obey the laws and ordinances of his gospel will be saved.

Concerning this record the Prophet Joseph Smith said . . . (Book of Mormon, Copyright 1981 by the Corporation of the President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Published 1989, Introduction).

We must, then, test Joseph Smith to see if he is a true prophet of God or a false prophet. Many false prophets have come into the world (Matt. 7:15; 24:11; 2 Cor. 11:13; 2 Pet. 2:1; 1 Jn. 4:1), so we must question whether Joseph Smith is one of them (Acts 17:11; 1 Th. 5:21; cf. Rev. 2:2).

First, God tells us that anyone preaching a gospel contrary to the gospel taught by inspired men in the first century is accursed (Gal. 1:6-9). As noticed above in the section titled *Distinctive Religious Doctrines*, Joseph Smith taught many doctrines contrary to the doctrine of Christ (cf. 2 Jn. 1:9; 2 Tim. 3:16-17). Therefore, Joseph Smith is accursed. As such, he cannot be a prophet of God.

Second, God gives us the standard by which we evaluate a prophet, based upon the prophecies he

utters. “You may say in your heart, ‘How will we know the word which the Lord has not spoken?’ When a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the thing does not come about or come true, that is the thing which the Lord has not spoken. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him” (Deut. 18:21-22). If only one of Joseph Smith’s prophecies failed to come true, we know he is a false prophet. He should not be obeyed, and should not be feared.

Here are a few of Smith’s failed prophecies, revealing that He’s a false prophet whom we must reject. We should neither obey Him nor fear Him.

- In 1835, Joseph Smith prophesied that **the Lord would come in fifty-six years** (*History of the Church*, Vol. 2, p. 182). This prophecy failed. The Lord has not come as of today.
- On May 6, 1834 Joseph Smith prophesied, “I prophecy in the name of the Lord God of Israel, unless the **United States redress the wrongs** committed upon the Saints in the state of Missouri and punish the crimes committed by her officers that **in a few years the government will be utterly overthrown and wasted**, and there will not be so much as a potsherd left for their wickedness in permitting the murder of men, women and children, and the wholesale plunder and extermination of thousands of her citizens to go unpunished” (*History of the Church*, Vol. 5, p. 394). This prophecy failed. As of today, the United States government and Missouri have not been overthrown and still stand strong.
- In Missouri, Smith prophesied, “And now I am prepared to say by the authority of Jesus Christ, **that not many years shall pass away** before the United States shall present such a scene of bloodshed as has not a parallel in the history of our nation; pestilence, hail, famine, and earthquake will sweep the wicked of this generation from off the face of the land, to open and prepare the way for the return of the lost tribes of Israel from the north country. The people of the Lord, those who have complied with the requirements of the new covenant, have already commenced **gathering together to Zion, which is in the state of Missouri**; therefore I declare unto you the warning which the Lord has commanded to declare unto this generation, remembering that the eyes of my Maker are upon me, and that to him I am accountable for every word I say, wishing nothing worse to my fellow-men than their eternal salvation; therefore, Fear God, and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment is come. Repent ye, repent ye, and embrace the everlasting covenant and flee to Zion, before the overflowing scourge overtake you, for there are those now living upon the earth whose eyes shall not be closed in death until they see all these things, which I have spoken, fulfilled” (*History of the Church*, Vol. 1, pp. 315-316). This prophecy failed. Missouri is not Zion and Smith eventually moved from Missouri to Nauvoo, Illinois.
- Joseph Smith said that there are **men living on the moon who dress like Quakers and live to be nearly 1000 years old** (*The Young Woman’s Journal*, Vol. 3, pp. 263-264. See reprint in *Mormonism -- Shadow or Reality?* by Jerald and Sandra Tanner, p. 4). This prophecy is false.

### **Joseph Smith’s Sinful Pride: He’s an Enemy of Christ and a False Prophet**

Joseph Smith claimed to be greater than Jesus Christ and the apostles.

“Come on! ye prosecutors! ye false swearers! All hell, boil over! Ye burning mountains, roll down your lava! for I will come out on top at last. I have more to boast of than ever any man had. I am the only man that has ever been able to keep a whole church together since the days of Adam. A large majority of the whole have stood by me. Neither Paul, John, Peter,

nor Jesus ever did it. I boast that no man ever did such a work as I. The followers of Jesus ran away from Him; but the Latter-day Saints never ran away from me yet. . . . When they can get rid of me, the devil will also go” (History of the Church, Vol. 6, p. 408-409).

Not only was Smith guilty of the sin of pride (Ja. 4:6; 1 Pet. 5:5), he believed he was superior to Jesus Christ. Any man who believes he, or any other man, is superior to Christ is preaching a different gospel (Gal. 1:6-9).

Joseph Smith was a false prophet (Matt. 28:18; Jn. 1:1; 12:48; Col. 1:13-20; 3:17; 1 Pet. 4:11).

Everyone teaching his doctrines is accursed as a false teacher, and everyone adhering to his teachings is lost in sin (Gal. 1:6-9; 5:4). They are not obeying the truth (Gal. 5:7).

### **Book of Mormon: Not Truth, Originates from Satan, Doctrine of Demons**

Mormons claim that the Book of Mormon is truth and divine.

In addition to Joseph Smith, the Lord provided for eleven others to see the gold plates for themselves and to be special witnesses of the truth and divinity of the Book of Mormon (Book of Mormon, Copyright 1981 by the Corporation of the President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Published 1989, Introduction).

But if we believe the New Testament, we must conclude that the Book of Mormon is not truth, and as such, not divine.

As already mentioned, people who believe a gospel other than the gospel of Christ as revealed by inspired men in the first century are severed from Christ and fallen from grace, if they were ever saved (Gal. 1:6-9; 5:4). Thus, they are not obeying the truth (Gal. 5:7).

Since the Book of Mormon is a different gospel, from the word of God revealed by inspired men in the first century, and Joseph Smith was a false prophet, we must conclude that the Book of Mormon is not the truth.

Since the Book of Mormon is not the truth, it is a lie, and not divine.

As a lie, the Book of Mormon must have originated from Satan, the father of lies (Jn. 8:44). And the doctrines of the Book of Mormon are therefore the doctrines of demons (1 Tim. 4:1).

Hence, when an adherent of the Book of Mormon learns the truth of God’s word and obeys it, he is set free from sin and the enslavement of Mormonism (Jn. 8:32; 2 Pet. 2:1-22; cf. Gal. 5:1-7).

### **Conclusion**

Joseph Smith taught a different gospel from the gospel of Christ, made prophecies that did not come true, and was pridefully boastful against Christ, proving himself to be a false prophet.

Since Joseph Smith was a false prophet, we must disobey him and the Book of Mormon in order to

obey God and His word.

The Mormon Church is neither the Lord's church nor His kingdom, as Mormons claim. It's Joseph Smith's church.