

## Why I Am Not a Mormon

**T**he religious group that identifies itself as the “Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints” (or the Mormons) is one of the fastest growing religions in the world. Those who are identified with it have a wonderful reputation as moral, loving, and sincere people.

In spite of these facts a careful examination of this religion leads to the conclusion that it is a false doctrine invented by man. Out of a love for God and for those who have accepted this false faith, I offer six reasons that I am not a Mormon.

**Background.** Mormonism claims that a man by the name of Joseph Smith received a series of visions in the early 1800’s in New York that eventually led him to unearth a collection of gold plates written in an ancient language (which he called “reformed Egyptian”) by descendants of the Israelites in the Americas between 600 B.C. and 421 A.D. Smith claimed to have been miraculously given the ability to translate these plates. A handful of witnesses signed statements claiming that they were shown the plates, and at some point the plates were reportedly taken off the earth. Smith’s “translation” was published in 1830 as the *Book of Mormon*. Subsequent editions with editorial corrections followed the original publication and Smith claimed that another



Joseph Smith

book, *Doctrines & Covenants*, was revealed to him later.

**I. Mormon Books Contradict the Bible.** When books conflict with one another in matters of interpretation, the fault for this conflict may rest in one’s misinterpretation of the text. When books conflict in statements of material fact, the fault for such a conflict rests in one (or both) of the books being in error. Three simple examples demonstrate that Mormon books are in error: 1) The Bible clearly states that Jesus was born in Bethlehem (Matthew 2:1). The *Book of Mormon* claims that Jesus was born in Jerusalem (Alma 7:10). 2) The Bible tells us that people were “**first called Christians in Antioch**” (Acts 11:26). The *Book of Mormon* claims that people were called Christians in the Americas before Jesus was even born! (Alma 46:15). 3) The Bible teaches us that God is Spirit (John 4:24), and that spirit “**does not have flesh and bones**” (Luke 24:39). *Doctrines & Covenants* claims that Jesus and God the Father have flesh and bones but the Holy Spirit does not (130:22).

**II. Mormon Books Contradict One Another.** The *Book of Mormon* claims to quote God’s view of polygamy: “Behold, David and Solomon truly had many wives and concubines, which thing was abominable before me, saith the Lord.” (Jacob 2:24). Yet, in *Doctrines & Covenants* God is said to declare: “David also received many wives and concubines, and also Solomon and Moses my servants, as also many others of my servants, from the beginning of creation until this time; and in nothing did they sin save in those things which they received not of me.” (132:38-39). Something cannot be “abominable” to God and yet not sinful. God would not contradict Himself.

**III. Mormonism Teaches Another Covenant.** The Book of Mormon is called “Another Testament of Jesus Christ.” In this the term “Testament” (synonymous with “covenant”) is used as if it meant simply a *collection of books*. A covenant is an agreement, a pack, a contract, and the terms of that contract. The Bible promised a New Covenant that replaced the Old (Jeremiah 31:31-34; Hebrews 9:15-17). The Bible never promised a third covenant or two at the same time (see Romans 7:1-4). Either, they are misusing the term “Testament” or they are teaching that Jesus has two covenants in place at the same time.

**IV. Mormonism Teaches Another Gospel.** Mormonism teaches a church organization that is not found in the New Testament. The Bible teaches that local congregations are led by men appointed from within a congregation based upon Scriptural qualifications (Titus 1:5-9). These men are called elders or bishops, and must be married. Mormons appoint young men (usually unmarried men) whom they call “elders” to act as door-to-door teachers. Within a congregation they have a man whom they call a “bishop” who is married. This is not what the Bible teaches.

The Bible tells us that the churches in Galatia struggled with a form of apostasy. The nature of this apostasy is revealed within the text. They were seeking to follow the “**works of the Law**” (Galatians 3:1-3) and they had a “**desire to be under the law**” (Galatians 4:21) at least part of which had led them to demand that Gentiles accept circumcision (Galatians 5:1-4). What is significant about this is that Paul says the Galatians had turned to a “**different gospel**” (Galatians 1:6-9). If turning back to the Law of Moses was considered a different gospel, what must the Lord consider a faith that teaches different things about the nature of God, the birth of Jesus, the identity of Christians, and the organization of the Lord’s church? That sure sounds like a different gospel to me!

**V. Mormonism Discredits the Bible.** While in practice there are many things about Islam and Mormonism that are different, many claims are parallel. Both appeal to a latter-day prophet (Muhammad & Joseph Smith). Both men disliked the religious division of their day, claimed to receive a special revelation, and were characterized as uneducated. Both offered the world new scriptures (The *Quran* & The *Book of Mormon*). To validate these books both claim that the Bible is from God, and that their books follow the Bible, and yet when the Bible conflicts with their own scriptures both claim that the Bible is flawed. This is one of the strangest characteristics of both faiths.

**Their positions force them to discredit the very thing which they appeal to in order to validate their credibility!**

They suggest that the Bible may be mistranslated, or that books mentioned in the Bible such as the “Book of Jasher” or Paul’s epistle to the Laodiceans mean that it lacks something. Yet, they claim the *Book of Mormon* is complete.

God’s word has never been something so fleeting. Isaiah tells us and Peter reiterates that “**the grass withers, the flower fades, But the word of our God stands forever**” (Isaiah 40:8; 1 Peter 1:24,25). The Book of Mormon mocks the notion that the Bible is complete, claiming “...many of the Gentiles shall say: A “Bible! A Bible! We have got a Bible, and there cannot be any more Bible” (2 Nephi 29:3). The books of the New Testament speak of a faith “**once for all delivered to the saints**” (Jude 3), which offers mankind “**all things that pertain to life and godliness**” (2 Peter 1:2-3) and make the man of God “**thoroughly equipped for every good work**” (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

**VI. Mormonism Follows Man-made Books.** In 1834 E.D. Howe published a book entitled *Mormonism Unveiled*. Howe presented affidavits from the family of an author named Solomon Spaulding stating that the *Book of Mormon* was plagiarized from a romance novel written by Spaulding called *Manuscript Found*. As late as 1880 Spaulding’s daughter Matilda continued to testify that the *Book of Mormon* used the same names her father read to her as a child. A former disciple of Christ preacher named Sidney Rigdon, who was instrumental in Mormonism’s early establishment, lived in Pittsburgh in 1812 at the same time as Spaulding. Associates of Rigdon were on record claiming that Spaulding had shown Rigdon the novel (Edward E. Plowman, “Who Really Wrote the Book of Mormon,” *Christianity Today* 21 [July 8, 1977]:33).


While the *Book of Mormon* claims to be a divine record written from 600 B.C. - 421 A.D., and miraculously translated from “reformed Egyptian,” a careful examination of the text shows that it contains many direct quotes from the translation of the King James Version done in 1611. These include passages italicized in the KJV. Italics in translations represent words not actually present in the original language, but which editors deem necessary to communicate the sense. These passages vary greatly from translation to translation. The Book of Mormon follows the KJV’s con-

vention of substituting the word “LORD” for the Hebrew *YHWH* (i.e. *Yahweh* or Jehovah). The Jews in public reading often substituted the Hebrew word *Adonai* meaning Lord for the word *Yahweh* (or Jehovah) out of respect. The editors of the KJV followed a similar convention. When the Hebrew word *YHWH* occurs, they use the word “LORD” with all capital letters.

These tendencies are illustrated in a passage where the *Book of Mormon* quotes Isaiah 6:12-13. In this text it reveals in three instances that it was taken directly from the KJV. 1) The word Lord is used, where the Hebrew of Isaiah has *YHWH*. *Would God substitute His own name?* 2) An archaic word is used referring to a “teyl tree” just as in the KJV. This, in spite of the fact that a number of translations before and after the KJV use the more familiar translation “**terebinth tree**” (see Wycliffe (1300); Coverdale (1539); ASV (1901); NASB (1960), and NKJV (1982)). 3. Both the KJV and the *Book of Mormon* contain the italicized phrase “when *they cast their leaves*.” In this instance the editors of the KJV appear to have misunderstood the meaning of the Hebrew word *shalleketh* meaning “felling of a tree” (BDB, 1021). All other translations I have found refer to the tree being felled or cut down, not the leaves falling. *Would God mistranslate Isaiah?* It is clear that a human author (and not God) used the English translation available to him to create the *Book of Mormon*.

Kyle Pope

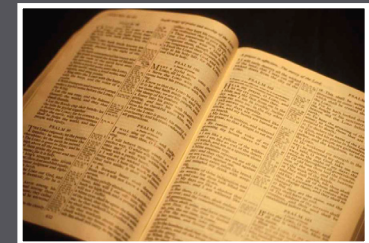
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