

**THE**  
**BOOK OF MORMON:**

**AN ACCOUNT WRITTEN BY THE HAND OF MOR-  
MON, UPON PLATES TAKEN FROM  
THE PLATES OF NEPHI.**

Wherefore it is an abridgment of the Record of the People of Nephi; and also of the Lamanites; written to the Lamanites, which are a remnant of the House of Israel; and also to Jew and Gentile; written by way of commandment, and also by the spirit of Prophecy and of Revelation. Written, and sealed up, and hid up unto the LORD, that they might not be destroyed; to come forth by the gift and power of God unto the interpretation thereof; sealed by the hand of Moroni, and hid up unto the LORD, to come forth in due time by the way of Gentile; the interpretation thereof by the gift of God; an abridgment taken from the Book of Ether.

Also, which is a Record of the People of Jared, which were scattered at the time the LORD confounded the language of the people when they were building a tower to get to heaven; which is to shew unto the remnant of the House of Israel how great things the LORD hath done for their fathers; and that they may know the covenants of the LORD, that they are not cast off forever; and also to the convincing of the Jew and Gentile that JESUS is the CHRIST, the ETERNAL God, manifesting Himself unto all nations. And now if there be fault, it be the mistake of men; wherefore condemn not the things of God, that ye may be found spotless at the judgment seat of CHRIST.

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**BY JOSEPH SMITH, JUNIOR,**  
AUTHOR AND PROPRIETOR.

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**PALMYRA:**

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1830.

## God the Father According to Mormonism<sup>1</sup>

The Mormon doctrine of God is not the same as the historic Christian view. It holds that God and man are essentially of the same species, and that God the Father has a body of flesh and bones. He is not uniquely self-existent, transcendent, or eternal. Neither is he truly the creator of all things, for he is one among potentially billions of Gods, and does not even have the ability to create matter. As BYU professor David Paulson once put it, "God does not have absolute power... but rather the power to maximally utilize natural laws to bring about His purposes."

The traditional Mormon view of God is summed up by the famous Lorenzo Snow couplet, "As man is God once was, as God is man may be." The historic understanding of this strongly implies that God the Father was once a sinner, and that we ourselves may model our mortal experience unto godhood after the mortal experience he once participated in. In his famous "King Follett Discourse" Joseph Smith taught,

"God himself was once as we are now, and is an exalted man, and sits enthroned in yonder heavens. That is the great secret... [Y]ou have got to learn how to be Gods yourselves, and to be kings and priests to God, the same as all Gods have done before you..."

In a later sermon Joseph Smith boldly preached:

"If Jesus Christ was the Son of God, and John discovered that God the Father of Jesus Christ had a Father, you may suppose that He had a Father also. Where was there ever a son without a father? And where was there ever a father without first being a son? Whenever did a tree or anything spring into existence without a progenitor? And everything comes in this way. Paul says that which is earthly is in the likeness of that which is heavenly, Hence if Jesus had a Father, can we not believe that He had a Father also? I despise the idea of being scared to death at such a doctrine, for the Bible is full of it."

To the contrary, God says in Isaiah 43:10, "Before me no god was formed, nor shall there be any after me." Psalm 90:2 says of him, "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God." This is the God Christians worship. Of him we can say, "Who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor? Or who has given a gift to him

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.mrm.org/god-of-mormonism>

that he might be repaid? For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen." (Romans 11:34-36)

Not all Mormon prophets have held to the traditional Mormon view of God the Father. Brigham Young taught that "Adam was the father of the spirits of mankind in addition to being the first procreator of mankind's physical bodies; that Adam came to this earth as a resurrected and exalted being; that he 'fell' to a mortal state of existence in order to procreate mortal bodies; and that Adam was the spiritual and physical father of Jesus Christ." (David John Buerger, *Dialogue*, Vol.15, No.1, p.45) This doctrine has been denounced by subsequent Mormon leaders as a deadly, damnable heresy.

### **Who is the One Mormons Call Elohim?**

For **centuries** Christians have professed their belief in a God who is God alone (Is. 44:8), self-existent (Is. 43:10; 48:12), transcendent (Num. 23:19; Ps. 50:21), immutable (Ps. 102:27; Is. 46:10; Mal. 3:6), eternal (Ps. 90:2; 93:2), omnipresent (1 Kings 8:27; Prov. 15:3; Is. 66:1; Jer. 23: 23, 24), and incorporeal (John 4:24; Col. 1:15; 1 Tim. 1:17). He is also a God who dwells in the believer (Eph. 3:17; 4:6; Rom. 8:9) and is omnipotent (Job 42:2; Ps. 115:3; Matt. 19:26). Mormons insist that their God, the one they call Elohim, is the Christian God. Why then are his attributes so different from the God who is declared in the Bible?

### **The god of Mormonism is one of many gods.**

Joseph Smith, the founder of Mormonism, stated, "I wish to declare I have always **and** in all congregations when I have preached on the subject of the Deity, it has been the plurality of Gods" (History of the Church 6:474).

Brigham Young, the second prophet and president of the LDS Church, said, "How many Gods there are, I do not know. But there never was a time when there were not Gods..." (*Journal of Discourses* 7:333).

### **The god of Mormonism is not self-existent.**

**Mormon** Apostle Orson Pratt taught, "We were begotten by our Father in Heaven; the person of our Father in Heaven was begotten on a previous heavenly world by His Father; and again, He was begotten by a still more ancient Father, and so one, from one generation to generation" (*The Seer*, pg. 132).

### **The god of Mormonism is not transcendent.**

While the God of the Bible makes it clear that He is not like man, Mormon leaders have insisted that their God is an exalted human being.

Joseph Smith declared, "God himself was once as we are now, and is an exalted man, and sits enthroned in yonder heavens!" (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, pg. 345).

Mormon Apostle John Widtsoe stated, "God and man are of the same race, differing only in their degrees of advancement" (*Gospel Through the Ages*, pg. 107). This concurs with Mormon Apostle Parley P. Pratt's comment which states, "God, angels, and men are all of the same species, one race, one great family..." (*Key to the Science of Theology*, 1978 ed., pg. 21).

### **The god of Mormonism is not immutable.**

**Whereas** God's perfection makes it never necessary for Him to change, the God of Mormonism changes both in his physical person and moral attributes. This is demonstrated by the fact that he evolved from a man into a God and that he has changed decrees which are theoretically "unalterable." Examples of this would include the abandonment of polygamy in 1890, the reversal of the ban which withheld the LDS Priesthood from Blacks in 1978, and the changes in the LDS temple ceremony in 1980.

### **The god of Mormonism is not eternally God.**

Joseph Smith taught that God was not always God when he stated, "We have imagined and supposed that God was God from all eternity. I will refute that idea, and take away the veil, so that you may see" (*Teachings*, pg. 345).

### **The god of Mormonism is not incorporeal.**

Unlike the God of the Bible who is a God of Spirit (John 4:24), Joseph Smith taught, "The Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man's" (D&C 130:22).

### **The god of Mormonism is not omnipresent.**

Because the LDS God is limited to a physical body, he is not omnipresent. Brigham Young said, "Some would have us believe that God is present everywhere. It is not so" (*Journal of Discourses* 6:345).

LDS Apostle James Talmage stated that neither God the Father, nor "any actual person of any one member of the Godhead can be physically present in more than one place at one time" (The Articles of Faith, pg. 39). The Mormon God's "omnipresence" is fulfilled through the Holy Spirit which, according to Mormon Apostle John Widtsoe, is not to be confused with the Holy Ghost (*Evidences and Reconciliations*, pp. 76-77).

### **The god of Mormonism cannot dwell in the believer.**

According to Joseph Smith, "The idea that the Father and the Son dwell in a man's heart is an old sectarian notion, and is false" (D&C 130:3. Oddly enough, the Book of Mormon teaches the Lord does dwell in the hearts of the righteous. See Alma 34:36).

### **The god of Mormonism is not omnipotent.**

As Mormons believe they will always be subservient to their God, so too it would make sense that their God is subservient to his God as well. It would also make sense that if the LDS God is the offspring of another God, then his God must be more advanced in his eternal progression than the God whom Mormons claim to serve.

Mormon author W. Cleon Skousen stated that God is God only because another force sustains him as such. He wrote, "Through modern revelation we learn that the universe is filled with vast numbers of intelligences, and we further learn that Elohim is God simply because all of these intelligences honor and sustain Him as such...since God 'acquired' the honor and sustaining influence of 'all things' it follows as a corollary that if He should ever do anything to violate the confidence or 'sense of justice' of these intelligences, they would promptly withdraw their support, and the 'power' of God would disintegrate...'He would cease to be God'" (*The First 2,000 Years*, pp. 355-356).

That the LDS God would have to answer to anyone clearly shows he is not omnipotent. Some Mormons insist his omnipotence lies in the fact that he has unlimited power, not all power. This too is inconsistent with Mormon thought since the God of Mormonism has no ability to create ex-nihilo, or out of nothing. The God of Mormonism is limited to only being able to reorganize matter.

### **The god of Mormonism does not forgive completely.**

Another major difference between the God of the LDS Church and that of historical Christianity lies in the fact that the God of the Bible forgives completely. In Isaiah 43:25 we read, "I, even I, am He that blot out thy transgressions for Mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins." In Jeremiah 31:34 it says God "will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." Hebrews 8:12 states, "For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." How

comforting to know that the God of the Bible will not remember the believer's past sins!

The God of Mormonism, however, must keep in remembrance past transgressions for D&C 82:7 warns, "And now, verily I say unto you, I, the Lord, will not lay any sin to your charge; go your ways and sin no more; but unto the soul who sinneth shall the former sins return, saith the Lord your God." There is no possible way that these two beings can be the same.

### **Conclusion**

There is probably no greater sin than to place your trust in a God whose attributes do not match those of the God of the Bible. The biblical term for such a sin is idolatry.

The fact that Joseph Smith failed to represent the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob proves that he was not a true prophet. God warned the children of Israel that if any arose and attempted to entice Israel to "go after other gods" he was to be put to death (Deuteronomy 13:1-3, 5). Do you think He takes this any less serious today? To insist on following the God of the Mormon Church will result in spiritual death, a painful separation from the Creator for all eternity. The stakes are too high to trust in any other. Our prayer for all Latter-day Saints is that they see how they have been deceived by Joseph Smith and the "prophets and apostles" who followed him and ultimately place their trust in the God who has been changing lives for centuries, the God of the Bible.

# Grammatical Errors in the Book of Mormon

(A sampling of some of the 3913 changes made to the Book of Mormon through the years)<sup>2</sup>

Text	Original 1830 Edition of The Book of Mormon	Editions of 1837, 1888, 1920, 1964 and 1978
Title page	Joseph Smith, Jr. The author and proprietor of this work	Joseph Smith, Jr. the translator of this work
Title page	now if there be fault, it be the mistake of men	now if there are faults, they are the mistakes of men
1 Ne 13:40	the lamb of God is the Eternal Father	the lamb of God is the son of the Eternal Father
1Nephi 11:21	the Eternal Father	son of the Eternal Father
1 Nephi 11:32	the Everlasting God	son of the Everlasting God
1 Nephi 20:1	<i>words added</i>	or out of the waters of Baptism
2 Nephi 12:9	the mean man boweth down	the mean man boweth not down
Alma 29:4	Yea, decreeth unto them decrees which are unalterable	<i>words deleted</i>
Alma 37:21,24	directors	Interpreters
Alma 30:16	it is the effects of a phrensied mind	it is the effect of a frenzied mind
Throughout B of M	now there was seven churches	now there were seven churches
Throughout B of M	there were no blood to shed	there was no blood to shed
Throughout B of M	there is two churches	there are two churches

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.bible.ca/mor-1830-changes.htm>

Throughout B of M	and also much horses	and also many horses
Throughout B of M	these things had not ought to be	these things ought not to be
Throughout B of M	They did prepare for to meet them	They did prepare to meet them
Throughout B of M	some have arrested the scriptures	some have wrested the scriptures
Throughout B of M	when they had arriven	when they had arrived
Alma 23:1	nor neither of their brethren	nor either of their brethren
Mosiah 21:28; Ether 4:1	king Benjamin	Mosiah (Benjamin dead at this time)
1 Nephi 12:18	Jesus Christ	Messiah (Jesus had not yet been revealed to the Nephites)

## Scientific Inaccuracy of the Book of Mormon<sup>3</sup>

Mormon Concept	Scientific Fact
Burying swords in the earth will keep them bright (unrusted) Alma 24:16.	Burying swords in the dirt will actually accelerate their rusting.
Leprosy occurred in the Americas in 34 A.D. 3 Nephi 17:7.	The first known case of leprosy in the Americas was in 1758.
Indians had many official records (Helaman 3: 15), scrolls (Mormon 5:23), and other writings. Mormon 9:2; 3 Nephi 9:18; 12:18.	The Indians wrote no books and used only simple picture writing.
God cursed the Indians with dark skin, and anyone who marries Indians "shall be cursed with the same cursing." 2 Nephi 5:21; Jacob 3:3-9; Mormon 5:15-17; 2 Nephi 5:23; Alma 3: 6-10.	If this were true, there would be no "part Indians," only "full Indians." This statement is genetically incorrect.
When Indians accept Mormon teachings, they will become "a white and delightful people." 2 Nephi 30:5-7; 3 Nephi 2:15.	There are no case histories of this occurring. In fact, such a change would imply a correlation between goodness and degrees of whiteness.
Baldness is caused by sin. 2 Nephi 13:24.	Baldness is hereditary (or chemically caused).
Domestic cattle, oxen, and cows are separate species, and were present in the Americas when man came here. Ether 9:18-19.	These animals are all the same species, and were not in the Americas when man arrived here.
Numerous people and animals in North America were exterminated by poisonous snakes, with sheep driven to the south by the snakes (which cooperated with each other). The people ate the animals that had been killed by the snakes. Ether 9:30-34.	There are very few poisonous snakes in North America. Going south increases the probability of contact with snakes. Snakes do not cooperate with each other or with any other creature. There would be too many dead animals for the people to have eaten them. Plus, this would have been against Jewish dietary laws.

<sup>3</sup> "A Biologist Examines the Book of Mormon" by Thomas D.S. Key. Journal of the American Scientific Affiliation, June 1985, pp. 96-99.

Lions are beasts of the forests. 3 Nephi 20:16; 21:12.	Lions live in the Savannahs, not in the forests.
Silk was produced in the Americas. 1 Nephi 13: 7; Alma 4:6; Ether 9:17, 10:24.	Silk was and is produced in Asia. It was exclusively produced in Asia at the supposed time of the events recorded.
Indians used butter, honey and candles. 2 Nephi 17:15; 3 Nephi 8:21.	These items were unknown to the Indians, and were introduced by Europeans after Columbus.
Disease is caused by climate. Alma 46:40.	Disease is not caused by climate.
Arabia has much fruit and honey. 1 Nephi 17:5.	Arabia is a desert, and has been for many thousands of years.
Jews made ships from the "ample timber of Arabia." 1 Nephi 18:1.	There are few trees in Arabia, and none was usable for ship building.
The Arabian River named Laman flows continually into the Red Sea. 1 Nephi 2:6.-9.	There are no rivers at all in Arabia flowing into the Red Sea, nor have there ever been in human history.
North America originally had cows, oxen, asses, and horses. 1 Nephi 18:25.	There were no cows, horses, or asses in North America when it was first discovered.
Jared and his family kept all species of fish that inhabit the Americas alive in aquaria for 344 days. Ether 6:1 He brought these to the Americas, as well as the birds, bees, and seed that populate North America. Ether 2:2-3, 5:4.	American birds and fish are for the most part different than those of the old world, there are very few species of any of these forms that are the same on both continents.
Native language of the Hebrews between 600 B.C. and 91 B.C. was Egyptian. 1 Nephi 1:2; Mosiah 1:4; Mormon 9:32— refers to the "reformed Egyptian" language existing about 400 A.D.	The Hebrews spoke Hebrew in 600 B.C. due to the Babylonian captivity from 560 to 538 B.C. Aramaic became the language of the people after that. "Reformed Egyptian" is not a language.
Plant grafting was done in the Americas between 600 B.C. and 421 A.D. 1 Nephi 15:16; Jacob 5.	Grafting was not practiced by the Indians at all in the Americas.
Leopards, asps, and cockatrices were present in North America. 2 Nephi 21:6-8, 30:12-14.	None of these animals are native to North America.



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 archaeologists see no direct connection between the archaeology 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. Archaeological 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 1000 A.D. and then settled in Greenland. There is no evidence to show that they reached Mexico or Central America.
4. None of the principal Old World domesticated food plants or animals (except the dog) occurred in the New World in pre-Columbian times. This is one of the main lines of evidence supporting the scientific premise that contacts with Old World civilizations, if they occurred, were of very little significance for the development of American Indian civilizations. American Indians had no wheat, barley, oats, millet, rice, cattle, pigs, chickens, horses, donkeys, or 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 the early big game hunters traveled 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 with the ancient Egyptians, Hebrews, or other peoples of Western Asia 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.
9. There are copies of the Book of Mormon in the library of the National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution.

\*Prepared by the Department of Anthropology, Smithsonian Institution

## No Archeological Evidence for the Book of Mormon

Numerous scholars and archaeologists have unanimously concluded that there is absolutely no archaeological evidence for the *Book of Mormon*. For example:

"The first myth we need to eliminate is that *Book of Mormon* archaeology exists...If one is to study *Book of Mormon* archaeology, then one must have a corpus of data with which to deal. We do not. The *Book of Mormon* is really there so one can have *Book of Mormon* studies, and archaeology is really there so one can study archaeology, but the two are not wed. At least they are not wed in reality since no *Book of Mormon* location is known with reference to modern topography. Biblical archaeology can be studied because we do know where Jerusalem and Jericho were and are, but we do not know where Zarahemla and Bountiful (nor any other location for that matter) were or are. It would seem then that a concentration on geography should be the first order of business, but we have already seen that twenty years of such an approach has left us empty-handed." (Dee F. Green, *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Summer 1969, pp. 77-78)

"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." ("Statement Regarding the *Book of Mormon*," Smithsonian Institution, Spring 1986)

"With all of these great efforts, it cannot be established factually that anyone, from Joseph Smith to the present day, has put his finger on a single point of terrain that was a Book-of-Mormon geographical place. And the hemisphere has been pretty well checked out by competent people. Thousands of sites have been excavated." (Thomas Stuart Ferguson, *Written Symposium on Book-of-Mormon Geography: Response of Thomas S. Ferguson to the Norman & Sorenson Papers*, p. 4, 1975)

"The bare facts of the matter are that nothing, absolutely nothing, has even shown up in any New World excavation which would suggest to a dispassionate observer that the *Book of Mormon*, as claimed by Joseph Smith, is a historical document relating to the history of early migrants to our hemisphere." (Michael Coe, *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Summer 1973, pp. 42, 46)

### The Hill Cumorah

It is clear that the LDS church believes the current Hill Cumorah was the same as the one mentioned in the *Book of Mormon*. For example, Mormon President Joseph Fielding Smith (d. 1972) stated:

"It must be conceded that this description fits perfectly the land of Cumorah in New York, as it has been known since the visitation of Moroni to the Prophet Joseph Smith, for the hill is in the proximity of the Great Lakes and also in the land of many rivers and fountains. Moreover, the Prophet Joseph Smith himself is on record, definitely declaring the present hill called Cumorah to be the exact hill spoken of in the *Book of Mormon*. "Further, the fact that all of his associates from the beginning down have spoken of it as the identical hill where Mormon and Moroni hid the records, must carry some weight. It is difficult for a reasonable person to believe that such men as Oliver Cowdery, Brigham Young, Parley P. Pratt, Orson Pratt, David Whitmer, and many others, could speak frequently of the spot where the Prophet Joseph Smith obtained the plates as the Hill Cumorah, and not be corrected by the Prophet, if that were not the fact. That they did speak of this hill in the days of the Prophet in this definite manner is an established record of history...." (Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, Vol.3, Bookcraft, 1956, pp. 232-243)

This was confirmed through a communication from the office of the First Presidency to Bishop Darrel Brooks:

"October 16, 1990  
Bishop Darrel L. Brooks Moore  
Ward Oklahoma City, Oklahoma  
South Stake 1000 Windemere Moore, OK 73160

Dear Bishop Brooks:

I have been asked to forward to you for acknowledgment and handling the enclosed copy of a letter to President Gordon B. Hinckley from Ronnie Sparks of your ward. Brother Sparks inquired about the location of the Hill Cumorah mentioned in the *Book of Mormon*, where the last battle between the Nephites and Lamanites took place. The Church has long maintained, as attested to by references in the writings of General Authorities, that the Hill Cumorah in western New York state is the same as referenced in the *Book of Mormon*. The Brethren appreciate your assistance in responding to this inquiry, and asked that you convey to Brother Sparks their commendation for his gospel study.

Sincerely yours,  
(signed) F. Michael Watson Secretary to the First Presidency"

According to the *Book of Mormon*, at least 230,000 men died in battle at the Hill Cumorah. Also, this battle was about 1/10 the size of the battle which took place at the same location approximately 1,000 years earlier when, according to Ether 15:2 "nearly two millions" of the Jaredites had their last great battle.

However, there is not a single trace of archaeological evidence to support the claim that so many men died in battle at the tiny hill now owned by the LDS Church in the State of New York called Cumorah.

## Book of Mormon Metallurgy

Among the most significant cultural anachronisms in the *Book of Mormon* is the depiction of Nephite civilization as having iron and other metal industries; we read of metal swords and breastplates, gold and silver coinage, and even machinery (2 Nephi 5:15; Jarom 1:8; Mosiah 11:3,8; Ether 7:9; 10:23). However, there is no evidence that any New World civilization attained any such industry during *Book of Mormon* times (600 BC - 421 AD).

As former Brigham Young University anthropology professor, Dr. Raymond T. Matheny, points out:

"The tools that the people [in cultures that did have metallurgical industries] used are primitive but nonetheless they are there, and they spell out a system of exploitation of those natural resources. In refining ores and then bringing these to casting and true metallurgical processes is another bit of technology that leaves a lot of evidence. You can't refine ore without leaving a bloom of some kind or... that is, impurities that blossom out and float to the top of the ore... Also blooms off into silicas and indestructible new rock forms. In other words, when you have a ferrous metallurgical industry, you have these evidences of the detritus that is left over. You also have the fuels, you have the furnaces, you have whatever technologies that were performing these tasks they leave solid evidences. And they are indestructible things... non-ferrous metallurgical industries have similar evidences. No evidence has been found in the new world for a ferrous metallurgical industry dating to pre-Columbian times. And so this is a king-size problem, it seems to me, for so-called *Book of Mormon* archaeology. The evidence is absent." (Michael Coe, *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Vol. 8, No. 2, Summer 1973, p. 23).

## Book of Mormon Crops

The *Book of Mormon* indicates that the Nephites produced various crops including barley (Mosiah 7:22; 9:9; Alma 11:7, 15), figs (3 Nephi 14:16), grapes (2 Nephi 15:2, 4; 3 Nephi 14:16), and wheat (Mosiah 9:9; 3 Nephi 18:18). However, there has been no archeological evidence for any of these crops. Archeology does indicate the peoples of the region ate maize (corn), lima beans, tomatoes, squash, and amaranth, but none of these crops are mentioned in the *Book of Mormon*.

Thomas Ferguson, archaeologist, noted defender of the *Book of Mormon*, and founder of the New World Archaeological Foundation at BYU stated:

"I participated in excavating a trench at the edge of the Grijalva river in which we found a ceramic vessel in a stratum dating to about 200 BC... Art portrayals in ceramics, murals, and sculptured works – of ancient plant life – are fairly commonplace. Thousands of archeological holes in the area proposed have given us not a fragment of evidence of the presence of the plants mentioned in

the *Book of Mormon*. The holes include the great one dug by Edwin Shook at Tehuacan, Puebla, Mexico. He excavated a cave – going back to 5000 BC., finding most of the major plants of the area. But no wheat, barley, figs or grapes."

### **Book of Mormon Animals**

Similarly, the *Book of Mormon* describes various domesticated animals: asses, cows, goats, sheep, horses, oxen, swine, and elephants. However, Pre-Columbian evidence for such animals in Mesoamerica is scant, at best. There is no evidence of horses in Central and North America before the Spaniards arrived (hundreds of years after the *Book of Mormon*). Why then does the *Book of Mormon* refer to horses where there were none?

Dr. John L. Sorenson proposed that the Nephites were really referring to either a species of deer or tapir, but since they did not have names for these animals, they called them horses. This seems a weak response, but even if it were true it doesn't account for the many other animals and crops for which there is absolutely no archeological evidence.

Again from Thomas Ferguson:

"Evidence of the foregoing animals has not appeared in any form – ceramic representations, bones or skeletal remains, mural art, sculptured art or any other form. However... evidence has been found in several forms of the presence in the Book-of-Mormon times of other animals – deer, jaguars, dogs, turkeys etc. The zero score presents a problem that will not go away with the ignoring of it. Non-LDS scholars of first magnitude, some who want to be our friends, think we have real trouble here. That evidence of the ancient existence of these animals is not elusive is found in the fact that proof of their existence in the ancient old-world is abundant. The absence of such evidence... is distressing and significant, in my view." (Tom Ferguson, *Written Symposium on Book of Mormon Geography*, 1978).

### **The Mormon Apologist Response:**

Michael Ash responded that current archaeological findings may be based on cultures other than the Nephites and Lamanites, and that there is no archeological evidence to disprove the claims of the *Book of Mormon*:

"How would we know *Book of Mormon* peoples from non-*Book of Mormon* peoples? What would we look for? Almost assuredly *Book of Mormon* peoples would have been absorbed into the existing Native American cultures. In other words *Book of Mormon* peoples would have looked like, lived like, and acted like the Native American cultures that inhabited *Book of Mormon* lands. Without finding something like a placard that reads "Nephi slept here!", it might be

impossible to recognize *Book of Mormon* peoples from any other non-*Book of Mormon* cultures.

"...the incomplete picture presented by archaeology can easily be turned against the Bible as well. McKeever and Johnson attempt to paint a picture of Biblical archaeology as a recent discipline that has uncovered vast support for the Bible, despite the fact that '90 percent of the evidence in the biblical lands is still buried in the sands'.

"Furthermore, the question seems to be not so much, "Do archaeological findings support the *Book of Mormon*?" but rather, "Do archaeological findings contradict the *Book of Mormon*?" The answer is no. Current studies indicate that the *Book of Mormon* fit comfortably and neatly in an ancient New World setting. There are no major areas of disagreement between the archaeological information available in Mesoamerican regions and the cultures and geographies described in the *Book of Mormon*." (Michael R. Ash, *The Book of Mormon*)

Despite this attempt by Michael Ash to defend the archeology of *The Book of Mormon*, the fact remains that no archeological evidence has been found in either North or South America that supports any of the claims made in the Book of Mormon. Claiming that the *Book of Mormon* must be true simply because no archeological evidence has been uncovered to disprove it is the same flawed logic that says flying saucers must exist because no evidence has been uncovered to prove they do not exist.

Furthermore, the areas in North America claimed by *The Book of Mormon* to be the sites of major battles have uncovered nothing. While the archeologist spade may have just scratched the surface of potential archeological sites in South America, that cannot be said of North America – especially in the heavily populated northeastern states.

The bottom line is simply this: *The Book of Mormon* is false!

## **A Sample of the Failed Prophecies of Joseph Smith, Jr.**

Joseph Smith wore many titles in his lifetime, Elder, Seer, President, Mayor, even Lieutenant General, but he is probably best known among Mormons as the Prophet. It is said that he prophesied often, with great passion, often invoking the powers of heaven and the name of God. Below is a sampling of just seven prophecies of Joseph Smith. They are notable not only for their specificity but also for their appeal to divine authority. These prophecies are taken from official Mormon sources – either the *Doctrine and Covenants* (D&C) or the *History of the Church* (HC), a seven volume history published under the authority of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (LDS). Each are given in context and cited directly from the original source. Where they are known, subsequent historical events relevant to the prophecy are also noted.

### **1 – The Coming of the Lord**

*President Smith then stated that the meeting had been called, because God had commanded it; and it was made known to him by vision and by the Holy Spirit. . . . it was the will of God that they should be ordained to the ministry and go forth to prune the vineyard for the last time, for the coming of the Lord, which was nigh – even fifty six years should wind up the scene. (History of the Church, Vol. 2, page 182).*

This prophecy was spoken by Joseph Smith in 1835, and recorded by Oliver Cowdery. The fifty-six years were passed by 1891.

### **2 – David W. Patten to go on a mission**

*Verily, thus saith the Lord: It is wisdom in my servant David W. Patten, that he settle up all his business as soon as he possibly can, and make a disposition of his merchandise, that he may perform a mission unto me next spring, in company with others, even twelve including himself, to testify of my name and bear glad tidings unto the world. (Doctrine & Covenants 114:1)*

This prophecy was made on April 17, 1838. David W. Patten died in October of 1838 and thus never went on a mission the following spring.

### **3 – The United States Government to be overthrown in a few years**

*I prophecy in the name of the Lord God of Israel, unless the United States redress the wrongs committed upon the Saints in the state of Missouri and punish the crimes committed by her officers that in a few years the government will be utterly overthrown and wasted, and there will not be so much as a potsherd left for their wickedness in permitting the murder of men, women and children, and the wholesale plunder and*

*extermination of thousands of her citizens to go unpunished (History of the Church, Vol. 5, page 394).*

Joseph Smith made this prophecy in May 6, 1843. However, the United States Government did not redress any of the wrongs committed against the Mormons in Missouri, and now well over two-centuries later, the U.S. Government still stands.

#### **4 – Congress to be broken up as a government**

*While discussing the petition to Congress, I prophesied, by virtue of the holy Priesthood vested in me, and in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that, if Congress will not hear our petition and grant us protection, they shall be broken up as a government, and God shall damn them, and there shall be nothing left of them - not even a grease spot. (Millennial Star, Vol. 22, p. 455. See also History of the Church (HC), vol. 6, p. 116, though when this prediction was incorporated into the official history, Mormon Church leaders decided to leave out the "grease spot" part.)*

The petition was not heard nor was protection granted (Deseret News, Vol. 1, p. 59). Yet, Congress was never broken up and continues to function to this day. It is interesting that the compilers of *History of the Church*, added an editorial note in an attempt to soften or explain this prophecy. They state that: *"This prediction doubtless has reference to the party in power; to the 'government' considered as the administration;"* (note, p. 116). According to the note in *HC*, this means the Democratic Party, which was in control at the time. However, the prediction is that *"Congress shall be broken up as a government"* and Congress is made up of representatives from both parties. The petition was an appeal to the U.S. Government, not the Democratic Party, a point made by a summary statement in the left margin beside this prophecy as it is recorded in *HC*.

#### **5 – Finding Treasure in Salem, Massachusetts**

This prophecy is recorded in Doctrine & Covenants Section 111. The introduction to this prophecy, found at the beginning of Section 111 states:

*Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet, at Salem, Massachusetts, August 6, 1836. HC 2:465-466. At this time the leaders of the [LDS] Church were heavily in debt due to their labors in the ministry.*

1. *I, the Lord your God, am not displeased with your coming this journey, notwithstanding your follies.*
2. *I have much treasure in this city for you, for the benefit of Zion, and many people in this city, whom I will gather out in due time for the benefit of Zion, through your instrumentality.*

3. *Therefore, it is expedient that you should form acquaintance with men in this city, as you shall be led, and as it shall be given you.*
4. *And it shall come to pass in due time that I will give this city into your hands, that you shall have power over it, insomuch that they shall not discover your secret parts; and its wealth pertaining to gold and silver shall be yours.*
5. *Concern not yourselves about your debts, for I will give you power to pay them.*

No treasure was ever discovered, nor did Salem ever fall into the hands of the Mormons.

## **6 – Pestilence, Hail, Famine & Earthquake to Destroy the Wicked**

*And now I am prepared to say by the authority of Jesus Christ, that not many years shall pass away before the United States shall present such a scene of bloodshed as has not a parallel in the history of our nation; pestilence, hail, famine, and earthquake will sweep the wicked of this generation from off the face of the land, to open and prepare the way for the return of the lost tribes of Israel from the north country. The people of the Lord, those who have complied with the requirements of the new covenant, have already commenced gathering together to Zion, which is in the state of Missouri; therefore I declare unto you the warning which the Lord has commanded to declare unto this generation, remembering that the eyes of my Maker are upon me, and that to him I am accountable for every word I say, wishing nothing worse to my fellow-men than their eternal salvation; therefore, "Fear God, and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment is come." Repent ye, repent ye, and embrace the everlasting covenant and flee to Zion, before the overflowing scourge overtake you, for there are those now living upon the earth whose eyes shall not be closed in death until they see all these things, which I have spoken, fulfilled. (History of the Church, Vol. 1, pp. 315-316).*

Such a widespread destruction of the wicked of that generation never occurred.

## **7 – Temple to be Built in Zion, Missouri**

This prophecy comes directly from Doctrine & Covenants Section 84, the introduction of which states:

*Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet, at Kirtland, Ohio, September 22 and 23, 1832. (HC 1:286-295).*

1. *A revelation of Jesus Christ unto his servant Joseph Smith, Jun., and six elders, as they united their hearts and lifted their voices on high.*
2. *Yea, the word of the Lord concerning his church, established in the last days for the restoration of his people, as he has spoken by the mouth of his prophets, and*

*for the gathering of his saints to stand upon Mount Zion, which shall be the city of New Jerusalem.*

3. *Which city shall be built, beginning at the temple lot, which is appointed by the finger of the Lord, in the western boundaries of the State of Missouri, and dedicated by the hand of Joseph Smith, Jun., and others with whom the Lord was well pleased.*
4. *Verily, this is the word of the Lord, that the city New Jerusalem shall be built by the gathering of the saints, beginning at this place, even the place of the temple, which temple shall be reared in this generation.*
5. *For verily this generation shall not all pass away until an house shall be built unto the Lord, and a cloud shall rest upon it, which cloud shall be even the glory of the Lord, which shall fill the house.*

The Mormons were forced to flee Missouri due to persecution and a temple was never built on the "temple lot" in the lifetime of Joseph Smith or within the generation of his contemporaries.

### **Testing Prophetic Claims**

Over the last 200 years a number of people have claimed to be religious prophets with special spiritual authority from God. These include Charles Taze Russell (Jehovah's Witnesses), Ellen G. White (Seventh Day Adventists), Mary Baker Eddy (Christian Science), and Joseph Smith (Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints). Each started an organization which claimed to be the one true Christian Church, each had unique teachings, and each appealed to the Bible to some degree as their basis for spiritual authority. Yet, each "prophet's" teachings contradict those of the others.

#### **How can we test a person like Joseph Smith who claims to be a prophet?**

Jesus warned in Matthew 7:15 that many false prophets would come. Other passages also warn about false prophets and spiritual deception (Galatians 1:6-9; 1 Timothy 4:1; 2 Peter 2:1-3; 1 John 4:1 and Jude 3-16). We should not be surprised, therefore, to discover that there are false prophets in the world today.

#### **A specific Biblical test**

The Bible, in Deuteronomy chapters 13 and 18, provides tests for anyone claiming to be a prophet and speak for God. If the person fails these tests given by God, then we can know for sure they are a false prophet and we are to reject their teaching. Consider the Biblical test of Deuteronomy 18:21-22 which reads as follows:

*"And if you say in your heart, 'How shall we know the word which the Lord has not spoken?' — when a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the thing does not*

*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." (Deuteronomy 18:21-22).*

Here the God of Israel told His people how they can keep from being deceived by someone claiming to be a prophet. If even one of the prophet's prophecies do not come true he is a false prophet. What was the punishment if a prophet did speak a false prophecy? According to Deuteronomy 13 the prophet was to die. So God obviously takes false prophecy very seriously.

Joseph Smith's false prophecies, all of which he prophesied "in the name of the Lord," constitute one of the single greatest objections to his claim to be a latter-day prophet of God.