***Mormonism, No. 4
RO59-01***

**© Berean Memorial Church of Irving, Texas, Inc. (1977)**

This evening, there is a great deal that I would like to bring to your attention. I will tell you this at this point – that I could recommend to you, if you would like to pursue the study of Mormonism on your own in great detail and with considerable authority, there is a book entitled Mormonism: Shadow or Reality written by Gerald and Sandra Tanner. This book is published by Modern Microfilm Company, Box 1884, Salt Lake City, Utah, 84110. This has just about everything. It is an excellent source of documents that will give you the picture of the whole issue of Mormonism from one end to the other. Then there is the little book that I mentioned in a previous session: Is Mormonism Christian? by Gordon H. Fraser. This is published by Moody Press, and it's a paperback.

From the Mormons themselves, you may secure a book called A Marvelous Work and a Wonder by Legrand Richards. This book is the foundation stone of the training of the two boys that you see riding around town on the bicycles – the Mormon missionaries. Just about every Mormon boy, when he gets to a certain point (in his teens) goes to theological school. He basically studies this work. This was written in order to brief them on a thorough indoctrination and Mormon viewpoint. It's got it all in this book. I mentioned those for your personal study to go into greater detail.

**The Narrow Gate – Grace**

As we have indicated, humanity by the millions pour through this wide gate, which promises salvation by human effort and rituals, on to the broad highway leading to the lake of fire. God has actually set up a system such as this. Eternal life is reached through a very narrow gate. The name of this gate is "grace." If you try to walk through that grace with any kind of works or human ritual in your arms, you won't get through. All that can get through is you as an unadorned sinner.

**The Broad Gate – Religion**

From this narrow gate leads a very straight and (what the Bible calls) a constricted pathway into eternal glory. Many people are deluded by the fact that Satan has created a vast and beautiful highway that often moves very close to the gate of grace. And the entrance way into this road is very, very wide. The name of this entrance way is "religion." Many people have approached God on one basis of religion or another, and they've hit this gate. It's very easy to hit. Its basic system is human works; human ritual; and, human effort. So, it's very easily found. Many people very easily enter into it, and they head down this road. They get great comfort from the fact that there are a lot of people on this road. That's where most of the people of the world (the Bible says), are.

However, this road takes a very subtle turn in time, and it ends up . . . in the lake of fire. It never gets to where people think they're going, because they have missed the real gate –, this very narrow gate. This road is followed in spite of the Bible's clearly identified true entrance into salvation – this narrow gate of grace. This gate will have nothing to do with human effort or ritual. The broad road, of course, is traveled in all sincerity and all genuineness. And vast numbers of church members, from various denominations, are hard on this road; hustling along; and, seeking God.

Now, if we were to challenge (which is what we're doing) approaching God with self-efforts, these people will say, "O, of course, you can't go to heaven on your works. I am believing in Jesus Christ as Savior." However, what they are saying is that: "I am adding my efforts. I'm adding my sincerity; I'm adding my good behavior; or, I'm adding my religious rituals to what Jesus Christ has done." They do not understand that grace allows no admixture of human works and a gift provision.

So, while it shocks us to think that many who are confident in their works and who are ritual oriented (even as church members), it offends us to some degree to think that those people will be lost, but we cannot, on the basis of Scripture, come to any other conclusion. We have been using Mormonism as the classic example of people who are very adamant about calling themselves Christian, but who are trusting in a contaminated gospel which dooms them to the lake of fire. They follow a false works oriented, self-improvement gospel, which is not God's gospel of grace. In Galatians 1:8-9, the apostle Paul says that that kind of a gospel is under a divine curse, and is to be rejected even if it's brought by an angel from heaven.

**The Mormon "New and Everlasting Gospel"**

The Mormon gospel plan is called the new and everlasting gospel. This new and everlasting gospel was purportedly restored to mankind by Joseph Smith from a direct revelation from heaven, after 1700 years of obscurity. The Mormon Church teaches that following the first century, an everlasting gospel with its four steps (that we've already looked at) was lost. And they teach that this has now been restored through Joseph Smith.

**Joseph Smith and Brigham Young**

Now such a claim, of course, is dependent on the divine authority of the Mormon Church – the basis upon which these additions are made. Mormonism has three sacred books that. It, of course, has, first of all, the sacred The Book of Mormon itself. Then it has the sacred volume (and by "sacred," I mean that these are Scriptures) called Doctrine and Covenants, and The Pearl of Great Price. These three contingents constitute the source of basic Mormon doctrine. Doctrine and Covenants are the record of the revelations (the prophecies) of the presidents of the church, and mostly of Joseph Smith. When Joseph Smith spoke, and Brigham Young spoke, they wrote it down. These prophetic utterances were from God, and they are Scripture. The Pearl of Great Price contains the translation of The Book of Abraham and The Book of Moses, and I'll give you some information on that a little later.

The Mormon Church actually claims to be a restoration of New Testament Christianity, which was left by Jesus Christ and the apostles, but which was abandoned shortly after the year 100, after John was removed from the scene – the last of the apostles. This system has now been restored. But as we have already thus far studied some of the basic views of Mormonism, you have no doubt realize that if we did not have The Book Mormon; if we did not have The Doctrine and Covenants; and, if we did not have The Pearl of Great Price, we would not have this restored gospel as Mormonism teaches it today. That is because this restored gospel is found nowhere in the New Testament Scriptures. And Mormons are not hesitant to just tell you that – that you couldn't learn these things from the Bible. Brigham Young was very fond of expounding on some Mormon viewpoint that was one of their peculiarities, and say, "Now you can't find this in the Bible. You wouldn't learn this just from the Bible.

So, isn't it interesting that God gave a New Testament Scripture which did not contain the new and everlasting gospel; which left out elements; and, which did not clearly set up His church order, and some of His basic doctrines? And it took these books, coming 1700 years later, to establish this. The Mormon system is not possible without the addition of their Scriptures.

**The Doctrine of Self-Improvement**

We've already looked at the doctrine of Mormonism relative to salvation, and we've seen that they have a self-improvement works program completely condemned by the Word of God.

**The Doctrine of Priesthood**

Let's look at another one, and that's the doctrine of priesthood. Mormonism completely perverts the New Testament doctrine of the church as the body and the bride of Christ. They are completely oblivious, seemingly, of that truth. They lack an absolute understanding of dispensational distinctions between Israel and the church, and between the Israel (Judeaist) way of life and the Christian church, graceful way of life.

Mormonism, of course, is not exclusive in this. Amillennialists lack that same discernment. I want to remind you that what Joseph Smith knew about the Bible; what do you do about theology; and, what his associates knew about theology did not come because they went to school. They did not go to theological school. They were not Bible students. What they knew of the Bible was what they heard from exhorters (revivalists) of their day, who, by and large, were themselves ignorant men preying upon people's emotions with a few basic salvation doctrines and some generalities from Scripture.

So, when we speak about these people and their understanding of dispensational distinctions, it's no surprise that very few people in that day had it. Joseph Smith and his cronies were not great students of the Bible. They possessed merely what anybody else of the day had heard from the exhorters. Consequently, they have a haphazard mixture of Old and New Testament without any consideration for dispensational distinctions. I don't have to tell you what kind of madness that leads to.

So, the Mormons have no grasp, consequently, of the universal priesthood of all believers, which is true of the age of the church, as distinct from the Mosaic priesthood which ended with the death of Jesus Christ. 1 Peter 1:9 informs us that we all in this age are priests. They lack an understanding of the distinction between Israel and the gentiles. For this reason, Mormons consider themselves the Israel of God, and they refer to everybody else as gentiles, and they call themselves "the saints." Well, that's a true and appropriate title, but we believers are all saints. The Bible says that anybody who is born-again is a saint of God. But the fact that they speak about non-Mormons as gentiles means that they view themselves as Israel, completely ignoring the fact that they have no racial connection. You could not be part of Israel unless you were descended from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as a true Jew.

They have, consequently, two priesthoods. They do not have the universal priesthood of the believers, but they have two priesthoods. One is the Aaronic priesthood. This is the lower form of priesthood. This is what boys in their teens are ordained to. This was administered to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery by John the Baptist on one occasion in the woods when they were praying. John the Baptist, of course, was never a priest, though he was of the priestly family. Therefore, because he was not a priest, he could never have administered any priestly rites. Only the high priest, as a matter of fact, could ordain one to the priesthood.

**Sidney Rigdon**

So, if you know anything about Scripture, you immediately see one of those things again, where God is contradicting what he has previously established as His order. Only a Jew of the tribe of Levi and of the house of Aaron could be an Old Testament priest. Neither Joseph Smith nor Oliver Cowdery were Jews of the House of Levi, of the descent of Aaron. If they were, they couldn't possibly have known it. All the Mormons who are being ordained to the Aaronic priesthood had the same problem. They do not belong to the appropriate Jewish tribe. Such an ordination, furthermore, would have to be public, and an animal sacrifice would have to be included for a blood sacrifice. This happened very privately (the two of them) without any witnesses. As a matter of fact, Cowdery observed that the voice of John the Baptist, as it spoke to them, sounded very, very much like their associate, Sidney Rigdon. And I do not find it hard to believe that old Sidney was out there standing behind a tree, speaking to them as the voice from heaven. Sidney was good with words. He was a flowery speaker, we're told, and he could really captivate an audience. But he wasn't too good, apparently, at disguising his voice.

The Aaronic priesthood, of course, terminated with the death of Jesus Christ. Later on, Joseph Smith claimed to have received the Melchizedek priesthood from Peter, James, and John. This is the higher level. When a man comes to maturity in the Mormon Church, he then is eligible to go on to the priesthood, and be ordained an elder. We have no specific details. The story gets a little hazy about when Peter, James, and John appeared to ordain Joseph Smith to the Melchizedek priesthood, and to confer upon him apostolic authority. The Mormons are as fanatical for apostolic authority as the Roman Catholic Church is. They're as fanatical for apostolic descent – that your authority comes from one apostle to the next, down the years, as the Roman Catholic Church is. They base a great deal upon that.

Now, one interesting thing about this is that the book Doctrine and Covenants, which describes the coming of these priesthoods, did not originally include (in his first revelation), the details concerning the Melchizedek priesthood. And as you study Mormonism, you become aware of the fact that as Joseph Smith developed the system, from the time that he had his first vision in 1820, and the Book of Mormon printed in 1830, and as he went along in his system, he gradually evolved new doctrinal ideas. There is good cause to suspect that Sidney Rigdon, the visionary, was behind many of these notions.

However, on this particular doctrine, the Melchizedek priesthood, Joseph Smith had no compunction of going back and adding something like 145 words to fill out the revelation on the priesthood in order to include the Melchizedek priesthood. Isn't that interesting? God gives a revelation, and later He has to go back and make it correct.

So, this priesthood, again, is a priesthood which violates Scriptures, for it is a priesthood which basically belongs to the Lord Jesus Christ. We as believers associated with Him as our high priest. We participate, to that extent, in the Melchizedek type of priesthood. But these ideas of Melchizedek as the founder of a priesthood were completely out of keeping with the scriptural relationship of this to Jesus Christ who had a superior priesthood over the Aaronic priesthood. And you know that doctrine, and I won't go into it. Joseph Smith, I told you before, taught his people that the Bible, through many translations, has been corrupted. Therefore, he came out with what he called the Inspired Version of the King James Bible. In the Inspired Version, he completely distorted the picture of Melchizedek. He added many details about who Melchizedek was, and so on, that the Bible does not do. And he took the priesthood from Jesus Christ, and made Melchizedek the central figure of this priesthood in himself. And from him, it was converted down to Joseph Smith and the Mormon Church.

Well, for this priesthood system (the Aaronic priesthood and the Melchizedek priesthood) in the Mormon Church is actually used as a corporate structure of organization. You must remember that the Mormon Church is a great corporation – a very wealthy corporation. $2 million dollars a day comes pouring in in tithes. Millions come in through all the business enterprises and the fantastic investments they have in every direction imaginable. This structure is monumental. They're building six new temples around the world at this point – all financed by the church. They have to have a structure of control; a structure of administration; and a structure of authority. And that's what these priesthood are actually used for – the structure of these various agents, ending up in the prophet at the top. They have the prophet and president of the church; the 12 apostles under him; and, the various groups (the Seventies, and the bishops, and the elders, and so on down the line. It's a vast corporate structure which is built around these priesthoods.

**Free Masonry**

Now the Mormon view of the local church is actually an amalgamation of the Old Testament temple rites and the secret ceremonies of Freemasonry. Again, I can't go into the details, but Joseph Smith got into masonry. I think it was when the church was in Kirtland, Ohio, and many of the leading Mormons got into masonry. And Joseph Smith was captivated by the secret ceremonies and the rituals in the Masonic Lodge. Therefore, he incorporated those wholesale, converting them to Old Testament orders and names. He converted rituals of the Masonic Lodge into rituals in the Mormon temple. And that's what goes on. I can't go into the details of describing to you how a man is ordained into one of these priesthoods, and the procedures that he goes through, and the garments that he puts on, and the words that he speaks, and the words that are spoken back to him. It's just masonry right down the line – the secret lodge all over again.

**Secrecy**

This is hardly anything comparable to the temple of the Old Testament. In the Old Testament, nothing was secret. Nothing was secret in the temple rites. Even when the high priest stood in the holy of holies, once a year on the day of atonement, the people knew exactly what he was doing. They even listen to the bells on his garment to be sure that he was still alive, and God had not struck him dead, and they could hear the bell tinkling as he went about the ministry back there in the holy of holies. There was nothing secret. There's nothing lodge-like about it.

**Temples**

This is the reason that Mormons build temples. They build temples for these secret rights. These rights include the rights of ordination into the priesthood. They include water baptism. They include baptism for the dead. They include the laying on of hands for the Holy Spirit. They include marriages for eternity (celestial marriages), and so on. It's just a Roman Catholic type of system for Protestants. It is a conglomeration of paganism and Old Testament theology and Christianity.

So, when we look at the priesthood of the Mormon Church, it's condemned as being false when we match it to Scripture. So, the system is not of God.

**Polygamy**

Let's come to the doctrine of polygamy. I won't take time to read the Scriptures, but Mark 10:2-6 and Matthew 19:2-5 had the Lord Jesus Christ giving information about marriage. The Lord indicates there that God's original plan of marriage was: "Male and female He made them. And of the twain, they shall become one flesh." It does not say, "And out of the twain, they shall become several fleshes" (as in polygamy). But it says that: "The two of them would be one flesh."

So, God has one right woman for one right man. Interestingly enough, the Book of Mormon calls polygamy a great corrupt practice. It uses many strong words to denounce polygamy. But remember that this was the first of the sacred books. This was when things were getting started. But very soon, Joseph Smith got a revelation from God that told him that he is to have more than one wife. Part of the rationale for this was that there are all these preexistent souls in heaven. This is that old pagan idea of souls existing already, waiting to have a mortal body. The idea was promulgated among Mormons (very much so by Brigham Young) that it is the duty of every man and every woman in the Mormon church to have as many children, and to produce as many bodies as they can, so that these poor spirits that are waiting (these souls who are waiting to come for their period of probation) will have physical bodies. Well, of course, that is a rather attractive doctrine to the old sin nature, when you stop and think about it. And Joseph Smith really hit a winner when he came up with this one.

Furthermore, in order to establish it as something that was necessary for their men to do, they were taught that no man could reach the highest heaven (the highest sphere) of salvation unless he had more than one wife. . . . If you were studying these matters, you would discover that Joseph Smith was practicing multiple wives (plural wives) for some time before the doctrine was publicly promulgated in Nauvoo, Illinois. It was announced publicly a year before he was murdered at the Carthage jail. But there are indications that he practiced it privately for some time.

**Celestial Marriage**

The testimony that has been gathered is that he had something like 87 wives. Brigham Young didn't do as well. He had, I think, 27 wives. But Brigham Young was very happy to engage in the practice of celestial marriage, which is one of the things you do in this temple, so that you marry a woman, so that for all eternity (when both of you are resurrected back into your physical bodies), she has to be your woman.

There was one very attractive lady who would have nothing to do with Brigham Young right down to the day of her death. So, after she died, he had a lady stand in by proxy, and he got himself married to her for all eternity. That poor gal is going to get out in eternity to discover that Brigham Young is her boyfriend, whether or no. Now that is a beautiful system. But Brigham Young had a lot of women who would come up and say, "I'd like to be your celestial wife." And he never refused a lady. Anybody who wanted to be married to him for eternity, he'd married her. So, he had hundreds of these gals that he was married to. He said, "I don't know how many wives I have." When the gentiles asked him how many wives he had, he said, "I don't keep track of them." But he said, "I always keep track of my children." And he had 56 of those.

When the revelation concerning polygamy came, through Joseph Smith, interestingly enough, in this particular revelation, God found it necessary to add some special instruction to Joseph Smith's wife, Emma – understandably so. As a matter of fact, Joseph Smith defended his practice that he recoiled from this idea, but that God gave a vision, and an angel came with a sword in his hand and said, "If you don't get more than one wife, I'll slay you on the spot." Joseph Smith said, "OK, I'll get some more girls."

Now you can't blame him. An angel from heaven told him to do this. But there was one problem. Emma was so narrow-minded, and God knew she was so narrow-minded, that she wasn't going to appreciate having these other girls around the house or someplace else stashed away as Joseph Smith's wives.

So, I just want to read you this much. I wish I could read you more, but in Doctrines and Covenants), in section 132:51, here's what it says: "'Verily I say to you a commandment I give unto mine handmaid, Emma Smith, your wife, whom I have given unto you, that she stay herself and partake not of that which I commanded you to offer unto her. For I did it,' saith the Lord, 'to prove you all as I did Abraham, that I might require an offering at your hand by covenant and sacrifice. And let my handmaid, Emma Smith, receive all those that have been given up to my servant Joseph, and who are virtuous and pure before me. And those who are not pure, and have said they were pure, shall be destroyed,' saith the Lord. 'For I am the Lord thy God. You shall obey my voice. And I give unto my servant Joseph that he should be made ruler over many things, for he hath been faithful over a few things. And from henceforth, I will strengthen him.'"

Doesn't this sound like a charismatic meeting?

"'And I commanded mine handmaid Emma Smith to abide and cleave and to my servant Joseph, and to none else. But if she will not abide this commandment, she shall be destroyed (the commandment of polygamy),' saith the Lord. 'For I am the Lord thy God. And I will destroy her if she abide not by my law. But if she will not abide this commandment, then shall my servant Joseph do all things for her, even as he hath said. And I will bless him, and multiply him, and give him unto an hundredfold in this world of fathers and mothers; brothers and sisters; homes and lands; wives and children; and, crowns of eternal lives in the eternal worlds.

"'And again, verily I say, let mine handmaid forgive my servant Joseph his trespasses. (It seems he had 12 wives already without her knowing it.) And then shall she be forgiven her trespasses, wherein she hath trespassed against me. And I, the Lord thy God will bless her, and multiply her, and make her heart to rejoice.'"

Well, I can see why Emma had to get some nudging from the Lord to accept this doctrine. If you pursue some of these books I've mentioned to you, there's some documentation of just how polygamy really worked out. It is a frightful practice. Having several wives in one household was madness to begin with, obviously, to anybody has got any sense at all. Things became such a problem for Brigham Young, at one time with, the bickering, and the contention, and the fussing with one wife for favor against another wife, that he gave them two weeks. He said, "I'm going to give you two weeks, and you may all decide if you want to stay, or if you want to leave. And you have two weeks to decide, and then I don't want to hear a peep out of any of you again." He gave them two weeks to decide whether they wanted to stay as his wives or to leave, because he was sick and tired of their squabbling and bickering. Well, I can imagine he must have really had it.

Well, there's a great deal more to be said about the doctrine of polygamy. But it could hardly be compatible with the order of Scripture. You would never know such a doctrine as being under divine approval unless you had it out of a super so-called revelation, and recorded here in these Scriptures.

Polygamy, we are told (I can't verify this), is practiced in parts of Utah. I read in one place (by some authorities who have some knowledge of these things) that there are 30,000 people in Utah who now practice polygamy (who are involved in it). While Section 132 is still in Doctrine and Covenants, there is at the end of this a statement by one of the presidents of the church at the time, in 1890 when Utah was trying to come into the union, when the United States now own the Utah territory. When the Mormons went out there, Utah was owned by Spain. The Mexican War change that. Now the United States owned the Utah territory, and finally in 1890, the government in Washington said, "Stop the practice of polygamy, or we're going to drive you out of the territory. Make up your minds."

Well, wonderful, wonderful. The prophet of the church at that time, Willard Woodruff, had a revelation from God that showed what was going to happen to them, he said, if they did not conform to the gentile request. So, they did. He gave the word that they were no longer to practice this doctrine. The doctrine has never been rescinded. It just is no longer practice.

**The Blood Atonement Doctrine**

The blood atonement doctrines had to do with actually enabling a person to save himself by the shedding of his own blood. There were certain sins that were so heinous that they simply could not be covered by the work of Christ. And that's actually, in so many words, specifically what the leaders, such as Brigham Young, taught the Mormon people.

For example, quoting out of Mormonism: Shadow or Reality, page 398: "Although William Smith's testimony was not given until 1893, he did publish a proclamation in 1845 in which he told that Brigham Young was teaching blood atonement; that is, that a man might be killed to save his soul. I heard Brigham Young say on the stand that he was glad that Alvin Hodge was killed. And he said further that it was far better for Alvin Hodge to die than to live any longer in sin, so that he might now possibly be redeemed in the eternal world; that is, murderers had done even a deed of charity so that such a man deserved to die."

The article also goes on to say that Brigham Young said in a sermon, as president of the church, "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 spilled 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." So, he goes on to further comment on this doctrine.

Then this volume gives you the example of a man who is accused of adultery, and convicted of it by the church council, and was told that he would be executed, but that he would be executed for blood atonement. His throat would be cut, and he was very amenable to that. He sincerely believed that this was the only way to resolve this sin. So, he asked for a day to make preparations. He did. His wife sowed him a new suit of clothes. Then the church council met in the woods; they dug the grave; the man knelt in prayer; and, then the three representatives of the Mormon Church were there, and they slit his throat. And they held his head back and let the blood gush into the grave in order that he might atone for his own soul. Then they put him into the grave and buried him.

This kind of thing was done many times – more perhaps than we can verify. Joseph Smith had a hit squad which called itself The Danites, after the tribe of the Dan. The Danites were literally a mafia-like hit squad. They executed people on the basis of his blood atonement doctrine, because they were saving their souls by causing them to die in a way that their blood was shed. The kinds of people they went after were primarily apostates – people who had abandoned the Mormon Church.

This explains one of the things that the Mormons like to claim, which is not exactly true – that the three witnesses who originally testified to having an angel appear, and (in a vision) showed them the golden plates. They didn't actually touch them, but the angel showed them, and held the book, and turned the pages for them so they could see these ancient hieroglyphics. All three of them in time fell out with the Mormon Church, and none of them ever denied having seen the golden plates face by the angel that Joseph Smith was translating.

That is not exactly true. But to the extent that it is, it is true, for example, with Sidney Rigdon – the only minister in a group. He would refuse to speak about the subject to the day of his death. But one of the reasons was because these men knew the blood doctrine atonement and the Danite hit squad. They knew that they were exposing themselves to instant death if they were to deny that sort of thing.

One of the presidents of the church thought taught that if anybody speaks against Joseph Smith, and denies that he is the prophet of God, that that person has committed a sin that is worthy of blood atonement. So, this method of expiation is still, in effect, in practice in Utah today by the fact that you can be executed by the firing squad if you so choose.

**Prophets**

Now, what about mistakes in the book? Mormons are very loathe to deal with that. The Old Testament criteria of the prophet (you may read about this in Deuteronomy 13:1-11) says that the message of the prophet must be in harmony with Scripture or he's a false prophet. We've already found that not to be the case with Joseph Smith. Deuteronomy 18:20-22 say that you can identify a prophet of God by the fact that he speaks the truth. But if he makes a prediction, and it does not come to pass, he has the mark of Satan upon him. He is a false prophet, and he is to be rejected.

The same principle is in 1 John 4:1 that tells us to: "Test every spirit, for there are many false prophets who have gone out into the world. Again, I cannot go into details. I'll just brief you on a few of the prophecies of Joseph Smith that were obviously false. When the Book of Mormon was completed and ready to be published in 1830, Martin Harris was one of the inner circle. He was a wealthy farmer. And he was kind of a religious visionary. So, he became interested in this project, and fell in with him. He was trying to sell some of his land in order to finance the publication of the Book of Mormon. He was going so slowly that the other members of the team became impatient with Martin, and they suggested to Joseph Smith that he inquire of the Lord some other way that this money may be raised, and they just simply bypassed Harris.

So, Joseph Smith went to the Lord and came back, and said, "God has given me a revelation. He has told me that you will go to Canada, and you will sell the copyright for the Book of Mormon, and the money will be raised for its publication in that way." Well, two of the men went, and they came back beaten; bedraggled; stomped into the ground; and, without the money. They said, "Joseph, how is it that you told us that God had revealed to you that we should go there, and that the money was there, and that it would be sold, but it did not come to pass?" He had no answer for it. He said, "I was wrong."

Later, when Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon decided that the revelations of the prophet must be recorded as Scripture, it was first called The Book of Commandments, and it was later changed to Doctrines and Covenants. One of the men objected. I think his name was Whitmer. He objected to these revelations being recorded, and Joseph Smith had a verbal outburst to him that this was the will of God. So, Mr. Whitmer said, "Brother Joseph, are you going to print *all* of your prophecies from the Lord?" He said, "Yes, every one of them – in order of the date. Then he said, "Are you going to publish the one about securing the money for the publishing of the Book of Mormon in Canada?" And the record says that Joseph Smith hung his head and said, "No, that was wrong."

Joseph Smith said that Jesus Christ would return in 56 years from 1835. He would return, and the Second Coming would take place. Obviously, that did not take place, but the Mormons didn't give up that hope for 100 years. The Mormons were told that Zion of the old world was in Jerusalem, and the Temple of the old world was there, but that God had a new world. The ten lost tribes had come over here. They had descended into the Indian groups. You can read all about that story in the Book of Mormon. He said that in this country, God would raise up another Zion and another temple to which all the world would come, and all the saints would be gathered.

Then Joseph Smith had the revelations that the place of the New Zion in this world is Independence, Missouri, and that there the temple would be raised. It has never been raised. They laid the cornerstone, and that's as far as they got. They were driven out before that was done. But the Saints were convinced that they'd be back in just a few years. It was practically apostasy to suggest that they would not be back to Independence, Missouri within five to ten years. The only thing that came out of Independence, Missouri was Harry Truman. . . . And there was no temple out of all that.

Furthermore, Joseph Smith said that the temple in the New Zion in Independence, Missouri, would be built in his generation: "In that generation." It was, of course, not so done. He said, that he himself would live to see the return of Christ to this temple, which had been rebuilt. He was dead within a year. Joseph Smith was actually willing to change the Scripture on occasion to tell a lie. This happened more than once. He changed the Scripture to tell something that was actually not the case.

**Changing the Scriptures**

Well look at just one as an example: This man, viewing himself as a prophet of God, did not hesitate even to change the Old Testament Scriptures. The title of this section is "Making God a Liar." Here is the change that Joseph Smith actually made in the book of Genesis in the inspired Bible: "And it came to pass, when he was come here to enter into Egypt (that is, Abraham, and this incident of his wife Sarah), that he said unto Sarai, his wife, 'Behold, now I know that thou art a fair woman to look upon. Therefore, it shall come to pass, when the Egyptians shall see thee, that they shall say, 'This is his wife,' and they will kill me, but they will save thee alive. Say, I pray thee, thou art my sister, that it may be well with me, for thy sake, and my soul shall live because of thee.'"

You're acquainted with the incident. Now, in Joseph Smith's Book of Abraham, we find that this story has been rewritten to make it appear that God told Abraham to lie about his wife. In the Book of Abraham, it says, "And it came to pass, when I was coming near to enter to Egypt, the Lord said unto me, 'Behold, Sarah, thy wife, is a very fair woman to look upon,'" and so on. Then it goes on to say, "God said, 'Let her say unto the Egyptians that she is thy sister, and thy soul shall live.' And it came to pass that I Abraham told Sarai, my wife, all that the Lord had said unto me, Therefore say I to them: 'I pray thee that thou art my sister,'" and so on. So, it was not about Joseph Smith to actually change the Scriptures to say that God told him to tell that lie concerning Sarah.

**Four Egyptian Mummies**

The Pearl of Great Price includes The Book of Abraham. It so happened that there was a traveling group that had four Egyptian mummies that was traveling around the country displaying them. They came to Nauvoo, Illinois, and Joseph Smith ended up buying these four mummies for something like $2,400 dollars. When he opened one of them, he found some papyri. He took these papyri and proceeded to translate, and what should he have found but a book written by Abraham? He even copied some of the hieroglyphics and hieratic characters that were on some of the seal (some of the diagrams), and he had these printed. For a long time, you could open the Book of Abraham. You could look at these copies of parts of the ancient papyri manuscripts, and so on. The Mormons were very happy and very proud of the fact to say to other churches, "Our prophet is able to translate languages. Do you have a leader in your church who can translate all languages?"

So, Joseph Smith brought out this translation. This papyri was held in the family, and ended up in Chicago. And the church believed that the papyri were burned in the Chicago fire. Well, in the 1960s, lo and behold, inadvertently, somebody studying in the Metropolitan Museum discovered these papyri. They discovered these placards (the cardboards upon which they had been laid out) with Joseph Smith's handwritten notes. These were the very ones he translated the Book of Abraham from. The Metropolitan Museum informed the Mormon Church, and there is reason to believe that they already knew that these things were someplace, but they were never really interested in pursuing them. They had never even taken the copies of the seals with the hieroglyphics and hieratic characters that were on those to have those translated. For some strange reason, the church had a sense that they better leave well enough alone.

Well, the Metropolitan Museum in New York gave these papyri to the Mormon Church. The Mormon Church was elated. They thought, "Here, at last, we will be able to get a translation of something that Joseph Smith actually worked from. We don't have the golden plates for the Book of Mormon, but we do have this, and we will establish that he was indeed a true prophet of God."

They gave it to one of their men at Brigham Young University who was not a true Egyptologist. As a matter of fact, this man began suspecting that he might have to do some translating, so he rushed off to the University of Chicago at the Oriental Institute, and took some courses on translating hieroglyphics. Of course, you have to have years of experience and training to do something like that. And he came out with some generalities about this being a true and proper presentation.

Then the church, being encouraged by this, to establish that they really had something, asked one of their men, who was a Mormon himself, and is one of America's great Egyptologists, to translate the Book of Abraham manuscripts (papyri) that they had found. Well, that's when the fur hit the fan. Oh, boy, did the chickens hit the fan, because after he got through translating it, lo and behold, what did they discover, but that this man, who was an authority in the field, and completely honorable – Professor D.J. Nelson said, "This has got nothing to do with the Book of Abraham at all. It's the Book of Breathing, a variation of the Egyptian Book of the Dead, which they used to put in with the bodies in order to have all the directions for the dead on how to operate in the next world, and how to sustain themselves, and how to go to a happy place. It is a pagan funeral order."

Well, the church immediately took him to task. They refused to publish what his findings were, and the result was that he asked for his membership from church. He called the church a liar. He said, "I do not wish to be associated with a religious organization which teaches lies and adheres to policies says so blatantly opposed to civil and religious liberties of some citizens in the United States." He's referring to the Blacks being excluded from the temple and from the priesthood, because it supposedly came out of this book." This is where Joseph Smith got it. And he simply laid it out for all the world to see. Well, the letters are interesting. We have had such a long service that I can't read these letters to you, but he lays it out very clearly.

So, the Book of Abraham is a problem for the Mormons. When I ask them about that in Salt Lake City, the professor from Utah University gave me the whole story about how they found it, and they were very happy to have these copies of what Joseph Smith had worked from in translating the Book of Abraham. And he seemed practically completely oblivious, because the Mormon leadership is not about keeping their people in the dark yet. He acted as if he didn't know that it was a complete fraud, and that what the church hoped to establish was not established.

I don't see how anybody who is a Mormon today, who's got any integrity of his soul, can stay in the system. Anybody who has any knowledge of these things simply could no longer continue with them.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1977

[**Back to the Romans index**](http://www.christiandataresources.com/romans.htm)

[**Back to the Bible Questions index**](http://www.christiandataresources.com/allarticles.htm)