

A Study in Mormonism

The History of Mormonism

On the 21st of September, 1823, Joseph Smith Jr. claimed that he was visited by a personage from heaven. This “personage” told him his name was Moroni, and that there was a book written upon golden plates buried in a nearby hill.

Four years later, after repeated visits from Moroni, Joseph was finally allowed to dig up the golden plates and translate them. He used two Seer stones, called Urim and Thummim to translate the plates.

In 1830, the Book of Mormon was published and the religion of the Latter-day saints began.

Galatians 1:8-9

God

1. One and only God
2. Has forever been God
3. Not made of flesh and bones
4. Not physical (you can't touch God)

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Mormon God

1. One of many other gods (Abraham 4:1-31).
2. Was once a man and now is "God" (D&C 130:22).
3. Made out of flesh and bones (D&C 130:22).
4. Very physical and has at least one wife whom has born him all the humans in the world (Ensign, Jan. 1989)

Jesus

1. Jesus is the only Son of God.
2. Jesus was born of a virgin that was conceived in the Holy Spirit.
3. Jesus is the only Son of God, He has no brothers.
4. Jesus saves all those who trust in Him.

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Mormon Jesus

1. Jesus is one of many offspring (D&C 93:21-33).
2. Jesus was the offspring of a physical relationship between Mary and God Himself (Ensign).
3. Satan and Jesus are spirit brothers and share the same father ("God") (Moses 4:1-4).
4. Humans have to make their own effort for the cause (2 Nephi 25:23).

Mormonism and “Works”

Ephesians 2:8-9

Mormonism teaches that humans must “help” God on their way to Salvation (2 Nephi 25:23). They cannot completely make it on their own and Jesus’ blood can’t completely take them to heaven either. For Mormons, heaven is a “meet God halfway” thing.

“Besides repentance, our works also include receiving ordinances, keeping covenants, and serving others. While these works are necessary for salvation, they aren’t sufficient. They are not enough because we can’t live perfect lives, but we can do our best to live righteously. By doing so, we invite the Lord’s grace into our lives and qualify for the gift of salvation.”

— (“Tough Topics: Are You Saved by Grace or Works?” New Era, March 2005)

Curse of Midnight

In 2 Nephi 5:21, the Book of Mormon tells Mormons that black skin is a curse set forth by God and that white-skinned people are morally superior.

God tells us that all men are the made of the same blood (Acts 17:26) and that all issues between ethnicity, social groups, etc. are erased in the unity of Jesus Christ (Galatians 6:28). Not only that, but God has strictly condemned favoritism toward any person for any reason (James 2:1).

Adam-God Theory

[A video](#) with some quotes from Brigham Young, Joseph Smith's successor, on what is commonly called the Adam-God theory.

This belief taught that Adam and God are one in the same.

A Mormon Response

After receiving many of the quotes you just read and heard, a Mormon friend of mine said (used with permission, grammar and wording kept the exact same):

I don't think that is exactly how he meant it. Remember. Brigham young was a true prophet of god. That's not something he would say.

Adam isn't. We know this. You are reading too deep into it, seeing connections where there are none. Brigham Young would never say that.

Ok, so up until now, I was tolerant of this.. Buts its now bordering on blasphemy on my religion, and a leader I hold in great esteem. I refuse to believe this, and am dropping this subject like a hot potato.

There is just something nagging me about that . . .

Something just seems very, very off.

Blood Atonement

Blood Atonement is a doctrine that was taught by many of the “Prophets” of Mormonism and is something many Mormons today do not know about. According to Mormonism, whatever came out of a Prophet’s mouth was to be taken as the Word of God (D&C 1:38).

However, when Mormons hear about some of the things their prophets have said about blood atonement, they can get pretty mad.

Blood atonement was the practice of killing someone because they committed a sin that Jesus’ blood could not wash away.

Blood Atonement Quotes

“We have those amongst us that are full of all manner of abominations, those who need to have their blood shed, for water will not do, their sins are of too deep a dye. . . Brethren and sisters, we want you to repent and forsake your sins. And you who have committed sins that cannot be forgiven through baptism, let your blood be shed, and let the smoke ascend, that the incense thereof may come up before God as an atonement for your sins, and that the sinners in Zion may be afraid.”

- Jedediah M. Grant, *Journal of Discourses*, Volume 4, Page 49, 51

Blood Atonement Quotes

It is said Joseph Smith did not promote Blood atonement but he is recorded as saying:

“I am opposed to hanging, even if a man kill another, I will shoot him, or cut off his head, spill his blood on the ground, and let the smoke thereof ascend up to God; and if ever I have the privilege of making a law on that subject, I will have it so.”

- Joseph Smith, Jr., *History of the Church*,
Volume 5, Page 296

Blood Atonement was needed for these sins:

Apostasy and Thievery:

“At the same time my feelings are these—the best way to sanctify ourselves, and please God our heavenly Father in these days, is to rid ourselves of every thief, and sanctify the people from every vile character. I believe it is right; it is the law and practice of our neighboring state to put the same thing in execution upon men who violate the law, and trample upon the sacred rights of others. It would have a tendency to place a terror on those who leave these parts, that may prove their salvation when they see the heads of thieves taken off, or shot down before the public. Let us clear up the horizon around us; and then, like the atmosphere after the thunderstorm has spent its fury in the tops of the mountains, becomes purified; and a calm sunshine pervades the whole. I believe it to be pleasing in the sight of heaven to sanctify ourselves and put these things away from our midst.”

Blood Atonement was needed for these sins:

Marrying an African:

“Shall I tell you the law of God in regard to the African race? If the white man who belongs to the chosen seed mixes his blood with the seed of Cain, the penalty, under the law of God, is death on the spot. This will always be so.”

- Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*,
Volume 10, Page 110

Blood Atonement was needed for these sins:

Covenant Breakers:

“I would ask how many covenant breakers there are in this city and in this kingdom. I believe that there are a great many; and if they are covenant breakers we need a place designated, where we can shed their blood.”

- Jedediah M. Grant, *Journal of Discourses*,
Volume 4, Page 50

Blood Atonement was needed for these sins:

Denial of Mormonism:

“The time is coming when justice will be laid to the line and righteousness to the plummet; when we shall take the old broad sword and ask, “Are you for God?” and if you are not heartily on the Lord’s side, you will be hewn down.”

- Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*,
Volume 3, Page 226

Brigham Young

“There are sins that men commit for which they cannot receive forgiveness in this world, or in that which is to come, and if they had their eyes open to see their true condition, they would be perfectly willing to have their blood spilt upon the ground, that the smoke thereof might ascend to heaven as an offering for their sins; and the smoking incense would atone for their sins, whereas, if such is not the case, they will stick to them and remain upon them in the spirit world.

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

“There are sins that can be atoned for by an offering upon an altar, as in ancient days; and there are sins that the blood of a lamb, of a calf, or of turtle doves, cannot remit, but they must be atoned for by the blood of the man. That is the reason why men talk to you as they do from this stand; they understand the doctrine and throw out a few words about it. You have been taught that doctrine, but you do not understand it.”

- Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*,
Volume 4, Page 53-4

Was God Once a Man?

“Remember that God, our heavenly Father, was perhaps once a child, and mortal like we ourselves, and rose step by step in the scale of progress, in the school of advancement; has moved forward and overcome, until He has arrived at the point where He now is. “Is this really possible?” Why, my dear friends, how would you like to be governed by a ruler who had not been through all the vicissitudes of life that are common to mortals?

“If he had not suffered, how could he sympathize with the distress of others? If he himself had not endured the same, how could he sympathize and be touched with the feelings of our infirmities? He could not, unless he himself had passed through the same ordeal, and overcome step by step. If this is the case, it accounts for the reason why we do not see Him—He is too pure a being to show himself to the eyes of mortals; He has overcome, and goes no more out, but He is the temple of my God, and is a pillar there.”

Your Guide to Being a “god”

D&C 132:20 and 37

The Bible tells us that God was never created, that He has existed for all time and has never had a physical body (John 4:24). The Bible also tells us that He has never sinned and He cannot even be tempted (James 1:13)! The Bible also makes it clear that God has existed for all time has never died nor can He die (Psalms 90:2, 103:17, 106:48).

Your Guide to Being a “god”

Even Joseph Fielding Smith (a prominent leader of the Mormon church) said:

“And as he [Joseph Smith] has here stated, as having come from the mouth of the Prophet, this doctrine of eternal union of husband and wife, and of plural marriage, is one of the most important doctrines ever revealed to man in any age of the world. Without it man would come to a full stop, without it we never could be exalted to associate with and become gods, neither could we attain to the power of eternal increase, or the blessings pronounced upon Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the fathers of the faithful.”

- Journal of Discourses, Vol. 21, pg. 10

Joseph Smith's Prophecies

Deuteronomy 18:22

- D&C 124:56-60 – Nauvoo House
 - No longer owned by Joseph's family
- D&C 117:12-15 – Oliver Granger
 - Totally forgotten
- D&C 112 – Thomas Marsh
 - Excommunicated

Changes in the Book of Mormon

The Book of Mormon, though it is only 184 years old, has had 3,913 parts changed. Many of them alter the meaning of the text.

The New Testament, though it has existed for 2,000 years, has only had 40 parts edited. Almost all these are small punctuation problems. Not one alters the meaning of the text.

Changes in the Book of Mormon

Let's imagine that the Book of Mormon was as old as the New Testament. At its current rate, it would be changed 42,532 times by the time it reached its 2,000th year.

The Book of Mormon was better off left in the ground!

From LDS.org

But the most common changes have not been in spelling, but in grammar. For example, there have been 891 changes of “which” to “who”, 177 changes of “exceeding” to “exceedingly”. Many changes involve a change in number or tense of verbs. “Was” was changed to “were” 162 times, “is” to “are” 74 times, and “done” to “did” 10 times.

Over the years, a few hundred deletions have also been made, primarily to improve the book grammatically. The most commonly eliminated have been the words “that” (188 times), “the” (48 times), “it came to pass” (46 times), “a” and “and” (40 times), and “had” (29 times).

Additions have been less numerous, probably less than one hundred. For example, “of” was added 12 times, “and”, “is”, and “the” 7 times. Some additions simply result from rearranging parts of a sentence or returning words inadvertently dropped in earlier editions. These are not “true” additions.

The Book of Mormon has 268,163 words in it. That means there was an error (just the errors mentioned in the previous slide) every 159 words. If you included all the errors than there would be an error for every 69 words. A novel nowadays is considered pathetic if it contains more than 1 typo for every 1,000 words.

“Joseph did not render the writing on the gold plates into the English language in his own style of language as many people believe. But every word and every letter was given him by the gift and power of God. So it is the work of God and not of Joseph Smith, and it was done in this way ... The Lord caused each word spelled as it is in the book to appear on the stones in short sentences or words, and when Joseph had uttered the sentence or word before him and the scribe had written it properly, that sentence would disappear and another appear. And if there was a word wrongly written or even a letter incorrect the writing on the stone would remain there.”

- Journal of Oliver B. Huntington, p. 168 of typed copy at the Utah State Historical Society

August 12, 1998

Luke Wilson
Institute for Religious Research
1340 Monroe Avenue NW
Grand Rapids, MI 49505

Dear Mr. Wilson:

We appreciate the interest that prompted your letter.

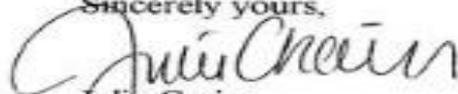
The *Book of Mormon* is clearly a work of great spiritual power; millions have read and revered its words, first published by Joseph Smith in 1830. Yet Smith's narration is not generally taken as a scientific source for the history of the Americas. Archaeologists and other scholars have long probed the hemisphere's past, and the Society does not know of anything found so far that has substantiated the *Book of Mormon*.

In fact, students of prehistoric America by and large conclude that the New World's earliest inhabitants arrived from Asia via the Bering "land bridge." (Lower sea levels during ice ages exposed the continental shelf beneath Bering Strait, allowing generations of ancient Siberians to migrate east.) NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC carried "The First Americans" in its September 1979 issue, perhaps on your library's shelf.

I have enclosed a statement issued by the Smithsonian Institution in 1982. You may wish to approach the National Museum of Natural History and ask if they offer additional information on the topic. You can write the museum in Washington, D.C., 20560. No street address is needed.

I hope this information proves helpful.

Sincerely yours,


Julie Crain
Research Correspondence



Information from the

National Museum of Natural History

SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20560

Your recent inquiry concerning the Smithsonian Institution's alleged use of the Book of Mormon as a scientific guide has been received in the Smithsonian's Department of Anthropology.

The Book of Mormon is a religious document and not a scientific guide. The Smithsonian Institution has never used it in archeological research and any information that you have received to the contrary is incorrect. Accurate information about the Smithsonian's position is contained in the enclosed "Statement Regarding the Book of Mormon," which was prepared to respond to the numerous inquiries that the Smithsonian receives on this topic.

Because the Smithsonian regards the unauthorized use of its name to disseminate inaccurate information as unlawful, we would appreciate your assistance in providing us with the names of any individuals who are misusing the Smithsonian's name. Please address any correspondence to:

Anthropology Outreach Office
Department of Anthropology
National Museum of Natural History MRC 112
Smithsonian Institution
Washington, DC 20560

STATEMENT REGARDING THE BOOK OF MORMON

1. The Smithsonian Institution has never used the Book of Mormon in any way as a scientific guide. Smithsonian archeologists see no direct connection between the archeology of the New World and the subject matter of the book.
2. The physical type of the American Indian is basically Mongoloid, being most closely related to that of the peoples of eastern, central, and northeastern Asia. Archeological evidence indicates that the ancestors of the present Indians came into the New World—probably over a land bridge known to have existed in the Bering Strait region during the last Ice Age—in a continuing series of small migrations beginning from about 25,000 to 30,000 years ago.
3. Present evidence indicates that the first people to reach this continent from the East were the Norsemen who briefly visited the northeastern part of North America around A.D. 1000 and then settled in Greenland. There is nothing to show that they reached Mexico or Central America.
4. One of the main lines of evidence supporting the scientific finding that contacts with Old World civilizations, if indeed they occurred at all, were of very little significance for the development of American Indian civilizations, is the fact that none of the principal Old World domesticated food plants or animals (except the dog) occurred in the New World in pre-Columbian times. American Indians had no wheat, barley, oats, millet, rice, cattle, pigs, chickens, horses, donkeys, camels before 1492. (Camels and horses were in the Americas, along with the bison, mammoth, and mastodon, but all these animals became extinct around 10,000 B.C. at the time when the early big game hunters spread across the Americas.)
5. Iron, steel, glass, and silk were not used in the New World before 1492 (except for occasional use of unsmelted meteoric iron). Native copper was worked in various locations in pre-Columbian times, but true metallurgy was limited to southern Mexico and the Andean region, where its occurrence in late prehistoric times involved gold, silver, copper, and their alloys, but not iron.
6. There is a possibility that the spread of cultural traits across the Pacific to Mesoamerica and the northwestern coast of South America began several hundred years before the Christian era. However, any such inter-hemispheric contacts appear to have been the results of accidental voyages originating in eastern and southern Asia. It is by no means certain that even such contacts occurred; certainly there were no contacts with the ancient Egyptians, Hebrews, or other peoples of Western Asian and the Near East.
7. No reputable Egyptologist or other specialist on Old World archeology, and no expert on New World prehistory, has discovered or confirmed any relationship between archeological remains in Mexico and archeological remains in Egypt.
8. Reports of findings of ancient Egyptian, Hebrew, and other Old World writings in the New World in pre-Columbian contexts have frequently appeared in newspapers, magazines, and sensational books. None of these claims has stood up to examination by reputable scholars. No inscriptions using Old World forms of writing have been shown to have occurred in any part of the Americas before 1492 except for a few Norse rune stones which have been found in Greenland.

What the Smithsonian said about the Bible

On the other hand, much of the Bible, in particular the historical books of the Old Testament, are as accurate, historical documents as any that we have from antiquity and are in fact more accurate than many of the Egyptian, Mesopotamian, or Greek histories.

These Biblical records can be and are used as are other ancient documents in archaeological work. For the most part, historical events described took place and the peoples cited really existed.

10 Things Mormons Want You To Believe

1. That God is one of many gods, was once a man, like us, made out of flesh and bones, and has many, many wives of which He bears all human spirits.
2. That Jesus is the brother of Satan, that His death and resurrection was not sufficient to wash away our sins.
3. We have to do many, many works in order to meet God halfway and take care of the sins that Jesus couldn't.
4. That African Americans are inferior to “white” men and that their color is a curse from God.

10 Things Mormons Want You To Believe

5. That God is Michael the Archangel *and* Adam; Eve is one of His many wives.
6. That the shedding of our own blood in death can cover some sins that Jesus' blood could not and that if you deny Mormonism that you should be killed.
7. That the Book of Mormon is reliable historically, scientifically and theologically.

10 Things Mormons Want You To Believe

8. That you can become a “god” just like God.
9. The Bible is correct as long as it is interpreted correctly.
10. That Joseph Smith is superior to every other person (including Jesus).

How to Witness to Mormons

1. Quote Mormon scripture and leaders
2. Discuss doctrine, not the people behind them
3. Do not criticize the leaders
4. Rely on facts, not emotions
5. Share only the Truth
6. Take into account that the Mormon might not know all the doctrines of the church

How to Witness to Mormons

7. Explain the differences between the Mormon Jesus and Jesus
8. Explain the differences between the Mormon God and God
9. Share the whole Gospel with them
10. Share the Truth in love

Something Joseph said . . .

“But I am learned, and know more than all the world put together.”

- Joseph Smith, King Follet Discourse, 1844

“I have more to boast of than any man had. I am the only man that has 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 every 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.”

— Joseph Smith, History of the Church, vol.6, pp.408-09, 1844

Joseph Smith was killed one month after saying that . . .

