

# When the Mormons Call

By David Phillips

## Its Beginnings

According to the Mormon faith on September 21, 1823 a young man by the name of Joseph Smith was praying in his room in a small house in Manchester, Ontario County New York when an angle appeared to him in the night. This angle, called Moroni, gave Smith directions to, a description of and instructions for a box that contained three objects supposedly of great historic and spiritual value: A book made of golden plates, a golden breastplate and two translating stones. The next day Smith went and found the box with the objects near the top of a hill close to the village, though he was not allowed to remove them until four years later. At that time he took the items to his home where he translated the writings that were in the book. The translation of these golden plates became what the world now knows as *The Book of Mormon*. Joseph Smith wrote a description of these plates and their translation saying, "The ancient record thus brought forth from the earth, as the voice of a people speaking from the dust, and translated into modern speech by the gift and power of God as attested by Divine affirmation, was first published to the world in the year 1830 as The Book of Mormon." (*Origin of the Book of Mormon*, Joseph Smith).

After the translation of the book was finished Joseph Smith and several friends and members of his family began preaching the gospel that was written in the Book of Mormon. Many people since that day have seen their teaching as a "different gospel" than what is revealed in the Bible. Reassuring men that what they taught was not a different gospel, but merely a reestablishment of the original gospel that had been lost over time, in 1831 the Mormon Church was founded and Joseph Smith became its founder and first "President," or presiding prophet. Over time and after many struggles the Mormon Church has grown to what we now know today as "The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints."

## Hold Fast the Pattern of Sound Words

According to the Book of Mormon there was a family of Jews from the tribe of Manasseh who split off from Israel just before the beginning of the Babylonian captivity (In the days of Jeremiah the Prophet). This family wandered in the wilderness east of the Red Sea where they eventually came to the shores of what is known today as the Indian Ocean, built a boat and sailed across the Oceans Landing in modern day Central America. This family then split into two tribes one being called Nephi after the most faithful son in the family. The people of the tribe of Nephi multiplied on the land and because they were faithful to God He spoke to them by prophets just as he did with Israel. Since God also gave revelation to the Nephites (2 Ne. 29:10, 12) along with the Jews the Mormons claim that the bible alone is incomplete (2 Ne. 29:10). Adding to the incompleteness of the bible it is claimed that a "Great Abominable church" has removed "plain and precious parts" from the bible, making it thoroughly incomplete without the Book of Mormon (1 Ne. 13:25, 26; 2 Ne. 29:3-10). Thus, it is claimed that the book of Mormon contains a history of the Nephites along with the "rest" of the gospel which the world has been without since the destruction of Jerusalem.

For many it may be conceivable that God allowed His word to be lost to men and generations be condemned without hope. However, for all who put their faith in God it is not conceivable that we accept such a doctrine without comparing it to the pattern of sound words which was given to us first in the Bible. "*Hold fast the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus*" (2 Tim. 1:13). Simply put, if the existence of "another revelation" and the doctrines contained therein are not consistent with the pattern revealed in scriptures then that revelation **must be false**. "*The scriptures cannot be broken*" (John 10:35). The following points show where doctrines and

principles in the Book of Mormon are in clear contrast to the scriptures. Based on these contradictions (and there are many more) a faithful Christian ought to be convinced that the Book of Mormon cannot be the word of God.

1. In 1 Ne. 2:6, 7 Lehi (Nephi's father) built an altar in the wilderness and offered sacrifices to the Lord. According to the story Lehi was a faithful and upright man and had to leave Israel because the wickedness of the Jews had become so great. Also, though there were no Levites and many temples were built by these people, Nephi continually affirms that his people faithfully kept the Law of Moses after leaving Jerusalem (2 Ne. 5:10). In spite of these claims the very fact that Lehi offered sacrifices out side of Jerusalem shows clear disobedience to the Law of Moses. Deut. 12:4, 5, 8, 13, 14: *"Take heed to yourselves that you do not offer your burnt offering in every place that you see."* Deut. 12:10, 11: *"Then there (Zion or Jerusalem) will be the place where the Lord your God chooses to make His name abide."*
2. 2 Ne. 25:24: At the same time that they were supposedly keeping the Law of Moses (with out Levitical Priesthood which was essential to the Law of Moses!) Nephi was also commanding that his people be "baptized in the name of Jesus Christ" (2 Nephi 9:23). Remember that according to the Mormons this was supposedly taking place between 559 and 545 years **before Christ's Birth**. But, according to Paul if the Jews were to join themselves to the Law of Christ while the Law of Moses was still in effect, then they would have been committing spiritual adultery (Rom. 7:1-6).
3. Mosiah 1:3: It states here that the mysteries of God are known only through the plates of brass (1 Ne. 5:10-13). Supposedly these brass plates contained the five books of Moses and writings from several prophets. But consider: 1. Rom. 16:25-26, Paul said this mystery (God's plan to save mankind in Jesus Christ) was not manifested until the first century in the gospel. 2. Eph. 3:3-5, Paul taught that the mystery of Christ had not been made known to man in earlier times, but to the apostles and prophets first. 3. The Book of Mormon teaches that the Mystery of Christ could be known 160 years before the bible teaches it was made known!

### Testing the Spirits

In response of the previous arguments the first thing that the Mormons will teach is that if a person prays with an honest and sincere heart asking God if the Book of Mormon is His word, then God will reveal it to them by the Holy Spirit. They get this idea from Moroni 10:4-5 out of their book. "And when ye shall receive these things, I would exhort you that ye would ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true; and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost." In almost every study with the Mormons this will be the first passage that they will take you to. They have memorized it and it is highlighted in almost every Book of Mormon.

Because Mormons hold to the above teaching they will say that proof of inspiration comes through prayer, thus the above arguments are invalid. But how does God say that we are to test whether or not a doctrine is false? In contrast to the idea of praying for proof, the scriptures say we are to examine the works of men claiming to be inspired of God. *"Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world"* (1 John 4:1). See also Prov. 14:15; 1 Thess. 5:21. Mormons will say that the Bible also teaches us to "pray for proof" because it says we must pray for wisdom in James 1:5. However, they fail to recognize that the context of James 1:5 is wisdom unto patience and that praying for wisdom is far different than praying for God to prove something for us. The above passages must be pointed out to the Mormons, for the idea of having to prove their faith is foreign most of them. In fact, even though we use scripture to show the need to test things most Mormons believe that the proof of prayer and the testimony of their leaders is sufficient evidence and they are more than content to leave it at that. Some will choose not to study with you any longer if you press the issue. If they are willing to continue in study they will often accuse you of misinterpreting the scriptures. They believe one cannot truly understand the scriptures purely on logic, therefore "God has to give us understanding by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit." If they tell you such

things it might be helpful to remind them of their own “scripture,” which also encourages men to test the Mormon doctrine. Such statements can be found in the <sup>1</sup>Journal of Discourses (Vol. 21 Dec. 7, 1879. John Taylor), <sup>2</sup>The Seer (Orson Pratt, January 1853).

### **When the Mormons Call**

Though many Christians are eager to study scripture with all who ask, such studies with those of the Mormon faith can often be filled with frustration. The reason for such frustration is not so much a lack of scriptural knowledge on the Christian’s part, but rather a knack of evading the issue on the Mormon’s part. One may argue with a Mormon for hours covering many different subjects and scriptures yet coming no closer to convincing them of the truth. The reason for this is that even before the Mormon missionary comes to the door they have already been convinced that you do not know what you are talking about. They have come to teach you, not to be taught by you. According to Mormon doctrine from the time of Joseph Smith there have been modern day prophets who teach the truth on every doctrine by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Their reason for these prophets is that “mankind is continually changing form generation to generation and is therefore incapable of properly understand scripture written in previous generations without the help of the Holy Spirit.” This doctrine is described in an article printed in the <sup>3</sup>*Phoenix Voice* entitled “Live Prophets Come First.” It is with this mentality that most Mormons approach every study.

Because of this attitude one can build up the strongest case against the Mormon doctrines using the scriptures and still not budge them. After all “you are just misinterpreting the scriptures.” Is there any way one can successfully convince a Mormon that what they teach is error? Yes! and that pattern is also revealed in the scriptures. It is fortunate that the Mormons interpret these particular scriptures the same way most people do.

### **You Will Know Them By Their Fruits**

In Matt. 7:15 Jesus warns His disciples of false prophets saying “*you shall know them by their fruits.*” It is upon this premise that faith in the Mormon doctrine can effectively be overthrown. By the work that Jesus did and the prophecies that were fulfilled in Him He has been proven to be the Son of God. By the work that Joseph Smith has done and the false prophecies that he and his people have given they will be overthrown. In Deut. 18:21, 22 Moses said to the people, “*And if you say in your heart, 'How shall we know the word which the LORD has not spoken?' -- 22 when a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the thing does not happen or come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him.*” It is by testing the writings and prophecies of Joseph Smith and his followers that we will find the truth concerning their nature.

**The Use of the King James Version:** By inspiration Joseph Smith adamantly affirmed that the book of Mormon is superior to the Bible because it has not been translated and retranslated by men. In <sup>4</sup>*The Evening and Morning Star*, the writer of an article clearly states concerning the Book of Mormon that, “it has not been tinctured by the wisdom of man, with here and there an Italic word to supply deficiencies.” In spite of these bold claims against the Bible if a person were to compare both Mosiah chapter 14 from the Book of Mormon and Isaiah chapter 53 from the King James Version Bible they will find that it is an exact copy ITALIC WORDS AND ALL. The only difference between the two is that the Book of Mormon does not italicize the additional words. Though the majority of quotes from the bible contained in the Book of Mormon include these italicized words, this passage alone will suffice to prove the point.

In another early LDS newspaper called *Times and Seasons* Joseph Smith also affirmed that <sup>5</sup>“There was no Greek or Latin upon the plates from which I, through the grace of God, translated the Book of Mormon.” With this statement in mind, let us consider the following passages: 3 Nephi 9:18 and 3 Nephi 19:4. In reading these passages it would seem that, if Joseph Smith were truly inspired of God, God must have forgotten that “Alpha, Omega, Timothy, and Jonas” are all Greek words. One might argue that they

are the English translation of the Reformed Egyptian, but that is not so. These are Greek transliterations (Greek words merely adjusted to form to the English tongue). In fact, alpha and omega are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. Clearly, a man speaking by inspiration would have known this before making such a statement.

**The character of Joseph Smith as a Prophet:** Many have pointed out to the Mormons that Joseph Smith was a drunkard and a thief (which we have documented proof of). But, they respond saying even King David sinned yet his scripture was still inspired. Where this may be true it is not Smith's morality, but his so-called inspired prophecies that we must examine (Deut. 18:21, 22).

1. Prophecies of the second coming of Christ: In 1831 after Joseph Smith had laid his hands on Layman Wight, Wight then prophesied saying, <sup>6</sup>“There were some in the congregation that should live until the Savior should descend from heaven with a shout, with all the holy angles with Him. He said the coming of the Savior should be like the sun rising in the east, and will cover the whole earth.” That prophecy was given 172 years ago. All who were in that congregation in 1831 are now dead. A similar prophecy was given in 1833 when Joseph Smith wrote saying, <sup>7</sup>“...and declared that I should continue in the Priest's office until Christ comes.” Joseph Smith even went so far as to give the year of the coming of the Lord saying, <sup>8</sup>“Joseph, my son, if thou livest until thou art eight-five years old, thou shalt see the face of the Son of Man; therefore let this suffice, and trouble me no more on this matter.” When one does the math, this prophecy being given on Dec. 25<sup>th</sup>, 1832 and Smith being 27 years old, Christ should have come in the year 1890 according to Smith. It is now 2003 and He still has not yet come. If that was not enough, Smith, becoming desperate just before his death threatened that if his blood were to be shed <sup>9</sup>the Lord would come 10 years earlier than originally stated. Even still, Joseph Smith was shot dead and 1880 has come and gone and Christ is still on His throne in heaven. <sup>10</sup>Promises were given during the “apostolic blessings” saying that the early Mormon apostles would also live until Christ comes. Every one of those apostles is now dead. By the way, did God forget to remind Joseph Smith that the Father alone will know when Christ will come until His appearing? (Matt 24:36)
2. Prophecies concerning Joseph Smith's death: In History of the Church Volumes 2 and 5 Smith makes several prophecies of his death in 1834 and 1842. In both statements Smith prophesied of his victory against his “gainsayers” and that those who fought against him would be “cut off.” In the Journal of Discourses Vol.2 and Vol. 5 on June 30 and in August of 1843 Smith prophesied again that he would triumph over his enemies (Physically). Finally on June 18, 1844 Smith made a statement in the Nauvoo Newspaper saying <sup>11</sup>“As sure as there is a God in Israel, we shall ride triumphantly over all oppression.” <sup>12</sup>A few days later Smith was killed when a mob attacked the town Jail. Thus, Smith was not triumphant, he did not ride away, and his gainsayers got the best of him.
3. Smith Exalts Himself above all men, including Jesus Christ: Nearly a month before his death Smith ranted arrogantly against those who sought his life. Being puffed up against them he says, “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. You know my daily walk and conversation. I am in the bosom of a virtuous and good people. How I do love to hear the wolves howl!” Who in their right mind would follow a man who would say that the work that he has done is greater even than the Lord's sacrifice? Let us remember 2 Cor. 10:5. “*Casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.*”

**Self Condemnation:** As often happens with men who falsely claim inspiration they end up saying things that in the end act as their own hanging noose. Mormonism is no different. In a zeal and desire to speak by inspiration the words of Orson Pratt (one of Mormonism's first apostles) have become one of the many nooses of the Mormon Church. Concerning<sup>13</sup>“The Gathering,” Pratt says, “*Now, the doctrine of the gathering of the saints in the last days must either be false or true; if false, then J. Smith must be an imposter. It matters not how correct he may have been in all other points of his system, if this one point –*

*the doctrine of the gathering be false, he must be a deceiver. Why? Because he professes to have received this doctrine by the direct revelation and commandment.”* The gathering never happened and the world is still here.

### Conclusion

The material discussed in this lesson is only a speck compared to the great amount of prophecies and errors mingled within the Mormon’s writings and history. With such a great witness against the Mormon Church they must be reminded of their own words. “Convince us of our errors of doctrine, if we have any, by reason, by logical arguments, or by the word of God, and we will be ever grateful for the information.” We have done both!

When his prophecies fail to be fulfilled once, let alone over and over it is absolute proof that a prophet is not from God. Throughout this lesson we have seen proof of Smith’s presumption as a prophet. But the proof does not end here. There are literally hundreds of such documents that one might set before the later day saints as proof of the unreliability of their “modern day prophets” and the Book of Mormon.

Investigations such as this have also conducted on the Bible. Unlike false religions such as Mormonism, however, the Bible has and will continue to pass the test. The Psalmist spoke correctly when he wrote, “*As for God, His ways are perfect. The word of the Lord is proven*” (Ps. 18:30). Would you put your faith in the simple gospel of Jesus Christ which is revealed in the Bible? “*But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. 4 For if he who comes preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or if you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted -- you may well put up with it!*” (2 Cor. 11:3-4). Come to the true gospel of Christ today. Mark 16:16; Rom. 6:3-6; Gal. 3:26, 27; Eph. 4:11-16.

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### Foot Notes

<sup>1</sup> The *Journal of Discourses* is a 26 volume compilation of LDS presidents and apostle’s sermons, covering about 35 years. There were several men who were officially assigned by the LDS Church to record the talks.

<sup>2</sup> *The Seer* is an official LDS publication written by Apostles Pratt which covers such subjects as a defense of Mormonism as the true church and polygamy as the true order of marriage.

<sup>3</sup> The Phoenix voice is a local LDS newspaper. The Live Prophet Come First was published May 12, 1980.

<sup>4</sup> The Evening and Morning Star was an LDS Newspaper that was in print from 1832 to 1834.

<sup>5</sup> Times and Seasons (an early LDS Newspaper in Nauvoo, Illinois) Vol. 4, Joseph Smith.

<sup>6</sup> History of the Church Vol. 1. pg. 176.

<sup>7</sup> History of the Church Vol. 1. page 323.

<sup>8</sup> Doctrine and Covenants 131:14-16.

<sup>9</sup> Statement recorded in the Journal of Oliver B. Huntington – 1876 from a typed copy of Brigham young university.

<sup>10</sup> History of Joseph Smith pages 206 and 207. Taken from the Millennial Star Vol. 15.

<sup>11</sup> Nauvoo Neighbor, Wednesday June 19, 1844.

<sup>12</sup> History of the Church, Vol. 6 Introduction, p. XLI

<sup>13</sup> A doctrine of the early Mormon church that taught that when the Lord would come before the 20<sup>th</sup> century all the saint would be gathered together.

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<p>Avondale church of Christ 1606 Glen Willow Rd., P.O. Box 421, Avondale, PA 19311 (610) 268-2088, <a href="mailto:gospelstudies@verizon.net">gospelstudies@verizon.net</a> <a href="http://www.avondalechristians.com">www.avondalechristians.com</a></p>
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