



Some Facts About
MORMONISM
Investigated & Analyzed

Imtiaz Ahmed Sra

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To

My father, Ch. Nazir A. Zahid Sra, mother, Naseem Akhter, brothers, Muhammad A. Pasha, Mahmood A. Mubshar, Adnan Nazir, sister, Faiza Aleem, brother-in-law, Atta ul Aleem, my wife, Khula Imtiaz, and kids, Sabeeh Ahmed and Rabeeta Ahmed, who have always loved, guided, supported, and encouraged me. Their prayers and profound cooperation have helped me throughout my life. With love and gratitude!

Note

Please note that according to our system of counting Quranic verses, the verse *Bismillahir-Rahmanir-Rahim* (In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, Ever Merciful) is counted as the first verse of the chapter which it precedes. Some publishers of the Holy Quran, however, begin counting following *Bismillahir-Rahmanir-Rahim*. Should the reader not find the relevant verse under the number mentioned in this book, he or she is advised to deduct 1 from the number. Also, references to the Holy Qur'an in this book are in the format of chapter number: verse citation. For example, if this book quotes 3:13 that means the quoted verse is the 13th of the 3rd chapter of the Holy Qur'an. As indicated above, some copies of the Holy Quran will list the same verse under 3:12.

Salutations are recited out of respect when mentioning the names of Prophets and holy personages. These salutations have been abbreviated and inserted into the text where applicable. Readers are urged to recite the full salutations for the following abbreviations:

The abbreviation ^{sa} *Sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, meaning 'May peace and blessings of Allah be upon him', is written after the name of the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa}.

The abbreviation ^{as} *Alaihis-salaam*, meaning 'May peace be on him', is written after the names of Prophets other than the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa}.

The abbreviation ^{ra} is used with the name of the Companions of the Holy Prophet^{sa} and those of the Promised Messiah^{as}. It is an abbreviation of *Radiyallahu'anhu/'anha/'anhum* (may Allah be pleased with him/with her/with them).

The abbreviation ^{aa} stands for *Ayyadahullahu Ta'ala* (may Allāh be his Helper!).

The abbreviation LDS – Latter-day Saints.

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And finally, my entire spiritual upbringing from when I dedicated my life has been through the boundless clemency and love of my Beloved Imam, Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V^{aa} who has inspired me in countless ways and continues to be every Ahmadi's life force.

Imtiaz Ahmed Sra
November 27, 2020

Foreword

The Holy Founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^{as} of Qadian was a great advocate of interfaith dialogue. He claimed to be the Promised Messiah and Reformer prophesied for the latter days by major world religions.

Continuing the tradition of the Promised Messiah^{as}, the scholars of his community discern fact from fiction through discourse on religion. Some Facts about Mormonism is another example of this remarkable endeavour. Maulana Imtiaz Ahmed Sra has authored this book through years of research and dedication. The work offers some objective reality to all those who seek the truth on Mormonism.

The defining characteristic of a true living religion is that it establishes the existence of God and brings its followers closer to their Creator. In this work, the author has written on the background of Joseph Smith, the founder of Mormonism, and the evolution of this Christian sect that is remarkably similar to Pauline Christianity in introducing new creed.

The analysis of Mormonism presented in this book will help the reader understand it through the lens of the Holy Qur'an and the unique perspective of the Promised Messiah^{as}. It also helps readers appreciate the importance of intellectual honesty, needed

now more than ever. It is sure to help many-a-curious reader see the church and religion in a fresh light.

Sheikh Abdul Wadood
National Secretary Ishā'at, Canada
November 27, 2020

Table of Contents

PART 1 — INTRODUCTION	3
Chapter 1	
JOSEPH SMITH	5
<i>Family Background and Birth</i>	7
<i>Childhood and Religious Excitement</i>	8
<i>The First Vision</i>	8
<i>The Visits of Moroni</i>	9
<i>Marriage and Children</i>	10
<i>Possession of the Gold Plates and the Translation</i>	11
<i>Organization of the Church</i>	12
<i>Spreading the Message</i>	12
<i>Struggle for Zion City</i>	13
<i>Joseph Smith in Nauvoo</i>	16
CHAPTER 2	
THE LATTER-DAY SAINTS' SCRIPTURES	19
<i>The Holy Bible</i>	22
<i>The Book of Mormon</i>	24
<i>Prophecies about the Book of Mormon in the Bible</i>	24
<i>The Book of Mormon, "An Ancient Record"</i>	26

<i>Why is it called the Book of Mormon?</i>	27
<i>The Book of Mormon</i>	27
<i>Another name</i>	28
<i>Translation of the Book of Mormon</i>	28
<i>The Vision</i>	28
<i>Possession of the Plates</i>	29
<i>Beginning of the Translation</i>	30
<i>Publication of the Book of Mormon</i>	30
<i>Different Books of the Book of Mormon</i>	30
<i>The Testimonies</i>	36
<i>Translation of the Book of Mormon in different languages</i>	37
<i>The Book of Mormon, a Key Stone</i>	38
<i>Doctrine and Covenants</i>	39
<i>The Pearl of Great Price</i>	40
<i>The Book of Moses</i>	40
<i>The Book of Abraham</i>	40
<i>Joseph Smith-Matthew</i>	40
<i>Joseph Smith-History</i>	41
<i>The Articles of Faith</i>	41

CHAPTER 3	
THE LATTER-DAY SAINTS BELIEFS	43
<i>God</i>	45
<i>The Doctrine of the Trinity and the LDS Church</i>	46
<i>The Nature of God</i>	47
<i>The Plan of Salvation</i>	48
1. <i>Faith in Jesus Christ</i>	50
2. <i>Repentance</i>	52
<i>Recognition of sins</i>	54
<i>Feeling sorrow for sins</i>	54
<i>Forsaking sins</i>	55
<i>Confessing sins</i>	55
<i>Making restitution for sins</i>	56
<i>Forgiving Others</i>	56
<i>Keeping the Commandments of God</i>	56
<i>The Author's Experience</i>	57
3. <i>Baptism</i>	58
<i>What is the definition of baptism?</i>	58
<i>When was this ordinance commanded and who was it commanded to?</i>	59

<i>How is baptism performed and who can perform this ordinance?</i>	60
<i>Why is it necessary to be baptised?</i>	60
<i>How much importance does it hold?</i>	61
<i>Who is eligible to be baptised?</i>	62
<i>What laws must be followed after baptism?</i>	62
<i>4. The Gift of the Holy Ghost</i>	62
<i>What is the gift of the Holy Ghost?</i>	63
<i>Why is it important to receive the gift of the Holy Ghost?</i>	63
<i>How is the gift of the Holy Ghost conferred and who has the authority to confer it?</i>	64
<i>5. Enduring to the End</i>	64
<i>Tithing</i>	65
<i>Word of Wisdom</i>	67
<i>The Second Coming of Jesus Christ</i>	69
<i>Signs of the Second Coming</i>	70
<i>1. An Era of Apostasy</i>	70
<i>2. Dreadful Days</i>	71
<i>3. The Restoration of the Gospels</i>	71
<i>4. The Coming Forth of the Book of Mormon</i>	72

5 <i>The Gospel preached to all nations</i>	73
6. <i>Building of the New Jerusalem</i>	74
7. <i>Armageddon</i>	75
<i>The Second Coming</i>	75
<i>Life after Death</i>	76
<i>The Spirit World</i>	76
<i>Paradise</i>	78
<i>Hell</i>	79
<i>The Last Judgement</i>	79
<i>Kingdom of Glories</i>	80
<i>Celestial Kingdom</i>	81
<i>Terrestrial Kingdom</i>	82
<i>Telestial Kingdom</i>	83
<i>Outer Darkness</i>	84
 PART II —	
MORMONISM INVESTIGATED & ANALYZED	87
 CHAPTER 4	
JOSEPH SMITH	89
<i>The First Criterion</i>	92
<i>Conclusion</i>	95

<i>The Second Criterion</i>	97
<i>Did Joseph Smith Claim to be a Prophet?</i>	100
<i>Did Joseph Smith Claim to Receive Revelations?</i>	101
<i>Did Joseph Smith Experience Visions?</i>	102
<i>Joseph Smith's Murder</i>	103
<i>Joseph Smith — In Search of Truths</i>	103
<i>The Nauvoo Expositor</i>	104
<i>Aftermath of the destruction of the printing press</i>	105
<i>Joseph Smith Declared Martial Law</i>	105
<i>Joseph Smith Fled to Iowa</i>	106
<i>Joseph Smith Arrested for Treason</i>	107
<i>Carthage Jail</i>	108
<i>Joseph Smith's murder</i>	109
<i>Did Joseph Smith live for 23 years after he claimed to receive revelations?</i>	110
<i>The Third Criterion</i>	111
<i>Conclusion</i>	113
<i>The Fourth Criterion</i>	113
<i>Conclusion</i>	117
<i>Joseph Smith, the LDS Church, and Free Masonry</i>	118

<i>Another salient characteristic of Joseph Smith</i>	134
CHAPTER 5	
THE LDS SCRIPTURES	137
<i>The Qur'anic Criterion</i>	139
<i>Joseph Smith and the witnesses</i>	147
<i>Archaeology of the Book of Mormon</i>	147
<i>Is The Book of Mormon "the most correct of any book"?</i>	149
CHAPTER 6	
THE LDS BELIEFS	157
<i>Plurality of gods</i>	159
<i>Unity of God</i>	164
<i>Jesus: Literal Son of God</i>	169
<i>Critical Analysis</i>	170
<i>Jesus: Literal Son or Beloved Prophet of God?</i>	170
<i>Jesus and the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community</i>	179
<i>The Mormon Doctrine of godhood</i>	180
<i>Angel of Light or Satan?</i>	182
<i>Blood Atonement</i>	184
<i>Critical Analysis</i>	186
<i>The LDS Church and the African Race</i>	189

<i>Critical Analysis</i>	194
1. <i>Teachings on betterment of the conditions of existing slaves and measures for their gradual emancipation</i>	197
2. <i>Steps for the permanent abolition of slavery.</i>	200
CHAPTER 7	
THE FUTURE OF MORMONISM	205
<i>A Question</i>	207
<i>Heavenly Signs and Three Types of People</i>	210
<i>Spread of Light at the Advent of a Prophet</i>	212
<i>Message in the USA</i>	220
<i>The Ultimate Future of Mankind</i>	232
Bibliography	235
Index	237
Endnotes	243

INTRODUCTION

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is a religion founded in the United States by Joseph Smith, a man who also claimed to be a prophet of God, in 1830. Smith and his followers were persecuted, beaten, robbed, incarcerated and driven out of their homes. After the murder of Joseph Smith, they migrated to an abandoned land (present day Salt Lake City, Utah). The perseverance and patience of the members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints prevailed, which has significantly contributed to the LDS Church becoming one of the fastest growing and richest religious organizations in the United States of America. Its members are known as the Latter-day Saints, or Mormons, and number close to 16.5 million. The Church has its headquarters in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Numerous books have been written both by the LDS Church and also by anti-Mormons (the majority of them are Christians hailing from different sects as well as former Mormons) on Mormon theology.

This book will lead you on a journey of reflection and critical thinking through:

- The theology of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints,
- The life and times of Joseph Smith,
- His claim to prophethood,
- The arrival of the awaited Messiah as well as the perspectives of historical accounts, rationality, the Bible, Islam and the

Church itself. It is hoped that all seekers of truth will examine this text with justice and fairness.

I pray to God, the Almighty, that the contents of this book may be useful in enlightening the minds and hearts of all. May God, the most Gracious and ever Merciful, guide us on the right path. Amen.

Chapter 1
JOSEPH SMITH

“God had a work for me to do;
and that my name should be had
for good and evil among all nations,
kindreds, and tongues, or that it
should be both good and evil
spoken of among all people.”

Family Background and Birth

Joseph Smith was a sixth generation American; his ancestors emigrated from England in the 1600s. He describes his ancestry in the following words:

My father, Joseph Smith, was born July 12th, 1771, in Topsfield, Essex County, Massachusetts; his father, Asael Smith, was born March 7th, 1744, in Topsfield, Massachusetts; his father, Samuel Smith, was born January 26th, 1714, in Topsfield, Massachusetts; his father, Samuel Smith, was born January 26th, 1666, in Topsfield, Massachusetts; his father, Robert Smith came from England.¹

Records mention that the Smith family believed in God and were associated with different Churches which they served with devotion. Joseph Smith's ancestors lived most of their lives in Topsfield, Massachusetts. Later, his father, Joseph Smith Sr, moved to the state of Vermont and then to Palmyra, New York. There, he married Lucy Smith who conceived nine children. Joseph Smith tells the names of his father's family:

His family consisting of eleven souls, namely-my father, Joseph Smith, my mother, Lucy Smith, (whose name, previous to her marriage, was Mack, daughter of Solomon Mack,) my brothers, Alvin, (who died November 19th, 1824 in the 27th year of his age) Hyrum, myself, Samuel, Harrison, Ephriam, William, Don Carlos, and my sisters, Sophronia, Catherine, and Lucy.²

Joseph Smith, named after his father, was born on December 23, 1805 in the town of Sharon, Windsor County, Vermont. His parents were poor, but hardworking and faithful. They used to make their living by farming the wooded lands, trading, or by teaching at school. Joseph Smith used to help his parents in the farms, which often required a great deal of hard, laborious work.

Childhood and Religious Excitement

As a child, Joseph Smith spent his time helping his father on the farms. Since he belonged to a very poor family, he and his siblings could not afford a formal education. They would work with their father to help support the family. He learned to read and write along with basic rules of arithmetic.

As mentioned earlier, Smith hailed from a religious family and grew up in a religious atmosphere. At that time in the United States, and particularly in New York State, there was an unusual proclivity towards religion. Many sects of Christianity at the time were either developing or heavily evangelising. Methodist, Presbyterian and Baptist were among the active sects receiving many converts. The Smith family was also immersed in this religious excitement. Joseph Smith's mother, Lucy Smith, his two brothers, Hyrum and Samuel, and his older sister, Sophronia, joined the Presbyterian Church while Joseph Smith, his father (Joseph Smith Sr.) and his brother Alvin did not. Although Joseph Smith was inclined towards the Methodists, he could not decide whether or not to join them.

The First Vision

Joseph Smith prayed to God for guidance about which church to join. When he was 14 years old, he saw a vision and divulged that:

... I saw a pillar of light exactly over my head, above the brightness of the sun, which descended gradually until it fell upon me. It no sooner appeared than I found myself delivered

from the enemy which held me bound. When the light rested upon me I saw two Personages, whose brightness and glory defy all description, standing above me in the air. One of them spake unto me, calling me by name and said, pointing to the other— This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him! My object in going to inquire of the Lord was to know which of all the sects was right, that I might know which to join. No sooner, therefore, did I get possession of myself, so as to be able to speak, than I asked the Personages who stood above me in the light, which of all the sects was right (for at this time it had never entered into my heart that all were wrong)—and which I should join. I was answered that I must join none of them, for they were all wrong; and the Personage who addressed me said that all their creeds were an abomination in his sight; that those professors were all corrupt; that: “they draw near to me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me, they teach for doctrines the commandments of men, having a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof.” He again forbade me to join with any of them;...³

As commanded in the First Vision, he did not join any church. When Joseph Smith shared his vision with priests and other people, he was opposed and persecuted. People mocked him and some even went on to say that it was the work of Satan, not the work of God.

The Visits of Moroni

Three years passed in opposition after the First Vision. Joseph Smith saw another vision on September 21, 1823:

... I discovered a light appearing in my room, which continued to increase until the room was lighter than at noonday, when immediately a personage appeared at my bedside, standing in the air, for his feet did not touch the floor.

He called me by name, and said unto me that he was a messenger sent from the presence of God to me, and that his name was Moroni; that God had a work for me to do; and that my name should be had for good and evil among all nations,

kindreds, and tongues, or that it should be both good and evil spoken of among all people. He said there was a book deposited, written upon gold plates, giving an account of the former inhabitants of this continent, and the source from whence they sprang. He also said that the fullness of the everlasting Gospel was contained in it, as delivered by the Savior to the ancient inhabitants; Also, that there were two stones in silver bows—and these stones, fastened to a breastplate, constituted what is called the Urim and Thummim—deposited with the plates; and the possession and use of these stones were what constituted “seers” in ancient or former times; and that God had prepared them for the purpose of translating the book.⁴

The angel Moroni visited Joseph Smith three times that night. Moroni quoted prophecies from the Old Testament, as well as from the New Testament concerning the advent of a prophet before the second coming of Jesus Christ and said that these prophecies will be fulfilled. Moroni also informed him about the great judgements that shall come to pass on earth including wars, famines, plagues, and epidemics. The next morning, in the fourth visit of the angel Moroni, Joseph Smith was commanded to share his experience with his father.

Moreover, the angel ordered him to visit a nearby hill named Cumorah, to see the Gold Plates and the stones. Joseph Smith went there and met the same angel who showed him the Gold Plates. Joseph tried to take the plates but was forbidden by the angel. He told him to visit the same place every year on the same day for three years.

Marriage and Children

Later in his life, Joseph Smith went to Pennsylvania for a job where he met Emma Hale. It is mentioned that her parents were not happy about her relationship with Joseph Smith because of his visions. Emma’s parents were opposed to the marriage with Joseph. For this reason, Joseph and Emma eloped to New York State and got married on the 18th of January, 1826. Joseph and

Emma settled in his parents' house. They had eleven children, six of whom died in infancy:

- Alvin, born in 1828
- Thaddeus and Louisa, (twins) born in 1831, died shortly after birth
- Adopted son Joseph, who was also the twin of adopted daughter, Julia, died at the age of eleven months
- Joseph III, born in 1832; Frederick, born in 1836; Alexander, born in 1838
- Don Carlos, born in 1840 and died shortly after his birth
- One son named David, born in 1844, after the death of Joseph Smith

Possession of the Gold Plates and the Translation

Joseph Smith visited the hill for three years and received guidance and instructions regarding the translation of the plates and about his "prophetic mission". The time had now arrived for obtaining the Gold Plates and the stones. On the 22nd of September, 1827, Joseph Smith went to the hill and the same angel appeared and handed him the plates and warned him against the hands of thieves and mobs. The persecution became severe once people knew about the Gold Plates. To avoid the bitter harassment, Joseph and Emma moved to Pennsylvania to her father's home where Joseph started working on the translation of the plates. Later, Oliver Cowdery, a schoolteacher, became his scribe and the translation was fast-tracked. On the 15th of May, 1829, while both were working on the translation, they prayed for the restoration of the Priesthood that must come to pass before the second coming of Jesus Christ. John the Baptist visited them and conferred the Aaronic Priesthood (the lesser Priesthood) upon them. Later, Jesus' apostles Peter, James and John also appeared

and conferred upon them the Melchizedek Priesthood (the higher Priesthood). The translation was completed and the Book of Mormon was published on the 26th of March, 1830.

Organization of the Church

After the publication of the Book of Mormon, on the 6th of April, 1830, Joseph Smith organized the church; 60 people joined. In this meeting, new converts were baptised and the gift of the Holy Ghost was given. Men were ordained to the priesthood. During the meeting, Joseph Smith received the revelation:

BEHOLD, there shall be a record kept among you; and in it thou shalt be called a seer, a translator, a prophet, an apostle of Jesus Christ, an elder of the church through the will of God the Father, and the grace of your Lord Jesus Christ.⁵ (*Doctrine and Covenants 21:1*)

Therefore, Joseph Smith was designated as the Prophet and the leader of the Church. Originally, the official name of the church was "The Church of Christ." On the 3rd of May, 1834, it was changed to "The Church of Latter Day Saints". Later, on the 26th of April, 1838, Joseph Smith had a revelation about the name of the church: *For thus shall my church be called in the last days, even The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.*⁶ (*Doctrine and Covenants 115:4*)

The Church was established and despite opposition and persecution, it continued to grow. Joseph Smith also organized the structure of the Church based on revelation. This structure consisted of First Presidency, the Priesthood quorums, and the auxiliary organization.

Spreading the Message

Joseph Smith received a revelation concerning his message: *Go ye into all the world, preach the gospel to every creature, acting in the*

*authority which I have given you, baptizing in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.*⁷ (*Doctrine and Covenants 68:8*)

He trained missionaries and sent them to different parts of New York. They saw great success and the Church rapidly grew in New York State as new branches were established in small towns, namely, Fayette, Manchester and Colesville. Because of the swift progress in New York, he sent missionaries to various parts of the United States, Upper Canada and England where the Church experienced further success and had many converts. This also brought in its wake severe persecution and opposition. The Latter-day Saints received constant threats to their lives and properties, but the Church persevered and people from across the region were converting.

Struggle for Zion City

With the progress of the Church, persecution and opposition continued to grow. Joseph Smith received a revelation in December, 1830: *BEHOLD, I say unto you that it is not expedient in me that ye should translate any more until ye shall go to the Ohio, and this because of the enemy and for your sakes.*⁸ (*Doctrine and Covenants 37:1*)

Smith and his wife were the first ones to migrate to Kirtland, Ohio. The majority of the Latter-day Saints' population migrated and had to sacrifice their houses, farms, and belongings for this costly journey. After establishing a new headquarters in Kirtland, Ohio, Smith received another revelation that he and other Church leaders should travel to Missouri. Therefore, some members of the Church embarked to Missouri. There, he received another revelation on the 20th of July 1831, stating:

HEARKEN, O ye elders of my church, saith the Lord your God, who have assembled yourselves together, according to my commandments, in this land, which is the land of Missouri, which is the land which I have appointed and consecrated for the gathering of the saints. Wherefore, this is the land of

promise, and the place for the city of Zion. And thus saith the Lord your God, if you will receive wisdom here is wisdom. Behold, the place which is now called Independence is the center place; and a spot for the temple is lying westward, upon a lot which is not far from the courthouse.⁹ (*Doctrine and Covenants* 57:1-3)

After laying the foundation of Zion city and dedicating land for the gathering of the Latter-day Saints and the Temple, Joseph Smith returned to Kirtland, Ohio. There, he encouraged the Latter-day Saints to gather in Jackson County, Missouri. Hence, under the direction of Joseph Smith, Church members migrated to Missouri under the supervision of their Priesthood leaders. They continued to live in Kirtland, Ohio and Jackson County, Missouri. The construction of the Kirtland Temple began in December 1832 and the members of the Church helped both financially and in the actual construction of the temple. The construction was completed and the Temple was dedicated on the 27th of March, 1836.

The population of the Latter-day Saints at the settlement in Jackson County, Missouri, started to increase rapidly with the migration of the Latter-day Saints from Kirtland, Ohio and other parts of the United States. It alarmed the local people of Missouri and they started to oppose and persecute the Latter-day Saints due to a dilution in political power and because of the peculiarity of their practises and doctrines. Persecution became intolerable as mobs and local militia began creating trouble for the Latter-day Saints. Eventually, they were driven out of Jackson County. In February, 1834, while Joseph Smith was in Kirtland, Ohio, he received a revelation:

Therefore, as I said unto you, ask and ye shall receive; pray earnestly that peradventure my servant Joseph Smith, Jun., may go with you, and preside in the midst of my people, and organize my kingdom upon the consecrated land, and establish the children of Zion upon the laws and commandments which have been and which shall be given unto you.¹⁰ (*Doctrine and Covenants* 103:35)

Therefore, Joseph Smith with 200 followers marched towards Jackson County, Missouri. This organized group was given the name 'Zion Camp'. There were many obstacles in the journey and they had to bear many difficulties and hardships including an outbreak of cholera. Moreover, Smith received news that there was an increase in mob violence and that several counties had sworn to fight the Latter-day Saints.

In the midst of all this, Smith received a revelation while they were nearing Jackson County that he must disband the camp. The Latter-day Saints then moved to Clay County, Missouri, but not long after, the local people again forced them out.

From there, the Latter-day Saints moved to Caldwell County, Missouri, which was organized by the state to accommodate the displaced Latter-day Saints. Back in Kirtland, the Church continued to grow but during this period, the opposition and persecution increased, intensifying even more in 1837.

The Latter-day Saints were driven out of Kirtland and went to Caldwell County, Missouri. There they joined the other Latter-day Saints who were in the Zion March. Once again, they had to leave their homes, properties, and, most importantly, their Temple. It was a difficult loss to bear.

In Caldwell County, the Latter-day Saints enjoyed peace for a short while, but not long after, they were caught in the middle of persecution by mobs and militia. Joseph Smith and other members of the Church retaliated. They were arrested and charged with treason. Smith was incarcerated in November 1838 and kept in inhumane conditions. He was imprisoned for about six months and was transferred to different jails. It is said that, in mid-April, 1839, while he was being transferred to another jail, he was allowed by a guard, who sympathised with his condition, to escape. During Joseph Smith's imprisonment, the Latter-day Saints were forced to move out of Missouri. Under the supervision of Brigham Young, the Latter-day Saints moved to

Quincy, Illinois. After his escape, Joseph Smith reunited with Latter-day Saints and here, he commanded his followers to move to another city, which he named Nauvoo. Obeying the commandment, the Latter-day Saints flocked to Nauvoo, Illinois, thus making it the most populated area in the state.

Joseph Smith's struggle for Zion City resulted in opposition, persecution, loss of properties, loss of souls and general chaos as he strived toward this unattained commandment of God and goal in his life.

Joseph Smith in Nauvoo

Nauvoo became the new headquarters for the Church and Joseph Smith and his followers lived there in peace for a short while. During this period, the Latter-day Saints dreamed and hoped to progress forward but this period was also short lived. On the 4th February, 1841, Joseph Smith was elected lieutenant general of the newly organized Nauvoo Legion, which was a unit of the Illinois State militia. Now, living in a new headquarters without a Temple, God commanded that a Temple be built in Nauvoo. Construction began and on the 6th April, 1841, the cornerstone was laid by Joseph Smith, which was completed after his demise.

Nauvoo was a Mormon city and heavily populated by the Latter-day Saints. Therefore, Joseph Smith ran for the office of mayor and was elected in May 1842. He was disappointed at the federal government because it failed to give the Latter-day Saints their religious rights and could not compensate for their lost properties in Kirtland, Ohio and Jackson County, Missouri. Thus, in January 1844, he announced his candidacy for the presidency of the United States of America. Although, there was no chance of him being elected, it drew public attention. Not long after this announcement, Joseph Smith and his brother, Hyrum Smith, were charged with treason against the state of Illinois and were imprisoned in Carthage Jail. On 27th June 1844, a mob stormed the

jail and murdered Joseph Smith along with his brother Hyrum Smith.

CHAPTER 2
THE LATTER-DAY SAINTS' SCRIPTURES

“I told the brethren that the Book of Mormon was the most correct of any book on earth and the keystone of our religion, and a man would get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book.”

Religious scripture plays a pivotal role in the success of a religion and most world religions have scriptures. The followers of prophets thrive and flourish by abiding by the precepts and teachings of their respective scriptures. Just like all Christian sects, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints follow the Holy Bible. In addition, certain other scriptures are considered and believed to hold the same importance and position as the Holy Bible. The reason for this is found in an interpretation of a revelation of Joseph Smith:

This is an ensample unto all those who were ordained unto this priesthood, whose mission is appointed unto them to go forth— And this is the ensample unto them, that they shall speak as they are moved upon by the Holy Ghost. And whatsoever they shall speak when moved upon by the Holy Ghost shall be scripture, shall be the will of the Lord, shall be the mind of the Lord, shall be the word of the Lord, shall be the voice of the Lord, and the power of God unto salvation.¹¹
(Doctrine and Covenants 68:2-4)

It is for this reason the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints believes a prophet of God appeared and whatever he said or claimed had been revealed to him became their scripture. This makes the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints one of the rare few sects, to have additional scripture other than what is

followed by the majority. The scriptures of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are as follows:

- The Holy Bible
- The Book of Mormon
- Doctrine and Covenants
- Pearl of Great Price

All the above-mentioned scriptures are also referred to as *standard works*. Now, let us look at these scriptures individually from the perspective of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

The Holy Bible

The Holy Bible itself does not need an introduction. Nevertheless, it is important to know the views of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints *regarding* the Bible and the translation used, etc.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints believes in the Bible and believes it to be the word of God with one condition. The eighth Article of Faith states: *"We believe the Bible to be the word of God as far as it is translated correctly."*¹²

The LDS Church is also of the view that the Bible, today, is not the same as revealed originally; it has been altered and some portions are distorted while others have been taken out altogether from the original Bible. Therefore, these things make it imperfect and incomplete. Joseph Smith said that the Bible was corrupted by *'Ignorant translators, careless transcribers, or designing and corrupt priests have committed many errors.'*¹³

The Book of Mormon also records a vision of the prophet Nephi that an angel said to him:

... thou seest the formation of that great and abominable church, which is most abominable above all other churches; for behold, they have taken away from the gospel of the Lamb

many parts which are plain and most precious; and also many covenants of the Lord have they taken away... Wherefore, thou seest that after the book hath gone forth through the hands of the great and abominable church, that there are many plain and precious things taken away from the book, which is the book of the Lamb of God.¹⁴

As is evident from the above references, the LDS Church believes in the Bible, yet differs from those who believe it to be the exact word of God. The LDS Church also rejects that the Bible is perfect, complete, unaltered and free from errors.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints prescribes some rules to solve most of the problems that arise in this regard:

- Read the Inspired Translation of the Bible by the LDS prophet to eradicate errors.
- Read and interpret the Bible in light of the Book of Mormon and the revelations to remove all ambiguities.
- Study the explanations of the modern prophets and apostles of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.
- Interpret the Bible with the help of the Holy Ghost and to seek God's guidance and revelation.

The official translation of the Bible used by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the King James version because it is believed to be the most complete English translation. Another reason is that the LDS prophet, Joseph Smith, used this translation himself. He also revised the King James translation. An eminent Mormon writer and an apostle, (member of Quorum of the twelve apostles) Bruce R. McConkie writes:

In consequence, at the command of the Lord and while acting under the spirit of revelation, the Prophet corrected, revised, altered, added to, and deleted from the King James Version of the Bible to form what is now commonly referred to as the Inspired Version of the Bible.¹⁵

Therefore, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has been publishing the Inspired Version of the Bible under footnotes of the King James Translation. Joseph Smith did not complete the work on the inspired translation and it was printed after his lifetime. Bruce R. McConkie praises the Inspired Version of the Translation in the following words:

In all cases where major changes were made, the student with spiritual insight can see the hand of the Lord manifest; the marvellous flood of light and knowledge revealed through the Inspired Version of the Bible is one of the great evidences of the divine mission of Joseph Smith.¹⁶

Naturally, some of the teachings, beliefs and practices of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints have roots in the Old Testament and the New Testament. For example, the first principle of the Gospels (Please see Chapter 3 – Plan of Salvation) which consist of faith, repentance, baptism, the gift of the Holy Ghost and enduring to the end have roots in the New Testament. Furthermore, the dynamic organization of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is based on both the Old and New Testament.

The Book of Mormon

The Book of Mormon is one of the standard works and holds great importance in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints., Joseph Smith said, *'I told the brethren that the Book of Mormon was the most correct of any book on earth and the keystone of our religion, and a man would get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book'*.¹⁷

Prophecies about the Book of Mormon in the Bible

Latter Day Saints, or Mormons, present the verses below in support of the Divine origin and Biblical support for the Book of Mormon:

And thou shalt be brought down, and shalt speak out of the ground, and thy speech shall be low out of the dust, and thy voice shall be, as of one that hath a familiar spirit, out of the ground, and thy speech shall whisper out of the dust.¹⁸ (*Isaiah 29:4*)

The Latter-day Saints believe this verse describes the Book of Mormon as being extracted from the ground, as found by Joseph Smith.

And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I cannot; for it is sealed. And the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I am not learned.¹⁹ (*Isaiah 29:11-12*)

The Latter-day Saints believe this prophecy was fulfilled when Martin Harris took a transcript of the characters from the plates from which the Book of Mormon was translated to a professor in New York. He gave Martin Harris a certificate that these writings were ancient Egyptian and that the translations were correct. When asked where and how Martin Harris got these transcripts, he was told that Joseph Smith translated them from the Gold Plates by the power of God. He asked to see the certificate and tore it up and asked that if he was given the gold plates, he would translate. Martin Harris responded that the book was sealed. The learned professor then responded, 'I cannot read a sealed book.'

On the contrary, Joseph Smith was unlearned but he completed the translation. He was known to have elementary knowledge of reading, writing and arithmetic - thus fulfilling the prophecy that the learned man will say that he cannot read a sealed book but an unlearned man would translate it.

The word of the LORD came again unto me, saying, Moreover, thou son of man, take thee one stick, and write upon it, For Judah, and for the children of Israel his companions: then take another stick, and write upon it, For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim

and for all the house of Israel his companions: And join them one to another into one stick; and they shall become one in thine hand.²⁰ (*Ezekiel 37:15-17*)

Say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel his fellows, and will put them with him, even with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they shall be one in mine hand.²¹ (*Ezekiel 37:19*)

According to the Latter-Day Saints, the *stick of Judah* represents the Bible and the *stick of Ephraim* represents the Book of Mormon. They say that the genealogy found in the Book of Mormon traces back to the descendants of Ephraim. Joining them together witnesses the dealings of God with man.

*And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.*²² (*John 10:16*)

The Latter-day Saints believe that Jesus Christ came in his bodily form to the Americas after his resurrection, warned the inhabitants of the Americas of that time and also gave them glad tidings of his second coming. Thus fulfilling the prophecy, Jesus visited *other sheep* and the Book of Mormon keeps the records and accounts of his visit to *other sheep*.

The Book of Mormon, "An Ancient Record"

According to Mormons, the Book of Mormon contains the migration record of two tribes of the house of Israel that migrated to the western hemisphere circa 600 B.C. It gives the account of two tribes, the Nephites and the Lamanites. Nephi and Laman were sons of an Israelite prophet Lehi, who led their migration. Laman was the oldest son of Lehi and he is presumed to be a disbeliever. All of his followers and progeny, who disbelieved in prophet Lehi and persecuted his believers, are called Lamanites. On the other hand, Lehi's younger son, Nephi, was a believer and always obeyed his commandments. His followers and progeny

are called Nephites. In short, the Book of Mormon was written and abridged by a prophet-historian named Mormon. He was also a general of the Nephite army and later became a prophet. At his death, he handed the abridgement to his son Moroni and advised him to hide them because of the war between the Nephites and Lamanites. In 1823, Moroni appeared in the form of an angel to Joseph Smith and told him that God has chosen him to fulfill the task. Then, in 1827, he gave the gold plates to Joseph Smith and commanded him to translate the book in English from ancient Egyptian writings. The translation of the gold plates is the Book of Mormon. It contains the record of the remnants of the House of Israel who migrated to a *New World*. It also contains visions, revelations, commandments and moral teachings. Likewise, prophecies of prophets, the persecution of their followers and the consequences of their enemies are mentioned in the Book of Mormon.

Why is it called the Book of Mormon?

It is named after a Nephite prophet named Mormon, because he collected and abridged the records of the inhabitants of the Americas. He also played a great role in preserving the abridgement by advising his son, Moroni, to hide the plates in the mountain. This is why it is called the Book of Mormon. Joseph Smith also mentioned the reason behind the name. He said:

I wish to mention here that the title-page of the Book of Mormon is a literal translation, taken from the very last leaf, on the left hand side of the collection or book of plates, which contained the record which has been translated...I give below that part of the title-page of the English version of the Book of Mormon, which is a genuine and literal translation of the title-page of the original book of Mormon as recorded on the plate:

The Book of Mormon

An account written by the hand of Mormon, upon plates, taken from the Plates of Nephi.²³

Another name

According to The Latter-day Saints, the Book of Mormon is, in reality, another *Testament of Jesus Christ*. They believe that Jesus Christ came in his bodily form to the Americas after his resurrection, preached his message and warned the inhabitants of that time, giving them glad tidings of his second coming. Therefore, it is called *another testament of Jesus Christ* because it keeps the records and accounts of his visit to the Americas, the remnants of the House of Israel or to the *other sheep* of the House of Israel.

Translation of the Book of Mormon

Before delving into how the Book of Mormon was translated, it is important to know how, why and when Joseph Smith received the golden plates. For this, we go back in history and witness how it all began.

The Vision

At the age of 17, Joseph Smith desired to know his standing before God and to receive forgiveness. On the night of September 21, 1823, he retired to his attic bedroom in his family's home in Palmyra, New York. Records state he earnestly prayed to know *God's purposes* for him. In answer to his prayers, Joseph Smith saw a light appear in his room that grew brighter and brighter until the room was *lighter than at noonday*. An angel appeared and this was Moroni, the last Nephite prophet, who had buried the Plates upon which the Book of Mormon was written. He had been sent to tell Joseph Smith that God had forgiven his sins and that He had a great task for him. Joseph Smith said:

He called me by name, and said unto me that he was a messenger sent from the presence of God to me, and that his name was Moroni; that God had a work for me to do; and that my name should be had for good and evil among all nations,

kindreds, and tongues, or that it should be both good and evil spoken of among all people.²⁴

As part of this work, Joseph Smith was to go to a nearby hill, where the sacred record, written on gold plates was deposited. Joseph Smith was to translate the record and bring it forth to the world. Joseph Smith said:

There was a book deposited, written upon gold plates, giving an account of the former inhabitants of this continent, and the source from whence they sprang. He also said that the fullness of the everlasting Gospel was contained in it, as delivered by the Saviour to the ancient inhabitants;²⁵

He further elaborated:

Also, that there were two stones in silver bows—and these stones, fastened to a breastplate, constituted what is called the Urim and Thummim—deposited with the plates; and the possession and use of these stones were what constituted Seers in ancient or former times; and that God had prepared them for the purpose of translating the book.²⁶

Possession of the Plates

The next day, Joseph Smith went to the hill where the plates were buried. There he met Moroni and saw them, but was told that he would not receive them for four years. Joseph Smith said:

I made an attempt to take them out, but was forbidden by the messenger, and was again informed that the time for bringing them forth had not yet arrived, neither would it, until four years from that time; but he told me that I should come to that place precisely in one year from that time, and that he would there meet with me, and that I should continue to do so until the time should come for obtaining the plates. Accordingly, as I had been commanded, I went at the end of each year, and at each time I found the same messenger there, and received instruction and intelligence from him at each of our interviews, respecting what the Lord was going to do, and how and in what manner His kingdom was to be conducted in the last days.²⁷

After four years, on September 22, 1827, Joseph Smith went to the hill and received the plates from Moroni.

Beginning of the Translation

With the ancient record in his possession, Joseph Smith began translating the gold plates, which would later be known as the Book of Mormon. His wife, Emma Smith, who was also a schoolteacher, was his first scribe. Later, Martin Harris, a wealthy and prosperous farmer, and Oliver Cowdery, another schoolteacher worked as his scribes. In June 1828, Martin Harris took 116 pages of the translation to show it to his family members. The manuscript was stolen and never returned. Consequently, Moroni took the gold plates and they were later returned to Joseph Smith after repentance. The work on the translation was resumed and it was completed in June of 1829. It is said that Joseph Smith completed the translation in 60 days.

Publication of the Book of Mormon

In August 1829, a publisher named Egbert B. Grandin of Palmyra agreed to print the volume. Martin Harris mortgaged his farm to ensure payment of the printing costs and paid Mr. Grandin. He later sold 151 acres of his farm to pay off the mortgage. The printing began and the Book of Mormon was available for sale in Grandin's bookstore on March 26, 1830.

Different Books of the Book of Mormon

The Book of Mormon consists of 15 books, which are:

1 Nephi	Mosiah
2 Nephi	Alma
Jacob	Helaman
Enos	3 Nephi
Jarom	4 Nephi
Omni	Mormon
Words of Mormon	Ether

Moroni

These books were translated from four metal plates by Joseph Smith. A list of these plates is given below:

The Plates of Nephi: These Plates had two kinds, small and large. The large Plates contained the genealogy of Lehi, the history of the Nephites, the teachings of Jesus Christ when he visited the Americas in his resurrected form and messianic prophecies mentioned in the Old and New Testaments., The small Plates dealt with spiritual matters and the ministry; teachings of the prophets, their ministries and preaching expeditions.

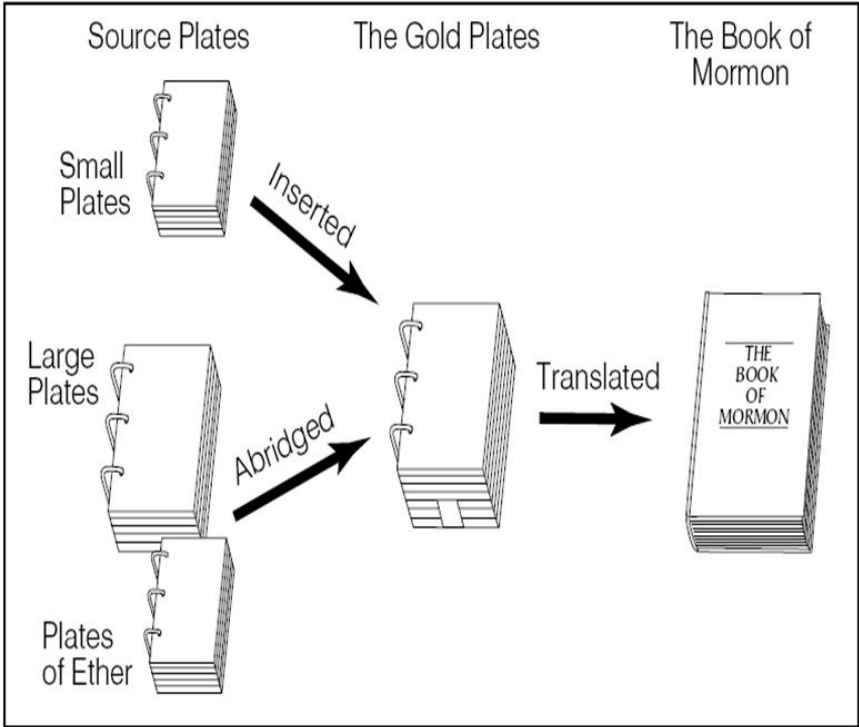
The Plates of Mormon: These Plates contained Mormon's commentary on the Plates of Nephi and also his sermons and letters which were documented by his son, Moroni.

The Plates of Ether: These Plates were recorded by a Jaredite prophet named Ether. The Jaredites were those people who were living in the Americas before the arrival of Lehi and his people. These plates contained the historical accounts of the Jaredites and spiritual experiences of Ether. Many years after the destruction of the Jaredites, these Plates were discovered by a Nephite prophet who translated them with the help of a stone.

The Plates of Brass: These Plates had five books of Moses, Jewish history and prophecies about the coming of different prophets.

The following diagrams illustrate the Book of Mormon:

Diagram 1¹:

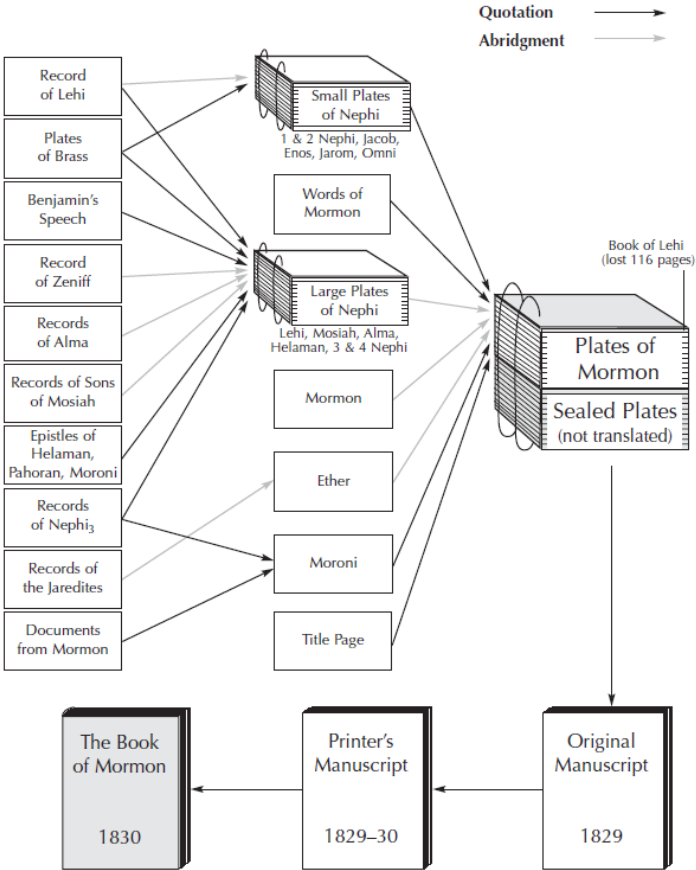


¹ The image is taken from:

<https://bookofmormontranslationchallenge.wordpress.com/2017/06/14/bomtc-1-nephi-19-21-dessert-first/>

Diagram 2²:

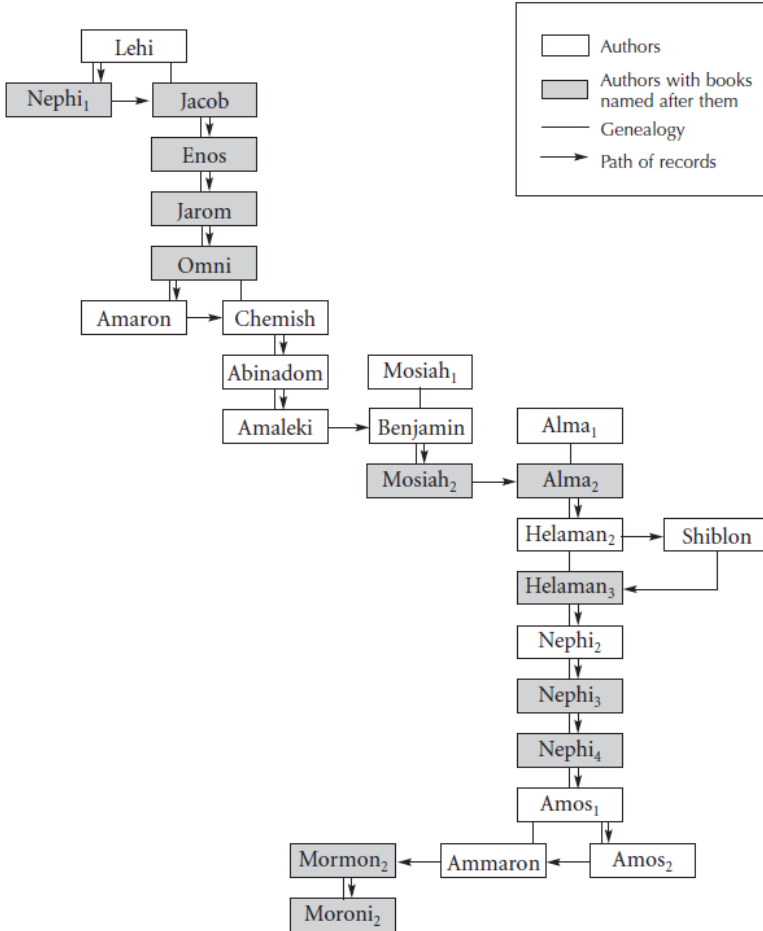
Book of Mormon Plates and Records



² The image is taken from: <http://faithfulfreja.blogspot.com/2012/11/study-aids-for-book-of-mormon-records.html>

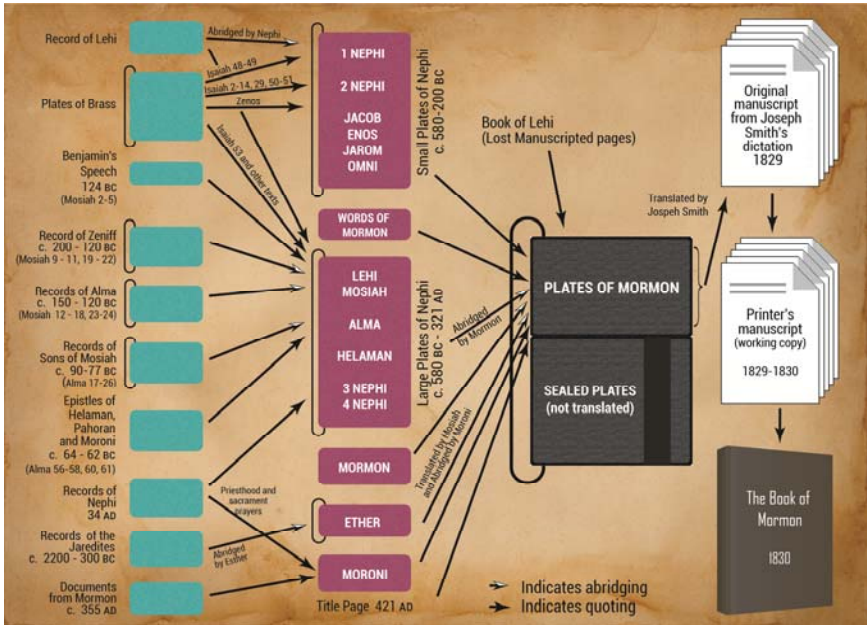
Diagram 3³:

Who Kept the Records in the Book of Mormon?



³ The diagram is taken from: <http://faithfulfreja.blogspot.com/2012/11/study-aids-for-book-of-mormon-records.html>

Diagram 4⁴:



⁴ Image reproduced by Omar Farooq

The Testimonies

As the translation work drew to a close, Joseph Smith felt the need to show the 'Gold Plates' to others so that they may give testimony – but it was forbidden by Moroni. Later, he discovered from the Gold Plates itself that the Lord would provide three witnesses who would testify to the truth of the Book of Mormon. It is said:

And my brother, Jacob, also has seen him as I have seen him; wherefore, I will send their words forth unto my children to prove unto them that my words are true. Wherefore, by the words of three, God hath said, I will establish my word. Nevertheless, God sendeth more witnesses, and he proveth all his words.²⁸

And behold, ye may be privileged that ye may show the plates unto those who shall assist to bring forth this work;

And unto three shall they be shown by the power of God; wherefore they shall know of a surety that these things are true.

And in the mouth of three witnesses shall these things be established; and the testimony of three, and this work, in the which shall be shown forth the power of God and also his word, of which the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost bear record—and all this shall stand as a testimony against the world at the last day.²⁹

After discovering the above-mentioned verses, Joseph Smith prayed and received a revelation saying that three men would be permitted to see the Plates. A few days later, Joseph Smith and three men, Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, and Martin Harris, went into the woods and began to pray. Joseph Smith recorded:

We...had not been many minutes engaged in prayer, when presently we beheld a light above us in the air, of exceeding brightness; and behold, an angel stood before us. In his hands he held the plates which we had been praying for these to have a

view of. He turned over the leaves one by one, so that we could see them, and discern the engravings thereon distinctly.³⁰

After seeing the Plates, the three witnesses gave testimony:

And we declare with words of soberness, that an angel of God came down from heaven, and he brought and laid before our eyes, that we beheld and saw the plates, and the engravings thereon; and we know that it is by the grace of God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, that we beheld and bear record that these things are true.³¹

Joseph Smith later showed the Gold Plates to eight more witnesses and they testified:

And this we bear record with words of soberness, that the said Smith has shown unto us, for we have seen and hefted, and know of a surety that the said Smith has got the plates of which we have spoken. And we give our names unto the world, to witness unto the world that which we have seen. And we lie not, God bearing witness of it.

Christian Whitmer
Jacob Whitmer
Peter Whitmer, Jun.
John Whitmer
Hiram Page
Joseph Smith, Sen.
Hyrum Smith
Samuel H. Smith³²

The Latter-day Saints say by the testimony of ‘three and eight witnesses,’ the prophecies in the Book of Mormon were fulfilled.

Translation of the Book of Mormon in different languages

The Latter-day Saints believe the Book of Mormon is a source of guidance for all and a perfect book. Therefore, the Church

believes it is incumbent to translate the book into every language of the world. It is also prophesied that:

For it shall come to pass in that day, that every man shall hear the fulness of the gospel in his own tongue, and in his own language, through those who are ordained unto this power, by the administration of the Comforter, shed forth upon them for the revelation of Jesus Christ.³³ (*Doctrine and Covenants 90:11*)

Hence, the Church feels the urgency to fulfill this prophecy and has done great work on this task. According to *News from the Church*:

*Almost 175 years after Joseph Smith first published the book in English, 104 different language editions are now in print, including 74 full editions of the Book of Mormon and 30 editions of Selections from the Book of Mormon.*³⁴

The Book of Mormon, a Key Stone

Joseph Smith said:

I told the brethren that the Book of Mormon was the most correct of any book on earth and the keystone of our religion, and a man would get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book.³⁵

On another occasion, he stated: *Take away the Book of Mormon and the revelations, and where is our religion? We have none.*³⁶

Latter-day Saints missionaries often explain this by giving an example of an arch made from wedge shaped pieces that lean against each other. Keystones in wedges are usually bigger and stronger than others are and hold the most important position. Such is the place of the Book of Mormon among all scriptures.

Doctrine and Covenants

Another scripture, which holds great importance to the Church's beliefs and is believed to be the word of God, is Doctrine and Covenants. It is the compilation of the revelations of Joseph Smith and his successors. It is not a translation of ancient documents, but is modern revelation given to Joseph Smith. Joseph Smith said that the Doctrine and Covenant is: *The foundation of the Church in these last days, and a benefit to the world, showing that the keys of the mysteries of the kingdom of our Savior are again entrusted to man.*³⁷ (*Doctrine and Covenants, Section Heading: 70*)

Indeed these scriptures are of great importance: *Take away the Book of Mormon and the revelations, and where is our religion? We have none.*³⁸

The Doctrine and Covenants were first published under the title of The Book of Commandment in 1833. Due to severe opposition, a mob destroyed all copies of the book along with the printing press. Later, in 1835, a successful attempt was made to print; this time with more revelations and a new title: Doctrine and Covenants. In the first section of Doctrine and Covenants, the reader is asked to:

Search these commandments, for they are true and faithful, and the prophecies and promises which are in them shall all be fulfilled. What I the Lord have spoken, I have spoken, and I excuse not myself; and though the heavens and the earth pass away, my word shall not pass away, but shall all be fulfilled, whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same.³⁹ (*Doctrine and Covenants 1:37-38*)

The Doctrine and Covenants has 138 sections and 2 official declarations of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

The Pearl of Great Price

The Pearl of Great Price consists of the following:

- The Book of Moses
- The Book of Abraham
- Joseph Smith-Matthew
- Joseph Smith-History
- The Articles of Faith

The Book of Moses

It is said that the book of Moses is the *inspired* translation which Joseph Smith began (in June 1830) after completing the translation of the Book of Mormon. The Latter-day Saints believe that it is a more complete record of Moses' writing at the beginning of the book of Genesis. It is also believed that it contains many doctrines and teachings that were lost from the Bible. It gives additional information about the creation of the earth, the Lord's dealing with Adam and Enoch and the plan of salvation.

The Book of Abraham

The book of Abraham is a translation of some ancient documents that were purchased in 1835 by the Church, along with some mummies. Those documents happened to be an account of the Prophet Abraham. The Latter-day Saints believe that Joseph Smith translated these ancient documents by revelation. This book discusses the pre-mortal council in Heaven, the creation of the earth, the nature of God and the Priesthood.

Joseph Smith-Matthew

Joseph Smith-Matthew speaks about the second coming of Jesus Christ.

Joseph Smith-History

This is the official history of Joseph Smith, by him in 1838 and first published on March 15, 1842.

The Articles of Faith

Contains beliefs and doctrines written by Joseph Smith. *The Articles of Faith of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints* was published on March 1, 1842.

CHAPTER 3
THE LATTER-DAY SAINTS BELIEFS

“The Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man’s; the Son also; but the Holy Ghost has not a body of flesh and bones, but is a personage of spirit. Were it not so, the Holy Ghost could not dwell in us.”

God

The Latter-day Saints believe in God and that He is perfect and has many attributes. He is the God of truth, knowledge, mercy, grace and goodness. He is slow in anger and abundant in goodness. He is Omnipresent, Omnipotent and Omniscient.

First Article of Faith: *We believe in God, the Father, and in His Son, Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost.*⁴⁰ Mormons believe that God consists of three personages:

- God as the Father
- God as Jesus Christ
- God as the Holy Ghost

These three personages make up the “Godhead”, one Supreme Being. God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost are three gods, corporally separate yet one in purpose and attributes. This phenomenon is present in almost all LDS literature. To explain this further, an eminent Mormon writer, Bruce R. McConkie, comments in his encyclopaedic book, *Mormon Doctrine: There are three Gods — the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost — who, though separate in personality, are united as one in purpose, in plan, and in all the attributes of perfection.*⁴¹

The Doctrine of the Trinity and the LDS Church

After reading the above quotation, a question may arise in the reader's mind: how is this concept different than that of the Trinity? The Latter-day Saints do not believe in the Trinity. On the contrary, the LDS Church regards this as a pagan belief. As mentioned above, The Latter-day Saints believe that these three gods are different in body and spirit yet one in purpose. On the other hand, the Trinity connotes three gods in one and one in three, meaning that they are inseparable in any form whatsoever. Here is what Joseph Smith said about the Trinity:

Many men say there is one God; the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost are only one God. I say that is a strange God anyhow—three in one, and one in three! It is a curious organization... All are to be crammed into one God, according to sectarianism. It would make the biggest God in all the world. He would be a wonderfully big God—he would be a giant or a monster.⁴²

Therefore, the LDS Church abhors the concept of the Trinity presented by orthodox Christianity. Rather, the Latter-day Saints Church explains the three distinct, different and united personages with the following verses:

Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.⁴³ (*Mathew 3:13-17*)

The Latter-day Saints say these verses draw attention towards three personages different in their bodies but unified in purpose

and attributes. The aforementioned verses illustrate that the first god (i.e. the Father's voice) was heard from heaven; the second god, the son, was baptised in the water; and the third god, the Holy Ghost, descended like a dove. This evidences the Church of latter-day Saints' belief that at the baptism of Jesus Christ, all three personages manifested individually and concurrently.

The Nature of God

One might also wonder about the nature of the three united yet independent gods. The LDS scriptures state:

The Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man's; the Son also; but the Holy Ghost has not a body of flesh and bones, but is a personage of spirit. Were it not so, the Holy Ghost could not dwell in us.⁴⁴ (*Doctrine and Covenants 133:22*)

Simply put, the nature of God would be as follows:

- God, The Father, has a body of flesh and bones
- God, the Son, has a body of flesh and bones.
- God, the Holy Ghost, has a spirit only.

Mainstream Christians believe that God is an incorporeal spirit not having flesh or bones. To support their point of view, they present the following verse:

But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.⁴⁵ (*John 4:23-24*)

In this regard, the Latter-day Saints present the *Inspired Translation* of these verses rendered by Joseph Smith:

The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship him. For unto such hath God promised his

Spirit. And they who worship him, must worship in spirit and in truth.⁴⁶

Hence, we are reminded of one of the articles of faith: *We believe the Bible to be the word of God as far as it is translated correctly; we also believe the Book of Mormon to be the word of God.*⁴⁷

Since the Godhead consists of three different entities, different tasks are attributed to each. Joseph Smith taught that an:

Everlasting covenant was made between three personages before the organization of this earth, and relates to their dispensation of things to men on the earth; these personages, according to Abraham's record, are called God the first, the Creator; God the second, the Redeemer; and God the third, the witness or Testator.⁴⁸

The work of the Godhead is individually divided. Sometimes, the first God is the Creator and sometimes He sends prophets or messengers. Then, Jesus – the second god – is the Redeemer and sometimes the Comforter in other instances. The Holy Ghost - the third God – is the Witness or Testator at times and sometimes He purifies the chosen ones.

The Plan of Salvation

The plan of salvation, redemption or exaltation is an important and significant belief taught by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. It would not be wrong to say that the plan of salvation is the essence of its teachings. In fact, the purpose of creating the Earth and mortal bodies was to receive salvation. The Latter-day Saints Church has been teaching and preaching this doctrine to the Christian or “Sectarian World” (term used in the Latter-day Saints scriptures extensively, generally referring to Christian sects) with great success as it continues to attract countless converts.

The Church believes the Plan of Salvation was ordained by God, the Father. Like Hinduism, the Latter-day Saints Church believes that all spirits existed before they were given mortal bodies in the presence of God. The plan was to give the pre-existing spirits a mortal body, send them to Earth and then give them *agency* (i.e. free will; free to choose between good and evil) so that they may be tested. In these trials and tribulations whoever follows the gospels of Jesus Christ and the ordinances and performances therein, shall achieve redemption, salvation and exaltation. Such individuals shall enter the *celestial kingdom*, the highest heaven where God the Father, resides.

There are five steps for the plan of salvation or “mortal probation”, which are as follows:

1. Faith in Jesus Christ
2. Repentance
3. Baptism
4. Gift of the Holy Ghost
5. Enduring to the end

The above-mentioned steps have been stated in the Articles of Faith:

We believe that the first principles and ordinances of the Gospel are: first, Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; second, Repentance; third, Baptism by immersion for the remission of sins; fourth, Laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost.⁴⁹

A Mormon must dutifully follow these steps all of his/her life in order to access the Celestial Kingdom (i.e. the presence of God). Glad tidings are given to those who follow these steps; as for those who do not follow these steps and ordinances, it is written:

And he commandeth all men that they must repent, and be baptized in his name, having perfect faith in the Holy One of Israel, or they cannot be saved in the kingdom of God. And if they will not repent and believe in his name, and be baptized in

his name, and endure to the end, they must be damned; for the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel, has spoken it.⁵⁰

It is the prime responsibility of a Mormon and whoever enters the fold of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to fulfill this obligation to the utmost so that they may dwell in the presence of their heavenly Father.

Now, let us look at the five steps in detail, as they are prerequisites to entering the Celestial Kingdom.

1. Faith in Jesus Christ

Faith in Jesus Christ demands that a Mormon believe in Jesus as the literal Son of God and the firstborn. More importantly, The Latter-day Saints have to believe in Jesus' atonement for mankind. It is the most important step from among the steps of the Plan of Salvation. In reality, faith in Jesus means to believe in the doctrine of atonement; the importance of this doctrine cannot be overstated. According to the Latter-day Saints, the doctrine of atonement supports and gives life to all other gospel doctrines; it is the foundational principle of the Church - everything relies on it and all things emerge from it. Describing the doctrine of atonement, Joseph Smith said:

And this is the gospel, the glad tidings, which the voice out of the heavens bore record unto us— That he came into the world, even Jesus, to be crucified for the world, and to bear the sins of the world, and to sanctify the world, and to cleanse it from all unrighteousness; That through him all might be saved whom the Father had put into his power and made by him;⁵¹ (*Doctrine and Covenants 76:40-42*)

This doctrine means to believe in the crucified death of Jesus for the sins of the world and to purify the world.

The question arises: if God is Omnipotent and Merciful, why can He not forgive us and why are we in need of the atonement of

Jesus Christ? For this, let us seek help from the LDS scriptures and look at two important extracts from the Book of Mormon which are often quoted by the members of the LDS church:

For the natural man is an enemy to God, and has been from the fall of Adam, and will be, forever and ever, unless he yields to the enticings of the Holy spirit, and putteth off the natural man and becometh a saint through the atonement of Christ the Lord, and becometh as a child, submissive, meek, humble, patient, full of love, willing to submit to all things which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon him, even as a child doth submit to his father.⁵²

The second extract explains the reason behind the Atonement of Jesus Christ:

Wherefore, redemption cometh in and through the Holy Messiah; for he is full of grace and truth. Behold, he offereth himself a sacrifice for sin, to answer the ends of the law, unto all those who have a broken heart and a contrite spirit; and unto none else can the ends of the law be answered. Wherefore, how great the importance to make these things known unto the inhabitants of the earth, that they may know that there is no flesh that can dwell in the presence of God, save it be through the merits, and mercy, and grace of the Holy Messiah, who layeth down his life according to the flesh, and taketh it again by the power of the Spirit, that he may bring to pass the resurrection of the dead, being the first that should rise. Wherefore, he is the first fruits unto God, inasmuch as he shall make intercession for all the children of men; and they that believe in him shall be saved.⁵³

In light of the above-mentioned extracts from the Book of Mormon, the doctrine of atonement is based on the following two points:

- I. The Fall of Adam
- II. The son-ship of Jesus Christ

Adam was in the presence of God and in the Garden of Eden. There, God commanded Adam and Eve not to eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Satan caused Eve to transgress and break the commandment and caused them to eat from it. Because they transgressed, they were given mortal bodies and sent to Earth with other spirits. They were also granted *agency*, or free will, and life on Earth is a probationary period for the children of Adam. Furthermore, according to Latter-day Saints, to ransom, redeem and pay for the inequities and sins of Adam and his progeny, God sent his own “begotten Son”. Without Jesus Christ, the “literal Son of God”, the sins of the children of Adam could not be redeemed nor could they dwell in the presence of their Heavenly Father. In other words, the Atonement of Jesus Christ is as ransom for humanity’s collective sins.

The Latter-day Saints’ scripture states this concept comes from our pre-mortal existence when God convened with His heavenly council and presented the Plan of Salvation. It was predestined that Adam and Eve would sin and their sin would befall their progeny. Then God would send His own “begotten” and “literal son” for the ransom of their sins and inequities. Nonetheless, believing in the atonement of Jesus Christ is the key to the Plan of Salvation. In fact, its importance is demonstrated by the fact that one article of faith is devoted to it: *We believe that through the Atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved, by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel.*⁵⁴

Without atonement, there would be no salvation, no exaltation, no spiritual growth, no eternal life and no immortal bodies. Belief in the atonement of Jesus Christ makes this possible.

2. Repentance

Before discussing this subject, let us first define the word *repentance*. The Latter-day Saints Bible Dictionary defines repentance as:

The Greek word of which this is the translation denotes a change of mind, i.e., a fresh view about God, about oneself, and about the world. Since we are born into conditions of mortality, repentance comes to mean a turning of the heart and will to God, and a renunciation of sin to which we are naturally inclined. Without this there can be no progress in the things of the soul's salvation, for all accountable persons are stained by sin, and must be cleansed in order to enter the kingdom of heaven. Repentance is not optional for salvation; it is a commandment of God.⁵⁵

On repentance, the Encyclopedia of Mormonism states:

Repentance is the process by which humans set aside or overcome sins by changing hearts, attitudes, and actions that are out of harmony with God's teaching, thereby conforming their lives more completely to his will. In the words of one latter-day prophet, repentance is "to change one's mind in regard to past or intended actions or conduct. (McKay, p. 14).⁵⁶

The following passage will elaborate further:

In modern as in earlier times, the term "repentance" literally means a turning from sin and a reversing of one's attitudes and behaviour. Its purposes are to develop the divine nature within all mortal souls by freeing them from wrong or harmful thoughts and actions and to assist them in becoming more Christ like by replacing the "natural man" (1 Cor. 2:14) with the "new man" in Christ (Eph. 4:20-24)⁵⁷

The Church believes that since the fall of Adam, man needs repentance because he has fallen short, committing sins and performing unjust acts. The following verse is often quoted:

Wherefore teach it unto your children, that all men, everywhere, must repent, or they can in nowise inherit the kingdom of God, for no unclean thing can dwell there, or dwell in his presence; for, in the language of Adam, Man of Holiness is his name, and the name of his Only Begotten is the Son of Man,

even Jesus Christ, a righteous Judge, who shall come in the meridian of time.⁵⁸

The Latter-day Saints state that the doctrine of repentance was taught to Adam and he and his progeny were commanded to teach people this doctrine and its necessity. The above-mentioned verse also highlights the need, importance and rewards of repentance.

After repenting, one would naturally want it to be accepted, leading to forgiveness. Let us see how this is achieved through the steps below:

- Recognition of sins
- Feeling sorrow for sins
- Forsaking sins
- Confessing sins
- Making restitution for sins
- Forgiving others
- Keeping the commandments of God

Now, let us look at each of these stages in further detail.

Recognition of sins

As it can be understood from the title, everyone must recognize his or her sins, as it is the first step of repentance. It is very important for everyone to recognize his or her shortcomings, sins, and unjust and unrighteous acts, because if a person does not admit that he or she has done wrong, then how can he or she repent? Therefore, recognition of sins is the first step on the ladder of repentance.

Feeling sorrow for sins

Once a person has recognized their sins, they must be remorseful. They must feel that they have committed a dreadful, terrible act, which should not have been done in any

circumstance. The LDS scripture states: *I desire that ye should let these things trouble you no more, and only let your sins trouble you, with that trouble which shall bring you down unto repentance.*⁵⁹

In other words, this verse says that one must be troubled by the evil acts that he/she has committed and one should feel pity for his/her sins. Therefore, feeling sorrow for sins is the second step on the ladder of repentance.

Forsaking sins

The next step on this ladder is to forsake, relinquish and stop committing sins. For example, if someone has lied in the past then after recognizing and feeling sorrow, he or she shall not lie in the future. If someone has stolen in the past then after recognizing and feeling sorrow, he or she shall not steal in the future. The LDS scripture states that it is by this action one can know whether he or she has repented or not. It says: *By this ye may know if a man repenteth of his sins—behold, he will confess them and forsake them.*⁶⁰ (*Doctrine and Covenants 58:43*)

Confessing sins

The fourth step on the ladder of repentance is to confess the sins with a sincere heart. Confessing the sins in front of those against whom one had sinned. For instance, if a person makes an allegation against another or attributes false acts to that person, then the accuser must confess before the accused. As for the sins committed against God, a person must confess them before God and seek forgiveness. The Latter-day Saints scriptures mention that it is very important to confess sins so that one may be forgiven: *...I, the Lord, forgive sins, and am merciful unto those who confess their sins with humble hearts;*⁶¹ (*Doctrine and Covenants 61:2*)

Making restitution for sins

The fifth step of repentance is restitution for one's sins. For instance, if a person has stolen, then after recognition, feeling sorrow, forsaking and confessing, he or she must return the stolen goods to its owner. Another example is, if an individual defames another's character then he or she must make amends by apologizing and speaking good of the victim. This action would also prove that the repentant is sincere.

Forgiving Others

The LDS scripture says about forgiving others: *Wherefore, I say unto you, that ye ought to forgive one another; for he that forgiveth not his brother his trespasses standeth condemned before the Lord; for there remaineth in him the greater sin.*⁶² (*Doctrine and Covenants 64:9*)

The above reference stresses the importance of forgiving others. Thus, the fifth step on the ladder of repentance is that one must forgive others for their sins and harmful actions.

Keeping the Commandments of God

The last step for repentance is keeping the commandments of God in letter and spirit. The Latter-day Saints scripture gives glad tidings to the members of the Church: *Nevertheless, he that repents and does the commandments of the Lord shall be forgiven;*⁶³ (*Doctrine and Covenants 1:32*)

According to the LDS church, keeping the commandments means keeping the Gospels' principles and ordinances, keeping the commandments of "the restored gospels" and keeping the commandments of the LDS prophets. Furthermore, it also requires the LDS members to observe Sabbath, give tithes and obey the Word of Wisdom. After following the last step of the ladder of repentance, the members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are ready for baptism.

The Author's Experience

Before discussing baptism, let us pause for a moment. Even after reading and discussing the doctrine of atonement and the doctrine of repentance in some detail, questions remain. If everyone is accountable for their own sins and will be punished for them, (The Article of Faith: 2) then whose sins has Jesus Christ atoned for? (Doctrine and Covenants, 76:40-42) Furthermore, after repentance, how does the atonement of Jesus Christ help humankind? After investigating various resources, the author went to see the Bishop of the Brampton Stake, Bishop Solomon, and put the question before him.

Bishop Solomon answered by first quoting the following verse:

...I desire that ye should deny the justice of God no more. Do not endeavor to excuse yourself in the least point because of your sins, by denying the justice of God; but do you let the justice of God, and his mercy, and his long-suffering have full sway in your heart; and let it bring you down to the dust in humility.⁶⁴

God's attribute of being Just and Merciful go hand in hand. He further elaborated by giving an example saying that Tom lent Harry some money. The due date came but Harry continued delaying the owed debt. One day, Tom got upset and brought the police and had Harry arrested. Harry repeatedly asked for forgiveness and mercy but Tom refused. Harry knew a wealthy man, and asked him to show mercy and requested him to pay the debt on his behalf. The wealthy man showed mercy to Harry and gave the debt on his behalf – showing mercy and justice at the same time. This is how atonement and repentance work together, Bishop Solomon said. Mercy is the forgiveness of sins and justice is the atonement. God cannot simply show mercy and forgive everyone and does not do justice by not giving punishment for their inequities. So, God will forgive the sins of the people by

having his own “begotten son” atone for their sins. Hence, mercy and justice are both dealt with, at the same time.

3. Baptism

Faith in Jesus Christ and repentance are two principles of the Gospels that prepare the members of the Church for baptism, the first ordinance. Although, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints differs in some of the practises of baptism, it agrees with other Churches that everyone must be baptised to enter in the presence of God. Its scripture has numerous references from the New Testament regarding baptism. Let us look at two oft-quoted quotations:

Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.⁶⁵ (*Matthew 28:19-20*)

Secondly, Peter teaches that: *...Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.*⁶⁶ (*Acts 2:38*)

The above references clearly depict that baptism is necessary for repentance as well as for receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost. In reality, sins can only be forgiven after repentance and baptism. In fact, one cannot dwell in the presence of God without baptism.

Now, let us turn to the LDS scriptures and find out more about what baptism is, when this ordinance was commanded, to whom, how it is performed, who has the authority to perform it, why members should be baptised, its importance, who is eligible to be baptised and what laws must be followed after the baptism.

What is the definition of baptism?

The Latter-day Saints Bible dictionary defines baptism as:

From a Greek word meaning to dip or immerse. Baptism in water is the introductory ordinance of the gospel, and must be followed by baptism of the Spirit in order to be complete. As one of the ordinances of the gospel, it is associated with faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, repentance, and the laying on hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost... Baptism symbolizes death, burial, and resurrection, and can only be done by immersion.⁶⁷

According to the LDS scriptures, baptism gives a new life and beginning. It is also believed that once a person is baptized, it is like a rebirth. The latter-day Saints scripture also reminds them of Jesus' death, burial and resurrection. The Encyclopedia of Mormonism says: *...Burial in the water and arising out the water symbolize the candidate's faith in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, as well as the future resurrection of all people...*⁶⁸

When was this ordinance commanded and who was it commanded to?

According to the LDS scriptures, Adam started the practise of baptism and Jewish people used to baptize converts long before John the Baptist. The LDS scriptures mention that this is an everlasting covenant which was given to Adam as life began on this planet and will continue till the end of time:

And it came to pass, when the Lord had spoken with Adam, our father, that Adam cried unto the Lord, and he was caught away by the Spirit of the Lord, and was carried down into the water, and was laid under the water, and was brought forth out of the water. And thus he was baptized, and the Spirit of God descended upon him, and thus he was born of the Spirit, and became quickened in the inner man. And he heard a voice out of heaven, saying: Thou art baptized with fire, and with the Holy Ghost. This is the record of the Father, and the Son, from henceforth and forever;⁶⁹

Furthermore, the Book of Mormon (Mosiah chapter 18) speaks about baptism being practised in the Americas long before the

advent of Jesus Christ and mentions a Nephite prophet who baptised his people and taught them this ordinance. From this the LDS church concludes that this ordinance is an ancient ritual practiced by Adam and his descendants.

How is baptism performed and who can perform this ordinance?

Joseph Smith said that Jesus Christ revealed to him how to baptize:

The person who is called of God and has authority from Jesus Christ to baptize, shall go down into the water with the person who has presented himself or herself for baptism, and shall say, calling him or her by name: Having been commissioned of Jesus Christ, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen. Then shall he immerse him or her in the water, and come forth again out of the water.⁷⁰

As mentioned above this ordinance can only be performed by an authority called of God and Jesus Christ. The Church authorizes this individual. In other words, this ordinance can be performed by priests who have the Aaronic Priesthood - a lower class of priesthood. This refers to the priesthood given to Aaron in ancient times. Doctrine and Covenants states *“And the Lord confirmed priesthood also upon Aaron and his seed, throughout all their generations, which priesthood also continueth and abideth forever with the priesthood which is after the holiest order of God.”*⁷¹ (Doctrine and Covenants, 84:18)

Why is it necessary to be baptised?

The LDS members are required to believe in this ordinance because the fourth Article of Faith says *“We believe that...baptism by immersion for the remission of sins...”*⁷² Wherefore, all the members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints must be baptized . Moreover, all those who want to be a part of or a

member of the LDS church must receive baptism; Joseph Smith taught:

All those who humble themselves before God, and desire to be baptized, and come forth with broken hearts and contrite spirits, and witness before the church that they have truly repented of all their sins, and are willing to take upon them the name of Jesus Christ, having a determination to serve him to the end, and truly manifest by their works that they have received of the Spirit of Christ unto the remission of their sins, shall be received by baptism into his church.⁷³ (*Doctrine and Covenants 20:37*)

How much importance does it hold?

The ordinance of baptism holds extreme importance in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints as it is a prerequisite for the next step of the Plan of Salvation. In other words, one who is not baptised cannot dwell in the kingdom of God. Just as Jesus Christ told Nicodemus that: *...Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.*⁷⁴ (*John 3:5*)

The Book of Mormon also records: *And whoso believeth in me, and is baptized, the same shall be saved; and they are they who shall inherit the kingdom of God. And whoso believeth not in me, and is not baptized, shall be damned.*⁷⁵

Hence, baptism holds great importance in the LDS church and it is very important for the members to be baptized in order to inherit the kingdom of God and also to save themselves from being ruined. In short, it is necessary and important for three reasons:

- For the remission of sins
- To enter into the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
- To enter into the celestial kingdom.

Who is eligible to be baptised?

According to the Latter-day Saints Church, baptism can be performed once a person has reached the age of eight years. Kids and the mentally sick are not baptised in the LDS church because they do not have the ability to sin hence they will not be accountable. The Book of Mormon teaches that:

...Behold, I came into the world not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance; the whole need no physician, but they that are sick; wherefore, little children are whole, for they are not capable of committing sin; wherefore the curse of Adam is taken from them in me, that it hath no power over them;... And after this manner did the Holy Ghost manifest the word of God unto me; wherefore, my beloved son, I know that it is solemn mockery before God, that ye should baptize little children.⁷⁶

The Latter-day Saints differ with other churches in this aspect.

What laws must be followed after baptism?

Baptism brings more responsibilities for the baptised member of the LDS church. There are certain commandments that he or she must fulfill:

Yea, and are willing to mourn with those that mourn; yea, and comfort those that stand in need of comfort, and to stand as witnesses of God at all times and in all things, and in all places that ye may be in, even until death,... ye will serve him and keep his commandments,...⁷⁷

After receiving baptism, these commandments must be observed in letter and spirit until one's demise. only then is a member considered truly baptised.

4. The Gift of the Holy Ghost

The fourth step of the Plan of Salvation is the gift of the Holy Ghost.

What is the gift of the Holy Ghost?

The Encyclopedia of Mormonism states: *The gift of the Holy Ghost is the right or privilege of receiving divine manifestations, spiritual gifts, and direction from the Holy Ghost.*⁷⁸

That is, once a person has faith in Jesus Christ, repents and has been baptised, he or she may receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. The gift of the Holy Ghost is considered the right of a member, once he or she has followed the first three steps of the Plan of Salvation and is usually conferred upon him or her immediately after baptism. Once the gift of the Holy Ghost is conferred, the member of the LDS church becomes eligible to receive revelation, truth and guidance.

Why is it important to receive the gift of the Holy Ghost?

The Book of Mormon teaches:

For, said he, I have repented of my sins, and have been redeemed of the Lord; behold I am born of the Spirit. And the Lord said unto me: Marvel not that all mankind, yea, men and women, all nations, kindreds, tongues and people, must be born again; yea, born of God, changed from their carnal and fallen state, to a state of righteousness, being redeemed of God, becoming his sons and daughters; And thus they become new creatures; and unless they do this, they can in nowise inherit the kingdom of God.⁷⁹

Therefore, it is important to receive the gift of the Holy Ghost because it helps the members of the LDS church stay on the right path so the guidance of the Holy Ghost always remains with them. More importantly, the Mormons must be reborn with the gift of the Holy Ghost so they may dwell in the presence of God and ultimately enter the celestial kingdom.

How is the gift of the Holy Ghost conferred and who has the authority to confer it?

The New Testament teaches that:

Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost. And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost.⁸⁰ (*Acts 8:17-19*)

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day saints also follow this as it is a teaching of the New Testament. However, this authority can only be granted by the Church and this type of priesthood is known as the Melchizedek priesthood. It is the highest priesthood. Once a person has received the gift of the Holy Ghost then he may also grant or confer the gift of the Holy Ghost on another member of the Church.

5. Enduring to the End

This is the final step for the Plan of Salvation. It means that the members of the LDS Church who have successfully passed through the first four stages must obey and follow the laws and ordinances of the Gospels. This step requires the LDS members to tread on the straight path until death and leads them into the presence of God, or the celestial kingdom. The LDS scriptures encourage all members to endure to the end in the following words: *And, if you keep my commandments and endure to the end you shall have eternal life, which gift is the greatest of all the gifts of God.*⁸¹ (*Doctrine and Covenants 14:7*)

This is the plan of salvation and whoever adheres to its conditions will dwell in the presence of God.

Tithing

The law of tithing is prescribed by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and its roots are ancient roots. Ancient Biblical prophets were commanded by God to give tithes; that is, they and their followers were ordained to spend ten percent of their earnings. Abraham and his son, Jacob, also practised this sacred law and it is said in the Book of Genesis: *And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee.*⁸² (Genesis 28:20)

The law of tithing was restored in the LDS church when Joseph Smith received a revelation from God:

And this shall be the beginning of the tithing of my people. And after that, those who have thus been tithed shall pay one-tenth of all their interest annually; and this shall be a standing law unto them forever, for my holy priesthood, saith the Lord.⁸³ (*Doctrine and Covenants* 119:3-4)

Thus, it is incumbent upon every Latter-day Saint to pay tithes. Although this law was restored in July 1838, it was not followed on a regular basis by all the members. Later, in 1881, the Latter-day Saints Prophet Wilford Woodruff made this law a requirement for those who wish to receive ordinances in the Temples. He also forbade all Bishops and Presidents of the Stakes from making recommendations for those who fail to follow this law.

Furthermore, it was revealed to Joseph Smith that:

Verily I say unto you, it shall come to pass that all those who gather unto the land of Zion shall be tithed of their surplus properties, and shall observe this law, or they shall not be found worthy to abide among you.⁸⁴ (*Doctrine and Covenants* 119:5)

Hence, the Latter-day Saints must pay tithes in order to dwell in the city of Zion. In addition, tithing is also a requirement for the

celestial kingdom. All those who want to dwell in the celestial kingdom must pay it willingly and with honesty. In this regard, all Latter-day Saints are encouraged to meet their Bishops for tithing settlements; that is, at the end of each year, they meet confidentially to discuss whether they have been regular and honest in tithing payments throughout the whole year.

According to the LDS scripture, it is important to give tithing because it saves people from hellfire and those who do not follow the law of tithing will burn in the fire at the second advent of Jesus Christ. Doctrine and Covenants states:

Behold, now it is called today until the coming of the Son of Man, and verily it is a day of sacrifice, and a day for the tithing of my people; for he that is tithed shall not be burned at his coming.⁸⁵ (*Doctrine and Covenants 64:23*)

Tithing is collected by the Bishop of the stake and he sends it to the headquarters. The Latter-day Saint members do not have the right to suggest where their tithing should be spent or what should be done with them. The LDS church has full rights and authorizations to spend the money or tithing wherever the church feels it is necessary. Once the tithing is received at the headquarters, the first presidency and the quorum for the twelve convene and decide where the money should be spent.

The tithing is spent to feed the poor and hungry; to spread the gospels to all nations; to give provision to those in service of the church; to build temples, chapels, meeting houses, schools; to run missionary programs; to print and distribute literature and to provide funds to the stakes and wards. The LDS scripture says that the money should be spent: "*For the building of mine house, and for the laying of the foundation of Zion and for the priesthood, and for the debts of the Presidency of my Church.*"⁸⁶ (*Doctrine and Covenants, 119:2*)

Word of Wisdom

The Word of Wisdom is often referred to as the Latter-day Saints dietary law, which was revealed to Joseph Smith on 27th February 1833. The name reflects the revelation concerning the dietary law, starting with “a word of wisdom”. In the LDS, scriptures, the Word of Wisdom always refers to the LDS dietary law. The entire *Word of Wisdom* is mentioned in section 89 of Doctrine and Covenants.

The *word of wisdom* defines what is lawful and unlawful to eat or drink for a Latter-day Saint. Doctrine and Covenants states that the unlawful things are:

That inasmuch as any man drinketh wine or strong drink among you, behold it is not good, neither meet in the sight of your Father, only in assembling yourselves together to offer up your sacraments before him. And, behold, this should be wine, yea, pure wine of the grape of the vine, of your own make. And, again, strong drinks are not for the belly, but for the washing of your bodies. And again, tobacco is not for the body, neither for the belly, and is not good for man, but is an herb for bruises and all sick cattle, to be used with judgment and skill. And again, hot drinks are not for the body or belly.⁸⁷ (*Doctrine and Covenants 89:5-9*)

From the above reference, three categories can be made which are unlawful to consume in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints:

- Tobacco
- Strong Drinks
- Hot Drinks

Strong Drinks refer to all alcoholic beverages while Hot Drinks refer to coffee and tea. Although, there is no official verdict from the consumption of cold caffeinated drinks such as cola, Latter-day Saints are encouraged not to consume them.

Furthermore, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints forbids the usage of things which could be harmful, pernicious and noxious to health such as cocaine, marijuana and the over-usage of prescribed drugs.

Regarding lawful things, Doctrine and Covenants states:

And again, verily I say unto you, all wholesome herbs God hath ordained for the constitution, nature, and use of man—every herb in the season thereof, and every fruit in the season thereof; all these to be used with prudence and thanksgiving. Yea, flesh also of beasts and of the fowls of the air, I, the Lord, have ordained for the use of man with thanksgiving; nevertheless they are to be used sparingly;⁸⁸ (*Doctrine and Covenants 89:10-12*)

It further states that: *All grain is ordained for the use of man and of beasts, to be the staff of life, not only for man but for the beasts of the field, and the fowls of heaven, and all wild animals that run or creep on the earth;*⁸⁹ (*Doctrine and Covenants 89:14*)

All the above-mentioned things are lawful; however, the LDS scriptures also teach that consumption of these things should be limited in times of hunger and famine.

Although, it was required from all Latter-day Saints to follow the *Word of Wisdom*, early history shows it was not followed very diligently after it was revealed to Joseph Smith. This carelessness continued until 1930 when it was made a requirement for Temple recommendations.

Relating to this, Joseph Smith was asked: *Whether disobedience to the word of wisdom was a transgression sufficient to deprive an official member from holding office in the Church, after having it sufficiently taught him?*⁹⁰

Joseph Smith replied: *No official member in this Church is worthy to hold an office after having the word of wisdom properly taught him; and he, the official member, neglecting to comply with and obey it.*⁹¹

Therefore, since 1930 it has been one of the requirements for Temple recommendations and Church office holders.

The LDS church encourages its members to obey the commandments of the Word of Wisdom and explains its temporal and spiritual benefits. Doctrine and Covenants states the temporal and spiritual benefits, through the following:

And all saints who remember to keep and do these sayings, walking in obedience to the commandments, shall receive health in their navel and marrow to their bones; and shall find wisdom and great treasures of knowledge, even hidden treasures; and shall run and not be weary, and shall walk and not faint. And I, the Lord, give unto them a promise, that the destroying angel shall pass by them, as the children of Israel, and not slay them. Amen.⁹² (*Doctrine and Covenants 89:18-21*)

The temporal benefits refer to better health and a better way of living while the spiritual benefits refer to safety from the destruction of the destroying angel – in other words, to be in the presence of God. Therefore, all members must follow the Word of Wisdom to get these benefits and inherit the celestial kingdom.

The Second Coming of Jesus Christ

Just like other sects of Christianity, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints also believes in the second coming of Jesus Christ. Latter-day Saints often quote a passage from the New Testament, which records the prophecy of Jesus' second advent. It is said that while Jesus' disciples watched him ascend to the heavens, two angels appeared to them and prophesied that: *...Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.*⁹³ (*Acts 1:11*)

The above-mentioned passage also highlights the fact that the same Jesus Christ will return in the latter days and his second coming is known as *the great and dreadful day of the Lord*. The LDS scripture states that predicted signs must be fulfilled before his second advent. It is said that when Jesus Christ will manifest himself on the earth there will be peace everywhere for one thousand years. This period is known as *The Millennium*.

Now, let us look at this in further detail to see what the signs of the second coming of Jesus Christ are. Many signs must be fulfilled before the second advent and the LDS scripture states: *For the hour is nigh, and that which was spoken by mine apostles must be fulfilled; for as they spoke so shall it come to pass;*⁹⁴ (*Doctrine and Covenants 29:10*)

Bruce R. McConkie (an eminent Mormon writer) writes about fifteen signs precluding the advent of Jesus Christ in his encyclopaedic book, *Mormon Doctrine*. Some prominent signs are mentioned here.

Signs of the Second Coming

An Era of Apostasy

Prior to the second advent of Jesus Christ, apostasy will encompass the earth. People will go astray and be devoid of righteousness. The LDS scripture often quotes Paul's statement that apostasy will precede the second coming of Jesus Christ: *Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;*⁹⁵ (*2 Thessalonians 2:3*)

It is also said that during the apostasy, there will be false prophets and false Christs leading people astray. Chapter 24 of Mathew in the New Testament talks about many signs of the second coming of Jesus Christ. One of the signs is the coming of false prophets and Christs: *For there shall arise false Christs, and false*

*prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.*⁹⁶ (Matthew 24:24)

Hence, a sign of the second coming is that people will be led astray by false prophets who will perform miracles and prophesy.

Dreadful Days

Another sign of his second coming is that there will be horrible and frightful days including famines, wars, calamities, and earthquakes. Ancient prophets have predicted that troubled times will precede his second coming. Jesus himself predicted: *For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in diverse places. All these are the beginning of sorrows.*⁹⁷ (Matthew 24:7)

Bruce R. McConkie has summarized in his book *Mormon Doctrine* these calamities which were predicted by the ancient prophets in the Holy Bible:

Preceding our Lord's return, the prophetic word tells of plagues, pestilence, famine, and disease such as the world has never before seen; of scourges, tribulation, calamities, disasters without parallel; of strife, wars, rumours of wars, blood, carnage, and desolation which overshadow anything of past ages; of the elements being in commotion with resultant floods, storm, fires, whirlwinds, earthquakes—all of a proportion and intensity unknown to men of former days; of evil, iniquity, wickedness, turmoil, rapine, murder, crime, and commotion among men almost beyond comprehension.⁹⁸

The Restoration of the Gospels

In the midst of all this, an era of restoration will start and according to the LDS scripture, God will choose people to carry out this task. During this time, not only will people be prepared for the second coming of Jesus Christ but the Gospels will also be restored. As John saw in his vision: *And I saw another angel fly in*

*the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people,*⁹⁹ (*Revelation 14:6*)

Therefore, the Gospels must be restored and preached to all nations of the world prior to the second coming of Jesus Christ.

The Coming Forth of the Book of Mormon

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints believes that the coming forth of the Book of Mormon is one of the signs of the second coming of Jesus Christ. The LDS church states that this was prophesized by the ancient Biblical prophets, namely Isaiah and Ezekiel:

And thou shalt be brought down, and shalt speak out of the ground, and thy speech shall be low out of the dust, and thy voice shall be, as of one that hath a familiar spirit, out of the ground, and thy speech shall whisper out of the dust.¹⁰⁰ (*Isaiah 29:4*)

According to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, this refers to the coming forth of the Book of Mormon as the angel Moroni gave the Book of Mormon out from the ground to Joseph Smith. Similarly, Prophet Ezekiel had also prophesized:

The word of the LORD came again unto me, saying, Moreover, thou son of man, take thee one stick, and write upon it, For Judah, and for the children of Israel his companions: then take another stick, and write upon it, For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim and for all the house of Israel his companions: And join them one to another into one stick; and they shall become one in thine hand.¹⁰¹ (*Ezekiel 37:15-17*)

Say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel his fellows, and will put them with him, even with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they shall be one in mine hand.¹⁰² (*Ezekiel 37:19*)

According to the LDS church, the above-mentioned verses are also a prophecy of the coming forth of the Book of Mormon. The Latter-day Saints Church explains that the *stick of Judah* means the Bible and the *stick of Ephraim* means the Book of Mormon. The LDS church further explains that the genealogy found in the Book of Mormon traces them back to the descendants of Ephraim, joining the Bible and the Book of Mormon together, becoming one book, which contains God's dealings with the twelve tribes of Israel. Hence, the above-mentioned reference also proves the coming forth of the Book of Mormon. This is also a sign of the second advent.

The Gospel preached to all nations

Another sign of his coming is that the gospel will be preached to all nations. It was prophesized in the New Testament: *And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.*¹⁰³ (Matthew 24:24)

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has been very active in preaching the gospels to all nations in their respective languages. It was revealed to Joseph Smith:

For it shall come to pass in that day, that every man shall hear the fullness of the gospel in his own tongue, and in his own language, through those who are ordained unto this power, by the administration of the Comforter, shed forth upon them for the revelation of Jesus Christ.¹⁰⁴ (*Doctrine and Covenants 90:11*)

The Latter-day Saints Church has done a great deal of work in achieving this task. LDS missionaries have been preaching the gospel vigorously and enthusiastically in different countries of the world and the LDS church has translated the Book of Mormon in seventy-four languages. The Church has been working hard to fulfill this sign before the second coming of Jesus Christ.

Building of the New Jerusalem

The Book of Mormon also teaches another sign which must come to pass prior to the second coming of Jesus Christ: The building of the New Jerusalem. The Scripture states:

And they shall assist my people, the remnant of Jacob, and also as many of the house of Israel as shall come, that they may build a city, which shall be called the New Jerusalem. And then shall they assist my people that they may be gathered in, who are scattered upon all the face of the land, in unto the New Jerusalem. And then shall the power of heaven come down among them; and I also will be in the midst.¹⁰⁵

The LDS church believes that the New Jerusalem will be built in America because God revealed to Joseph Smith:

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. Verily this is the word of the Lord, that the city of 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.¹⁰⁶
(Doctrine and Covenants, 84:3-4)

Therefore, it was for this purpose that Joseph Smith struggled throughout his life to build the New Jerusalem in Jackson County, Missouri and ordered his followers to gather in there, but was unsuccessful in building the city because they faced severe opposition and persecution. The city was never built so he made the headquarters of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Nauvoo, Illinois. Then, after his murder, Brigham Young led the Latter-day Saints to Salt Lake City, Utah, and since then it remains the Church's headquarters. However, the LDS church

continues to believe that the New Jerusalem will be built in the future in Jackson County, Missouri, and all the Latter-day Saints will gather there.

Armageddon

Another sign of the second coming of Jesus Christ is Armageddon. It will be the greatest war ever fought and will be good against evil - all nations will gather in Megiddo and shall fight. There are many prophecies in the Holy Bible that warn against the greatest war, including:

For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty... And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.¹⁰⁷ (*Revelation 16:14, 16*)

The Second Coming

When all the above-mentioned events will occur, Jesus Christ will appear on the Mount of Olives and shall fight the battle and shall take his revenge. It was revealed to Joseph Smith that at his second coming, Jesus will say:

And I have trampled them in my fury, and I did tread upon them in mine anger, and their blood have I sprinkled upon my garments, and stained all my raiment; for this was the day of vengeance which was in my heart.¹⁰⁸ (*Doctrine and Covenants 133:51*)

Therefore, Jesus will come back and participate in the battle and will take his revenge and kill all evil souls. This second coming is also known as *the great and dreadful day of the Lord*.

After gaining an understanding of the second coming, one question that may arise in the reader's mind is, what will Jesus

Christ do in his Second Advent? Latter-day Saints answer this question with the following tasks:

- **Cleanse the Earth:** By destroying all the wicked, evil and corrupt things with fire.
- **Judge the people:** He will judge all the nations and divide the righteous from the evil.
- **Lead in the Millennium:** The Millennium is the thousand years when Jesus will rule on the earth. It will begin with his second coming and these years will be of peace, harmony, love and joy.
- **Complete the Resurrection:** People will resurrect in his second coming and will meet Jesus and inherit the celestial kingdom, thus completing their resurrection.
- **Take his place as King of heaven and earth:** He will rule the earth and will be greeted as *Lord of Lords and King of Kings* and he will be called *Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God and the Prince of Peace* as prophesized.

Thus, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is waiting for the second coming of Jesus as it holds great importance in their faith to receive salvation, exaltation and celestial glory.

Life after Death

According to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, spirits pre-existed. Then God sent them to earth with mortal bodies. The mortal body lives its life on earth and at death, the spirit leaves the body. Now let us delve into where the spirit goes, what happens to it and when it leaves the mortal body.

The Spirit World

After death, the spirit leaves the body and goes to a different world. The Latter-day Saints refer to this new world as the spirit world. In the spirit world, all spirits, whether they are righteous

or evil, wait until resurrection. At the time of resurrection, the same bodies will be granted to these spirits so that they may receive the degree of glory they have prepared for. The Book of Mormon explains what happens to the spirit once it leaves the mortal body in the following words:

... the spirits of all men, as soon as they are departed from this mortal body, yea, the spirits of all men, whether they be good or evil, are taken home to that God who gave them life. And then shall it come to pass, that the spirits of those who are righteous are received into a state of happiness, which is called paradise, a state of rest, a state of peace, where they shall rest from all their troubles and from all care, and sorrow. And then shall it come to pass, that the spirits of the wicked, yea, who are evil—for behold, they have no part nor portion of the Spirit of the Lord; for behold, they chose evil works rather than good; therefore the spirit of the devil did enter into them, and take possession of their house—and these shall be cast out into outer darkness; there shall be weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth, and this because of their own iniquity, being led captive by the will of the devil. Now this is the state of the souls of the wicked, yea, in darkness, and a state of awful, fearful looking for the fiery indignation of the wrath of God upon them; thus they remain in this state, as well as the righteous in paradise, until the time of their resurrection.¹⁰⁹

Therefore, immediately after death, spirits are judged and sent to another world. From the above reference, it is evident that this spirit world is further divided into two distinct spheres which are:

- Paradise
- Hell

Depending upon the nature of the spirit, it will be judged whether to dwell in Paradise or Hell.

Paradise

Paradise is also known as heaven. However, there is another term often used in the LDS scriptures - *spirit prison*. Although the term spirit prison is often referred to as hell, it is also used in its broader meanings for paradise. Joseph Smith taught: “...*Paradise, spirits in prison, are all one: it is a world of spirits. The righteous and the wicked all go to the same world of spirits until the resurrection.*”¹¹⁰ Therefore, not only will heaven and hell be in the same place, their inmates will intermingle. Furthermore, the LDS scripture teaches that the righteous spirits will be working and preaching the Gospels. According to a vision of Joseph Fielding Smith, a Latter-day Saints prophet, Jesus Christ went to the spirit world and:

...From among the righteous, he organized his forces and appointed messengers, clothed with power and authority, and commissioned them to go forth and carry the light of the gospel to them that were in darkness, even to all the spirits of men; and thus was the gospel preached to the dead.¹¹¹ (*Doctrine and Covenants 138:30*)

All the righteous spirits will preach the Gospels, especially those who were apostles, presidents, bishops and elders. They will also teach evil spirits to repent and believe in Jesus Christ. Joseph Smith once referred to this as: “...*The spirits of the just are exalted to a greater and more glorious work; hence they are blessed in their departure to the world of spirits.*”¹¹² Therefore, the righteous spirits will continue to carry out this *greater and more glorious work* of preaching until they are resurrected and reunited with their bodies.

Thus, paradise is an abode where the righteous spirits will abide until resurrection. These spirits will remain there in a state of peace, happiness and joy.

Hell

The second sphere of the spirit world is Hell. This is also known as spirit prison and the *outer darkness*. This will be the abode and waiting sphere for all the wicked and evil spirits in which they will remain until their resurrection. These evil spirits will suffer from the punishment and torment of hell. For those who have never heard of the gospel, they will be preached to, given agency (free choice) and asked to repent. If they repent and believe in the gospel and Jesus Christ, they will be allowed to enter paradise. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints believes there will be an end to hell. To prove this, the LDS church presents a verse from the New Testament: *And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.*¹¹³ (*Revelation 20:13*)

Therefore, there will come a time when every spirit will be resurrected and united with its body and at that particular time, the spirit world will be uninhabited. After this, the spirits will be ready for the last judgement to receive degrees of glory.

The Last Judgement

After passing through the waiting period in the spirit world, the spirits will be resurrected and reunited with their physical bodies and will be judged. The LDS church believes that this judgement will be conducted by Jesus Christ and those appointed by him. The gospel of John teaches that: *“For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son.”*¹¹⁴ Peter also teaches that Jesus was *“ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead.”*¹¹⁵ The Gospels teach that the twelve apostles who were with him during his ministry will help him. Jesus Christ prophesized that:

Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his

glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.¹¹⁶ (*Matthew 19:28*)

Furthermore, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints also believes that the first presidency and the twelve apostles of their church will also assist Jesus Christ in the last judgement.

The judgement will be issued with the help of a book, known as the book of life. It will contain the record of the actions of an individual during his or her mortal life. All men will be judged according to their deeds. The Latter-day Saints prophet, Joseph Smith taught that: *For they shall be judged according to their works, and every man shall receive according to his own works, his own dominion, in the mansions which are prepared.*¹¹⁷ (*Doctrine and Covenants 76:111*)

This is the reason why the Latter-day Saints Church puts a lot of emphasis on living according to the gospel principles and it continues to exhort and encourage its members to live righteous lives.

Kingdom of Glories

After the last judgement, everyone will be assigned to one of four destinations, which are:

- The Celestial Kingdom
- The Terrestrial Kingdom
- The Telestial Kingdom
- Outer Darkness

This doctrine was first taught by Paul and now it has further developed in the teaching of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; it is preached all over the world. Paul teaches in First Corinthians that:

There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is

another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory.¹¹⁸ (*1 Corinthians 15:40-41*)

Joseph Smith further developed the idea and made it into one of most important beliefs of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Now, let us learn what he taught about these kingdoms, outer darkness, who will go where and what will happen in each sphere.

Celestial Kingdom

According to the LDS scripture, this is the highest kingdom of glory where God dwells. It is often referred to as the glory of the sun. Therefore, whoever dwells here will witness the glory of God. Joseph Smith claimed that he was shown the celestial kingdom in a profound vision. He describes his vision in the following words:

The heavens were opened upon us, and I beheld the celestial kingdom of God, and the glory thereof, whether in the body or out I cannot tell. I saw the transcendent beauty of the gate through which the heirs of that kingdom will enter, which was like unto circling flames of fire; also the blazing throne of God, whereon was seated the Father and the Son. I saw the beautiful streets of that kingdom, which had the appearance of being paved with gold.¹¹⁹

Joseph Smith also taught that the celestial kingdom is further divided into three degrees. The highest degree can only be achieved by members of the LDS church who follow the celestial law, the law of the gospels and the plan of salvation. The celestial marriage is the new and everlasting ordinance, which is key to the inheritance of the kingdom of God. The celestial marriages must be performed in a Latter-day Saints temple. The members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints can only dwell in the celestial kingdom provided they have followed the celestial law in their mortal lives. They will be granted celestial bodies and will be

united with their families and dwell in the celestial kingdom forever.

Terrestrial Kingdom

The second glory is known as the terrestrial kingdom and dwellers of this kingdom will not be able to see the glory of God, but will be able to witness the glory of Jesus Christ. This glory is often referred to as the glory of the moon. Doctrine and Covenants teaches that dwellers of this kingdom will be those who:

...are the spirits of men kept in prison, whom the Son visited, and preached the gospel unto them, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh; who received not the testimony of Jesus in the flesh, but afterwards received it. These are they who are honourable men of the earth, who were blinded by the craftiness of men. These are they who receive of his glory, but not of his fullness. These are they who receive of the presence of the Son, but not of the fullness of the Father. Wherefore, they are bodies terrestrial, and not bodies celestial, and differ in glory as the moon differs from the sun. These are they who are not valiant in the testimony of Jesus; wherefore, they obtain not the crown over the kingdom of our God.¹²⁰ (*Doctrine and Covenants 76:73-79*)

To summarize, four categories of people who followed the terrestrial law will go into this kingdom:

- Those who die without a law and do not accept the gospel in the spirit world.
- Those who do not accept the Gospel in their mortal lives but accept it in the spirit world.
- Those who were honourable in their mortal lives but could not accept the gospel because they were blinded by the *craftiness of men*.
- Those who were members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints but were not righteous.

The above-mentioned people will dwell in this kingdom and will be granted terrestrial bodies which will be different than the celestial bodies.

Telestial Kingdom

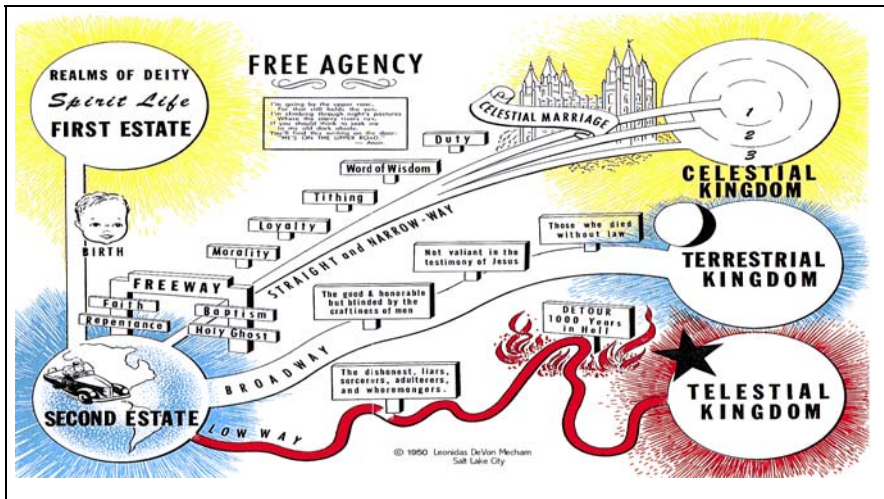
This is the third and lowest kingdom; often referred to as the glory of the stars. The Latter-days Saints scripture teaches that this kingdom will be filled with uncountable people who:

...received not the gospel of Christ, neither the testimony of Jesus. These are they who deny not the Holy Spirit. These are they who are thrust down to hell.¹²¹ (*Doctrine and Covenants 76:82-84*)

These are they who are liars, and sorcerers, and adulterers, and whoremongers, and whosoever loves and makes a lie. These are they who suffer the wrath of God on earth. These are they who suffer the vengeance of eternal fire.¹²² (*Doctrine and Covenants 76:103-105*)

Dwellers of this kingdom will neither see the glory of God nor of Jesus Christ but they will receive the glory of the Holy Ghost. They will also be servants of God and Jesus Christ yet will be forbidden from seeing their glory.

The following diagrams describe the three kingdoms of Glory:

Diagram 4⁵

Outer Darkness

Outer darkness, in other words, the eternal hell, is prepared for those who reject the Holy Ghost, Jesus Christ and God, the Father. According to the LDS scripture, these people will not be forgiven and they will be accompanied by Satan. Doctrine and Covenants teaches that:

For they are vessels of wrath, doomed to suffer the wrath of God, with the devil and his angels in eternity; Concerning whom I have said there is no forgiveness in this world nor in the world to come— Having denied the Holy Spirit after having received it, and having denied the Only Begotten Son of the Father, having crucified him unto themselves and put him to an open shame. These are they who shall go away into the lake of fire and brimstone, with the devil and his angels.¹²³ (*Doctrine and Covenants* 76:33-36)

⁵ The image is taken from: <https://wheatandtares.org/2019/10/20/is-there-no-other-way/>

Therefore, outer darkness is the eternal hellfire where people will be tormented and made to suffer because of their injustices.

PART II
MORMONISM INVESTIGATED & ANALYZED

CHAPTER 4
JOSEPH SMITH

“But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die.”

Having presented the story of the dramatic origin of the LDS, as well as the theological underpinnings of the LDS system of belief, I would now like to examine the LDS belief system with greater scrutiny.

In undertaking a comparative analysis of LDS teachings, I do not wish to harm the religious sentiments of followers of any faith. In fact, as a follower of a faith and member of a community that has been repeatedly and intensely attacked, I value the religious sentiments of members of other faiths to a great degree.

The purpose of this section is to prompt readers to reflect over the evidences provided and develop their own conclusions about the validity and logic of the teachings. If anyone feels there is any inaccuracy in the historical content provided herein, please contact me directly.

All revealed religions are like trees that bear fruit. Hence, in our journey to study the tree of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, let us begin with the sower of the seed of this tree i.e. Joseph Smith, the founder of the LDS Church.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints stands and falls with their prophet Joseph Smith. This is what the LDS missionaries teach while preaching and they encourage people to pray about Joseph Smith's claim. They go on further to state that

God will answer such inquiries and supplications and often quote the following verses:

Behold, you have not understood; you have supposed that I would give it unto you, when you took no thought save it was to ask me. But, behold, I say unto you, that you must study it out in your mind; then you must ask me if it be right, and if it is right I will cause that your bosom shall burn within you; therefore, you shall feel that it is right.¹²⁴ (*Doctrine and Covenants 9:7-8*)

Therefore, the LDS Church teachers and preachers set this criterion for the truthfulness of Joseph Smith, i.e., burning of one's bosom will tell whether Joseph Smith was a true prophet or not. In these verses one is asked to pray to God directly and also use one's intellectual ability of critical thinking to study Joseph Smith and his teachings.

Is this the criterion presented in the revealed books, i.e., the Holy Bible and the Holy Qur'an? Is this the criterion upon which previous prophets were judged? The prophethood of Joseph Smith will be judged according to the previous holy books. For this examination, let us first look at what criteria is presented by the Holy Bible and the Holy Qur'an pertaining to true and false prophets.

The First Criterion

The first criterion is presented by both the Holy Bible as well as the Holy Qur'an. The Gospel of John records: *Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?*¹²⁵ (*John 5:46*)

The same criterion has also been presented in the most complete, perfect, and unchanged book, that is the Holy Qur'an, revealed to the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa}. The Qur'anic

perspective of a true prophet is also necessary because the readership will also be Muslims so they may weigh the arguments based on their own book. Furthermore, one might wonder why the author is judging the prophethood of Joseph Smith based on the Holy Qur'an while the Latter-day Saints do not believe in it as a book, nor in the Prophet Muhammad^{sa}. The fact of the matter is that a Latter-day Saint must believe in the Holy Qur'an and the Prophet Muhammad^{sa} if he or she is a true believer in the Book of Mormon, for it is stated in the Book of Mormon:

For behold, the Lord doth grant unto all nations, of their own nation and tongue, to teach his word, yea, in wisdom, all that he seeth fit that they should have; therefore we see that the Lord doth counsel in wisdom, according to that which is just and true.¹²⁶
(*The Book of Mormon, Alma 29:8*)

This leaves no room for the Latter-day Saints to ignore the Holy Qur'an. At times, LDS missionaries take either a sincere or a diplomatic route while preaching to or confronting Muslims. They often say that they believe Muhammad^{sa} to be an inspired man, thereby penetrating and getting their message across. Such is also the case with prominent LDS leaders and Presidents of the Church. For instance, George Quayle Cannon, a prominent LDS leader, member of the Quorum of the Twelve, Counsellor to Brigham Young, Assistant Counsellor to Brigham Young (the LDS Prophet), and First Counsellor to John Taylor, Wilford Woodruff, and Lorenzo Snow (the LDS Prophets), once said that:

I believe myself that Mahomed, whom the Christians deride and call a false prophet and stigmatize with a great many epithets – I believe that he was a man raised up by the Almighty, and inspired to a certain extent by Him to effect the reforms which he did in his land, and in the nations surrounding. He attacked idolatry, and restored the great and crowning idea that there is but one God. He taught that idea to his people, and reclaimed them from polytheism

and from the heathenish practices into which they had fallen. I believe many men were inspired who lived after him and before him, who, nevertheless, did not have the Holy Priesthood, but were led by the Spirit of God to strive for a better condition of affairs and to live a purer and higher life than those by whom they were surrounded were living.¹²⁷

This explains why the author is using the Holy Qur'an to test the prophethood of Joseph Smith.

This criterion is mentioned in the Holy Qur'an in the following words:

فَقَدْ لَبِثْتُ فِيكُمْ عُمُرًا مِّن قَبْلِهِ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿١٧﴾

I have indeed lived among you a *whole* lifetime before this. Will you not then understand?'¹²⁸ (*The Holy Qur'an* 10:17)

Both references present a criterion that a claimant of prophethood spends a pure and noble life and has a high standard of morals. This was the criterion presented by Jesus Christ^{as} and Prophet Muhammad^{sa}, as well as all other prophets of God. Now, let's study Joseph Smith's prophethood.

Joseph Smith was a treasure hunter or "*money digger*" and was well known for his expertise in the field. His reputation as a "*money digger*" grew and his fame spread in neighboring states. He provides some testimony to this in the following words:

...In the month of October, 1825, I hired with an old gentleman by the name of Josiah Stool, who lived in Chenango county, State of New York. He had heard something of a silver mine having been opened by the Spaniards in Harmony, Susquehanna county, State of Pennsylvania; and had, previous to my hiring to him, been digging, in order, if possible, to discover the mine. After I went to live with him, he took me,

with the rest of his hands, to dig for the silver mine, at which I continued to work for nearly a month, without success in our undertaking, and finally I prevailed with the old gentleman to cease digging after it. Hence arose the very prevalent story of my having been a money-digger.¹²⁹

It is acceptable for a prophet to earn money through legitimate means and professions, but Joseph Smith's ways of earning income led him into many troubles; he was charged and summoned to court for a trial. Peter Bartley, a leading scholar on Mormonism, writes:

The principal document is a court record, and concerns Joseph Smith's trial before a justice of the peace in Bainbridge, Chenango County, New York on 20 March 1826, at which Smith was charged with being 'a disorderly person and an imposter'. The document was first brought to light in the nineteenth century when it was published by Bishop Daniel S. Tuttle of Salt Lake City in his contributory article to an *Encyclopedia of Religion*. Five witnesses testified at the trial that Joseph Smith used a 'peep-stone' to locate buried treasure. On being questioned by counsel, Joseph Smith admitted to possessing a peep-stone, and using it to locate lost property and buried treasure of various kinds in various places.¹³⁰

Joseph Smith, before his claim to prophethood, was charged of being "*a disorderly person and an imposter*" by the court.

Conclusion

This has been a hallmark of the life of Joseph Smith. He was a "disorderly person" and this caused his followers unbearable losses and great afflictions. Messengers and prophets maintain a high standard of morals and are men of great integrity. Even sworn enemies cannot successfully accuse them of any misconduct. Readers are encouraged to examine the incidents presented in this book. This is certainly not the case with Joseph Smith. Hence, Joseph Smith does not meet the first criterion,

which makes him a false prophet. The founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian, India, the Promised Messiah^{as} states:

اگر کسی کے دل میں یہ سوال پیدا ہو کہ دنیا میں صد ہا جھوٹے مذہب ہیں جو ہزاروں برسوں سے چلے آتے ہیں۔ حالانکہ ابتدا ان کی کسی کی افتراء سے ہوگی۔ تو اس کا جواب یہ ہے کہ افتراء سے مراد ہمارے کلام میں وہ افتراء ہے کہ کوئی شخص عمداً اپنی طرف سے بعض کلمات تراش کر یا ایک کتاب بنا کر پھر یہ دعویٰ کرے کہ یہ باتیں خدا تعالیٰ کی طرف سے ہیں اور اس نے مجھے الہام کیا ہے اور ان باتوں کے بارے میں میرے پر اس کی وحی نازل ہوئی ہے حالانکہ کوئی وحی نازل نہیں ہوئی۔ سو ہم نہایت کامل تحقیقات سے کہتے ہیں کہ ایسا افتراء کبھی کسی زمانہ میں چل نہیں سکا۔ اور خدا کی پاک کتاب صاف گواہی دیتی ہے کہ خدا تعالیٰ پر افتراء کرنے والے جلد ہلاک کئے گئے ہیں۔ اور ہم لکھ چکے ہیں کہ توریت بھی یہی گواہی دیتی ہے اور انجیل بھی اور فرقان مجید بھی۔

If someone has a question in his heart regarding the hundreds of false religions that have continued for thousands of years, even though the beginning of such religions are based on a lie. Then, the answer to this is that by forgery, I mean such lies which a person purposely concocts or that he writes a book and claims that this was from God and He has revealed this to me, and I have received His revelations about these things, even though no such revelation has been received by him. So I say with complete certainty and research that no such forgery has ever been successful in any era. And the book of God bears witness that those who forge lies against God are destroyed at once. And I have written that the Torah and the Gospels also bear witness to this and so does the Qur'an.¹³¹

This is the case with the founder of the LDS Church. No matter how much the LDS Church progresses, it is certain that its building stands on unstable ground and on a false prophet who

met his end according to the prophecies of the Holy Bible and the Holy Qur'an and this church is prone to ultimately fail.

The Second Criterion

Naturally, one sent from God demonstrates, without a shadow of doubt, the help of the Magnificent and Glorious God with him throughout his life. What do the Scriptures reveal about false claimants? *But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die.*¹³² (Deuteronomy 18:20)

We read further in Deuteronomy:

And that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams, shall be put to death; because he hath spoken to turn you away from the LORD your God. If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, And the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the LORD your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. Ye shall walk after the LORD your God, and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and ye shall serve him, and cleave unto him.¹³³ (Deuteronomy 13:1-5)

Then, Jeremiah, chapter 14 also highlights this:

Then the LORD said unto me, the prophets prophesy lies in my name: I sent them not, neither have I commanded them, neither spake unto them: they prophesy unto you a false vision and divination, and a thing of nought, and the deceit of their heart. Therefore thus saith the LORD concerning the prophets that prophesy in my name, and I sent them not, yet they say, Sword and famine shall not be in this land; By sword and famine shall those prophets be consumed.¹³⁴ (Jeremiah 14:14-15)

The New Testament also presents the same criterion in the following words:

And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought: But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God.¹³⁵ (*Acts 5:38-39*)

The above verses explain that a false claimant of prophethood is killed if he:

- Openly claims to be a prophet.
- Openly claims to receive revelation from God.
- Announces his false dreams and visions to lead people astray.

A similar criterion has also been presented in the Holy Qur'an:

وَلَوْ تَقَوَّلَ عَلَيْنَا بَعْضَ الْأَقَاوِيلِ ۖ لَأَخَذْنَا مِنْهُ بِالْيَمِينِ ۖ ثُمَّ لَقَطَعْنَا مِنْهُ
الْوَيْتِينَ ۖ فَمَا مِنْكُمْ مِنْ أَحَدٍ عَنْهُ حَاجِزِينَ ۖ

And if he had forged *and attributed* any **sayings** to Us, We would surely have seized him by the right hand, And then surely We would have severed his life-artery, And not one of you could have held *Us* off from him.¹³⁶ (*The Holy Qur'an 69:45-48*)

From these words, the following conditions can be derived:

- The claimant of revelation must do so purposely. In other words, despite being fully aware that Divine revelation has not been sent to him, he knowingly and intentionally forges a lie against God, attributing specific verbal revelation to Him. A psychologically disturbed or mentally ill patient cannot qualify according to this condition.
- The claimant must believe in God as a separate entity and should not be someone who considers his thoughts to be revelations. This condition is found in the word "عَلَيْنَا" 'Alaina'.

- The claimant should be a believer in the revelation of words and should claim his words to be those of God. It must not be someone who considers his thoughts to be revelation. This condition is found in the words “الْأَقَاوِيلُ” Ba’dh-al-‘Aqaaweel”
- The claimant must publish or announce his claim openly and this must be a cause of leading people astray which leads to God punishing him and no one being able to rescue him. This condition is found in the words “فَمَا مَنكُمْ مِنْ أَحَدٍ عِنْدَهُ حَاجِزِينَ” *fa maa minkum min ahadin anhu haajizeen*”

If a claimant of prophethood and revelation fulfills the aforementioned conditions, then that person will be killed within 23 years. This is the criterion used in Islam to test the claims of a prophet whether the claimant is true or false. The Founder of Ahmadiyya Muslim Community Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian, India, the Promised Messiah^{as}, issued a challenge more than a hundred years ago stating:

اگر یہ بات صحیح ہے کہ کوئی شخص نبی یا رسول اور مامور من اللہ ہونے کا دعویٰ کر کے اور کھلے کھلے طور پر خدا کے نام پر کلمات لوگوں کو سنا کر پھر باوجود مفتری ہونے کے برابر تینس برس تک جو زمانہ وحی آنحضرت صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم ہے زندہ رہا ہے تو میں ایسی نظیر پیش کرنے والے کو بعد اس کے جو مجھے میرے ثبوت کے موافق یا قرآن کے ثبوت کے موافق ثبوت دے دے یا سو روپیہ نقد دیدوں گا۔

If it is true that a person who claimed to be a prophet or messenger, or one appointed by Allah, or one who openly proclaimed before people particular words, attributing them to God, and then, despite being a forger, remained alive for 23 years, which is the duration of the era of Holy Prophet^{sa}'s revelation, I will give 500 rupees in cash to anyone who can show me a single example and prove it (historically) or from the Holy Quran..¹³⁷

The Founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community reiterates the same phenomenon in the following couplets:

عزت نہیں ہے ذرہ بھی اُس کی جناب میں	لعنت ہے منفری پہ خدا کی کتاب میں
لکھا گیا ہے رنگِ وِ عیدِ شدید میں	توریت میں بھی نیز کلامِ مجید میں
ہو گا وہ قتل ہے یہی اس جرم کی سزا	کوئی اگر خدا پہ کرے کچھ بھی افتراء

The forger of lies is accursed in the Book of God;

He has not even the slightest honour in His sight.

In the Torah, as well as in the Qur'an

It is written in the form of a severe decree.

(That) whoever forges any lie against God

Shall be murdered – this is the punishment for such a crime!¹³⁸

Keeping the above points in mind, let us study the life of Joseph Smith and determine as to whether or not he satisfies this criteria.

Did Joseph Smith Claim to be a Prophet?

Joseph Smith declared himself to be a prophet sent by God. Not long after the publication of the Book of Mormon, a group of sixty people gathered at the house of Peter Whitmer in Fayette, New York. There, Joseph Smith officially organized the LDS Church and during this meeting, he claimed that he had received the following revelation:

BEHOLD, there shall be a record kept among you; and in it thou shalt be called a seer, a translator, a prophet, an apostle of Jesus Christ, an elder of the

church through the will of God the Father, and the grace of your Lord Jesus Christ,¹³⁹ (*Doctrine and Covenants 21:1*)

On another occasion, March 1842, Joseph Smith wrote in a letter to Mr. John Wentworth, Editor and Proprietor of the *Chicago Democrat*: *I was informed that I was chosen to be an instrument in the hands of God to bring about some of His purposes in this glorious dispensation.*¹⁴⁰

Precisely, on the 6th of April, 1830, Joseph Smith claimed to be a prophet based on the revelation of God.

Did Joseph Smith Claim to Receive Revelations?

Joseph Smith claimed that he received revelations from God and it was on the 23rd of September 1823 when he was visited by an angel called Moroni from the presence of God. He records in the *History of the Church*:

He (Moroni) called me by name, and said unto me that he was a messenger sent from the presence of God to me, and that his name was Moroni; that God had a work for me to do; and that my name should be had for good and evil among all nations, kindreds, and tongues, or that it should be both good and evil spoken of among all people.¹⁴¹

During the same visit of the angel, many revelations were given to Joseph Smith, including Section 2 of *Doctrine and Covenants*:

BEHOLD, I will reveal unto you the Priesthood, by the hand of Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And he shall plant in the hearts of the children the promises made to the fathers, and the hearts of the children shall turn to their fathers. If it were not so, the whole earth would be utterly wasted at his coming.¹⁴² (*Doctrine and Covenants 2:1-3*)

Although Joseph Smith lived a short life of 39 years, he received many revelations. A study of the references in this book can provide a more detailed account of his revelations.

Did Joseph Smith Experience Visions?

Joseph Smith claimed to have seen many visions - the volumes of the *History of the Church* contain accounts of them. For instance, Joseph Smith, along with two counsellors, Oliver Cowdery and Sidney Rigdon, assembled in Kirtland Temple and engaged in the ordinances of the endowment. It is recorded:

All of the Presidency laid their hands upon me (Joseph Smith), and pronounced upon my head many prophecies and blessings, many of which I shall not notice at this time. But as Paul said, so say I, let's come to visions and revelations.

The heavens were opened upon us, and I beheld the celestial kingdom of God, and the glory thereof, whether in the body or out I cannot tell. I saw the transcendent beauty of the gate through which the heirs of that kingdom will enter, which was like unto circling flames of fire; also the blazing throne of God, whereon was seated the Father and the Son. I saw the beautiful streets of that kingdom, which had the appearance of being paved with gold. I saw Fathers Adam and Abraham, and my father and mother, my brother, Alvin, that has long since slept, and marvelled as that he had obtained an inheritance in that kingdom, seeing that he had departed this life before the Lord had set His hand to gather Israel the second time, and had not been baptized for the remission of sins.

Thus came the voice of the Lord unto me, saying--

Revelation. "All who have died without a knowledge of this Gospel, who would have received it if they had been permitted to tarry, shall be heirs of the celestial kingdom of God; also all that shall die henceforth without a knowledge of it, who would have received it with all their hearts, shall be heirs of that

kingdom, for I, the Lord, will judge all men according to their works, according to the desire of their hearts."¹⁴³

It is quite remarkable that, at one moment, Joseph Smith says, "*Let us come to visions and revelations*", and the next moment, he not only witnesses a vision but also receives a revelation. After this incident, some of the most ambiguous, bizarre, and controversial doctrines were added to the LDS' doctrines (e.g. baptism for the dead).

Joseph Smith's Murder

The *History of the Church* records the murder of Joseph Smith. However, the Latter-day Saints often regard Joseph Smith to have been unjustly charged for treason from the following quote of Joseph Smith:

I am going like a lamb to the slaughter, but I am calm as a summer's morning. I have a conscience void of offense toward God and toward all men. If they take my life I shall die an innocent man, and my blood shall cry from the ground for vengeance, and it shall be said of me, 'He was murdered in cold blood!'¹⁴⁴

Therefore, Joseph Smith sealed the testimony with his blood.

Joseph Smith — In Search of Truths

Was Joseph Smith unjustly charged for treason? Did he wilfully give his life to seal this testimony or is there evidence to support the contrary? What happened in the events leading up to his murder?

As mentioned previously, Joseph Smith was the mayor of Nauvoo, Illinois. He was a very controversial figure and was charged and jailed several times for illegal activities.

The Nauvoo Expositor

In 1844, the year of Joseph Smith's murder, some former members of the LDS Church assembled and decided to print a newspaper exposing the secret life and inequities of Joseph Smith. These prominent Latter-day Saints who held key positions in the Church included William Law (counsellor to Joseph Smith), Wilson Law, Dr. Foster, and Charles Ivins. They were later excommunicated for a number of reasons and were often referred to as "the apostates" in the *History of Church*. To summarize, they decided to print the newspaper called the *Nauvoo Expositor*, which would tell the Latter-day Saints and non-Mormons alike about the lifestyle of Joseph Smith and the new teachings (e.g., plurality of God, baptism for the dead and the secret practice of polygamy) that he was preaching. *The Nauvoo Expositor* was intended to be a weekly newspaper with its first edition published on the 7th of June 1844. This created a stir within the city — some were excited while others were furious, especially Joseph Smith. Therefore, this matter was presented in the city council and Joseph Smith, being the mayor of the city, convened the council. *The Nauvoo Expositor* would not live to see its second edition. Just three days after its first publication, on the 10th of June 1844, the following bill was passed:

BILL FOR REMOVAL OF THE PRESS OF THE NAUVOO EXPOSITOR `Resolved by the city council of the city of Nauvoo, that the printing office from whence issues the Nauvoo Expositor is a public nuisance; and also of said Nauvoo Expositors which may be or exist in said establishment; and the mayor is instructed to cause said establishment and papers to be removed without delay, in such manner as he shall direct.

`Passed June 10th, 1844. GEO. W. HARRIS, President pro tem.
 `W. RICHARDS, Recorder.¹⁴⁵

Shortly after the bill was passed, the press was set on fire and many copies of the first edition were destroyed. However, some copies were saved and can be found on the internet¹⁴⁶.

Aftermath of the destruction of the printing press

John Taylor, the third president of the LDS Church, records the aftermath of the destruction of the press:

This, as was foreseen, was the very course our enemies wished us to pursue, as it afforded them an opportunity of circulating a very plausible story about the 'Mormons' being opposed to the liberty of the press and of free speech, which they were not slow to avail themselves of. Stories were fabricated, and facts perverted; false statements were made, and this act brought in as an example to sustain the whole of their fabrications; and, as if inspired by satan,... These reports were communicated to their 'anti-Mormon' societies, and these societies circulated them in their several districts. The 'anti-Mormon' paper, the Warsaw Signal, was filled with inflammatory articles and misrepresentations in relation to us, and especially to this act of destroying the press. We were represented as a horde of lawless ruffians and brigands, anti-American and anti-republican, steeped in crime and iniquity, opposed to freedom of speech and of the press, and all the rights and immunities of a free and enlightened people; that neither person nor property was secure, that we had designs upon the citizens of Illinois and of the United States, and the people were called upon to rise en masse, and put us down, drive us away, or exterminate us as a pest to society, and alike dangerous to our neighbors, the state, and the commonwealth.¹⁴⁷

A writ was issued that Joseph Smith and the city council members were to be brought to court for a legal hearing.

Joseph Smith Declared Martial Law

Joseph Smith was now sensing that his life was in danger because of how people reacted to his illegal act. He was also the

General of the Nauvoo Legion, and for preventive measures, he spread his force in the city of Nauvoo and declared martial law. It is recorded:

At the same time guards were stationed around Nauvoo, and picket guards in the distance. At length opposing forces gathered so near that more active measures were taken; reconnoitering parties were sent out, and the city proclaimed under martial law. Things now assumed a belligerent attitude, and persons passing through the city were questioned as to what they knew of the enemy, while passes were in some instances given to avoid difficulty with the guards.¹⁴⁸

Meanwhile, destruction of the press had caused many non-Mormons to gather forces around Nauvoo.

Joseph Smith Fled to Iowa

The Governor issued a new arrest warrant for treason against the State of Illinois because only he (the Governor) could call up the State Militia for action and the Nauvoo Legion was a part of the State Militia of Illinois. He issued a direct order for the Nauvoo Legion to stand down. Joseph Smith, along with his brother Hyrum Smith, then fled across the Mississippi River to a town called Montrose, Iowa. A number of his close friends, including his wife, Emma, accused him of being a “coward”.

Reynolds Cahoon, Lorenzo D. Wasson and Hiram Kimball accused Joseph of cowardice for wishing to leave the people, adding that their property would be destroyed, and they left without house or home. Like the fable, when the wolves came the shepherd ran from the flock, and left the sheep to be devoured.¹⁴⁹

Some of the prominent leaders of the Church asked Emma to write a letter to Joseph Smith, encouraging him to come back.

Joseph Smith Arrested for Treason

Joseph and Hyrum Smith reluctantly returned to Nauvoo and surrendered themselves to the Sheriff of Hancock County, who took them to Carthage. An interview was taken of Joseph Smith at Carthage on the 25th of June, 1844; Joseph Smith and his brother were charged and arrested for treason. A writ was issued:

Writ of Arrest on the Charge of Treason--Joseph Smith.

STATE OF ILLINOIS, CITY OF NAUVOO.

The people of the State of Illinois, to all sheriffs, coroners and constables of said state greeting:

Whereas complaint has been made before me, one of the justices of the peace in and for said county aforesaid, upon the oath of Augustine Spencer, that Joseph Smith, late of the county aforesaid, did, on or about the nineteenth day of June. A. D. 1844, at the county and state aforesaid, commit the crime of treason against the government and people of the State of Illinois aforesaid.

These are therefore to command you to take the said Joseph Smith if he be found in your county, or if he shall have fled, that you pursue after the said Smith into another county within this state, and take and safely keep the said Joseph Smith, so that you have his body forthwith before me to answer the said complaint and be further dealt with according to law.

[Seal] Given under my hand and seal this 24th day of June, A. D. 1844.

R. F. SMITH, J. P.¹⁵⁰

Joseph and Hyrum Smith were incarcerated in Carthage jail.

Carthage Jail

There is an aura of secrecy surrounding the events that occurred in the Carthage Jail and many Latter-day Saints appear to be unaware of the facts. These events reflect Joseph Smith's character when it is tested. The criterion for a prophet of God, which is adherence to integrity and moral standards, is in great question for Joseph Smith. One of his close friends smuggled a pistol into the jail and gave it to him; John Taylor, who was also present in the Carthage Jail, records:

Elder Cyrus H. Wheelock came in to see us, and when he was about leaving drew a small pistol, a six-shooter, from his pocket, remarking at the same time, 'Would any of you like to have this?' Brother Joseph immediately replied, 'Yes, give it to me,' whereupon he took the pistol, and put it in his pantaloons pocket.¹⁵¹

It is also recorded that contrary to the teachings (*Doctrine and Covenants 89:5-9*), Joseph Smith consumed alcohol in the Carthage Jail. As mentioned previously, Latter-day Saints are forbidden to drink alcoholic beverages (*Doctrine and Covenants 89:5-9*), but Smith's practice was quite the opposite and contrary to his so-called revelations. In the *History of the Church* we read:

Before the jailor came in, his boy brought in some water, and said the guard wanted some wine. Joseph gave Dr. Richards two dollars to give the guard; but the guard said one was enough, and would take no more.

The guard immediately sent for a bottle of wine, pipes, and two small papers of tobacco; and one of the guards brought them into the jail soon after the jailor went out.

Dr. Richards uncorked the bottle, and presented a glass to Joseph, who tasted, as also Brother Taylor and the doctor, and the bottle was then given to the guard, who turned to go out.¹⁵²

John Taylor, the third president of the LDS Church, who was also present in the jail, also mentioned in his written accounts of the Carthage Jail, that:

Sometime after dinner we sent for some wine. It has been reported by some that this was taken as a sacrament. It was no such thing; our spirits were generally dull and heavy, and it was sent for to revive us. I think it was Captain Jones who went after it, but they would not suffer him to return. I believe we all drank of the wine, and gave some to one or two of the prison guards. We all of us felt unusually dull and languid, with a remarkable depression of spirits.¹⁵³

Another element hidden by the LDS Church is that Joseph Smith killed two men in the Carthage Jail with the smuggled gun. John Taylor testifies to this fact after Hyrum was shot dead in the jail.

He, however, instantly arose, and with a firm, quick step, and a determined expression of countenance, approached the door, and pulling the six-shooter left by Brother Wheelock from his pocket, opened the door slightly, and snapped the pistol six successive times; only three of the barrels, however, were discharged. I afterwards understood that two or three were wounded by these discharges, two of whom, I am informed, died,¹⁵⁴

This is the LDS claim that their prophet went to the Carthage Jail as a lamb but ended up killing two people and injuring another. These incidents will not be mentioned by the LDS missionaries.

Joseph Smith's murder

Joseph, seeing there was no safety in the room, and no doubt thinking that it would save the lives of his brethren in the room if he could get out, turned calmly from the door, dropped his pistol on the floor and sprang into the window when two balls

pierced him from the door, and one entered his right breast from without, and he fell outward into the hands of his murderers,¹⁵⁵

Joseph Smith was shot while trying to escape from the window of the jail. As he was shot, he fell from the second floor of the jail to the ground.

Did Joseph Smith live for 23 years after he claimed to receive revelations?

As mentioned above, the criterion set by the Holy Qur'an is that a false claimant of revelation must die within 23 years. Therefore, in this matter, Joseph Smith did not live for 23 years after claiming to receive revelations from God. On the 23rd of September 1823, Joseph Smith received the first revelation and on the 27th of June 1844, he was murdered. Precisely, Joseph Smith lived for 20 years, 9 months and 4 days after claiming to receive that first revelation from God. Therefore, his murder not only proves he is a false prophet, but also the truthfulness of the Holy Qur'an.

Another reason for presenting Qur'anic criterion is that Joseph Smith, the founder of the LDS Church, greatly revered the founder of Islam and laid testimony to the true Divine revelation received by the Prophet^{sa} of Islam. The Holy Qur'an is 23 years of revelations vouchsafed to the Prophet Muhammad^{sa}.

Here, one may ask why Joseph Smith's First Vision, spring 1820, is not considered for this criterion? The answer to this question is that the account of the First Vision is highly unreliable. There are multiple reasons why the First Vision is not used in this criterion which are as follows:

1. This vision was not published in 1820. It was published much later after the church was founded.
2. There are at least four different accounts the First Vision.

3. These accounts were discovered by the historians who were working in the LDS Church. The first time these accounts were published was in in 1960.
4. The accounts of the First Vision are known as: Account of 1832 (First account), Account of 1835 (Second account), Account of 1838 (Third account), Account of 1842 (Fourth account).
5. Besides these accounts from Joseph Smith himself, five other accounts were written by contemporaries who heard Joseph Smith speak about the vision.

Hence, this account becomes highly unreliable to use. The date of the visits of Angel Maroni has been used as this account is much more reliable than the first vision.

The Third Criterion

The third criterion is also mentioned in the 18th chapter of *Deuteronomy*, and that is:

And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the LORD hath not spoken? When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that *is* the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, *but* the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him.¹⁵⁶ (*Deuteronomy 18:21-22*)

- If prophecies of a claimant are fulfilled, the claimant is true.
- If they are not, then he is false.

Keeping the above verses in mind, let us examine the prophecies of Joseph Smith.

Joseph Smith received many revelations that were not fulfilled. For example, Joseph Smith received the following revelation on the 26th of September 1830:

And ye are called to bring to pass the gathering of mine elect; for mine elect hear my voice and harden not their hearts; Wherefore the decree hath gone forth from the Father that they

shall be gathered in unto one place upon the face of this land, to prepare their hearts and be prepared in all things against the day when tribulation and desolation are sent forth upon the wicked.¹⁵⁷ (*Doctrine and Covenants 28:7-8*)

He received another revelation concerning this matter on the 20th of July, 1831:

HEARKEN, O ye elders of my church, saith the Lord your God, who have assembled yourselves together, according to my commandments, in this land, which is the land of Missouri, which is the land which I have appointed and consecrated for the gathering of the saints. Wherefore, this is the land of promise, and the place for the city of Zion. And thus saith the Lord your God, if you will receive wisdom here is wisdom. Behold, the place which is now called Independence is the center place; and a spot for the temple is lying westward, upon a lot which is not far from the courthouse.¹⁵⁸ (*Doctrine and Covenants 57:1-3*)

On the 7th of March, 1831, the LDS “prophet” received another revelation on the same matter:

Wherefore I, the Lord, have said, gather ye out from the eastern lands, assemble ye yourselves together ye elders of my church; go ye forth into the western countries, call upon the inhabitants to repent, and inasmuch as they do repent, build up churches unto me. And with one heart and with one mind, gather up your riches that ye may purchase an inheritance which shall hereafter be appointed unto you. And it shall be called the New Jerusalem, a land of peace, a city of refuge, a place of safety for the saints of the Most High God;¹⁵⁹ (*Doctrine and Covenants 45:64-66*)

Three prophecies were provided concerning the mission of Joseph Smith to establish the city of Zion in Missouri. As mentioned in the first part of this book under the chapter titled “Joseph Smith”, he struggled his entire life to build the city of Zion in Jackson County, Missouri, ultimately failing. Joseph Smith

and his followers had to pay a very high price for these prophecies. The pursuit of Zion city ended with the incarceration of the LDS Prophet. He was kept in deplorable conditions and his followers were driven out of Missouri, shattering the dreams and revelations of Joseph Smith.

Conclusion

Many of Joseph Smith's prophecies were not fulfilled (e.g. Zion shall never be moved⁶, the United States government to be thrown in a few years⁷, and earthquakes⁸, just to name a few).

The Fourth Criterion

The fourth criterion is common in the Holy Bible and the Holy Qur'an. It is mentioned in several verses of the Bible that:

The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon.¹⁶⁰ (*Psalms 92:12*)

Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up.¹⁶¹ (*Matthew 15:13*)

⁶And the nations of the earth shall honor her, and shall say: Surely Zion is the city of our God, and surely Zion cannot fall, neither be moved out of her place, for God is there, and the hand of the Lord is there; (Doctrine and Covenants 97:19)

⁷ '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, V. 5, pg. 394)

⁸ 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. ((History of the Church, V. 1, pg. 315-316)

The above-mentioned verses present the following criterion to differentiate between a true and a false prophet:

- A true prophet from God will flourish and succeed in his missions.
- A false prophet will fail in his missions and will die.

This criterion is also found in the Holy Qur'an in the following words:

كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَأَغْلِبَنَّ أَنَا وَرُسُلِي ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَوِيٌّ عَزِيزٌ ﴿٥٨﴾

Allah has decreed: 'Most surely I will prevail, I and My Messengers.' Verily, Allah is Powerful, Mighty.¹⁶² (*The Holy Qur'an* 58:22)

Now, let us study the life of the LDS "prophet", keeping this criterion in mind.

After receiving the Gold plates in September 1827, Joseph Smith started to work on its translation with the help of his *seer stone*. By June 1828, he had translated 116 pages of the Book of Lehi. Martin Harris, one of three witnesses, wanted to take the 116 page manuscript to show it to his family. Joseph Smith acquired permission from God through the *seer stone*, not through meditation or prayer. Martin Harris took the manuscript to his home and lost it. As a result, Joseph Smith received the following revelation:

The works, and the designs, and the purposes of God cannot be frustrated, neither can they come to naught. For God doth not walk in crooked paths, neither doth he turn to the right hand nor to the left, neither doth he vary from that which he hath said, therefore his paths are straight, and his course is one eternal round. **Remember, remember that it is not the work of God that is frustrated, but the work of men;**¹⁶³ (*Doctrine and Covenants* 3:3)

Martin Harris and Joseph Smith never recovered the manuscript. Joseph Smith, in the above reference, states the fact that none can frustrate the work of God. However, almost every action taken by Joseph Smith led to unsuccessful ends, misery, and humiliation. Another example is in December 1833 when he received the following revelation:

Zion shall not be moved out of her place, notwithstanding her children are scattered. They that remain, and are pure in heart, shall return, and come to their inheritances, they and their children, with songs of everlasting joy, to build up the waste places of Zion—And all these things that the prophets might be fulfilled. And, behold, there is none other place appointed than that which I have appointed; neither shall there be any other place appointed than that which I have appointed, for the work of the gathering of my saints.¹⁶⁴ (*Doctrine and Covenants 101:17-20*)

The above revelation contains the following promises:

“Shall return, and come to their inheritances, they and their children, with songs of everlasting joy.”

“There is none other place appointed than that which I have appointed; neither shall there be any other place appointed than that which I have appointed.”

Joseph Smith struggled throughout his life to make this dream and revelation come true, but was unsuccessful. His followers, in Missouri, lost their properties and were persecuted and beaten. Then, in February 1834, Joseph Smith was commanded by God in a revelation:

But verily I say unto you, a commandment I give unto you, that ye shall not go up unto the land of Zion until you have obtained a hundred of the strength of my house, to go up with you unto the land of Zion. Therefore, as I said unto you, ask and ye shall receive; pray earnestly that peradventure my servant Joseph Smith, Jun., may go with you, and preside in the midst of

my people, and organize my kingdom upon the consecrated land, and establish the children of Zion upon the laws and commandments which have been and which shall be given unto you. All victory and glory is brought to pass unto you through your diligence, faithfulness, and prayers of faith.¹⁶⁵ (*Doctrine and Covenants 103:34-36*)

Upon this revelation, Joseph Smith organized a camp of over 200 members known as Zion's Camp, which embarked on a journey to Jackson County, Missouri. While they were nearing their destination, Joseph Smith disbanded the camp. Let us read about what happened through the words of Joseph Smith himself:

This night the cholera burst forth among us, and about midnight it was manifested in its most virulent form. Our ears were saluted with cries and moanings and lamentations on every hand; even those on guard fell to the earth with their guns in their hands, so sudden and powerful was the attack of this terrible disease. At the commencement, I attempted to lay on hands for their recovery, but I quickly learned by painful experience, that when the great Jehovah decrees destruction upon any people, and makes known His determination, man must not attempt to stay His hand. The moment I attempted to rebuke the disease I was attacked, and had I not desisted in my attempt to save the life of a brother, I would have sacrificed my own. The disease seized upon me like the talons of a hawk, and I said to the brethren: "If my work were done, you would have to put me in the ground without a coffin."

On the morning of the 25th, the camp was separated into small bands, and dispersed among the brethren living in the vicinity.¹⁶⁶

In the words of Joseph Smith, the wrath of God was unleashed on the camp to the extent that he feared his death. Thus, none of the promises were fulfilled by God. The Latter-day Saints were driven out of Missouri, never returned with their children and their properties were never recovered, despite Joseph Smith having put forth great efforts. On the contrary, he and his

followers were smitten with cholera. Moreover, he was incarcerated and remained in a deplorable condition.

Conclusion

The founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community explains how God Almighty helps His prophets and chosen ones in the following poetic verses:

خدا کے پاک لوگوں کو خدا سے نصرت آتی ہے جب آتی ہے تو پھر عالم کو اک عالم دکھاتی ہے
 وہ بنتی ہے ہوا اور ہر خس رہ کو اڑاتی ہے وہ ہو جاتی ہے آگ اور ہر مخالف کو جلاتی ہے
 کبھی وہ خاک ہو کر دشمنوں کے سر پہ پڑتی ہے کبھی ہو کر وہ پانی اُن پہ اک طوفان لاتی ہے
 غرض رکتے نہیں ہر گز خدا کے کام بندوں سے بھلا خالق کے آگے خَلق کی کچھ پیش جاتی ہے

The Holy ones of God receive help from Him;

And when it comes, it shows another world
to the entire creation;

It turns into a storm and blows away thereby all the trash;

It turns into fire and burns every enemy in its wake.

It becomes dust and falls on the enemy's
head to humiliate him;

It turns into water and floods the enemies.

In short, Man can not obstruct the works of God;

How can a creature stop the works of the Creator?¹⁶⁷

As Joseph Smith rightly said, *"The works, and the designs, and the purposes of God cannot be frustrated, neither can they come to naught."*¹⁶⁸ (Doctrine and Covenants 3:3) Yet, we see the exact

opposite when we read the life of Joseph Smith. Hence, Joseph Smith does not meet this criterion of a true prophet.

Joseph Smith, the LDS Church, and Free Masonry

Joseph Smith was a Free Mason and had strong ties with the organization; this deep connection is also found in the Church. Once, I was reading the *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* and came across a picture of a temple having an all-seeing eye on it. It was quite strange at first, because a religious organization, claiming to restore the Gospels, Church, and Kingdom of God, had a Masonic symbol on one of its most sacred places.

After further research, one of the most surprising items I found was a speech by Dr. Reed C. Durham, a prominent historian of the LDS Church, who delivered a presidential address at the Mormon History Association Convention on the 20th of April, 1974. He addressed the very touchy subject of the relationship between Mormonism and Masonry.

He discussed the close resemblances and similarities between Mormon and Masonic Temple ceremonies in things like names, aprons, penalties, blood oaths, grips, tokens and the Political Kingdom of God. He also highlighted many Masonic markings inside and outside the LDS Temples; for example, the all-seeing eye and an inverted pentagram, known as a pentagram, which is the symbol of Satanism. This speech was recorded and soon became publically available. After delivering the Presidential address, Dr. Reed C. Durham faced tremendous criticism from the Church and his friends. He barely escaped excommunication after writing a letter to the Church reaffirming his faith in Joseph Smith. Before quoting some extracts from the speech of Dr. Durham, let us read from the *History of the Church* wherein it mentions Joseph Smith and his followers' Freemason membership:

Tuesday, 15.--I officiated as grand chaplain at the installation of the Nauvoo Lodge of Free Masons, at the Grove near the Temple. Grand Master Jonas, of Columbus, being present, a large number of people assembled on the occasion. The day was exceedingly fine; all things were done in order, and universal satisfaction was manifested. In the evening I received the first degree in Free Masonry in the Nauvoo Lodge, assembled in my general business office.¹⁶⁹

It was precisely the 15th of March 1842, when the LDS prophet became a Free Mason. Then, the *History of the Church* records that the next day, *Wednesday, March 16.--I was with the Masonic Lodge and rose to the sublime degree.*¹⁷⁰

The followers of Joseph Smith also became Free Masons. The *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* records:

The introduction of Freemasonry in NAUVOO had both political and religious implications...Eventually nearly 1,500 LDS men became associated with Illinois Freemasonry, including many members of the Church's governing priesthood bodies—this at a time when the total number of non-LDS Masons in Illinois lodges barely reached 150.¹⁷¹

Many prominent members of the LDS Church were Free Masons, including Hyrum Smith (Joseph Smith's brother) and Brigham Young (the 2nd prophet of the LDS Church).

It is an undeniable fact that Joseph Smith and the LDS Church were not only influenced by Freemasonry, but that it is also deeply rooted in the very foundation of the LDS Church. Let us now look at what Dr. Reed C. Durham Jr., a prominent LDS historian, has said about this topic.

Dr. Reed starts his speech by explaining **how it all started**:

To begin with, Masonry in the Church had its origin prior to the time Joseph Smith became a Mason. Nauvoo was not its

genesis. It commenced in Joseph's home when his older brother became a mason. Hyrum received the first degrees of Masonry in Mount Moriah Lodge No. 112 of Palmyra, New York, at about the same time that Joseph was being initiated into the presence of God and angels and was being entrusted with the sacred gold plates.¹⁷²

Then, Joseph Smith's **new converts were deeply involved in Freemasonry** and he had a **Masonic influence** vividly illustrated through his speeches. Thus, Dr. Reed reveals:

By the end of 1832, Joseph Smith had welcomed new brethren, along with their influences, into the Church. Men such as W. W. Phelps, Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, and Newel K. Whitney, each of whom had been deeply involved in Masonry, from one side or the other, before their entrance into the Church. In a sermon the Prophet delivered in 1835, unmistakable Masonic vocabulary was used, and I quote from the Prophet: "I exposed their abominations in the language of the Scriptures and I pray God that it may be like a nail in a sum place, driven by the Master of Assemblies." In that same year and in subsequent years, the Prophet was involved in things Egyptian, the new revelations of suns and moons, governing planets and fixed stars, and, though unique at that time to Mormonism, was commonplace in Masonry.¹⁷³

Under the supervision and leadership of Joseph Smith, **Mormon Masonry commenced:**

However, at the instigation of John C. Bennett, George W. Harris, John Parker, Lucius Scovil, as well as other Mormon Masons residing at Nauvoo, and certainly with the approval of the hierarchy of the Church, the institution of Masonry commenced. Joseph and Sidney (Rigdon) were inducted into formal Masonry at Sight, on the same day upon which the Illinois Grand Master Mason--and politically ambitious--Abraham Jonas officially installed the Nauvoo Lodge. It was on March 15, 1842. On the next day, both Sidney and Joseph advanced to the Master Mason Degree. In only a few years, five

Mormon Lodges were established, several others in planning, a Masonic Temple constructed, and the total membership of the Mormon fraternal brethren was over 1,366.¹⁷⁴

This brought an unusual excitement amongst the members and they were **encouraged to join the Mormon Masonry**. Dr. Reed highlighted this as well.

Heber C. Kimball wrote to Parley Parker Pratt, who was in England at the time, only three months after Joseph Smith had embraced Masonry, in the following words: "We have received some precious things through the Prophet on the Priesthood which would cause your soul to rejoice. I cannot give them to you on paper, for they are not to be written. So you must come and get them for yourself. We have organized a Lodge here of Masons since we have obtained a charter. That was in March. Since that there have near 200 been made Masons. Brother Joseph and Sidney were the first that were received into the Lodge. All of the Twelve have become members except Orson P. He hangs back. He will wake up soon."¹⁷⁵

On Masonic influences in the Church's practices, Dr. Reed writes:

I have attempted thus far to demonstrate that Masonic influence upon Joseph in the early Church history, preceding his formal membership in Masonry, were significant. However, these same Masonic influences exerted a more dominant character as reflected in the further expansion of the Church subsequent to the Prophet's Masonic membership. **In fact, I believe that there are few significant developments in the Church, that occurred after March 15, 1842, which did not have some Masonic interdependence.** Let me comment on a few of these developments. There is absolutely no question in my mind that the Mormon ceremony which came to be known as the Endowment, introduced by Joseph Smith to Mormon Masons initially, just a little over one month after he became a Mason, had an immediate inspiration from Masonry...the similarities

between the two ceremonies are so apparent and overwhelming that some dependent relationship cannot be denied.¹⁷⁶

Dr. Reed addressed the question as to **why Joseph Smith became a Mason:**

I believe he accepted Masonry because he genuinely felt he recognized true Ancient Mysteries contained therein. And, that in light of two fundamental concepts, already established within the theological framework of Mormonism--the Restoration of the Gospel and the Dispensation of the Fullness of Times--Joseph was under the strong compulsion to embrace Masonry. The Prophet believed that his mission was to restore all truth, and then to unify and weld it all together into one. This truth was referred to as "the mysteries", and these Mysteries were inseparably connected with the Priesthood. The Prophet further sermonized that these Mysteries were to be discerned, unlocked, unravelled, and appropriately unfolded unto the Church, line upon line, by the one who holds the keys of the Holy Priesthood. Therefore, if Masonry in reality contained any of the true ancient Mysteries, it would have been necessary for Joseph to accept it... these Mysteries came down into the modern institution of Masonry--the 12th and 13th centuries, A. D.--they had experienced so many progressive alterations, that there remained only an imperfect image of their original brilliancy. My assumption is that Joseph Smith believed he was restoring Masonry's original pristine brilliancy, and that he was recreating the Mysteries of the ancient Priesthood.¹⁷⁷

Dr. Reed goes on to mention similarities between Masonry and Mormonism.

The many parallels found between early Mormonism and the Masonry of that day are substantial: conferences, councils, priesthood, temples, anointing with oil, the issuance of licenses, certificates for identifying legitimate fellow workers, elders, high priests, and even the Book of the Law.¹⁷⁸

One of the resemblances is the **architectural constructions of the Mormon and Masonic Temples:**

...More importantly, professional architects have only recently called attention to the classical and Gothic elements combined in the architecture of the Kirtland Temple (Picture 1) as containing direct and unmistakable Masonic influences (this picture has been added for better understanding - The Author)...It is also obvious that the Nauvoo Temple architecture was in part, at least Masonically influenced. Indeed, it appears that there was an intentional attempt to utilize Masonic symbols and motifs. The sun stones, and the moon and star stones, were examples. An additional example was the angel used on the weather vane on the top of the Temple. William Weeks (made a Mason in Nauvoo Lodge. M. B. H.), the architect of the Nauvoo Temple, has many drawings in the Historians Office of the Church. This is one of the preliminary drawings--first drawings--first draft drawings of the Nauvoo Temple. You will notice that it has the beautiful picture in the whole front of the Temple of the All-Seeing Eye, and he was going to have a beautiful angel stand on the top of the Temple. Later, another design by William Weeks again--modified the All-Seeing Eye, trimmed down the angel on the top of the Temple, and then again, in another plan, he has the small angel on the top--not a huge lady as was before--and this one comes pretty close to the way the Nauvoo Temple looked like. Now, in the Visitors' Center at the Nauvoo Restoration, you see a mock-up of the Temple and on the very top there is, on the weather vane (Picture 2), this little angel. Well, that little angel was photographed. There is the angel: the beautiful horn, the Book of Mormon in the other hand. (this picture has been added for better understanding - the Author) And, then, if you will notice, what looks as if there are crosses on the staff or the spear which is the weather vane. Do you see those crosses there? We blew that up--it is not a very clear picture--to let you know that it is a beautiful compass and square, in the typical Masonic fashion. Now, I wondered where in the world did they get, on the mock-up of the Temple in the Visitors' Center, the compass and square--the Masonic symbols; in fact, the most probably universal Masonic symbols that are

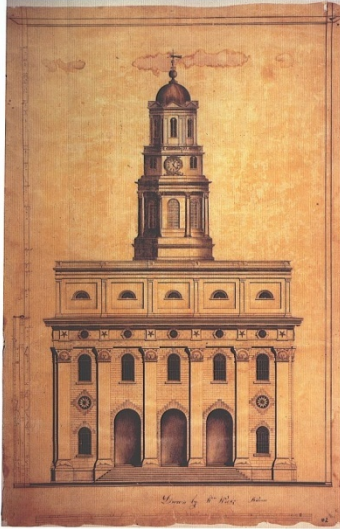
known in Masonry. Where did they get that? Until, in the Historian's Office in Salt Lake City, we found the drawing of William Weeks, who very clearly employed the Masonic symbols on that angel... And, there is no question that it was intentionally to be a Masonic symbol on the top of the Nauvoo Temple.¹⁷⁹

The inverted five pointed star, known as a **pentagram** (Picture 3), a Masonic symbol, is also seen on the Nauvoo temple.

Then, the picture of a **sunstone** (Picture 4) is found on the Nauvoo Temple building, which is also a Masonic depiction of the sun.

Moreover, the Temple in Salt Lake City, Utah, is also influenced by Masonic symbolism. For example, **the all-seeing eye** (Picture 5) and **the secret hand shake** (Picture 6) of Masons are prevalent:

Picture 1⁹: Kirtland Temple

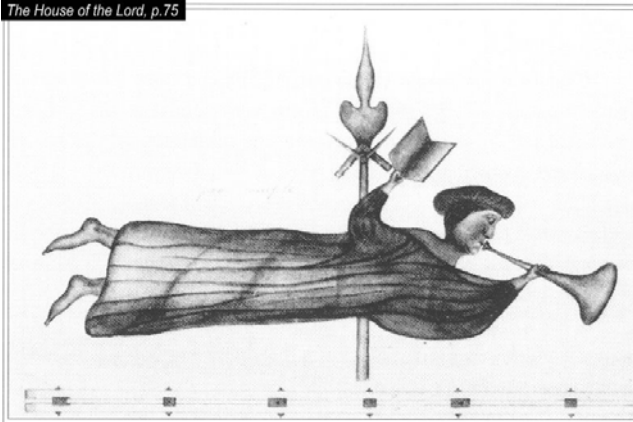


The west facade of the Nauvoo Temple at Nauvoo, Illinois, as drafted by William Weeks, the architect. This Temple was commenced under direction of Joseph Smith and completed by Brigham Young. By 1848, abandoned by the western migration of the Church, it had been reduced to a pile by mob incendiary and a tornado.

The Salt Lake Temple, p.44

Picture 2¹⁰: Weather Vane

The House of the Lord, p.75



⁹ <http://www.utlm.org/onlineresources/masonicsymbolsandtheldstemple.htm>

¹⁰ Ibid.

**Picture 5¹³: Masonic All-Seeing Eye
on the Temple in Salt Lake City**



**Picture 6¹⁴: Masonic Secret Handshake
on the Temple in Salt Lake City**



¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

These are just a few examples of the Masonic symbols that are prevalent in the architectural structure of LDS temples.

Moreover, **the temple** Endowment **ceremonies** have also been taken from Masonry and incorporated by Joseph Smith. Dr. Reed explains:

Let me comment on a few of these developments. There is absolutely no question in my mind that the Mormon ceremony which came to be known as the Endowment, introduced by Joseph Smith to Mormon Masons initially, just a little over one month after he became a Mason, had an immediate inspiration from Masonry...the similarities between the two ceremonies are so apparent and overwhelming that some dependent relationship cannot be denied.¹⁸⁰

Then, the idea of **Female Relief** Organization, organized by Joseph Smith, was also taken from Masonry. More astonishingly, the very **concept of the Kingdom of God** that Joseph Smith struggled to achieve was taken from Masonry. Furthermore, Dr. Reed elaborates how **the LDS prophet was deeply involved in mysterious** behaviour:

Now, I should like to initiate all of you into what is perhaps the strangest, the most mysterious, occult-like, esoteric, and yet Masonically oriented practice ever adopted by Joseph Smith. This may also be another fine example of our earlier explained principle of "grabbing on". All available evidence suggests that Joseph Smith the Prophet possessed a magical Masonic medallion, or talisman, which he worked during his lifetime and which was evidently on his person when he was martyred... After months of research, the talisman, presently existing in Utah, was originally purchased from the Emma Smith Bidamon family, fully notarized by that family to be authentic and to have belonged to Joseph Smith, can now be identified as a Jupiter talisman. It carries the sign and image of Jupiter and should more appropriately be referred to as the Table of Jupiter. And in some very real and quite mysterious sense, this particular Table of Jupiter was the most appropriate talisman for Joseph Smith to

possess. Indeed, it seemed meant for him, because on all levels of interpretation: planetary, mythological, numerological, astrological, mystical cabalism, and talismatic magic, the Prophet was, in every case appropriately described... Astrology also declares that every year is governed by one of the planets. And, therefore, the planet directs the affairs of men for good or ill during that year. Joseph Smith's planet was Jupiter; and two significant years governed by Jupiter were 1805 and 1844. The day of the week governed by Jupiter was Thursday. And I don't know--perhaps just coincidence--the fast meetings in the Church were on Thursdays for 60 years, as well as all the regular Mormon Masonic meetings on the first and third Thursdays, as well as the day of the Prophet Joseph Smith's martyrdom, on Thursday, and so many other special events in Church history. So closely is magic bound up with the stars and astrology that the term astrologer and magician were in ancient times almost synonymous. The purpose of the Table of Jupiter in talismanic magic was to be able to call upon the celestial intelligences, assigned to the particular talisman, to assist one in all endeavours... Talismatic magic further declared that anyone who worked skilfully with this Jupiter Table would obtain the power of stimulating anyone to offer his love to the possessor of the talisman, whether from a friend, brother, relative, or even any female... the tradition, which came out of the Emma Smith Bidamon family, attributed the talisman as being Joseph's Masonic jewel. The relationship with Masonry is possible because "Masonry did contain elements of magic, including this magic Table of Jupiter."¹⁸¹

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints appears to be a form of Masonry; Dr. Reed quotes a portion of a letter:

Heber C. Kimball later wrote, "We have the true Masonry. The Masonry of today is received from the apostasy which took place in the days of Solomon and David. They have now and then a thing that is correct, but we have the real thing." Joseph Fielding, a convert and a missionary from England, wrote in his diary, "Many have joined the Masonic Institution. This seems to

have been a stepping stone for preparation for something else, the true origin of Masonry.¹⁸²

The most startling part of Dr. Reed's address is the comparison that he made between **Joseph Smith and a Masonic legend:**

There is a famous legend in which the grand orator elaborates in lecture form in the ceremonies of the 13th, 14th and 21st degrees of Masonry which has some very ancient roots, bearing remarkable similarity to Mormonism. The roots of the legend extend back into ancient Hebrew traditions, but were developed most nearly as they are now found in Masonry--out of ancient cabalistic lore and mythology. The refinement of the legend and their incorporation into modern Masonry began in France about 1740 to 1760, but the legend was in American Masonic print by 1802; and by Joseph Smith's time many publications had made the legend popularly well disseminated. Now let me just comment that the basic, introductory aspect of the legend is: that up in the pre-existence, there was a special Secret Doctrine that was given by Deity, and it was given down to the Earth first to Adam. Adam then was to carefully guard this Secret Doctrine because it contained all the Mysteries. It contained the knowledge of God, and the name it contained was the sacred name of God. Adam then bestowed it upon his son Seth who guarded it very carefully--only among the inner circle of believers--and then it was handed down until it came to Enoch. And, Enoch is the central figure in the legend. It is with Enoch that the remarkable resemblances with Joseph Smith and Mormon history become disconcertingly clear. The major details of the legend are outlined as follows:

1. Enoch, seventh in the line of patriarchs from Adam, was 25 years old when he received his call and vision.
2. He was taken up in vision onto a hill called Moriah.
3. In vision he saw a cavern in a hill, a sacred vault in the bowels of the earth. The cavity was symbolized as being

a container for sacred treasures, like a holy ark, and it had a lid on it.

4. In vision, Enoch perceived a shiny gold plate containing unknown engravings and symbols.

5. He recognized the letter "M" upon the gold plate, which designated the name of the hill.

6. He further saw the Sacred name of God, which had been lost to all mankind, and he was commissioned by Deity to preserve this knowledge.

7. He foresaw that a flood would come to destroy all mankind. Therefore, he felt it was his duty to preserve the Sacred Mystery.

8. He placed two pillars inside the hill:

a. One of marble upon which, written in Egyptian hieroglyphics, were found the historical events connected with the tower of Babel.

and

b. One of brass, which contained the history of creation and the Secret Mysteries. These records were placed in the hill along with the treasure of the gold plate.

9. This brass pillar had a metal ball on its top, within which were contained maps, and directions of the world and of the universe, and which also acted as a sort of oracle.

10. Enoch then placed a stone lid, or slab, over the cavity into the hill.

11. Enoch predicted that on the other side of the deluge an Israelitish descendant would discover anew the Sacred buried treasure.

12. As predicted after the flood, a great king, named Solomon, came to power and desired to build a Sacred house for the in-dwelling of the divine presence.

13. Solomon and his builders, the Masons, while building and excavating for the temple at Mt. Moriah, discovered the cavern and the sacred treasure.

14. After three attempts to obtain the treasure, they were finally successful. Those Masons were very rejoiciful upon receiving these preserved Mysteries.

15. But, three wicked men intervned and committed a horrible crime. They attempted to force one of the Masons, one of the faithful Masons who had discovered the treasure, Hiram Abif: or Hiram, the widow's son, to reveal the hiding (place) and the contents of the hidden treasure.

16. He would not reveal his knowledge and therefore they killed him.

17. While being slain, Hiram, with uplifted hands, cried out, "Oh Lord, My God, is there no help for the widow's son?" This has since become a general Masonic distress call.

18. Then three loyal Masons, seeking revenge, pursued the three evil ones.

19. One of the three faithful Masons overtook one of the arch villains. He was asleep with his sword, or knife, nearby.

20. The "Mason slew the villain with his own knife by cutting off his head.

21. In Masonic ceremonies, the words "strike off his head" were employed.

22. Also in Masonic ceremonies. In revolutionary France, the re-acting of the killing of this villain, the tyrant's name was King Phillippe le Bel.

23. The loyal Mason was rewarded by King Solomon.

24. The recovered treasures then became part of the temple treasury. It consisted of the brass records, the gold plate, the metal ball, the breast plate and the urim and thummim.

Such is the Masonic legend of the Secret Doctrine, or the sacred treasure in the sacred hill, or the treasure of the widow's son. The parallels of Joseph Smith and the history of Mormonism are so unmistakable, that to explain them only as coincidence would be ridiculous.

Joseph Smith was named Enoch, even by God. He was 25 when he brought forth his Sacred record. His sacred record was buried in the hill by a man who had the initial "M". There were gold plates containing the mysteries of God. They were also in Egyptian hieroglyphics or some Egyptian form. There were brass plates, which also contained an account of the creation of the world. There was another record which contained an account of the tower of Babel. The cavity in the hill, and the hill and the cavity Joseph both saw in vision, was covered with a stone lid. The other treasures in the stone box were the breastplate, the urim and thummim, as well as the round metal ball which served as a director and was called the Liahona.

Joseph Smith also claimed to be an Israelite, and he too made several fruitless attempts at getting the treasure when he first saw it. Joseph Smith had three witnesses to the Book of Mormon and the record itself bears witness that an archvillain named Laban, or Laban, was thwarting the availability and accessibility of the sacred records, had his head cut off by his own sword. This prophet also built temples for the in-dwelling of God's spirit. Now these parallels, dramatic as they seem, still do not represent the strongest part of the story.

All of these aspects of the legend seem transformed into the history of Joseph Smith, so much so that it even appears to be a kind of symbolic acting out of Masonic lore. But there is a point in this drama where the action goes beyond metaphor and the

symbol merges into a tragic reality. This has to do, of course, with the death of Hiram Abif in the legend and the martyrdom of Joseph Smith.

In June, Joseph Smith gave himself up to be imprisoned and on June 27, 1844, a mob stormed the little Carthage jail. Hyrum was killed instantly and John Taylor seriously wounded. Joseph Smith, Master Mason and widow's son, went to the window and with upraised hands, commenced giving the Masonic distress call to fraternal Masons who were present in the mob: "Oh, Lord, My God." He was unable to complete his plea and fell out of the window to his death.

How does a Mormon historian interpret Joseph Smith and the Masonic Enoch legend? The parallels demand an answer. Was Joseph Smith the fruition of Enoch's prophecy? Was this an extreme "grabbing on" by the Prophet? Or did mysterious and divine, even magical, forces attach themselves to him? Can anyone deny that Masonic influence on Joseph Smith and the Church, either before or after his personal Masonic membership? The evidence demands comments. I have attempted to indicate that with regard to Mormonism and Masonry, there remains an abundance of that which is "new under the sun".

I do not believe that the Nauvoo story can adequately be told without an inquiry into Masonry. There are many questions which still demand the answers. I earnestly hope I have raised some questions. Perhaps I have answered a few. But if we, as Mormon historians, respond to these questions and myriads like them relative to Masonry in an ostrich-like fashion, with our heads buried in the traditional sand, then I submit: there never will be "any help for the widow's son."¹⁸³

Another salient characteristic of Joseph Smith

*Wo unto the liar, for he shall be thrust down to hell. (Book of Mormon)*¹⁸⁴

Joseph Smith claimed to be a prophet sent by God to restore the true Church and Gospel on the face of the earth, yet on various occasions, he would tell lies. While many examples are available, one is presented relating to Joseph Smith's practice of polygamy. According to the book, *No man knows my history*, by Fawn M. Brodie, who was born and raised as a Mormon, Joseph Smith had 33 wives apart from his legal wife, Emma Smith. She has given the list of Joseph Smith's wives with substantial evidences. Not to mention, some of these *secret wives* were also married at the same time with other men. Joseph Smith was practising polygamy in secret. In *the new and everlasting doctrine*, Joseph Smith claimed to receive the following revelation about Emma:

And I command mine handmaid, Emma Smith, to abide and cleave unto my servant Joseph, and to none else. But if she will not abide this commandment she shall be destroyed, saith the Lord; for I am the Lord thy God, and will destroy her if she abide not in my law.¹⁸⁵ (*Doctrine and Covenants 132:54*)

Joseph Smith openly denied such polygamous activities. When he was once asked about it, he replied: *What a thing it is for a man to be accused of committing adultery, and having seven wives, when I can only find one.*¹⁸⁶

Following the example of Joseph Smith, many members of the LDS Church, including church leaders, continued to practice polygamy. In 1890, under pressure by the American government, the church issued a manifesto formally ending polygamy. Even after this manifesto, many members of the LDS continued their polygamous activities secretly. When these activities became known, the LDS Church had to issue another manifesto to clarify that new plural marriages had been stopped in the church. Even the second manifesto could not bring these secret polygamous activities to an end.¹⁸⁷

In 2013, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has quietly posted 12 essays on its official website on contentious topics such as the ban on blacks in the priesthood, which was lifted in 1978 and accounts of how Smith translated the Book of Mormon, the church's sacred scripture and polygamy. The process of writing these essays began in May 2012. Each one was drafted by LDS scholars, often outside the church history department, then edited by the church historians and leaders, and vetted by the church's top authorities.

Prior to 2013, the LDS Church denied that Joseph Smith had multiple secret wives. In the essay on *'Plural Marriage in Kirtland and Nauvoo'* the LDS Church has acknowledged for the first time that Joseph Smith took as many as 40 wives, among whom were already married women¹⁸⁸.

The purpose of a prophet of God is that God's existence should be established through him by adopting the qualities and attributes of God at extremely high levels. In light of the above revelations, historical accounts, records, both written and said, as well as the abundance of testimonies to the character of Joseph Smith, a fair and just seeker of truth cannot accept Joseph Smith as an appointee of God and His representative on Earth.

CHAPTER 5
THE LDS SCRIPTURES

“Had it been from anyone other than Allah, they would surely have found therein much disagreement.”

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints' scriptures have been discussed in detail in the first part of this book. Now, let us examine them from a critical perspective.

The Qur'anic Criterion

The Holy Qur'an sets a very logical criterion to test whether a book is really from God or not. If a book claims to be from God, then the following should be the standard to judge such a book:

وَلَوْ كَانَ مِنْ عِنْدِ غَيْرِ اللَّهِ لَوَجَدُوا فِيهِ اخْتِلَافًا كَثِيرًا ۝

Had it been from anyone other than Allah, they would surely have found therein much disagreement.¹⁸⁹ (The *Holy Qur'an* 4:83)

Disagreement can be in the sense of contradiction. One attribute of God is that He is the Truth. He keeps all His promises and does not possess any weakness, because that is a human trait. Hence, God's words cannot contradict themselves and one would draw the conclusion that they must be the words of humans if inconsistencies are present.

While reading the criterion, two questions come to mind:

- (1) **Does the LDS Church claim that its Scripture is from God?**

Yes:

This is an ensample unto all those who were ordained unto this priesthood, whose mission is appointed unto them to go forth— And this is the ensample unto them, that they shall speak as they are moved upon by the Holy Ghost. And whatsoever they shall speak when moved upon by the Holy Ghost shall be scripture, shall be the will of the Lord, shall be the mind of the Lord, shall be the word of the Lord, shall be the voice of the Lord, and the power of God unto salvation.¹⁹⁰ (*Doctrine and Covenants 68:2-4*)

In addition to this, Joseph Smith stated:

I told the brethren that the Book of Mormon was the most correct of any book on earth and the keystone of our religion, and a man would get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book.¹⁹¹

(2) Are there any contradictions in the LDS scriptures?

There appear to be disagreements on the unity and qualities of God:

And now, behold, my beloved brethren, this is the way; and there is none other way nor name given under heaven whereby man can be saved in the kingdom of God. And now, behold, this is the doctrine of Christ, and the only and true doctrine of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, which is one God, without end.¹⁹²

And he hath brought to pass the redemption of the world, whereby he that is found guiltless before him at the judgment day hath it given unto him to dwell in the presence of God in his kingdom, to sing ceaseless praises with the choirs above, unto the Father, and unto the Son, and unto the Holy Ghost, which are one God, in a state of happiness which hath no end.¹⁹³

And after this manner shall ye baptize in my name; for behold, verily I say unto you, that the Father, and the Son, and the Holy

Ghost are one; and I am in the Father, and the Father in me, and the Father and I are one.¹⁹⁴

The above verses state that the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost make up one God. In other words, these verses support the doctrine of Trinity. On the other hand, we read in Doctrine and Covenants:

According to that which was ordained in the midst of the Council of the Eternal God of all other gods before this world was, that should be reserved unto the finishing and the end thereof, when every man shall enter into his eternal presence and into his immortal rest.¹⁹⁵ (*Doctrine and Covenants 121:32*)

Then shall they be gods, because they have no end; therefore shall they be from everlasting to everlasting, because they continue; then shall they be above all, because all things are subject unto them. Then shall they be gods, because they have all power, and the angels are subject unto them.¹⁹⁶ (*Doctrine and Covenants 132:20*)

Abraham received concubines, and they bore him children; and it was accounted unto him for righteousness, because they were given unto him, and he abode in my law; as Isaac also and Jacob did none other things than that which they were commanded; and because they did none other things than that which they were commanded, they have entered into their exaltation, according to the promises, and sit upon thrones, and are not angels but are gods.¹⁹⁷ (*Doctrine and Covenants 132:37*)

By reading the above verses, one is left confused as they provide descriptions of many creatures as gods.

Then, another contradiction the LDS scriptures have is in some verses about God having a spirit but in other verses Him having body, flesh, and bones:

And then Ammon said: Believest thou that there is a Great Spirit? And he said, Yea. And Ammon said: This is God. And Ammon said unto him again: Believest thou that this Great

Spirit, who is God, created all things which are in heaven and in the earth?¹⁹⁸

And the king said: Is God that Great Spirit that brought our fathers out of the land of Jerusalem? And Aaron said unto him: Yea, he is that Great Spirit, and he created all things both in heaven and in earth. Believest thou this? And he said: Yea, I believe that the Great Spirit created all things, and I desire that ye should tell me concerning all these things, and I will believe thy words.¹⁹⁹

The above verses teach that God is a spirit but the following verse says He has body, flesh and bones:

The Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man's; the Son also; but the Holy Ghost has not a body of flesh and bones, but is a personage of Spirit. Were it not so, the Holy Ghost could not dwell in us.²⁰⁰ (*Doctrine and Covenants 130:22*)

Please note that these are not ordinary contradictions, the very belief in God is contradicted in the LDS scriptures yet it is claimed to be the Word of God and the most complete book. The god of Latter-day Saints does not present himself properly without contradicting his statements, consequently proving that the LDS scriptures are certainly not Divine.

Moreover, the LDS scriptures are also in disagreement on the issue of lying.

God does not lie:

And the Lord said unto him: Believest thou the words which I shall speak? And he answered: Yea, Lord, I know that thou speakest the truth, for thou art a God of truth, and canst not lie.²⁰¹

He is displeased with those who lie:

Wo unto the liar, for he shall be thrust down to hell.²⁰²

However, the following verses in the Book of Mormon show God commanding Prophet Abraham to lie:

And it came to pass when I was come near to enter into Egypt, the Lord said unto me: Behold, Sarai, thy wife, is a very fair woman to look upon; Therefore it shall come to pass, when the Egyptians shall see her, they will say—She is his wife; and they will kill you, but they will save her alive; therefore see that ye do on this wise: Let her say unto the Egyptians, 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 unto them, 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.²⁰³

Is God powerless to help His servants in magnificent ways that He must resort to falsehood (God forbid)? Hence, we now understand that one reason Joseph Smith lied about polygamy was due to his understanding of God.

The dilemma of polygamy is presented below. The Book of Mormon condemns the doctrine of plural wives in the following words:

And now it came to pass that the people of Nephi, under the reign of the second king, began to grow hard in their hearts, and indulge themselves somewhat in wicked practices, such as like unto David of old desiring many wives and concubines, and also Solomon, his son.²⁰⁴

Behold, David and Solomon truly had many wives and concubines, which thing was abominable before me, saith the Lord.²⁰⁵

...they should have save it were one wife, and concubines they should have none, and there should not be whoredoms committed among them.²⁰⁶

For behold, he did not keep the commandments of God, but he did walk after the desires of his own heart. And he had many wives and concubines. And he did cause his people to commit

sin, and do that which was abominable in the sight of the Lord. Yea, and they did commit whoredoms and all manner of wickedness.²⁰⁷

The above verses not only clearly condemn and forbid polygamy, but also explain that it is a sin corresponding to adultery. In this way, all prophets who had practised polygamy have been branded as sinners and adulterous (God forbid).

Now, let us read from Doctrine and Covenants where polygamy has been commanded and encouraged:

VERILY, thus saith the Lord unto you my servant Joseph, that inasmuch as you have inquired of my hand to know and understand wherein I, the Lord, justified my servants Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as also Moses, David and Solomon, my servants, as touching the principle and doctrine of their having many wives and concubines—²⁰⁸ (*Doctrine and Covenants 132:1*)

Therefore, prepare thy heart to receive and obey the instructions which I am about to give unto you; for all those who have this law revealed unto them must obey the same. For behold, I reveal unto you a new and an everlasting covenant; and if ye abide not that covenant, then are ye damned; for no one can reject this covenant and be permitted to enter into my glory.²⁰⁹

Abraham received concubines, and they bore him children; and it was accounted unto him for righteousness, because they were given unto him, and he abode in my law; as Isaac also and Jacob did none other things than that which they were commanded; and because they did none other things than that which they were commanded, they have entered into their exaltation, according to the promises, and sit upon thrones, and are not angels but are gods. 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. David's wives and concubines were

given unto him of me, by the hand of Nathan, my servant, and others of the prophets who had the keys of this power; and in none of these things did he sin against me save in the case of Uriah and his wife; and, therefore he hath fallen from his exaltation, and received his portion; and he shall not inherit them out of the world, for I gave them unto another, saith the Lord.²¹⁰

And again, as pertaining to the law of the priesthood—if any man espouse a virgin, and desire to espouse another, and the first give her consent, and if he espouse the second, and they are virgins, and have vowed to no other man, then is he justified; he cannot commit adultery for they are given unto him; for he cannot commit adultery with that that belongeth unto him and to no one else. And if he have ten virgins given unto him by this law, he cannot commit adultery, for they belong to him, and they are given unto him; therefore is he justified.²¹¹

Prophets who practised polygamy were called sinners and adulterous, but later, they were justified and proclaimed righteous. Joseph Smith was also commanded to do the same. Why would the All-Seeing and All-Knowing God, who upholds the honour of His prophets, make such contradictory statements and false allegations and then attempt to reconcile?

With regards to polygamy itself, an objection can be raised that Islam also commands polygamy. However, this is not the case. God, the Almighty has not commanded nor made it compulsory for Muslims to practice polygamy in order to gain His nearness and attain salvation. Rather, it is an option given under certain circumstances, including times of war where a population might have a significant difference in the ratio of males to females due to deaths. Furthermore, Islam is the only religion that, while providing this option in certain circumstances, also restricts the number of wives (four at any one time) if the option is to be exercised at all. Another condition is that the husband must act justly in his treatment towards his wives - a

very difficult task that requires a high standard of God-consciousness.

As mentioned earlier, the LDS Church has acknowledged that Joseph Smith had as many as 40 wives, and that among them were some who were already married²¹². Islam never permits believers to have secret wives. The Holy Qur'an commands the believers:

فَأَنكِحُوهُنَّ بِأَذْنِ أَهْلِهِنَّ وَأَتَوْهُنَّ أَجُورَهُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ مُحْصَنَاتٍ غَيْرَ
مُسْفِحَاتٍ وَلَا مُتَّخِذَاتِ أَخْدَانٍ ۝

So marry them with the leave of their masters and give them their dowries according to what is fair, they being chaste, not committing fornication, nor taking secret paramours.²¹³ (*The Holy Qur'an* 4:26)

To this day, many sects of Mormonism, especially Fundamentalist Latter-day Saints, continue to follow the footsteps of their prophet, Joseph Smith, in America and the practise of polygamy is far greater in early Latter-day Saints and Fundamentalist Latter-day Saints than in any other faith. These polygamist activities are unveiled in a documentary "*Lifting the veil of polygamy*" produced by a group of former Latter-day Saints who are now known as "*Living Hope Ministry*".

The examples above, in conjunction with all other evidences provided, cannot be ignored by any seeker of truth. These grievous contradictions require great reflection on the scriptures', which are missing 116 pages and claim to have been revealed by the Lord of all the worlds. There are numerous other flaws in the LDS scriptures but enough evidence has been provided to demonstrate that the LDS Church is false in its claims and that their scriptures are not from God.

Furthermore, over 4000 changes were made in the Book of Mormon after its first publication. Yet the LDS Church still claims

it is the most complete book despite apparently missing 116 pages. Ed Decker, a former Mormon who is considered to be an authority on Mormonism, writes in his book *Decker's complete handbook on Mormonism: There have been more than 4000 changes made to the Book of Mormon, and all of them are minor.*²¹⁴

Joseph Smith and the witnesses

Joseph Smith was charged as a “disorderly person” and a convicted criminal and fugitive. All of the witnesses of the Book of Mormon left the Church except Joseph Smith, Sr., Hyrum Smith, and Samuel H. Smith. Notably, Oliver Cowdery who was also the scribe of Joseph Smith and actually saw the gold plates was excommunicated from the Church for accusing Joseph Smith of adultery. Joseph Smith publically charged him of stealing, lying and adultery. Moreover, the other two witnesses who actually saw the gold plates were also excommunicated. The first was David Whitmer, who later made his church known as the New Church of Christ and his followers were known as Whitmerites. Oliver Cowdery, the second witness, joined him and became his counsellor. Information relating to the witnesses has been briefly discussed. Readers are encouraged to explore further their accounts and history.

Archaeology of the Book of Mormon

Extensive research has been done and many books have been written in favour of and against the Book of Mormon. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints’ Brigham Young University founded the *New World Archaeological Foundation* (NAAF) in 1952. The ultimate purpose of this foundation was to prove the validity and truthfulness of the Book of Mormon through archaeological research. The LDS Church funded it with hundreds of thousands of dollars. Mr. Thomas Stuart Ferguson initiated the organization hoping to achieve this purpose. He later admitted that he wasted

25 years of his life trying to prove the authenticity of the Book of Mormon.

The idea is not to present the lengthy research of the New World Archaeological Foundation, but two extracts will be presented from *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, which is an independent Mormon quarterly publication that gives a summary of its research. The first extract is from an article written by Mr. Michael Douglas Coe, one of the leading authorities on American Archaeology, he writes:

Let me now state un-categorically that as far as I know there is not one professionally trained archaeologist, who is not a Mormon, who sees any scientific justification for believing the foregoing to be true,... Next, we come to "Book of Mormon archaeology," which I would define as an attempt by Mormons to establish the historicity of the Book of Mormon...Green's assertion that "The first myth we need to eliminate is that Book of Mormon archaeology exists"... nothing, absolutely nothing, has ever 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.²¹⁵

The second extract is from an article by a Mormon scholar, Mr. Dee F. Green, who very honestly admitted:

Just how much the foundation (New World Archaeological Foundation, the author) is doing to advance the cause of Book of Mormon archaeology depends on one's point of view about Book of Mormon archaeology. There have been no spectacular finds (from the Book of Mormon point of view), no Zarahemlas (a huge ancient city according to the Book of Mormon, the author), no gold plates brought to light, no horses uncovered,... In assessing the future relationship of the Book of Mormon to archaeology, one must first consider how long it will take us to rid ourselves of the unfortunate myths we have built around the relationship. For the general Church membership my prognosis

is unfortunately pessimistic... The first myth we need to eliminate is that Book of Mormon archaeology exists... a department of Archaeology at BYU (Brigham Young University) devoted to the production of Book of Mormon archaeologists do not insure that Book of Mormon Archaeology really 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.

Another myth which needs dispelling is our Lamanite syndrome. Most American Indians are neither descendants of Laman nor necessarily of Book of Mormon peoples... there is ample evidence in the archaeological record to show that this hemisphere was widely populated by peoples of Asiatic stock crossing the Bering Strait long before Book of Mormon peoples were supposed to have arrived on the scene.²¹⁶

It is also worth noting that Mr. Dee F. Green was also an editor of the *University Archaeological Society Newsletter*, published at the Church's Brigham Young University.

Is The Book of Mormon "the most correct of any book"?

For inquisition into the correctness and completeness of the Book of Mormon, let us look at what brands something as

complete. According to Aristotle, everything is said to have four causes for its existence and those are:

- Efficient cause (as in the maker)
- Material cause (the matter of which the thing is made)
- Formal cause (that form in which its essence consists)
- Final cause (purpose for which is made)

These are also known as Aristotle's Four Causes. The following reference explains further in detail on what the four causes are:

Aristotle proposed in *Physics* II, 3 that we employ four very different kinds of explanatory principle {Gk. aition [aition]} to the question of why a thing is, the four causes:

The **material cause** is the basic stuff out of which the thing is made. The material cause of a house, for example, would include the wood, metal, glass, and other building materials used in its construction. All of these things belong in an explanation of the house because it could not exist unless they were present in its composition.

The **formal cause** {Gk. eidos [eidos]} is the pattern or essence in conformity with which these materials are assembled. Thus, the formal cause of our exemplary house would be the sort of thing that is represented on a blueprint of its design. This, too, is part of the explanation of the house, since its materials would be only a pile of rubble (or a different house) if they were not put together in this way.

The **efficient cause** is the agent or force immediately responsible for bringing this matter and that form together in the production of the thing. Thus, the efficient cause of the house would include the carpenters, masons, plumbers, and other workers who used these materials to build the house in accordance with the blueprint for its construction. Clearly, the house would not be what it is without their contribution.

بہت بعید اور دور ہیں۔ پھر بعد اس کے علتِ صوری کا قابلِ تعریف ہونا ظاہر فرمایا اور کہا لَّا رَيْبَ فِيهِ یعنی قرآن اپنی ذات میں ایسی صورتِ مدلل و معقول پر واقع ہے کہ کسی نوع کے شک کرنے کی اس میں گنجائش نہیں۔ یعنی وہ دوسری کتابوں کی طرح بطور کتھا اور کہانی کے نہیں۔ بلکہ ادلّٰہِ یقینیہ و براہینِ قطعیہ پر مشتمل ہے اور اپنے مطالب پر حججِ بیّنہ اور دلائلِ شافیہ بیان کرتا ہے اور فی نفسہ ایک معجزہ ہے جو شکوک اور شبہات کے دور کرنے میں سیفِ قاطع کا حکم رکھتا ہے۔ اور خداشناسی کے بارے میں صرف ہونا چاہئے کے ظنی مرتبہ میں نہیں چھوڑتا بلکہ ہے کے یقین اور قطعی مرتبہ تک پہنچاتا ہے۔ یہ تو عللِ ثلاثہ کی عظمت کا بیان فرمایا اور پھر باوجودِ عظیم الشان ہونے ان ہر سہ علتوں کے کہ جن کو تاثیر اور اصلاح میں دخلِ عظیم ہے۔ علتِ رابعہ یعنی علتِ غائی نزولِ قرآن شریف کو جو رہنمائی اور ہدایت ہے صرف متقین میں منحصر کر دیا اور فرمایا هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ یعنی یہ کتاب صرف ان جو اہر قابلہ کی ہدایت کے لئے نازل کی گئی ہے جو بوجہ پاکِ باطنی و عقلِ سلیم و فہمِ مستقیم و شوقِ طلبِ حق و نیتِ صحیح انجامِ کادر جہ ایمان و خداشناسی و تقویٰ کامل پر پہنچ جائیں گے۔ یعنی جن کو خدا اپنے علمِ قدیم سے جانتا ہے کہ ان کی فطرت اس ہدایت کے مناسب حال واقعہ ہے۔ اور وہ معارفِ حقانی میں ترقی کر سکتے ہیں۔ وہ بالآخر اس کتاب سے ہدایت پا جائیں گے۔

The **Efficient cause** is made to the Author of the Holy Quran and His Grandeur and Majesty are indicated. It is said: I am Allah the All-Knowing; that is to say, I, Who Am All-Knowing and All-Wise, Whose knowledge is not matched by the knowledge of anyone else, am revealing this Book. Then, the **Material cause** is that the greatness of the Holy Quran alluded to and it is said: This is the Perfect Book; i.e., this is a grand and high-graded Book which derives from Divine knowledge. It is established with regard to it that its source and spring is the Eternal Being Who is All-Wise. By referring to it as *The Book*, God Almighty has signaled that this Book derives from the knowledge of that particular Being with perfect attributes, Who is Matchless and Peerless and Whose perfect knowledge and

minute mysteries are very far from the limited reach of human vision.

Then, it is said that the **Formal cause**, i.e., the body of the Qur'an, is so well reasoned that there is no room left in it for any kind of doubt, meaning that like other books it is not a mere tale or story, but is comprehensive of conclusive arguments and reasoning, and sets forth clear proofs of its objects and purposes, and is in itself a miracle which operates like a sharp sword for the removal of doubts and suspicions, and does not leave the matter of the recognition of God at the conjectural stage that He *should* exist, but carries the matter to the certainty of, He *does* exist.

Despite the grandeur of these purposes which are greatly concerned with effect and reform, it proceeds to define the fourth purpose which is its **Final cause**, which is the provision of guidance for the righteous. It announces that this Book has been revealed for the guidance of those who, on account of their pure interiors, sound reason, firm intelligence, eagerness for the pursuit of truth, and upright intentions, would, in the end, arrive at a high degree of faith and recognition of God and perfect righteousness. In other words, those about whom God knows that their nature is suited to this guidance and they can make progress in field true [spiritual and moral] insights, will ultimately be guided by this Book.²¹⁸

The author requests the readers to try this exercise by applying the Four Causes to the Book of Mormon, starting with the Efficient Cause (below), re-examining the sections above on contradictions, witnesses and archaeology and ending with the Final Cause (*"a man would get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book,"*²¹⁹)

The **Efficient Cause** of the Book of Mormon is a "seer stone." Joseph Smith would put that stone in his hat, and it would glow and the English translation would appear. Then, he would read the translation to his scribe, Oliver Cowdery, who would write and read it back to him. If the translation was correct the sentence

in the “seer stone” would disappear and the next sentence would appear. If it was incorrect then it would remain until the corrections were made. Moreover, the title of the Book of Mormon proves the fact that the origin of this book is a man, not God.

THE
BOOK OF MORMON

AN ACCOUNT WRITTEN BY
THE HAND OF MORMON
UPON PLATES
TAKEN FROM THE PLATES OF NEPHI²²⁰

Thus, the Book of Mormon has failed in the first cause and stands unable to justify its claim. Whereas, the Holy Qur’an at its very onset announced that this Book is from God, who is All-knowing:

اَلَمْ ذٰلِكَ الْكِتٰبُ لَا رَيْبَ فِيْهِ *

Alif Lam Mim (I am Allah the All-knowing). This is a perfect Book; there is no doubt in it²²¹ (*The Holy Qur’an* 2:2-3)

The **Material Cause** of the Book of Mormon is its greatness, which is established by its origin. In the case of the Book of Mormon it is the “seer stone” or its writer, and translator, Mormon. In any case, the greatness of the Book of Mormon should be in its claim to be “the most complete book” but it is a well-known fact that there have been more than 4000 corrections since its publication in 1830. One hundred and ninety years have passed - such is the “greatness” of this book. On the contrary, in the case of the Holy Qur’an, which has made the same claim, 1400 years have passed without a single correction or alteration. Even the bitterest enemies of Islam have admitted the fact that the Holy Qur’an is the same book today that was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad^{sa} 1400 years ago. Sir William Muir writes: “There is probably in the world no other book which has remained twelve

centuries (now 14 centuries) with so pure a text." This also proves that the Book of Mormon is not the most complete book.

The **Formal cause** of the Book of Mormon is that its body should be well reasoned so as to leave no doubt about it. However, the Book of Mormon gives the account of those people who lived in ancient America. Archaeologists have yet to find evidence pertaining to the people about whom the book was written. Therefore, the book is full of doubts and ambiguities in its entirety.

The **Final cause** is guidance for mankind. Although Joseph Smith claims that *"a man would get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book."*²²² The Book of Mormon does not make any such claim. Despite this statement, he failed to attain nearness to God, the Almighty, but instead incurred Divine wrath. The final cause does not apply to the Book of Mormon, thus proving that it is wrong in its claims and certainly not the most complete book.

CHAPTER 6
THE LDS BELIEFS

“And when Allah will say, “O Jesus, son of Mary, didst thou say to men, ‘Take me and my mother for two gods beside Allah?’”, he will answer, “Holy art Thou. I could never say that to which I had no right. If I had said it, Thou wouldst have surely known it. Thou knowest what is in my mind, and I know not what is in Thy mind. It is only Thou Who art the Knower of hidden things. “I said nothing to them except that which Thou didst command me — ‘Worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord.’ And I was a witness over them as long as I remained among them, but since Thou didst cause me to die, Thou hast been the Watcher over them; and Thou art Witness over all things.”

The beliefs presented in the first part are often taught and preached by LDS missionaries. Here are a few of the most ambiguous beliefs that are often hidden and not divulged to the public.

Plurality of gods

Although The Latter-day Saints say that they believe in One God, it is nonetheless evident from the revelations of Joseph Smith that his beliefs consist of many gods. Joseph Smith taught:

The Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man's; the Son also; but the Holy Ghost has not a body of flesh and bones, but is a personage of Spirit. Were it not so, the Holy Ghost could not dwell in us.²²³ (*Doctrine and Covenants 130:22*)

The above quotation clearly proves how the Mormons believe that there is more than one god. Joseph Smith was once revealed on the 20th of March 1839: *A time to come in the which nothing shall be withheld, whether there be one God or many gods, they shall be manifest.*²²⁴ (*Doctrine and Covenants 121:28*)

This prophecy was fulfilled 11 days prior to his murder, he delivered a lecture on the "Plurality of Gods". Here is an extract from his sermon:

I will preach on the plurality of Gods. I have selected this text for that express purpose. 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. It has been preached by the Elders for fifteen years.

I have always declared God to be a distinct personage, Jesus Christ a separate and distinct personage from God the Father, and that the Holy Ghost was a distinct personage and a Spirit: and these three constitute three distinct personages and three Gods. If this is in accordance with the New Testament, lo and behold! we have three Gods anyhow, and they are plural; and who can contradict it?

Our text says, "And hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father." The Apostles have discovered that there were Gods above, for John says God was the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. My object was to preach the scriptures, and preach the doctrine they contain, there being a God above, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. I am bold to declare I have taught all the strongest doctrines publicly, and always teach stronger doctrines in public than in private. John was one of the men, and apostles declare they were made kings and priests unto God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. It reads just so in the Revelation, Hence the doctrine of a plurality of Gods is as prominent in the Bible as any other doctrine. It is all over the face of the Bible. It stands beyond the power of controversy. A wayfaring man, though a fool, need not err therein...

Scriptural Interpretation

Some say I do not interpret the Scripture the same as they do. They say it means the heathen's gods. Paul says there are Gods many and Lords many; and that makes a plurality of Gods, in spite of the whims of all men. Without a revelation, I am not going to give them the knowledge of the God of heaven. You know and I testify that Paul had no allusion to the heathen gods. I have it from God, and get over it if you can. I have a witness of the Holy Ghost, and a testimony that Paul had no allusion to the heathen gods in the text. I will show from the Hebrew Bible that I am correct, and the first word shows a plurality of Gods; and I

want the apostates and learned men to come here and prove to the contrary, if they can. An unlearned boy must give you a little Hebrew. Berosheit baurau Eloheim ait aushamayeen vehau aurait, rendered by King James' translators, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." I want to analyze the word Berosheit. Rosh, the head; Sheit, a grammatical termination; the Baith was not originally put there when the inspired man wrote it, but it has been since added by an old Jew. Baurau signifies to bring forth; Eloheim is from the word Eloi, God, in the singular number; and by adding the word heim, it renders it Gods. It read first, "In the beginning the head of the Gods brought forth the Gods," or, as others have translated it, "The head of the Gods called the Gods together." I want to show a little learning as well as other fools.

The head God organized the heavens and the earth. I defy all the world to refute me. In the beginning the heads of the Gods organized the heavens and the earth. Now the learned priests and the people rage, and the heathen imagine a vain thing. If we pursue the Hebrew text further, it reads, "The head one of the Gods said, Let us make a man in our own image." I once asked a learned Jew, "If the Hebrew language compels us to render all words ending in heim in the plural, why not render the first Eloheim plural?" He replied, "That is the rule with few exceptions; but in this case it would ruin the Bible." He acknowledged I was right. I came here to investigate these things precisely as I believe them. Hear and judge for yourselves; and if you go away satisfied, well and good.

In the very beginning the Bible shows there is a plurality of Gods beyond the power of refutation. It is a great subject I am dwelling on. The word Eloheim ought to be in the plural all the way through—Gods. The heads of the Gods appointed one God for us; and when you take [that] view of the subject, its sets one free to see all the beauty, holiness and perfection of the Gods. All I want is to get the simple, naked truth, and the whole truth.

Many men say there is one God; the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost are only one God. I say that is a strange God

anyhow—three in one, and one in three! It is a curious organization. "Father, I pray not for the world, but I pray for them which thou hast given me." "Holy Father, keep through Thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one as we are." All are to be crammed into one God, according to sectarianism. It would make the biggest God in all the world. He would be a wonderfully big God—he would be a giant or a monster...

Abraham's Reasoning

I learned a testimony concerning Abraham, and he reasoned concerning the God of heaven. "In order to do that," said he, "suppose we have two facts: that supposes another fact may exist—two men on the earth, one wiser than the other, would logically show that another who is wiser than the wisest may exist. Intelligences exist one above another, so that there is no end to them.

"If Abraham reasoned thus—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 want you to pay particular attention to what I am saying. Jesus said that the Father wrought precisely in the same way as His Father had done before Him. As the Father had done before? He laid down His life, and took it up the same as His Father had done before. He did as He was sent, to lay down His life and take it up again; and then was committed unto Him the keys. I know it is good reasoning,²²⁵

Moreover, Joseph Smith taught that God was an “exalted man”. In April of 1844, he addressed the church conference and expressed the following:

God himself was once as we are now, and is an exalted man, and sits enthroned in yonder heavens! That is the great secret. If the veil were rent today, and the great God who holds this world in its orbit, and who upholds all worlds and all things by His power, was to make himself visible,—I say, if you were to see him today, you would see him like a man in form—like yourselves in all the person, image, and very form as a man;... it is necessary we should understand the character and being of God and how He came to be so; for I am going to tell you how God came to be God. 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.²²⁶

This means that Jesus had a father, that father had a father and so on and so forth, i.e., an innumerable number of gods.

Moreover, the LDS apostle, prominent LDS scholar, and author of many books, Bruce R. McConkie, also taught that god has a family and that human beings are the children. He states:

God lives in the family unit. He is our Father in heaven—the literal and personal Father of the spirits of all men. He begat us; we are the offspring of Heavenly Parents: we have an Eternal Father and an Eternal Mother. We were born as spirits, and we dwelt in the presence of our Eternal Parents; we lived before our mortal birth. As spirits we were in all respects as we are now save only that we were not housed in mortal bodies as is the present circumstance. Christ was the Firstborn of all the heavenly host; Lucifer was a son of the morning; each of us came into being as conscious identities in our appointed order; and Christ is our Elder Brother.²²⁷

Unity of God

The parallels with paganism can be seen very clearly. This is a predictable evolution of the concept of the trinity brought forth by Paul. Thus, Joseph Smith was a strong believer in the plurality of gods and preached this doctrine throughout life. He attempted to prove that this dogma exists in the Old Testament, as well as in the New Testament. He said that Paul taught this doctrine and presented the following verse:

For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,) But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.²²⁸ (1 Corinthians 8:5-6)

Thus, Paul's claim that Jesus was God's "begotten son" led to Joseph Smith's interpretation of multiple gods. One can understand how this development occurred. Furthermore, he and his successors fervently taught that human beings could also become gods; in fact, according to LDS beliefs, this is the very purpose of the creation of humans. The Holy Qur'an says that once a religion deviates from the Oneness of God:

وَمَنْ يُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ فَكَأَنَّمَا خَرَّ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ فَتَخْطَفُهُ الطَّيْرُ أَوْ تَهْوِي بِهِ الرِّيحُ فِي مَكَانٍ سَحِيْقٍ ۝

And whoso associates anything with Allah, falls, as it were, from a height, and the birds snatch him up, or the wind blows him away to a distant place.²²⁹ (*The Holy Qur'an* 22:32)

This is what has happened to Christianity, from the moment they believed Jesus to be a "begotten son" of God, it opened the doors to consider the existence of more gods, like pagans. The only way for Christians to return to the doctrine of the Oneness of God is to leave the concept of the deification of Jesus Christ, and follow the real teachings of Jesus as he himself taught. In other

words, they would have to accept that Jesus was only a prophet of God and nothing more. The Christians, including the Latter-day Saints, have fallen away from the pure and pristine teachings that were brought by Jesus Christ, i.e., “...*The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment.*”²³⁰

The teachings of Joseph Smith, the founder of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are examples of how deifying messengers of God results in numerous dilemmas and spiritual problems. Indeed, moving away from the pure and pristine teachings of any messenger of God will result in this. Jesus taught all his life that there is only One God and never asked his followers to worship him.

Joseph Smith quoted Genesis 1:1 in Hebrew and interpreted it to prove that there are many gods. How odd that it never occurred to monotheistic Jews who have been reading the Torah in their own language, that *Elohiem* refers to multiple gods.

The author contacted two scholars well versed in the Hebrew language. The first is Dr. Seymour Epstein, a Jewish scholar who acquired his Bachelor of Hebrew Literature in 1968 from the Jewish Theological Seminary of America and for ten years, from 1999 to 2009, Dr. Epstein was the director of Toronto’s Board of Jewish Education at the UJA Federation. He teaches at York University in Toronto, Canada, and consults in the field of Jewish education. He explained this quote in the following words:

This quote has misinterpreted the Hebrew of Genesis 1:1. God is called by several names in the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament according to Christians). Elohim is one of them and, although in this case, it signifies one God, the God of Israel, its form is plural. Many singular nouns have a plural form such as scissors or pants in English. In other places, Elohim does refer to several gods, but not the God of Israel, rather pagan gods of

neighbouring cultures. For example, Deuteronomy 11:16, "Take heed to yourselves, that your heart be not deceived, and ye turn aside, and serve other gods, and worship them."²³¹

Then, Mr. Falah Odeh, who was born, raised and spent most of his life in Kababir, Israel, considered to be an authority on Semitic and Arabic languages and taught at the Ahmadiyya Institute of Islamic Studies in Toronto, Canada, thoroughly explained this issue in the following words:

The quotation 'Berosheit baurau Eloheim ait aushamayeen vebau aurait's' that you showed me from the book 'SCRIPTURAL TEACHINGS OF THE PROPHET JOSEPH SMITH' is in the Yiddish Language (East European Ashkinazi Jewish accent).

The normal regular Hebrew transliteration of that quotation from the Bible (Genesis 1:1) is as follows:

Be rashith (In beginning) bara (created) Eloheim (Eloheim) ait hashamayim (the heavens) ve (and) ait haarets (the earth)

In Hebrew and Arabic, like other languages, the plural form is often used instead of singular out of respect and honour.

Anyway, Judaism is a monotheist religion. It believes in One God. In the Bible, we see in the book Deuteronomy, chapter 6, verse 4:

Shm'a (hear-you) Israel (Israel) ieu (Yahweh) elohainu (Eloheim-of-us) ieu (Yahweh) aihad (one)²³²

The Holy Bible and the Holy Qur'an teach that there is only One God, Who, alone, is the Creator of this universe. Here are a few examples from the Old Testament that bear testimony to the Oneness of God:

Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD:²³³ (*Deuteronomy 4:6*)

... O LORD God of Israel, which dwellest between the cherubims, thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; thou hast made heaven and earth.²³⁴ (2 Kings 19:15)

I am the Lord, and there is none else, there is no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me: That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me. I am the Lord, and there is none else.²³⁵ (Isaiah 45:5-6)

A few examples from the New Testament that evidence the Oneness of God are as follows:

Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment.²³⁶ (Mark 12:29-30)

And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God.²³⁷ (Mark 10:17-18)

And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.²³⁸ (John 17:3)

These verses leave no doubt that the Old Testament as well as the New Testament teach and preach only the One, True God and all other gods, be it Jesus or any other, to be false gods.

Now, let us read a few verses from the Holy Qur'an, which teach the Oneness of God:

وَالهَكُمُ اللهُ وَآحِدٌ ۚ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿١٠٠﴾

And your God is One God; there is no God but He, the Gracious, the Merciful.²³⁹ (The Holy Qur'an 2:164)

شَهِدَ اللهُ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ وَأُولُو الْعِلْمِ قَائِمًا بِالْقِسْطِ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ
الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ۝

Allah bears witness that there is no God but He — and *also* do the angels and those possessed of knowledge — Maintainer of justice; there is no God but He, the Mighty, the Wise.²⁴⁰ (*The Holy Qur'an* 3:19)

هُوَ اللهُ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمَلِكُ الْقُدُّوسُ السَّلَامُ الْمُؤْمِنُ الْمُهَيَّمِنُ الْعَزِيزُ
الْجَبَّارُ الْمُتَكَبِّرُ سُبْحَانَ اللهِ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ ۝

He is Allah, and there is no God beside Him, the Sovereign, the Holy One, the Source of Peace, the Bestower of Security, the Protector, the Mighty, the Subduer, the Exalted. Holy is Allah *far* above that which they associate *with Him*.²⁴¹ (*The Holy Qur'an* 59:24)

The above verses emphatically teach that there is only One God. Thus, the Holy Bible and the Holy Qur'an teach and preach only One God and reject all the other gods.

Lastly, God is One and He does not have any family as the Latter-day Saints believe. This was refuted 1400 years ago in the Holy Qur'an and in the following words:

قُلْ هُوَ اللهُ أَحَدٌ ۝ اللهُ الصَّمَدُ ۝ لَمْ يَلِدْ ۝ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ ۝ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا
أَحَدٌ ۝

Say, 'He is Allah, the One; 'Allah, the Independent and Besought of all. 'He begets not, nor is He begotten; 'And there is none like unto Him.'²⁴² (*The Holy Qur'an* 112:2-5)

Jesus: Literal Son of God

The LDS Church teaches that Jesus Christ, Lucifer (Satan) and the human race are all the sons and daughters of God. For that matter, God and the human race are the same species. Brigham Young, the second prophet of the LDS Church, said that:

...we actually believe that God the Father is our heavenly Father, that we are His children; and we believe that Jesus Christ is our elder brother – that he is actually the Son of our Father and that he is the Savior of the world, and was appointed to this before the foundations of this earth were laid.²⁴³

Furthermore, he explained that:

...He (Jesus), as we are the sons of our earthly fathers. God is the Father of our spirits, which are clothed upon by fleshly bodies, begotten for us by our earthly fathers. Jesus is our elder Brother spirit clothed upon with an earthly body begotten by the Father of our spirits.²⁴⁴

How was Jesus born? Let us read this story in the words of Brigham Young:

Things were first created spiritually; the Father actually begat the spirits, and they were brought forth and lived with Him. Then He commenced the work of creating earthly tabernacles, precisely as He had been created in this flesh himself, by partaking of the course material that was organized and composed this earth, until His system was charged with it, consequently the tabernacles of His children were organized from the coarse materials of this earth.

When the time came that His first-born, the Saviour, should come into the world and take a tabernacle, the Father came Himself and favoured that spirit (Mary) with a tabernacle instead of letting any other man do it. The Saviour was begotten by the Father of His spirit, by the same Being who is the Father of our spirits, and that is all the organic difference between Jesus

Christ and you and me. And a difference there is between our Father and us consists in that He has gained His exaltation, and has obtained eternal lives. The principle of eternal lives is an eternal existence, eternal duration, eternal exaltation.²⁴⁵

In simpler words, god Himself, came to Earth and had intercourse with Mary so that his son, Jesus, could be conceived (God forbid). This concept of literal sonship is also present in the *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* and other literature of the LDS Church. For instance:

...Jesus Christ is the Son of Elohim both as spiritual and bodily offspring; that is to say, Elohim is literally the Father of the spirit of Jesus Christ and also of the body in which Jesus Christ performed His mission in the flesh, and which body died on the cross and was afterward taken up by the process of resurrection, and is now the immortalized tabernacle of the eternal spirit of our Lord and Savior.²⁴⁶

Critical Analysis

It is evident that the Christianity presented by Paul and later Joseph Smith is at odds with the present day and age.

Jesus: Literal Son or Beloved Prophet of God?

Jesus: was he the son of God or a noble prophet of God? For this question, let us carefully examine the Gospels and figure out the actual role of Jesus in Christianity.

The First question: Did Jesus ever teach that he is a god besides God?

It is stated in Mark Chapter 12 that a few scribes came to enquire about a few things. One of them asked Jesus which commandment was the first of all commandments. This was the best chance to make his position known, that he is the son of God and that he has a share in Divinity:

The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment.²⁴⁷ (Mark 12:29-30)

Then, Mark Chapter 10 clarifies further when a man knelt down before Jesus, called him “good teacher” and sought his guidance. Jesus replied in the following words: *Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is, God.*²⁴⁸ (Mark 10:18)

Here, again, Jesus demonstrated his humility like all prophets and if he was the son of God, he should have encouraged the man, rather than telling him that “*There is none good but one, that is God*”.

The Holy Qur’an also supports the view that Jesus never taught the doctrine of plurality of gods nor the doctrine of his divinity. It is recorded in a discourse between God, the Almighty, and Jesus after his demise:

وَأَذَّ قَالَ اللَّهُ يَعِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ ءَأَنْتَ قُلْتَ لِلنَّاسِ اتَّخِذُونِي وَأُمِّي إِلَهَيْنِ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ قَالَ سُبْحَانَكَ مَا يَكُونُ لِي أَنْ أَقُولَ مَا لَيْسَ لِي بِحَقِّ إِنْ كُنْتُ قُلْتُهُ فَقَدْ عَلِمْتَهُ تَعْلَمَ مَا فِي نَفْسِي وَلَا أَعْلَمُ مَا فِي نَفْسِكَ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ عِلْمُ الْغُيُوبِ ﴿١٥٠﴾

مَا قُلْتُ لَهُمْ إِلَّا مَا أَمَرْتَنِي بِهِ أَنْ ااعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ رَبِّي وَرَبَّكُمْ وَكُنْتُمْ عَلَيْهِمْ شَهِيدًا مَّا دُمْتُمْ فِيهِمْ فَلَمَّا تَوَفَّيْتَنِي كُنْتُ أَنْتَ الرَّقِيبَ عَلَيْهِمْ وَأَنْتَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ ﴿١٥١﴾

And when Allah will say, “O Jesus, son of Mary, didst thou say to men, ‘Take me and my mother for two gods beside Allah?’”, he will answer, “Holy art Thou. I could never say that to which I had no right. If I had said it, Thou wouldst have surely known it. Thou knowest what is in my mind, and I know not what is in Thy mind. It is only Thou Who art the Knower of

hidden things. "I said nothing to them except that which Thou didst command me — 'Worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord.' And I was a witness over them as long as I remained among them, but since Thou didst cause me to die, Thou hast been the Watcher over them; and Thou art Witness over all things.²⁴⁹ (*The Holy Qur'an* 5:117-118)

The fact of the matter is that all prophets were sent to establish the unity of God, and to eradicate all false partners and equals that mankind had set up in ignorance to the One and Only Creator of the heavens and the earth. The Holy Qur'an makes this abundantly clear, and so, too, does the Bible.

The legendary words of that revered Prophet Moses echo in the homes and hearts of Jews, Christians, and, indeed, Muslims as well, to this day, when he proclaimed:

Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.²⁵⁰ (*Deuteronomy* 6:4-5)

This, as we all know, is the first commandment of the Old Testament. When it came to Moses^{as}, his very first instruction was the unity of God. If anyone is in doubt, that Jesus^{as} abrogated this ancient teaching of God's unity, then he need to only bear in mind that Jesus^{as}, that wise and holy man, cleared all possible misconceptions by declaring, *Think not that I have come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am come not to destroy, but to fulfill.*²⁵¹ (*Matthew* 5:17)

So, when Jesus Christ was asked what the first commandment was, he echoed the exact same words in verbatim, which Moses had taught as the first commandment. Jesus made it aboundingly clear that the same concept of God's unity which was taught by Moses was Jesus' own understanding as well. But Jesus Christ, who knew full well that people would seek to twist and misconstrue the beautiful teachings of God's unity by trying to

downgrade its importance, made it astoundingly clear that God's unity is the most important thing²⁵².

Hence, Jesus Christ brought the same teachings that all other prophets brought before him, that is, to worship the One True God, who has no associates besides Him.

The references from the Gospels and the Holy Qur'an clearly indicate and leave no doubt that Jesus taught to worship One God and never taught the doctrine of the plurality of gods. The Trinity doctrine was brought after Jesus and has led to interpolations and extrapolations until today.

The second question: What does the term God mean? The terms God, sons of God or His children are often used in revealed scriptures and by divinely inspired or saintly people to refer to those who receive the word of God and those who are prophets. Jesus was also called the son of God in this sense, that is, in metaphorical terms, not in literal terms. Keeping these metaphorical meanings in mind, let us study the Gospel of John, chapter 10, when some scribes came to Jesus:

I and my Father are one. Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him. Jesus answered them, Many good works have I showed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me? The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God. Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken; Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God? ²⁵³ (*John 10:30-35*)

Evidently, Jesus Christ's own understanding of his 'being god' was in the same figurative sense that the Jews, as a nation of God, have been called god. In fact, 69 times in the Synoptic Gospels, Jesus is referred as son of man, and where the word god is

applied to him, he himself has taken great pains to clarify that it is not at all literal, but figurative.

Hence, in the above verses, Jesus himself explained what the term god meant: i.e., those submissive to the will of God, chosen by Him and blessed by His revealed words. "Gods" refers to godly people in Biblical terms. This term was not alien to the scriptures and Jews at that time. For instance, the exact same figure of speech has been used by God in Exodus: *See, I have made thee a god to Pharaoh: and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet.*²⁵⁴ (Exodus 7:1)

And that's not all. In the Bible, the Kings of Israel have also been called the sons of God. If it is asserted that Jesus was the son of God because he was born without the aid of a father, then Adam, who is described in the same Bible as having been born without the agent of a mother or father, must be doubled in his godhood. In fact, Adam is not alone. Melchizedek had no mother or father; in fact he had no beginning, nor end, according to the Bible.

Hence, this concept of sonship is a figure of Biblical speech which signifies and connotes not the literal sonship, but the spiritual affinity and connection between God and His elect, chosen ones, and never once signifies the literal sonship of Christ to God the father. In fact, the Holy Qur'an also commands Muslims to call upon God like we call upon our fathers, with the same sense of affinity, connection, and innate love that a child has toward his father.

The term son of God is one of endearment and love which the bible has used many-a-time for several different people to demonstrate the pristine and godly nature of those noble and pure men. However, later interpolations which unduly and without Biblical evidence labeled Jesus Christ, began to assert that he is the literal son of God.

This terminology has also been used in the Holy Qur'an on numerous occasions and it is always taken in metaphorical terms and never literally. For example:

فَاذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ كَذِكْرِكُمْ آبَاءَكُمْ أَوْ أَشَدَّ ذِكْرًا

Celebrate the praises of Allah as you celebrated the praises of your fathers, or even more than that.²⁵⁵ (*The Holy Qur'an* 2:201)

In the above verse, God, the Almighty, is exhorting the believers to worship, and glorify Him as their fathers, yet this verse is never taken literally. Then, God, the Almighty, addressed the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa}, saying:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُبَايِعُونَكَ إِنَّمَا يُبَايِعُونَ اللَّهَ يَدُ اللَّهِ فَوْقَ أَيْدِيهِمْ

Verily, those who swear allegiance to thee indeed swear allegiance to Allah. The hand of Allah is over their hands.²⁵⁶ (*The Holy Qur'an* 48:11)

This verse was revealed on the eve of the treaty of *Hudaibiyyah*. When the Holy Prophet^{sa} was taking the oath of allegiance, his hand was on top of the hands of the believers, but God, the Almighty, said that His hand was over their hands. This is always translated in a metaphorical sense and Muslims never translate it to mean that the Holy Prophet^{sa} was God (God forbid). At another instance in the Holy Qur'an, God addressed the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa}:

فَلَمْ تَقْتُلُوهُمْ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ قَتَلَهُمْ وَمَا رَمَيْتَ إِذْ رَمَيْتَ وَ لَكِنَّ اللَّهَ رَمَى

So you killed them not, but it was Allah Who killed them. And thou threwest not when thou didst throw, but it was Allah Who threw²⁵⁷ (*The Holy Qur'an* 8:18)

This was at the Battle of *Badr*, when the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa} threw pebbles towards the army of the enemies, but

God, the Almighty, said that it was He Who threw the pebbles. Again, this is taken metaphorically.

The above references evidence that Jesus never thought of himself to be the literal son of God. He used the term god or son of God as used in the scriptures, namely, messengers of God and other godly people.

The third and last question: Was Jesus a prophet of God? Yes, indeed Jesus was a prophet and he was known to be a prophet amongst the people. Jesus himself believed he was a prophet sent by God, just like all other prophets who were sent by God. His prayer is recorded in the Gospel of John where he openly admits to be a prophet sent by God in the following words: *And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.*²⁵⁸ (John 17:3)

Then, the Gospel of Matthew records that, once, Jesus went to the temple of Jerusalem where he addressed the multitude who accepted his message as a prophet of God. Let us read how Jesus Christ was known at the time of his presence: *And when he was come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, Who is this? And the multitude said, This is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee.*²⁵⁹ (Matthew 21:10-11)

At another instance, he was also addressed as a prophet of God:

And the one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering said unto him, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days? And he said unto them, What things? And they said unto him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people.²⁶⁰ (Luke 24:18-19)

The Gospel of John also illustrates that Jesus was a prophet of God; *For Jesus himself testified, that a prophet hath no honour in his*

*own country.*²⁶¹ (*John 4:44*) This verse also refers to the practice of people when a prophet comes to them. They initially reject and persecute him. This verse also foreshadows the eventual migration of Jesus, similar to other messengers of God, from his homeland, to preach.

Furthermore, Jesus Christ himself categorically rejects his divinity, and always redirects all attributions of things Divine to God, the father. And this has always been the way of all Prophets.

Thus, Mark, Chapter 10 testifies that:

As Jesus was starting on his way again, a man ran up, knelt before him, Good Teacher, what must I do to receive eternal life? Why do you call me good? Jesus asked him. No one is good except God alone.²⁶² (*Mark 10: 17-18*)

Here, Jesus demonstrably presents himself as independent of God the father, and if anyone asserts that he is still divine in his own person, clarifies furthermore that let alone Divine, he cannot even be called good. Again, this humble statement of this great Prophet demonstrates that the indignation of Jesus for the Unity of God was so great, that he even considered calling a man good as shirking and taking away from the praise that belongs to God, and God alone.

And this is not a one-off statement. Indeed, the Bible is replete with Jesus' own understanding of how he was no more than a humble man, albeit a great Prophet, and how God, the father, the Creator of the Heavens and the Earth, was a separate Entity altogether, and that Jesus did not in any way share in His Godhood.

Again, it is indicated in John 14 that *If you loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the father, for my Father is greater than I.*²⁶³ (*John:14:28*)

Jesus Christ, in plain, lucid speech, makes clear that God, the father, is greater than he, thus totally refuting and putting straight the concept that Jesus is part of a perfect and equal tri-unity with the father and the Holy Spirit. After all, whose words will we take? Surely the words of Jesus Christ himself, when he lucidly declares, "I am going to the father, for He is indeed greater than I."

These verses show that Jesus claimed to be a prophet and his people also knew him and accepted his message as a prophet of God.

The Holy Qur'an also supports that Jesus Christ was a prophet of God:

إِنَّمَا الْمَسِيحُ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ

Verily, the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, was only a Messenger of Allah.²⁶⁴ (*The Holy Qur'an* 4:172)

قَالَ إِنِّي عَبْدُ اللَّهِ ط أَننِي الْكُتُبَ وَجَعَلَنِي نَبِيًّا ۝

He said, 'I am a servant of Allah. He has given me the Book, and made me a Prophet.²⁶⁵ (*The Holy Qur'an* 19:31)

وَإِذْ قَالَ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ يَبْنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ إِنِّي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ إِلَيْكُمْ مُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيَّ مِنَ التَّوْرَةِ ۝

And remember when Jesus, son of Mary, said, 'O children of Israel, surely I am Allah's Messenger unto you, fulfilling that which is before me of the Torah.²⁶⁶ (*The Holy Qur'an* 61:7)

These verses emphatically declare that Jesus Christ was a noble man and prophet of God sent for the guidance of the Israelites who never preached that he is god or that he should be worshiped.

Jesus and the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community is unique and stands out amongst all the other sects of Islam in regards to its belief regarding Jesus. It believes that Jesus was a noble man and prophet of God sent for the guidance of the Israelites. He preached the unity of God and faced severe persecution at the hands of his enemies. He had to pass through many trials and tribulations, the greatest of which was the attempted crucifixion. The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community believes that Jesus of Nazareth was hanged on the cross but was miraculously saved by God through his earnest prayers.

He met his disciples after his recovery and migrated to *Kashmir*, India, to gather his lost sheep. He completed his mission and died a natural death at the age of 120 years. The founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, the Promised Messiah, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^{as} of Qadian, posited this in his book *Masih Hindustaan mein* (Jesus in India — English version). Furthermore, more than a century ago, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^{as}, who also claimed to be the second coming of Jesus, wrote:

یاد رکھو کہ کوئی آسمان سے نہیں اترے گا۔ ہمارے سب مخالف جو اب زندہ موجود ہیں وہ تمام مرین گے اور کوئی ان میں سے عیسیٰ بن مریم کو آسمان سے اترتے نہیں دیکھے گا۔ اور پھر ان کی اولاد جو باقی رہے گی وہ بھی مرے گی اور ان میں سے بھی کوئی آدمی عیسیٰ بن مریم کو آسمان سے اترتے نہیں دیکھے گا۔ اور پھر اولاد کی اولاد مرے گی۔ اور وہ بھی مریم کے بیٹے کو آسمان سے اترتے نہیں دیکھے گی۔ تب خدا ان کے دلوں میں گھبراہٹ ڈالے گا کہ زمانہ صلیب کے غلبہ کا بھی گذر گیا۔ اور دنیا دوسرے رنگ میں آگئی مگر مریم کا بیٹا عیسیٰ اب تک آسمان سے نہ اترتا۔ تب دانشمندیک دفعہ اس عقیدہ سے بیزار ہو جائیں گے۔ اور ابھی تیسری صدی آج کے دن سے پوری نہیں ہوگی کہ عیسیٰ کے انتظار کرنے والے کیا مسلمان اور کیا

عیسائی سخت نومید اور بدظن ہو کر اس جھوٹے عقیدہ کو چھوڑیں گے اور دنیا میں ایک ہی مذہب ہو گا اور ایک ہی پیشوا۔ میں تو ایک تخم ریزی کرنے آیا ہوں۔ سو میرے ہاتھ سے وہ تخم بویا گیا اور اب وہ بڑھے گا اور پھولے گا اور کوئی نہیں جو اس کو روک سکے۔

Remember very well that no one will descend from heaven. All our opponents who live today shall die and none of them shall ever see Jesus son of Mary coming down from heaven; then their children that are left after them shall also die and none from among them shall ever see Jesus son of Mary coming down from heaven and then their third generation shall also die and they too shall not see the son of Mary coming down. Then God shall cause great consternation in their hearts, yet the son of Mary has not come down. Then in dismay the wise among them shall forsake this belief and three centuries from now shall not have passed when those who await the coming of Jesus son of Mary, whether they be Muslims or Christians, shall relinquish altogether this conception. Then shall prevail only one religion over the whole world and there shall be only one religious Leader. I came only to sow the seed which has been planted by my hand. It shall now grow and flourish and there is none who can hinder its growth.²⁶⁷

The Latter-day Saints, the majority of Christians and non-Ahmadi Muslims believe Jesus ascended to heaven physically and will literally descend. The Latter-day Saints are to build the kingdom of God before the *great and dreadful days of the Lord*, however the time for the second coming has passed in fulfilment of various scriptural prophecies and scholarly endeavors. They are waiting for a man who is physically resting in peace in *Kashmir, India*.

The Mormon Doctrine of godhood

The members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints hope to become gods of their own worlds and produce spirit children similar to God, the Father. On the 12th of July 1843,

Joseph Smith received a revelation concerning this doctrine and it is now part of the Doctrine and Covenants. The relevant part of the revelation is as follows:

And again, verily I say unto you, if a man marry a wife by my word, which is my law, and by the new and everlasting covenant,...Ye shall come forth in the first resurrection; and if it be after the first resurrection, in the next resurrection; and shall inherit thrones, kingdoms, principalities, and powers, dominions, all heights and depths...and they shall pass by the angels, and the gods, which are set there, to their exaltation and glory in all things, as hath been sealed upon their heads, which glory shall be a fulness and a continuation of the seeds forever and ever. Then shall they be gods, because they have no end; therefore shall they be from everlasting to everlasting, because they continue; then shall they be above all, because all things are subject unto them. Then shall they be gods, because they have all power, and the angels are subject unto them. Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye abide my law ye cannot attain to this glory. For strait is the gate, and narrow the way that leadeth unto the exaltation and continuation of the lives, and few there be that find it, because ye receive me not in the world neither do ye know me.²⁶⁸ (*Doctrine and Covenants 132:19-22*)

To be obedient to this revelation is to become god in the afterlife, when one will have his own kingdom and goddess wives with whom they will procreate children; and one will be called god of that kingdom. This is how Jesus, the LDS god and all gods achieved their godhood. Joseph Fielding Smith, the tenth president of the LDS Church, explained this very doctrine in his book, *Doctrines of Salvation*:

The Father has promised us that through our faithfulness we shall be blessed with the fulness of his kingdom. In other words we will have the privilege of becoming like him. To become like him we must have all the powers of godhood; thus a man and his wife when glorified will have spirit children who eventually will go on an earth like this one we are on and pass through the

same kind of experiences, being subject to mortal conditions, and if faithful, then they also will receive the fulness of exaltation and partake of the same blessings. There is no end to this development; it will go on forever. We will become gods and have jurisdiction over worlds, and these worlds will be peopled by our own offspring. We will have an endless eternity for this.²⁶⁹

This doctrine is found extensively in the LDS scriptures including the *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, *Mormon Doctrine*, the *Millennial Messiah*, and *Journal of Discourses*, but two references should be sufficient in order to develop an understanding of this doctrine.

Angel of Light or Satan?

Joseph Smith taught that man can become god and that this should be the goal of every member of the LDS Church. This sounds very familiar. For this inquiry, let us go back in history to refer to older scriptures and find out who else taught that man can become god and where exactly Joseph Smith got this idea. The result is that when God created Adam and Eve, He gave them certain commandments. Among them was that they should not eat the fruit from the forbidden tree, but then Satan beguiled Adam and Eve by promising: *For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.*²⁷⁰ (Genesis 3:5) The LDS scripture presents the same verse in the Book of Moses.

Indeed, after reading the previous section on godhood, one understands that both Satan and God make the same promise to believers.

The tenth president of the LDS Church, Joseph Fielding Smith, said that:

When Adam was driven out of the Garden of Eden, the Lord passed a sentence upon him. Some people have looked upon

that sentence as being a dreadful thing. It was not; it was a blessing. I do not know that it can truthfully be considered even as punishment in disguise...Therefore, worlds are created and peopled with the children of God, and they are granted the privilege to pass through the mortal existence, with great gift of agency in their possession. Through this gift they choose good and choose evil, and thus receive a reward of merit in the eternities to come. Because of Adam's transgression we are here in mortal life...

The fall of man came as blessing in disguise, and was the means of furthering the purposes of the Lord in the progress of man, rather than a means of hindering them.²⁷¹

Adam's transgression was a "gift" and a "blessing in disguise" - this is what the LDS Church teaches. According to the Bible and Doctrine and Covenants, Satan taught Adam and Eve that they would become gods and, according to the LDS scriptures (as mentioned above), Joseph Smith also taught that if they believe in him, they would also become gods. Furthermore, the LDS Church has been making their members gods in their temples.

Another astonishing fact that welds Mormonism with Satanism is that Joseph Smith mentioned an angel of light visited him. Who was this angel? It was the angel Moroni, the very symbol of Mormonism, just as the Star of David is the symbol of Judaism and the Cross is the symbol of Christianity. In editions printed until 1979, the Introduction page of the Doctrine and Covenants verifies Moroni is an angel of light. It states, "...Joseph Smith received visitations from Moroni, an angel of light..." The editions printed after 1979 do not include this sentence.

Let us read from the New Testament and find out who exactly the angel of light is: *And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.*²⁷² (2 Corinthian 11:14-15)

Therefore, according to the above reference, the angel of light is Satan or Lucifer and Joseph Smith also said that *The Devil may appear as an angel of light*.²⁷³ Moreover, in the book, *Mormon Doctrine*, Burch R. McConkie writes under the angel of light “*See Devil*”. Is it possible that the angel of light who visited Joseph Smith was in fact Satan, who gave him the same message that he had conveyed to Eve earlier? *For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil*.²⁷⁴

Blood Atonement

Another belief of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is that if someone commits an *unpardonable* sin, e.g., murder, adultery, stealing, marrying a person of African origin, and breaking a covenant, then the blood of Jesus Christ cannot atone for his or her sins. They must be killed and their blood must be shed in order for their sins to be forgiven.

The second LDS Prophet, Brigham Young, taught the following:

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... It is true that the blood of the Son of God was shed for sins through the fall and those committed by men, yet men can commit sins which it can never remit.²⁷⁵

Brigham Young further taught what action should be taken toward those who turn away from the Church:

I have known a great many men who have left this Church for whom there is no chance whatever for exaltation, but if their blood had been spilled, it would have been better for them. The wickedness and ignorance of the nations forbid this principle's being in full force, but the time will come when the law of God will be in full force. This is loving our neighbour as ourselves; if he needs help, help him; and if he wants salvation and it is necessary to spill his blood on the earth in order that he may be saved, spill it. Any of you who understand the principles of eternity, if you have sinned a sin requiring the shedding of blood, except the sin unto death, would not be satisfied nor rest until your blood should be spilled, that you might gain that salvation you desire. That is the way to love mankind.²⁷⁶

The question remains as to what these unpardonable sins are. The first unpardonable sin is murder, as Joseph Smith stated:

I was 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,²⁷⁷

The second is adultery, as Brigham Young taught:

... Suppose you found your brother in bed with your wife, and put a javelin through both of them, you would be justified, and they would atone for their sins, and be received into the kingdom of God. I would at once do so in such a case; and under such circumstances,²⁷⁸

The third is stealing; Brigham Young taught:

If you want to know what to do with a thief that you may find stealing, I say kill him on the spot, and never suffer him to commit another iniquity... if I caught a man stealing on my premises I should be very apt to send him straight home, and that is what I wish every man to do, to put a stop to that abominable practice in the midst of this people.²⁷⁹

The fourth is to marry someone of African origin. Presented below is an extract from the LDS prophet, Brigham Young, commenting on this matter:

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.²⁸⁰

The last one is to break a covenant, as Heber C. Kimball, an LDS apostle, taught:

If men turn traitors to God and His servants, their blood will surely be shed, or else they will be damned, and that too according to their covenants.²⁸¹

Critical Analysis

How can one claim that this promotes peace, love and mutual harmony among the human race? These teachings still exist in LDS scriptures; does this mean that the Church adheres to such teachings, yet is unable to implement them due to the laws of the land? Moses preached justice to his people, found in the commandment of tooth for a tooth and an eye for an eye. As this teaching gradually became extreme (i.e. justice at all costs and outside of the realm of mercy and compassion), Jesus came to revive it, preaching forgiveness to the Israelites; this is illustrated in the famous teaching of turning the other cheek.

These are ambiguous and perplexing teachings of the LDS Church. On one hand, the Church accepts the atonement of Jesus Christ, yet at the same time, rejects it partially by declaring that there are sins that cannot be pardoned and, thus, necessitating the shedding of the blood of a person who has committed that sin, and thus justifying killings in the name of salvation.

In reality, Jesus Christ neither died on the cross nor atoned for anyone. The Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa}, on the other hand

brought a wonderful law that appeals to the human intellect. He taught that everyone must pay for their shortcomings or seek forgiveness from the Merciful God, who loves to forgive. Those who read this teaching without bias will certainly agree to the fact that it is from God and that the Prophet, who brought this teaching, was, indeed, ordained by God Almighty. The Holy Qur'an says:

قُلْ أَعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ أَدْبَعِي رَبًّا وَهُوَ رَبُّ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَلَا تَكْسِبُ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ إِلَّا عَلَيْهَا
وَلَا تَزِرُ وَازِرَةٌ وِزْرَ أُخْرَىٰ ثُمَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكُمْ مَرْجِعُكُمْ فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنتُمْ فِيهِ
تَخْتَلِفُونَ ۝

Say, 'Shall I seek a lord other than Allah, while He is the Lord of all things?' And no soul acts but only against itself; nor does any bearer of burden bear the burden of another. Then to your Lord will be your return, and He will inform you of that wherein you used to differ.²⁸² (*The Holy Qur'an* 6:165)

This is the most perfect teaching that satisfies the requirements of justice, i.e., no one has to suffer for the sins of another and every soul should be responsible for its own deeds and actions. The God of Islam is Merciful and Forgiving and not cruel like the god presented by other religions. The founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, by whose hand the renaissance of Islam has been initiated, refuted the false doctrine of atonement in many books, but just a passage is presented here:

اور پھر ایک اور بات پر بھی غور کرو کہ خدا کا قدیم سے قانون قدرت ہے کہ وہ توبہ اور استغفار سے گناہ معاف کرتا ہے۔ اور نیک لوگوں کی شفاعت کے طور پر دعا بھی قبول کرتا ہے۔ مگر یہ ہم نے خدا کے قانون قدرت میں کبھی نہیں دیکھا کہ زید اپنے سر پر پتھر مارے اور اس سے بکس کی درد سر جاتی رہے۔ پھر ہمیں معلوم نہیں ہوتا کہ مسیح کی خود کشی سے دوسروں کی اندرونی بیماری کا دور ہونا کس قانون پر مبنی ہے۔ اور وہ کونسا فلسفہ ہے جس سے ہم

معلوم کر سکیں کہ مسیح کا خون کسی دوسرے کی اندرونی ناپاکی کو دور کر سکتا ہے۔ بلکہ مشاہدہ اس کے برخلاف گواہی دیتا ہے۔ کیونکہ جب تک مسیح نے خود کشی کا ارادہ نہیں کیا تھا تب تک عیسائیوں میں نیک چلنی اور خدا پرستی کا مادہ تھا۔ مگر صلیب کے بعد تو جیسے ایک بند ٹوٹ کر ہر ایک طرف دریا کا پانی پھیل جاتا ہے۔ یہی عیسائیوں کے نفسانی جوشوں کا حال ہوا۔ کچھ شک نہیں کہ اگر یہ خود کشی مسیح سے بالارادہ ظہور میں آئی تھی تو بہت بے جا کام کیا۔ اگر وہی زندگی و وعظ و نصیحت میں صرف کرتا تو مخلوق خدا کو فائدہ پہنچتا۔ اس بے جا حرکت سے دوسروں کو کیا فائدہ ہوا۔ ہاں اگر مسیح خود کشی کے بعد زندہ ہو کر یہودیوں کے روبرو آسمان پر چڑھ جاتا تو اس سے یہودی ایمان لے آتے۔ مگر اب تو یہودیوں اور تمام عقل مندوں کے نزدیک مسیح کا آسمان پر چڑھنا محض ایک فسانہ اور گپ ہے۔

You should also consider that it is God's eternal and established law that He forgives in response to repentance and penitence, and hears the prayers of His righteous servants which are offered by way of intercession. But we never observe in the Divine law of nature that 'A' hits his own head with a stone and this cures the headache of 'B'. We are, therefore, at a loss to understand how people can acquire inner purification through the suicide committed by the Messiah. Is there any law or philosophy which can make us understand how the Messiah's blood could have cleansed the inner impurities of other people? Our observation is, in fact, opposed to this principle, because, until the time when the Messiah decided to commit suicide, we find an element of righteousness and godliness among the Christians. After the crucifixion, however, their carnal passions burst forth like a river which breaks its banks and inundates the land. There is no doubt that even if this suicide on the part of the Messiah was deliberate, it was quite needless. If he had, instead, spent his life in preaching and exhortation, he would have done a lot of good for God's creation. But this act did not serve them in any way. Yes, if the Messiah had indeed come back to life after his suicide, and had ascended to heaven before the very eyes of the Jews, they would surely have believed in him. But, as

things stand, the Jews, and all reasonable people, consider the Messiah's ascension to be no more than a fable.²⁸³

God, the Almighty, gives glad tiding to all in the Holy Qur'an:

وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ سُوءًا أَوْ يَظْلِمْ نَفْسَهُ ثُمَّ يَسْتَغْفِرِ اللَّهَ يَجِدِ اللَّهَ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا ۝

And whoso does evil or wrongs his soul, and then asks forgiveness of Allah, will surely find Allah Most Forgiving, Merciful.²⁸⁴ (*The Holy Qur'an* 4:111)

The doors of repentance and forgiveness are always open with the sole condition of sincere repentance. In another verse, God, the Almighty, says:

قُلْ يٰعِبَادِيَ الَّذِينَ أَسْرَفُوا عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ لَا تَقْنَطُوا مِن رَّحْمَةِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ جَمِيعًا إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ ۝

Say, "O My servants who have committed excesses against their own souls! despair not of the mercy of Allah, surely Allah forgives all sins. Verily He is Most Forgiving, Merciful.²⁸⁵ (*The Holy Qur'an* 39:54)

Once, the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa} said that the joy of God at the repentance of His servant is greater than the joy of a lone wayfarer who, while travelling in the desert, loses his camel laden with provisions and loses all hope of finding it, but then suddenly finds it. God is the Most Loving, Compassionate and Merciful, Whose mercy encompasses all things.

The LDS Church and the African Race

The history of the LDS Church is tarnished with racism. It is an undeniable and harrowing fact that the Book of Mormon, the LDS Scriptures, the LDS Prophets, and the officials of the church discriminated against certain races.

So where do we begin? The LDS Church believes that in the “pre-existence” there was a “council of gods.” The “head god” prepared a plan of salvation, which Bruce R. McConkie mentions in his book, *Mormon Doctrine*, in the following words:

When the plan of salvation was presented — the plan where under the spirit children of the Father would be enabled to gain tangible bodies and, if faithful in all things progress to a like status with their Father — and when the need for a Redeemer was explained, Satan offered to come into the world as the Son of God and be the redeemer. "Behold, here am I, send me," he said. "I will be thy Son." But then, as always, he was in opposition to the full plan of the Father, and so he sought to amend and change the terms of salvation; he sought to deny men their agency and to dethrone God. "I will redeem all mankind, that one soul shall not be lost, and surely I will do it; wherefore give me thine honor," he continued. (Moses 4:1-4)

With the rejection of his offer and the choosing of the Beloved Son to be the Redeemer, Satan made open warfare against the Lord. "Wherefore, because that Satan rebelled against me, and sought to destroy the agency of man, which I, the Lord God, had given him, and also, that I should give unto him mine own power; by the power of mine Only Begotten, I caused that he should be cast down; And he became Satan, yea, even the devil, the father of all lies, to deceive and to blind men, and to lead them captive at his will, even as many as would not hearken unto my voice." (Moses 4:3-4) "A third part of the hosts of heaven" joined the rebellion; "And they were thrust down, and thus came the devil and his angels." (D & C 29:36-38; Rev. 12:4-9; Abraham 3:27-28)

Those thus cast out are denied bodies forever. They are sons of perdition, and with Lucifer, their father, they are in eternal opposition to all righteousness. By them all men are tempted, enticed, and encouraged to leave the paths of truth, walk in darkness, and become carnal, sensual, and devilish. (Moses 6:49) This opposition is used by the Lord, as part of his plan, to test

and try men. In mortality the overcoming of opposition is an essential part of progression and advancement. (2 Nephi: 2)²⁸⁶

In short, according to the LDS, Satan rejected God's plan of salvation which caused a war in heaven between the good and evil spirits. During the war, there was a group of spirits which was less valiant. This incurred the displeasure of the LDS god and he cursed those spirits by blackening their skin. McConkie further elaborates on what happens to these "less valiant" spirits:

Those who were less valiant in pre-existence and who thereby had certain spiritual restrictions imposed upon them during mortality are known to us as the negroes. Such spirits are sent to earth through the lineage of Cain, the mark put upon him for his rebellion against God and his murder of Abel being a black skin...The present status of the negro rests purely and simply on the foundation of pre-existence.²⁸⁷

In recent editions of Mormon Doctrine the above quoted reference has been removed. However, it is still present in the original edition. Joseph Fielding Smith, the tenth Prophet of the LDS Church explains:

There is a reason why one man is born black and with other disadvantages, while another is born white with great advantages. The reason is that we once had an estate before we came here, and were obedient; more or less, to the laws that were given us there. Those who were faithful in all things there [pre-existence] received greater blessings here, and those who were not faithful received less. . . There were no neutrals in the war in Heaven. All took sides either with Christ or with Satan. Every man had his agency there, and men receive rewards here based upon their actions there, just as they will receive rewards hereafter for deeds done in the body. The Negro, evidently, is receiving the reward he merits.²⁸⁸

This was a time when African Americans were widely maltreated and discriminated against and this LDS teaching

formed a part of the prevalent situation. The founder, Joseph Smith stated:

Had I anything to do with the negro, I would confine them by strict law to their own species, and put them on a national equalization.²⁸⁹

Furthermore, the second prophet of the LDS Church disseminated the following teaching:

You see some classes of the human family that are black, uncouth, uncomely, disagreeable and low in their habits, wild, and seemingly deprived of nearly all the blessings of the intelligence that is generally bestowed upon mankind. The first man that committed the odious crime of killing one of his brethren will be cursed the longest of any one of the children of Adam. Cain slew his brother. Cain might have been killed, and that would have put a termination to that line of human beings. This was not to be, and the Lord put a mark upon him, which is the flat nose and black skin. Trace mankind down to after the flood, and then another curse is pronounced upon the same race – that they should be the "servant of servants;" and they will be, until that curse is removed; and the Abolitionists cannot help it, nor in the least alter that decree. How long is that race to endure the dreadful curse that is upon them? That curse will remain upon them, and they never can hold the Priesthood or share in it until all the other descendants of Adam have received the promises and enjoyed the blessings of the Priesthood and the keys thereof. Until the last ones of the residue of Adam's children are brought up to that favourable position, the children of Cain cannot receive the first ordinances of the Priesthood. They were the first that were cursed, and they will be the last from whom the curse will be removed. When the residue of the family of Adam come up and receive their blessings, then the curse will be removed from the seed of Cain, and they will receive blessings in like proportion.²⁹⁰

It is worthy to note that this teaching originates from the 'most correct book' and is still part of the Mormon canon. The first book

of the Book of Mormon states that *“And it came to pass that I beheld, after they had dwindled in unbelief they became a dark, and loathsome, and a filthy people, full of idleness and all manner of abominations.”*²⁹¹

Alman, another book of the Book of Mormon, states, *“And the skins of the Lamanites were dark, according to the mark which was set upon their fathers, which was a curse upon them because of their transgression and their rebellion against their brethren.”*²⁹²

Having studied the LDS ideologies, it is little wonder that the early Latter-day Saints actively discriminated against African Americans. For instance, members of the LDS Church were not allowed to marry African Americans. African Americans were not allowed to hold priesthood and other positions in the Church. All this continued until 1978 when under enormous political pressure the Church reverted from this teaching. How could the teachings of God crumble so weakly under the societal pressure of his own creation? Spencer W. Kimball, the twelfth president of the Church, issued a declaration in which he officially announced that the priesthood would be extended to all worthy members without discrimination of race or color. He declared:

He has heard our prayers, and by revelation has confirmed that the long-promised day has come when every faithful, worthy man in the Church may receive the holy priesthood, with power to exercise its divine authority, and enjoy with his loved ones every blessing that flows therefrom, including the blessings of the temple. Accordingly, all worthy male members of the Church may be ordained to the priesthood without regard for race or color. Priesthood leaders are instructed to follow the policy of carefully interviewing all candidates for ordination to either the Aaronic or the Melchizedek Priesthood to insure that they meet the established standards for worthiness.²⁹³

This declaration gave permission to African-origin individuals to become priests, yet past verses regarding the curse of the less valiant and Cain are unexplained. After this announcement, the

LDS Church started extending the message and preaching to African Americans. However, Present-day LDS Church members and missionaries have trouble reconciling such teachings.

Critical Analysis

These quotations beg the question of the wisdom behind cursing a certain nation for thousands of years and then reverting from this teaching. One must ask, what would be the wisdom behind this claimed action of the All-Seeing, All-Knowing, Compassionate God who has created everyone. It is said about God in the Old Testament that *'For I am the Lord, I change not'*²⁹⁴.

The Holy Qur'an from the very outset presents God as the Lord of the all the worlds and of all people. Therefore, its teachings are for everyone and it resonates with everyone because of its beauty and its appeals. Here are some verses of the Holy Qur'an discussing equality:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ
لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتَقَاكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ ﴿١٠١﴾

O mankind, We have created you from a male and a female; and We have made you into tribes and sub-tribes that you may recognize one another. Verily, the most honourable among you, in the sight of Allah, is he who is the most righteous among you. Surely, Allah is All-knowing, All-Aware.²⁹⁵

The English Commentary of the Holy Qur'an, published by the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community in five volumes, explains this verse:

The verse, in fact, constitutes the Magna Carta of human fraternity and equality. It has firmly laid the axe at the false and foolish notions of superiority, born of racial arrogance or national conceit. All men having been "created from a male and a female" as human beings have been declared equal in the sight of God. The worth of a man is not to be judged by the pigment

of his skin, the amount of wealth he possesses or by his rank or social status, descent or pedigree, but by his moral greatness and the way in which he discharges his obligations to God and man. The whole human race is but one family. Division into tribes, nations, and races is meant to give them a better knowledge of one another, in order that they might benefit from one another's national characteristics and good qualities. This, according to Islam, is the criterion of a person's greatness and this is the only true and real criterion. The Holy Prophet^{sa} explained the beautiful idea of the brotherhood of man inculcated in this verse in his own inimitable way on the occasion of the Last Pilgrimage at Mecca, a short time before his death. Addressing a vast concourse of Muslims the Prophet^{sa} said, "O ye men! Your God is One and your ancestor is one. An Arab possesses no superiority over a non-Arab, nor does a non-Arab over an Arab. A white is in no way superior to a red, nor, for that matter, a red to a white, but only to the extent to which he discharges his duty to God and man. The most honoured among you in the sight of God is the most righteous among you" (Baihaqui). These noble words spoken by the Prophet^{sa} during his Farewell Pilgrimage which have resounded through the centuries epitomize one of Islam's loftiest ideals and strongest principles. It goes to the credit of the Holy Prophet^{sa} that in a society riven with class distinction, he preached a message intensely democratic.²⁹⁶

The life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa} was a living embodiment of the teachings of the Holy Qur'an. He proved through his actions that he practiced what he preached. For instance, one of the first converts to Islam - and the first person selected by the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa} to make the call (adhan) for prayer - was an Ethiopian freed slave by the name of Bilal^{ra}. He also helped the Prophet^{sa} build the first mosque ever built: the Quba Mosque in Medina. Then, at the victory of Mecca, the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa} gave Bilal^{ra} the duty of calling the Meccans to the Flag of Peace. The story of Bilal^{ra}, in fact, remains the classic and most frequently cited demonstration that in the Prophet's^{sa} eyes, the measure of a man was neither nationality nor social status or race, but piety.

Perhaps there is a Biblical influence on the LDS Church's teachings and practices of slavery:

Both thy bondmen, and thy bondmaids, which thou shalt have, shall be of the heathen that are round about you; of them shall ye buy bondmen and bondmaids.

Moreover of the children of the strangers that do sojourn among you, of them shall ye buy, and of their families that are with you, which they begat in your land: and they shall be your possession.

And ye shall take them as an inheritance for your children after you, to inherit them for a possession; they shall be your bondmen for ever: but over your brethren the children of Israel, ye shall not rule one over another with rigour.²⁹⁷

Another example:

Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the forward.²⁹⁸

At the advent of Islam, more than 1400 years ago, the practice of slavery was prevalent. Hundreds of thousands of slaves were living in extreme misery and pain in Rome, Greece, Egypt, Persia, and other countries. In Arabia, too, there were thousands of slaves in those days. Perhaps nowhere in the world were slaves more despised than in Arabia. They were treated with the utmost cruelty and contempt, subjected to torment and regular torture.

When the Holy Founder^{sa} of Islam began preaching, circa 611 A.D., his teaching included the injunction that slaves should be treated with leniency and kindness. In fact, his earliest revelations declared the emancipation of slaves as an act of great virtue. As time advanced and further commandments were revealed concerning slaves, their position became stronger and their condition improved, until at last there ceased to be any distinction between slaves and their masters.

The teachings that the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa} brought regarding slaves can be divided into two categories:

1. Teachings for the betterment of the conditions of existing slaves and measures for their gradual emancipation.
2. Steps for the permanent abolition of slavery.

1. Teachings on betterment of the conditions of existing slaves and measures for their gradual emancipation

The Holy Qur'an enjoins the Muslims to be kind to slaves and do good to them in the following words:

وَأَعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَلَا تُشْرِكُوا بِهِ شَيْئًا وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا وَبِذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ
وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَالْمَسَاكِينِ وَالْجَارِ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْجَارِ الْجُنُبِ
وَالصَّاحِبِ بِالْجَنبِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ وَمَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ
مَنْ كَانَ مُخْتَالًا فَخُورًا ﴿١٠١﴾

And worship Allah and associate naught with Him, and show kindness to parents, and to kindred, and orphans, and the needy, and to the neighbour that is a kinsman and the neighbour that is a stranger, and the companion by your side, and the wayfarer, and those whom your right hands possess (slaves). Surely, Allah loves not the proud and the boastful,²⁹⁹

The Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa} further taught his followers:

Your slaves are your brethren. So if anyone of you happens to have a slave, let him give him the same food that he himself eats, and the same clothing that he himself wears. And do not give them such work as is beyond their power to perform, and if you ever happen to give them such work, you should help them in doing it.³⁰⁰

These were not mere words; the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa} lived up to what he advised. Hazrat Mirza Bashir Ahmad^{ra}, a renowned historian on the life of Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa} and

Islamic history, quotes a very moving incident in his book on the life of the Prophet Muhammad^{sa}:

Hakīm bin Hizām, the nephew of Hazrat Khadījah^{ra}, was a merchant who constantly moved about with various trade caravans. Once he purchased a few slaves during a trade expedition and gifted one of them to Hazrat Khadijah^{ra}. The name of the slave gifted to Hazrat Khadijah^{ra} was Zaid bin Hārithah. In actuality, Zaid belonged to a free family, but during a plunder he was taken captive and was made a slave forcefully. Khadijah^{ra} found Zaid to be wise and intelligent, so she entrusted him to Muhammad^{sa}.

It was always the practice of the Holy Prophet^{sa} that he would treat his servants and slaves with extreme love like his own kith and kin. Hence, Muhammad^{sa} was affectionate to Zaid. Since Zaid possessed a sincere heart, he also developed love for Muhammad^{sa}. Meanwhile, Zaid's father Hārithah and paternal uncle Ka'b came to Makkah while looking for him. Both of them presented themselves before the Holy Prophet^{sa} and with great humility requested the freedom of Zaid, thus that he may return home with them. Muhammad^{sa} responded, "Absolutely! If Zaid wishes to leave with you I delightedly give him permission to do so". At this, Zaid was called upon and was asked by Muhammad^{sa}, "Zaid, Do you recognize these people?" "Yes," responded Zaid, "they are my father and paternal uncle". Muhammad^{sa} said, "They have come to take you. If you wish to leave with them, I gladly give you permission to do so." "I shall not leave you on any account," answered Zaid, "to me, you are far dearer than my own uncle or father." Zaid's father responded with great anger and grief, "What? Do you give preference to a life of slavery over that of freedom?" "Yes," responded Zaid, "for I have witnessed such virtues in him as now, I can give preference to none above him."

When Muhammad^{sa} heard this response he immediately stood up and took Zaid to the Ka'bah and announced in a loud voice, "O People! Remain witness that as of this day I free Zaid and make him my son. He shall be my heir and I shall be his." When

Zaid's uncle and father observed this sight, they were astounded. They happily left Zaid with Muhammad^{sa}. Since then, Zaid bin Hārithah became known as Zaid bin Muhammad. However, after the Hijrah, God revealed a commandment that it is unlawful to take an adopted child as an actual son. Upon this, Zaid was once again given his original name, Zaid bin Hārithah. Nonetheless, the loving conduct of the ever-loyal Muhammad^{sa} remained unaltered with this ever-sincere servant, rather, it increased day after day. After the demise of Zaid, the Holy Prophet^{sa} extended the same graciousness and love to his son Usāmah bin Zaidra who was born of Ummi Aimanra, a servant of the Prophet^{sa}.

In addition to the honourable distinctions of Zaid^{ra}, one is that among all the companions of the Prophet^{sa}, only his name is specifically mentioned in the Holy Qur'ān.³⁰¹

The instructions and examples of the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa} leave no doubt that he not only enjoined the kindest treatment of slaves, the like of which is not to be found in any other religion or society, but the real object of those teachings was that Muslims should treat their slaves as their own brothers and sisters. His teaching was not meant to impress people but was meant to be followed. His companions and followers did exactly that. They followed his teachings in letter and spirit and acted upon them faithfully. Here are two examples:

Ubadah, son of Walid, says: "We once met Abdul Yusr, a companion of the Holy Prophetsa, who was accompanied by a slave. We saw that he wore a striped garment coupled with a Yemenite garment, and so did his slave. I said to him, 'Uncle, why did you not take the striped garment of your slave and give a Yemenite garment to him, or take his Yemenite garment for yourself and give him the striped garment of the same kind? Abdul Yusr laid his hand on my head and blessed me and said, 'Dear nephew, my eyes have seen, and my ears have heard, and my mind remembers that the Holy Prophet^{sa} used to enjoin, 'Give to your slaves the same food that you yourselves eat and give them the same garment that you yourselves wear.

Therefore, I prefer to give of my worldly possessions an equal share to my slave rather than lose any part of my reward on the Day of Judgement.”³⁰²

Abū Nawār^{ra}, who was a merchant of cotton cloth, narrates that on one occasion Hazrat ‘Alī^{ra} came to his shop. At the time he was accompanied by one of his slaves. ‘Alī^{ra} purchased two thin shirts and said to his slave, ‘Select the shirt you desire from among these two.’ Hence, the slave chose a shirt and Hazrat ‘Alī^{ra} wore the one which was left behind.”³⁰³

This demonstrates the level of the companions’ obedience to the teachings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa} with regard to the treatment of slaves. This conduct was not meant merely as an act of kindness to the slaves, but had the ulterior object of lifting them in the social scale and bringing them on par with free men and women, so that they become good citizens after emancipation. This is the reason why the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa} issued the following teaching to his companions:

Let not one of you say, ‘O my slave’ or ‘O my bondsmaid’ but let him say, ‘My boy’ or ‘My girl’. Similarly the slaves should not address their masters as, ‘My Lord’ or ‘My Master’ but simply as ‘Sir’.³⁰⁴

There are many other traditions also which show that Islam not only laid the greatest stress on the betterment of the condition of existing slaves and on doing the utmost for their welfare and comfort, but that the real aim of the teachings of Islam was to help make slaves respectable and contributing citizens of the state.

2. Steps for the permanent abolition of slavery.

The second method that Islam has employed is to eradicate slavery. The Holy Qur’an, in one of its earliest revealed chapters, refers to this subject in the following words:

أَلَمْ نَجْعَلْ لَهُ عَيْنَيْنِ ﴿١﴾ وَلِسَانًا وَشَفَتَيْنِ ﴿٢﴾ وَهَدَيْنَاهُ النَّجْدَيْنِ ﴿٣﴾
 ﴿٤﴾ فَلَا افْتِحَمَ الْعُقَبَةَ ﴿٥﴾ وَمَا أَذْرَاكَ مَا الْعُقَبَةُ ﴿٦﴾ فَكُ رَقَبَةً ﴿٧﴾
 ﴿٨﴾ أَوْ إِطْعَامٌ فِي يَوْمٍ ذِي مَسْغَبَةٍ ﴿٩﴾ بَتِيماً ذَا مَقْرَبَةٍ ﴿١٠﴾ أَوْ
 مِسْكِيناً ذَا مَتْرَبَةٍ ﴿١١﴾

Have We not given him two eyes, Have We not given him two eyes, And We have pointed out to him the two highways of good and evil. But he attempted not the ascent courageously. And what should make thee know what the ascent is? It is the freeing of a slave. Or feeding in a day of hunger, An orphan near of kin, Or a poor man *lying* in the dust.³⁰⁵

Then, according to the verse below, it is the duty of an Islamic state to spend part of the *zakat* or Alms for the liberation of men and women from the bondage of slavery.

إِنَّمَا الصَّدَقَاتُ لِلْفُقَرَاءِ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَالْعَامِلِينَ عَلَيْهَا وَالْمُؤَلَّفَةِ قُلُوبِهِمْ
 وَفِي الرِّقَابِ وَالْعَارِمِينَ وَفِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَأَبْنِ السَّبِيلِ فَرِيضَةً مِّنَ اللَّهِ
 وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿١١٠﴾

The alms are only for the poor and the needy, and for those employed in connection therewith, and for those whose hearts are to be reconciled, and for the *freeing* of slaves, and for those in debt, and for the cause of Allah, and for the wayfarer — an ordinance from Allah. And Allah is All-Knowing, Wise.³⁰⁶

How did Muslims act upon these teachings? Hazrat Mirza Bashir Ahmad answered this question in his book on the life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa}:

The answer to this is that as mentioned above, in this era, slaves were found in abundance. This was to such extent that in certain countries, the number of slaves was at times, even greater than the actual number of residents in the country. Therefore, to empty this unlimited store was no easy task, nor did all of these slaves live under the small Islāmic State and

under Muslim owners, whose number was even smaller. Thus, it was obvious that this liberation movement could only move forward gradually. However, history shows that as far as the efforts of the Companions and their followers were concerned, they exerted their utmost concentration and effort in order to free slaves themselves, as well as secure the freedom of others. Most definitely, no such example can be found in the history of the world. As such, history establishes that in this era, not only did Muslims continue to free slaves in abundance by their own hands, rather, they would also purchase slaves with the specific intention and objective of freeing them. In this manner, due to the commendable efforts of the Muslims, countless slaves were delivered from the misfortune of slavery. Therefore, the following list, which is definitely not inclusive and only contains the names of a few Companions by way of example, is enough to prove our claim. It is narrated in Subulus-Salām:

The Holy Prophet Muḥammad^{sa} freed 63 slaves

Ḥaḍrat ‘Ā’ishah^{ra} freed 67 slaves

Ḥaḍrat ‘Abbās^{ra} freed 70 slaves

Ḥakīm bin Hizām^{ra} freed 100 slaves

‘Abdullāh bin ‘Umar^{ra} freed 1,000 slaves

‘Abdur-Raḥmān bin ‘Auf^{ra} freed 3,000 slaves

Ḥaḍrat ‘Uthmān bin ‘Affān^{ra} freed 20,000 slaves on one day alone, which was the day of his martyrdom. The total number is far greater than this.

Dhul-Kilā’ Al-Ḥimyarī freed 8,000 slaves on one day alone

TOTAL NUMBER: 32,300

As we have mentioned above, in this narration only a few Companions have been mentioned by way of example. If according to the proportion mentioned above, we were to approximate the number of slaves freed by a large number of

other Companions, the Tābī'īn and Taba' Tābī'īn, this number definitely reaches into the millions. However, the truth is that even the number of freed slaves mentioned in this narration, which have been attributed to the above-mentioned Companions, is not completely accurate. Rather, the actual number is far greater. For example, with regards to Ḥadrat 'Ā'ishah^{ra} it is proven from a narration that she freed forty slaves upon a single instance alone. From another narration it becomes evident that it was her practice to free slaves abundantly. Therefore, to assume that throughout the course of her entire life she only freed sixty-seven slaves, would most definitely be incorrect. Similarly, the number which has been attributed to the Holy Prophet^{sa}, may be correct in relation to his personal circumstances, because his financial state at a personal level was not very good. Moreover, after the institution of these injunctions, the Holy Prophet^{sa} only lived for a short period in time thereafter. However, this number definitely does not include those slaves who were freed by the Holy Prophet^{sa} in his capacity as Head of the Islāmic State, the number of which was very great. Another thing to remember with respect to the Holy Prophet^{sa} is that many narrations substantiate that not a single slave came under his possession who was not set free. As such, it is this very fact, which the following narration alludes to:

“Amr bin Al-Ḥārith, who was the biological brother of UmmulMu'minīn, Juwairiyah^{ra} and the brother-in-law of the Holy Prophet^{sa} relates that upon the demise of the Holy Prophet^{sa}, he did not leave behind a single Dirham, Dinar, slave or bond-woman.”¹ Therefore, this teaching which has been prescribed by Islām in relation to slaves was not merely the embellishment of paper. Rather, this teaching became a necessary part of Islāmic culture and civilization, and the Islāmic way of living. Moreover, both individuals and the government keenly acted upon this teaching.³⁰⁷

The simplicity of the teachings of Islam, combined with this special injunction about slaves, made a deep impression upon the slaves of Arabia who began to look upon the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa}'s message as the call of a deliverer and liberator.

In short, Islam not only establishes equality but also abolishes slavery. Islam commands Muslims to love and respect existing slaves and to treat them with kindness. Most importantly, Muslims are ordered to emancipate slaves. Islam is a religion that came to do away with the very substance and concept of slavery; it established a perfect system to gradually eradicate this practice. There are conclusive evidences to prove that both the individual and state carried this teaching into practice with the fullest zeal and ardour. This flawless teaching, which Islam gave regarding slaves, was not meant to merely adorn papers; rather it became a part of the law and the social life of Muslims.

CHAPTER 7
THE FUTURE OF MORMONISM

“All those who resemble the Anti-Christ, those who love this world overmuch and who have only one eye, having lost the eye for spiritual truth, all of them will end by the sword of solid, unanswerable arguments. Truth will prevail. A new bright day will dawn again for Islam, just as it did before. The sun of Islam will rise in full bloom, same as it did before.”

A Question

Before discussing the future of Mormonism, an important question needs to be answered: If Joseph Smith was a false prophet, then what is the reason for the success of the Church? This is a valid question and must be addressed before going further. Let it be known that there are two kinds of success; the first is religious and the second is worldly.

When it comes to religious success, the truthfulness or falsehood of the founder of that particular religious community is significant. Joseph Smith's primary mission was to set up the Kingdom of God and to build Zion City in Jackson County, Missouri. However, he failed in doing so and was eventually arrested. This was not accomplished in his lifetime or afterward. Even his little success in Nauvoo, Illinois was short-lived. His actions led to a rapid yet inevitable downfall and eventually his untimely murder.

After his death, his Church was further divided into other segments. Today, there are more than sixteen million followers divided over one hundred denominations of his Church - *the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the Church of Jesus Christ of the First Born of the Fullness of Times, the Church of Zion, the Apostolic United Brethren, the Fundamentalist Latter-day Saints, the Righteous Branch of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the*

Restoration Church of Jesus Christ, the New Covenant Church of God, and the Time & Living Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints — to name a few. All of them justify themselves as the true followers of Joseph Smith and declare the others strayed from the right path. For instance, the *Fundamentalist* LDS Church believes that mainstream LDS strayed from the right course when they compromised with the government and abandoned components of the *new and everlasting covenant*. According to the LDS Scriptures, the mainstream LDS cannot be resurrected and become gods and goddesses. As a result, it is unclear which Church truly follows Joseph Smith. Prophets of God come to unite, not divide.

Moreover, the teachings that Joseph Smith brought suffered major setbacks. For example, his followers were forced to stop the practise of polygamy and give equal rights to African Americans. The communities of true prophets face dangers and accept every difficulty, persecution and hostility with patience, perseverance and smiling faces, but nothing moves them away from their beliefs. Joseph Smith and his followers were shaken and forced by the US government which resulted in forcing them to abandon several key teachings of Joseph Smith.

On the contrary, the living example of the founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^{as} of Qadian, and his community, when he proclaimed that Jesus Christ died a natural death, is worthy of note. He wrote a book named "*Masih Hindustan Mein*" (Translated English version available as *Jesus in India*) in which he has proved:

حضرت مسیح علیہ السلام مصلوب نہیں ہوئے اور نہ آسمان پر گئے اور نہ کبھی امید رکھنی
چاہئے کہ وہ پھر زمین پر آسمان سے نازل ہوں گے بلکہ وہ ایک سو بیس برس کی عمر پا کر سرینگر
کشمیر میں فوت ہو گئے اور سرینگر محلہ خان یار میں ان کی قبر ہے۔

Jesus did not die on the cross, nor did he go up to the heavens; nor should it be supposed that he would ever again come down to the earth. On the contrary, the fact of the matter is that he died at the age of 120 years at Srinagar, Kashmir, where his tomb is still to be found in the Khan Yar quarter.³⁰⁸

He proved it from the Gospels, the Holy Qur'an, the *Ahadith* (narrations of the Holy Prophet^{sa}), medical literature, historical records, oral traditions which have been handed down from generation to generation, various circumstantial evidences, logical arguments and revelations received from God.

After announcements like the one mentioned above, and others such as the termination of religious wars, many people turned against him and his followers and branded them as "disbelievers". His community has been suffering persecution for more than 130 years, but has remained faithfully steadfast, never turning away from his teachings. The author invites readers to explore in-depth the truthfulness of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community and compare it to the life of Joseph Smith, and the Church of Jesus Christ.

The second type of success is worldly success - truthfulness or falsehood of the founder of a particular community does not matter. According to this clause, be it a Jew, a Christian, a Muslim, a Buddhist, a Hindu, an Atheist, or a Mormon, whoever strives for a cause and expends great resources to achieve goals, it is against the natural system of cause and effect and the attribute of God, *Al-Rahim* (i.e. God causes beneficent results to follow upon human effort which is in accordance with His laws) that such efforts would not bear fruits.

God is Merciful and He rewards people according to their efforts. Let us take the example of two students; a theist and an atheist. Both are writing exams for the same class. The theist student, although a believer in God, does not work hard while the atheist student studies well, resulting in his success. One is

rewarded according to one's actions regardless of one's faith. God is Just and Gracious. He rewards according to the efforts of His servants, regardless of their opinion about God, the Almighty says in the Holy Qur'an:

وَأَنْ لَّيْسَ لِلْإِنْسَانِ إِلَّا مَا سَعَى ﴿٤٠﴾

And that man will have nothing but what he strives for;³⁰⁹ (*The Holy Qur'an*, 53:40)

This is the case with the Latter-day Saints – they work hard and spread their message diligently and God rewards them for their hard work – but this does not prove that Mormonism is a true faith just as it cannot be surmised that God does not exist based on an atheist's success in class.

Heavenly Signs and Three Types of People

The founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^{as} of Qadian, describes in his magnum opus book *The Philosophy of Revelation* that there are three types of people who partake of heavenly signs:

There are three types of people who partake of heavenly Signs. Firstly, those who possess no merit in themselves and have no relationship with God Almighty, but who, on account of their mental compatibility, see some true dreams and witness some true visions, but without manifesting any sign of acceptance and endearment, nor do they derive any benefit from them. Thousands of wicked, evil, sinful, and immoral ones share with them such malodorous dreams and revelations. It is often observed that, despite such dreams and visions, their conduct is not praiseworthy. At a minimum, their faith is very weak, so much so, that they do not have the courage to give a true testimony, and they do not fear God as much as they fear the world, and they cannot sever themselves from the wicked. They dare not bear such true testimony as might offend a person of rank. They are extremely slothful and lazy in respect of religious

obligations and are preoccupied day and night with worldly concerns and worries. They deliberately support falsehood and abandon truth. They are guilty of dishonesty at every step; moreover, some of them do not even restrain themselves from vice and sin and resort to every unlawful device for the purpose of acquiring worldly benefits. The moral condition of some of them is deplorable and they are the embodiment of jealousy, miserliness, self-conceit, arrogance, and pride. They perpetrate every mean act, and a variety of despicable traits are found in them. It is peculiar that some of them are such that they always see evil dreams, and they even come true, as if their brains have been fashioned only for evil and ill-omened dreams. They are incapable of having dreams that foretell their own betterment in worldly affairs and attainment of their desires, or dreams that foretell any good fortune for others. The quality of their dreams, out of the three types, can be described as resembling the physical experience of a person who perceives only smoke from a distance, but does not see the light of the fire nor does he feel its warmth. Because such people have no relationship with God and with spiritual matters, their lot is mere smoke from which no light is obtained.

Then the second category of people who see dreams or experience revelations are those who have some relationship with God Almighty, but that relationship is not perfect. The quality of their dreams or revelations resembles the physical experience of a person who perceives the light of a fire from far away on a dark and frigid night. This sight provides at least the benefit that he avoids the path which has many potholes, thorns, rocks, serpents, and beasts, but this much light cannot save him from the cold and destruction. Thus, if such a person fails to reach the warm circle of the fire, he is destroyed just like one who walks in the dark.

Then the third category of people who experience revelations and see dreams are those whose quality of dreams and revelations resembles the physical experience of a person who, on a dark and frigid night, not only finds the full radiance of the fire and walks in it, but also, by entering its warm circle, is fully

safeguarded against the ill effects of the cold. This rank is attained by those who incinerate the cloak of carnal passions in the fire of divine love and adopt an arduous life for the sake of God. They see the death that lies ahead, yet they rush to choose that death for themselves. They embrace every pain in the path of God. For the sake of God, by becoming the enemy of their ego and marching against it, they exhibit such power of faith that even the angels are amazed and astounded at the strength of their faith. They are spiritual champions and all of Satan's assaults amount to nothing in opposition to their spiritual strength. They are true in their faithfulness and uncompromising in their truthfulness such that the sights of worldly pleasures cannot beguile them nor can the love of children or the bond of matrimony turn them away from their True Beloved. In short, no bitterness can frighten them nor can any carnal pleasure hinder them from God, nor can any relationship interfere with their relationship with God.³¹⁰

In summary there are three kinds of people who partake of divine signs:

- Those who are wicked, evil, sinful, and immoral ones.
- Those who have some relationship with God Almighty, but that relationship is not perfect.
- Those who are true in their faithfulness and uncompromising in their truthfulness.

Spread of Light at the Advent of a Prophet

It is a law of nature that at the advent of a prophet, God sends His angels to prepare people's hearts to accept the prophet. This law has been outlined by God the Almighty in the Holy Qur'an:

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةِ الْقَدْرِ ۖ وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ ۖ لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ خَيْرٌ مِّنْ أَلْفِ شَهْرٍ ۖ تَنزِيلُ الْمَلِكَةِ وَالرُّوحِ فِيهَا بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِمْ مِّنْ كُلِّ أَمْرٍ ۗ سَلَامٌ هِيَ حَتَّىٰ مَطْلَعِ الْفَجْرِ ۖ

Surely, We sent it down on the Night of Destiny. And what should make thee know what the Night of Destiny is? The Night of Destiny is better than a thousand months. Therein descend angels and the Spirit by the command of their Lord — with every matter. *It is all peace till the rising of the dawn.*³¹¹ (*The Holy Qur'an*, 97:2-6)

The Promised Messiah^{as} has explained this law of nature in profound words:

یہ نکتہ بھی یاد رکھنے کے لائق ہے کہ جب آسمان سے مقرر ہو کر ایک نبی یا رسول آتا ہے تو اس نبی کی برکت سے عام طور پر ایک اور حسب مراتب استعدادات آسمان سے نازل ہوتا ہے اور انتشار و روحانیت ظہور میں آتا ہے تب ہر ایک شخص خوابوں کے دیکھنے میں ترقی کرتا ہے اور الہام کی استعداد رکھنے والے الہام پاتے ہیں اور روحانی امور میں عقلیں بھی تیز ہو جاتی ہیں کیونکہ جیسا کہ جب بارش ہوتی ہے ہر ایک زمین کچھ نہ کچھ اس سے حصہ لیتی ہے ایسا ہی اس وقت ہوتا ہے جب رسول کے بھیجنے سے بہار کا زمانہ آتا ہے تب ان ساری برکتوں کا موجب دراصل وہ رسول ہوتا ہے اور جس قدر لوگوں کو خوابیں یا الہام ہوتے ہیں دراصل ان کے کھلنے کا دروازہ وہ رسول ہی ہوتا ہے کیونکہ اس کے ساتھ دنیا میں ایک تبدیلی واقع ہوتی ہے اور آسمان سے عام طور پر ایک روشنی اترتی ہے جس سے ہر ایک شخص حسب استعداد حصہ لیتا ہے وہی روشنی خواب اور الہام کا موجب ہو جاتی ہے اور نادان خیال کرتا ہے کہ میرے ہنر سے ایسا ہوا ہے مگر وہ چشمہ الہام اور خواب کا صرف اس نبی کی برکت سے دنیا پر کھولا جاتا ہے اور اس کا زمانہ ایک لیلۃ القدر کا زمانہ ہوتا ہے جس میں فرشتے اترتے ہیں جیسا کہ اللہ تعالیٰ فرماتا ہے تَنْزِيلُ الْمَلٰٓئِكَةِ وَالرُّوْحُ فِيْهَا يٰۤاٰذُنْ رَّبِّهِنَّ مِنْ كُلِّ اٰمَنٍ سَلٰمٌ جب سے خدانے دنیا پیدا کی ہے یہی قانون قدرت ہے۔

When a messenger or a prophet comes, being appointed from the Heaven, a light descends from heavens according to each's capacity due to the prophet's blessing, and spirituality is widespread. Then each person excels in the viewing of true dreams,

and those with the capabilities of receiving revelation receive revelation, and minds become sharpened in spiritual matters. **Because when it rains all types of land benefit more or less from it. The same happens when the season of spring arrives due to the arrival of a prophet. At that time all the blessings are in actuality due to the prophet because with him a change occurs in the world, and a light normally descends from heaven, from which each person takes his share according to his capacity. That very light is the cause of true dreams and revelation. And the foolish think that it is due to his own skills, but in reality that fountain of revelation and true dreams is due to the blessings of the prophet.** And the era of the prophet is the era of Lailat-ul-Qadr – The night of decree, in which angels descend. As Allah says:

“Therein descend angels and the Spirit by the command of their Lord – with every matter”.

This has been the law of nature since the beginning of the world.³¹²

Therefore, according to the law of nature, angels descend with a prophet to assist him in spreading the heavenly light and spirituality. It is because of the spiritual power that angels bring with the prophet, not because of anyone’s abilities to receive true dreams and revelations. Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^{as} of Qadian – a prophet of the latter-days – was born on the 13th of February 1835. If he was a true prophet, then according to the law of nature, people should have seen dreams and experienced revelations with the help of angels that would lead them to his acceptance.

There are many examples of people receiving revelation but it does not make them true or chosen people. The Holy Qur’an gives an example of a man named Bal’am bin Ba’ur who lived in the time of Moses. He was a virtuous man and used to receive revelations from God but pride turned him away. He followed his

evil desires and inclinations and met a miserable end. God says in the Holy Qur'an:

وَلَوْ شِئْنَا لَرَفَعْنَاهُ بِهَا وَلَكِنَّهُ أَخْلَدَ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ وَاتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ فَمَثَلُهُ كَمَثَلِ الْكَلْبِ
 إِنْ تَحْمِلْ عَلَيْهِ يَلْهَثْ أَوْ تَتْرَكْهُ يَلْهَثُ ذَلِكَ مَثَلُ الْقَوْمِ الَّذِينَ كَذَبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا
 فَأَقْصِصْ الْقِصَصَ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿١٧٧﴾

And if We had pleased, We could have exalted him thereby; but he inclined to the earth and followed his evil inclination. His case therefore is like the case of a thirsty dog; if thou drive him away, he hangs out his tongue; and if thou leave him, he hangs out his tongue. Such is the case of the people who disbelieve in Our Signs. So give them the description that they may ponder.³¹³ (The Holy Qur'an, 7:177)

There is another example of a man who used to be a scribe of the revelations which the Holy Prophet (peace and blessing be upon him) received from God. His name was Abdullah bin abi Sarah. Once he was writing the revelation of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him). Due to the effect of the revelation, he also received a portion of the revelation - which caused his apostasy and downfall. Moreover, the Promised Messiah^{as} has mentioned that even a prostitute can see a true dream, but the true dream does not make her a pious lady. Many examples exist of this kind but do not prove by any means the truthfulness of a particular person.

Hazrat Khalifat ul Maish the Second^{ra} sums up the concept of revelation to different people:

Therefore, when Allah the Exalted speaks to a large number of people across all ages and periods how can denial in His existence be justified? And it is not just that He discourses with His prophets and messengers, but He also speaks with saints and at times, through His mercy, He even speaks to a poor servant of His to bring him solace. He has also spoken to a humble person like myself and confirmed the truth of His

existence through His arguments. Further, He even talks with base and wicked individuals to force upon them a conclusive argument of His truth. So, at times, even lowly and evil sections of society experience dreams and revelations, the divine origins of which can be recognised from the fact that they possess news of the unseen which finds fulfilment at its appointed time, and clearly shows they did not emanate from the processes of the mind or dyspepsia.³¹⁴

As the Latter-day Saints are addressed in this essay, let us find out whether Joseph Smith saw any dream or received any revelation about the latter-days' Messiah who had also claimed to be the second advent of Jesus Christ. If any dream or revelation is found it will not make Joseph Smith a true prophet by any chance as it has been proven that the ability for receiving revelations and dreams is enhanced at the advent of a true prophet(like the example of rain). Therefore, if Joseph Smith had received a revelation about the coming of the Latter-day Messiah under the law of nature, this will not make him a true prophet, but will put his revelation under the general category of revelation vouchsafed to common people

A day after Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^{as} was born, Joseph Smith is reported to have received the following revelation on February 14, 1835: *Go forth to prune the vineyard for the last time, or the coming of the Lord, which was nigh--even fifty-six years should wind up the scene.*³¹⁵

Moreover, Joseph Smith received another revelation on the 2nd of April 1843 about the coming of Jesus Christ that:

I was once praying very earnestly to know the time of the coming of the Son of Man, when I heard a voice repeat the following: Joseph, my son, if thou livest until thou art eighty-five years old, thou shalt see the face of the Son of Man; therefore let this suffice, and trouble me no more on this matter. I was left thus, without being able to decide whether this coming referred to the beginning of the millennium or to some previous

appearing, or whether I should die and thus see his face. I believe the coming of the Son of Man will not be any sooner than that time.³¹⁶ (*Doctrine and Covenants, 130:14-17*)

This tells that Jesus Christ will appear in 1890 or 1891. Astonishingly, at the end of 1890, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian claimed to be sent as the second advent of Christ and he writes in his book *Fath-e-Islam* (translated as: *Victory of Islam*):

میں اس کو بار بار بیان کروں گا اور اس کے اظہار سے میں رک نہیں سکتا کہ میں وہی ہوں جو وقت پر اصلاح خلق کے لئے بھیجا گیا تادین کو تازہ طور پر دلوں میں قائم کر دیا جائے۔ میں اس طرح بھیجا گیا ہوں جس طرح وہ شخص بعد کلیم اللہ مرد خدا کے بھیجا گیا تھا جس کی روح ہیرودیس کے عہد حکومت میں بہت تکلیفوں کے بعد آسمان کی طرف اٹھائی گئی۔ سو جب وہ دوسرا کلیم اللہ جو حقیقت میں سب سے پہلا اور سید الانبیاء ہے دوسرے فرعونوں کی سرکوبی کے لئے آیا جس کے حق میں ہے اِنَّا اَرْسَلْنَا اِلَيْكُمْ رَسُوْلًا شَاهِدًا عَلَيْنَكُمْ كَمَا اَرْسَلْنَا اِلَى فِرْعَوْنَ رَسُوْلًا۔ سو اس کو بھی جو اپنی کارروائیوں میں کلیم اول کا شیل مگر رتبہ میں اس سے بزرگتر تھا ایک شیل المسیح کا وعدہ دیا گیا اور وہ شیل المسیح قوت اور طبع اور خاصیت مسیح ابن مریم کی پا کر اسی زمانہ کی مانند اور اسی مدت کے قریب قریب جو کلیم اول کے زمانہ سے مسیح ابن مریم کے زمانہ تک تھی یعنی چودھویں صدی میں آسمان سے اتر اور وہ اترنا روحانی طور پر تھا جیسا کہ مکمل لوگوں کے صعود کے بعد خلق اللہ کی اصلاح کے لئے نزول ہوتا ہے اور سب باتوں میں اسی زمانہ کے ہم شکل زمانہ میں اتر جو مسیح ابن مریم کے اترنے کا زمانہ تھا۔ تا سمجھنے والوں کے لئے نشان ہو۔

I must say and I cannot be stopped from repeating that I am the promised one who has been sent to restore the faith, to re-establish it in the hearts of men. I have been sent exactly as was sent my prototype to follow the man of God they call Kalimullah (One who converses with God-the author). I have come like him whose spirit underwent hardships in the reign of Herod and

was at last raised to heaven. My coming became imperative after the coming of the second Kalim (One who converses with God—the author), he who is greater than the first Kalim being the chief of all prophets. This second Kalim came to defeat and disgrace the Pharaohs of his time. It is of him that it has been said in the Holy Book, "we have sent unto you a Messenger as witness over you, even as we sent to Pharaoh a Messenger" (*Holy Quran* 73:16).

In accordance with this the second Kalim, similar to the first but superior to him in spiritual rank, was also promised a Messiah similar to the first. This second Messiah has come in the power and character of the first, at a time similar to his and after the lapse of a similar length of time after his own Kalim: that is after about 1,400 years. His coming is described in prophecies as a descent from heaven but the descent is a spiritual descent. In holy idiom, men who achieve perfection rise to heaven. When they come to reform their people they may be said to descend from heaven. The second Messiah has descended at a time which resembles in all essentials the time of the first Messiah, the Messiah son of Mary that it may serve as a sign for those who understand.³¹⁷

He further states:

سو اس عاجز کو اور بزرگوں کی فطرتی مشابہت سے علاوہ جس کی تفصیل براہین احمدیہ میں بہ بسط تمام مندرج ہے حضرت مسیح کی فطرت سے ایک خاص مشابہت ہے اور اسی فطرتی مشابہت کی وجہ سے مسیح کے نام پر یہ عاجز بھیجا گیا تا صلیبی اعتقاد کو پاش پاش کر دیا جائے۔ سو میں صلیب کے توڑنے اور خنزیروں کے قتل کرنے کے لئے بھیجا گیا ہوں۔ میں آسمان سے اتر اہوں ان پاک فرشتوں کے ساتھ جو میرے دائیں بائیں تھے۔ جن کو میرا خدا جو میرے ساتھ ہے میرے کام کے پورا کرنے کے لئے ہر ایک مستعد دل میں داخل کرے گا بلکہ کر رہا ہے اور اگر میں چپ بھی رہوں اور میری قلم لکھنے سے رکی بھی رہے تب بھی وہ فرشتے جو میرے ساتھ اترے ہیں اپنا کام بند نہیں کر سکتے اور ان کے ہاتھ میں بڑی بڑی گرزیں ہیں جو صلیب

توڑنے اور مخلوق پرستی کی ہیكل کچلنے کے لئے دئے گئے ہیں۔ شاید کوئی بے خبر اس حیرت میں پڑے کہ فرشتوں کا اتنا کیا معنی رکھتا ہے۔ سو واضح ہو کہ عادت اللہ اس طرح پر جاری ہے کہ جب کوئی رسول یا نبی یا محدث اصلاح خلق اللہ کے لئے آسمان سے اترتا ہے تو ضرور اس کے ساتھ اور اس کے ہمراہ ایسے فرشتے اترتے ہیں کہ جو مستعد دلوں میں ہدایت ڈالتے ہیں اور نیکی کی رغبت دلاتے ہیں اور برابر اترتے رہتے ہیں جب تک کفر و ضلالت کی ظلمت دور ہو کر ایمان اور راستبازی کی صبح صادق نمودار ہو جیسا کہ اللہ جل شانہ فرماتا ہے۔

تَنْزِلُ الْمَلَائِكَةِ وَ الرُّوحِ فِيهَا بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِمْ مِنْ كُلِّ أَمْرٍ سَلَامٌ هِيَ حَتَّى مَطْلَعِ الْفَجْرِ۔

This humble one is similar in character to other holy ones. The subject is described in detail in Barahin-i-Ahmadiyya. But similarity to Jesus Christ is more pronounced. Because of this similarity, this humble one has been sent in the name of Jesus Christ. So that belief connected with the Cross may be banished. I have been sent to break the Cross, to kill the swine. I have come from heaven with angels on my right and left. Angels whom God will send, nay, is already sending into willing hearts. This, to help complete my mission. Even if I speak or write nothing, even then the angels who have descended with me will carry on their work. They have maces in their hands, given to them so that they may break the cross and break the idol of man-worship. Maybe the ignorant will ask, what does it mean - this descent of angels from heaven? Let them know it is the custom of God that when a prophet or apostle or saint descends from heaven to reform and restore a people to faith, then angels also descend with him, in his company. These angels enter human hearts willing and ready. They draw them to virtue and keep drawing them, until unbelief and misguidance disappear and the dawn of belief and righteousness shows its face. As indeed God Almighty Himself says in the Holy Quran: *"In it - the Night of Power - descend angels and a New Spirit, all by the command of their Lord and charged with every kind of affair. Peace it is, peace - till the rising of the dawn"*.³¹⁸

Therefore, as prophesised by Joseph Smith, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian, the Promised Messiah^{as} came as the second advent of Jesus Christ ^{as}. **This does not make him a true prophet in any way, as it has been clearly mentioned that the ability of receiving revelations and true dreams is enhanced at the advent of a true prophet. Such was the case with Joseph Smith.**

Message in the USA³¹⁹

The message of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^{as}, believed to be the Promised Messiah^{as} and Reformer of the latter days by the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, also reached the USA in his lifetime. Detailed below, you will find a mighty sign in support of his claim.

A man named Dr. John Alexander Dowie claimed to be a prophet and Elijah the Third. He was an influential man worth millions of dollars and he claimed to be the healer and founder of Zion City in Illinois and the Christian Apostolic Church. Dr. Dowie was the leader of a community with hundreds of thousands of followers and a fierce enemy of Islam. He would use foul and obscene language against the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa}. He often preached his hatred against Islam and Muslims in his newspaper 'Leaves of Healing'. For example, Dowie once said:

One of the greatest systems in the Orient is Mohammedanism. The very essence of Mohammedanism is the degradation of woman, denying her an immortal spirit. The theology of the Moslem gives no immortality to a woman. The Moslem is not taught to look forward to a reunion with wife, and mother, and daughter in heaven. He is taught that they pass away; that they rot in cemeteries. The Mohammedan is taught to look forward to heaven as one vast brothel and harem, where he can find satisfaction in women that are prepared for him as the creatures of lust. Zion will have to wipe out that shocking blot upon

humanity. That accursed flag will have to come down from the high towers of Jerusalem. May God help me to knock at the gate of the Moslem before long! The Moslem will fight. There are hundreds of millions of them. One of the great wars imminent is that between the Cross and the Crescent.³²⁰

Dowie surpassed all limits of morality when he said:

How can anyone who know exactly what Mohammedanism is, for one single moment imagine that God or man can forever stand that abomination? "Where the Moslem hoof comes no grass grows" is the Eastern proverb. Wherever the accursed teaching of Mahomet has come, there has been an end of all real progress . . . It is time that such an organized abomination as that should be swept out . . . I pray God for the day to come when the Crescent shall disappear, and when the flags – I would like to see them united there and everywhere – of Great Britain and America shall float over Zion at Jerusalem, as they often do at the city of Zion near Chicago. May God grant it! It is time that the Moslem Abomination was gone, "bag and baggage," as Mr. Gladstone used to say. Let it slink away back into the deserts of Arabia whence the filthy thing emerged . . . Ugh! How one hates the whole thing, the slimy, filthy thing! May God destroy it.³²¹

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^{as} took note of this offensive, vulgar and provocative language. A major part of his prophetic mission was to defend Islam. Indeed, evidence of his great conviction is also found in his response to Dr. Dowie:

This fabricator and prevaricator is a dangerous enemy of Islām. It would be best to publish and send an open letter to him and invite him to a challenge. Besides Islām, there is no truthful religion in the world; and blessings and signs are manifested only in favour of Islām. It is my firm belief that if this forger of lies challenges me, he will suffer a debilitating loss, and the time has now come that God Almighty will punish him for his forgery.³²²

The Promised Messiah^{as} politely told Dowie:

Since Dr. Dowie is the messenger of the powerful deity who was crucified by the Jews, I would entreat him to refrain from destroying the whole body of Muhammadans living on the face of the earth. If they do not take the son of Mary for their God, the fault is not theirs. Where is the requisite proof of Jesus' deity and how can they be convinced of the divinity of the one whose very tomb has been discovered in this very country (India). Nay, more than this, they have in their midst the Promised Messiah whose appearance is in accordance with the Prophetic promises, at the close of the sixth and on the commencement of the seventh thousand year and with a host of heavenly signs.³²³

Alexander Dowie had no regard for the invitation. He ignored this straightforward declaration and continued to be abusive. His followers drew his attention toward accepting the invitation. He then responded:

There is one foolish man in India, a Mohammedan Messiah, who persists in writing to me saying that the body of the Christ is buried at Cashmir, in India, and can be found there. He never says that he has seen it, but the poor, fanatical and ignorant creature keeps on with the raving that the Christ died in India. The Christ reascended [sic] into the heavens at Bethany, and He is there in His Celestial Body.³²⁴

He further said:

If I am not a true prophet then there is no person on the face of this earth, who can be a prophet of God.³²⁵

He continued preaching hatred against Muslims and their destruction. He said:

My part is to bring out the people from the East and the West, from the North and the South and to settle them in the cities of Zion, until the time shall come, when all the Muhammadans are swept away.³²⁶

The Promised Messiah^{as}, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^{as}, was a comparatively unknown figure in the USA as he lived in a small

village in India. Yet, his challenge to Dowie was widely published in US newspapers. Despite the attention, Dowie did not respond to the prayer-duel challenge. The Promised Messiah^{as} announced once again:

I do not say merely out of my own mouth that I am the Promised Messiah^{as}. God Who has created the heavens and the earth bears witness for me. To complete His witness He has manifested and continues to manifest hundreds of signs in my support. I say truly that His Grace upon me is in excess of Grace that He bestowed upon the Messiah who appeared before me. His countenance has been exhibited in my mirror more widely than it was reflected in his mirror. If I say this only out of my own mouth, I am false; but if He bears witness for me, no one can call me false. I have thousands of His testimonies in my support, which I cannot number . . . One testimony is that if Mr. Dowie will accept my challenge and will put himself in opposition to me clearly or impliedly, he will depart this world with great sorrow and pain during my lifetime . . . Dowie has not so far replied to my challenge nor has he referred to it in his paper. I, therefore, grant him time for seven months from today, the 23rd of August 1903. If during this period he comes forth in opposition to me and makes an announcement in his paper that he accepts fully the plan that I have put forward, the world shall soon see the end of this contest. I am about seventy years of age and Dowie, according to his own statement, is a young man of fifty years. I am not concerned about this disparity in our ages as the issue is not to be decided on the merits of age. It rests entirely with God Who is the God of heaven and earth and is the best Judge. If Mr. Dowie runs away from this contest I would call upon the people of America and Europe as witnesses that this would also be deemed to be his defeat, and in such case it should be concluded that his claim of being Elijah is a mere boast and deceit. He may try to flee from death in this manner, but he should realize that his flight from the proposed contest is also a species of death. Be sure, therefore, that a calamity will most certainly befall his Zion very soon.³²⁷

This announcement was again widely circulated in the USA. All avenues of escape for Dowie were now closed. In any case, whether the challenge was accepted, refused, or ignored, his doom had been forecast with a conviction that could only be described as divinely inspired. Dowie, who had so far kept silent and kept himself out of this contest with the Promised Messiah^{as}, unwittingly entered this contest, when he described Ahmad as a "Worm", and said he could kill him with his foot.

Within two months of the issuance of the handbill, a great heavenly sign was witnessed all over the United States. For a long time, Dowie had been nursing a fond wish to storm New York as never had been done before. Having reached heights that no other American clergy had yet reached, Dr. Dowie announced with much fanfare, the holding of a Mass Rally in October 1903 at Madison Square Garden in New York, a venue known for large international gatherings. Dowie had spent thousands of dollars for the publicity of his rally. At last, the day arrived and scores of people came to listen to him. He made a false start, and then made another effort to cast his magic spell. The mammoth crowd was eager to hear him speak, but before hundreds of thousands of people of New York, he stood speechless. All the charm and magic, his sole asset, suddenly left him. It had never happened before. People who had eagerly been waiting to listen to the famous Alexander Dowie now began to stir and then slowly started to leave the arena. He was disgraced and faced utter humiliation.

This was the first heavenly strike two months after the challenge by the Promised Messiah^{as}. His Australian followers, fed up with Dowie's deceptions and lies, issued the following statement, which echoed the sentiments of his once royal contingent of followers around the world:

Whereas John Alexander Dowie, of Zion City, has been found guilty of the violation of every one of the Ten Commandments,

and whereas the overseers of Zion City have found him guilty of hypocrisy, criminal extravagance, embezzlement, misrepresentation, tyranny, dastardly contempt for the sufferings of those whom he has pauperised, and of a blasphemous claim to Divine authority to cloak his villainy; therefore it is resolved that we, members of the Christian Catholic Apostolic Church of Zion in Melbourne, renounce his leadership for ever, and disassociate ourselves absolutely from his personal or his delegated authority.³²⁸

Dowie was confident of his bold prophecy that he would be victorious over his enemies, but he was also aware of his quickly dwindling popularity. He was now desperately looking for a fresh start. So he decided to embark on a world tour to win converts. The trip took him to Hawaii, Australia, New Zealand, France, Germany, Italy, and finally to England. However, to his dismay, this journey brought further disgrace and humiliation for him.

He then returned to the USA and continued his work but was losing all of this respect and wealth. On a Sunday in September 1905, he summoned an extraordinary meeting of the Central Tabernacle, the supreme body of the Zion movement. He took great pains in organizing and planning this meeting. Dowie was addressing the meeting when suddenly he shook his right hand violently as if something had bitten it. He did it several times. His followers silently watched. And then he fainted and collapsed. Paralysis had hit him.

The same year in December, another attack of paralysis struck him, this time completely crippling him. Along with physical agony, mental torture followed suit.

His wife and son disowned him. They revealed his misdeeds; Dr. Dowie's son acquired letters that the Elijah claimant had written to a rich heiress of Switzerland, Miss Hofer. Startling disclosures came to light: he was involved with several women.

His private rooms were found to be stocked with the choicest wines, although he denounced publicly all intoxicating liquor. He was found intoxicated on several occasions. His own followers denounced him as an impostor.

The Promised Messiah^{as}, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^{as} announced another revelation with reference to Alexander Dowie on February 20, 1907:

God says that I will show a new sign, which will have glorious victory. It will be a sign for the whole world, and it will be God's very personal sign and from the heavens. It is mandated for human beings to stay watchful, for God will show it very soon. So that He may stand witness, that this humble person, who all nations are bad-mouthing, is from him. Blessed are those who may benefit from it. Let every eye wait for it, for God will manifest it soon as His testimony that this humble one, who is being reviled by all peoples, is from Him. Blessed are those who would take advantage of it.³²⁹

According to this prophecy, on March 2 1907, John Alexander Dowie met his horrendous end. Newspapers across the world reacted to his death and fulfillment of the prophecy of the Promised Messiah^{as}, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^{as} who wrote:

Can there be a greater miracle? My true mission is to break the Cross, and a great part of the Cross has been broken with his death. Since he was the world's foremost defender of the Cross, and claimed to be a Messenger, and claimed that all Muslims would be destroyed by his prayers, and Islām would be destroyed, and the Ka'bah would fall into ruins, God Almighty therefore caused him to perish at my hands. I also believe that the prophecy about the 'slaying of the swine' has been clearly fulfilled with his death, for who could be more dangerous than the one who makes a false claim of Prophethood and eats the filth of falsehood like a pig? He himself wrote that nearly a hundred thousand wealthy people had joined him. The fact is that Musailma, the Impostor, and Aswad 'Ansī were nothing as compared to him. Neither of them enjoyed the popularity he

did, nor did they possess millions of rupees like him. So I can swear by God that he was the same 'swine' whose death at the hands of the Promised Messiah^{as} had been foretold by the Holy Prophet^{sa}. Had I not invited him to mubāhila [Prayer challenge], or invoked curse on him, or published the prophecy regarding his ruin, his death would not have served as a testimony to the truth of Islām. But since I had published beforehand in hundreds of newspapers that he would die during my lifetime, and I wrote time and again that I am the Promised Messiah^{as} and Dowie is a liar, and that the proof of this would be that he would die in ignominy and despair within my lifetime, that is why he met his death during my life. Can there be a greater miracle that testifies to the truth of the prophecy of the Holy Prophet^{sa}? Only he who is the enemy of truth will deny it.³³⁰

In a span of less than five years (from September 1902, when the Promised Messiah^{as} first issued the challenge, to March 9, 1907), Dowie plunged from a state of absolute power, wealth and supremacy down to an abyss of humiliation, disgrace, sickness and ultimately, death. Thus was the wretched end of Dowie, who left the world an utterly destroyed and ruined man, leaving not even a shadow of his former self. His destruction is a glaring manifestation of God's Might and a sign of the truth of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Promised Messiah^{as}.

Dowie's wretched end was extensively published throughout the world and in the USA, in particular. *Truth Seeker*, a US publication, covered the prophecy in detail and wrote:

The Qadian man predicted that if Dowie accepted the challenge, 'he shall leave the world before my eyes with great sorrow and torment.' If Dowie declined, the Mirza said, 'the end would only be deferred; death awaited him just the same, and calamity will soon overtake Zion.' That was the grand prophecy: Zion should fall and Dowie die before Ahmad. It appeared to be a risky step for the Promised Messiah to defy the restored Elijah to an endurance test, for the challenger was by 15 years the older

- The Chicago Inter Ocean, June 28, 1903
- The Telegraph, July 5, 1903
- The Literary Digest, June 20, 1903
- The New York Mail & Express, June 25, 1903
- The Herald Rochester, June 25, 1903
- The Record Boston, June 27, 1903
- The Advertiser Boston, June 25, 1903
- The Pilot Boston, June 27, 1903
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How did Ahmad (as) know of the miserable end of Dowie? Why did he challenge Dowie when he knew he was much older than the perfectly healthy and successful Dowie? Indeed, this is a grand sign for all peoples, especially in the West. It is as grand today as it was over a hundred years ago. Indeed, it a mighty sign in support of the Messiah of the latter-days. As mentioned in the Holy Qur'an: *And He [Allah] reveals not His secrets to any except the one whom He chooses, namely, His Messenger.*³³³ (*The Holy Qur'an 72:27-28*)

The future is bleak for Mormonism, at least spiritually – and true salvation and redemption lies in the acceptance of Islam, the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa} (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and the message of the true Promised Messiah^{as}, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^{as} of Qadian, who appeared in the latter-days for the reformation of humankind. His advent was also in

accordance with their prophet's revelation, but more importantly (and reliably) according to the glad tidings given in the Holy Qur'an and the Holy Bible. If The Latter-day Saints are waiting for the same corporeal form of Jesus Christ, like mainstream Christians, then let it be known that he is certainly not returning. They can either remain without a Messiah, or accept the one sent by Almighty God Himself! For indeed:

یاد رکھو کہ کوئی آسمان سے نہیں اترے گا۔ ہمارے سب مخالف جو اب زندہ موجود ہیں وہ تمام مریں گے اور کوئی ان میں سے عیسیٰ ابن مریم کو آسمان سے اترتے نہیں دیکھے گا۔ اور پھر ان کی اولاد جو باقی رہے گی وہ بھی مرے گی اور ان میں سے بھی کوئی آدمی عیسیٰ بن مریم کو آسمان سے اترتے نہیں دیکھے گا۔ اور پھر اولاد کی اولاد مرے گی۔ اور وہ بھی مریم کے بیٹے کو آسمان سے اترتے نہیں دیکھے گی۔ تب خدا ان کے دلوں میں گھبراہٹ ڈالے گا کہ زمانہ صلیب کے غلبہ کا بھی گذر گیا۔ اور دنیا دوسرے رنگ میں آگئی مگر مریم کا بیٹا عیسیٰ اب تک آسمان سے نہ اتر۔ تب دانشمندیک دفعہ اس عقیدہ سے بیزار ہو جائیں گے۔ اور ابھی تیسری صدی آج کے دن سے پوری نہیں ہوگی کہ عیسیٰ کے انتظار کرنے والے کیا مسلمان اور کیا عیسائی سخت نومید اور بدظن ہو کر اس جھوٹے عقیدہ کو چھوڑیں گے اور دنیا میں ایک ہی مذہب ہو گا اور ایک ہی پیشوا۔ میں تو ایک تنخم ریزی کرنے آیا ہوں۔ سو میرے ہاتھ سے وہ تنخم بویا گیا اور اب وہ بڑھے گا اور پھولے گا اور کوئی نہیں جو اس کو روک سکے۔

Remember, that no one will descend from heaven. All our opponents who are alive today will die and no one will see Jesus son of Mary descending from heaven. Then their next generation will pass away and no one of them will see this spectacle. Then the generation next after that will pass away without seeing the son of Mary descending from heaven. Then God will make them anxious that though the time of the supremacy of the cross had passed away and the world had undergone great changes, yet the son of Mary had not descended from heaven. Then the wise people will suddenly discard this belief. The third century after

today will not yet have come to a close when those who hold this belief, whether Muslims or Christians, will lose all hope and will give up this belief in disgust. **There will then be only one religion that will prevail in the world and only one leader.** I have come only to sow the seed, which has been sown by my hand. Now it will sprout and grow and flourish and no one can arrest its growth.³³⁴

The only path of salvation is to accept the One and true God, His beloved and chosen Prophet Muhammad^{sa} and the one and only latter-day reformer: Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian, the Promised Messiah^{as}. The Kingdom of God was established fourteen hundred years ago by the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa} and all other prophets have come under his spiritual canopy. All those who wish to recognize God and earn His pleasure, must accept the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa}. In addition, in this age, the acceptance of the Promised Messiah^{as} is essential to attain nearness to God. He said:

وَإِنِّي عَلَى مَقَامِ الْخْتَمِ مِنَ الْوَلَايَةِ- كَمَا كَانَ سَيِّدِي الْمُصْطَفَى عَلَى مَقَامِ الْخْتَمِ مِنَ النَّبُوَّةِ- وَ إِنَّهُ خَاتَمُ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ- وَ أَنَا خَاتَمُ الْأَوْلِيَاءِ- لَا وَبِي بَعْدِي- إِلَّا الَّذِي هُوَ مِنِّي وَ عَلَى عَهْدِي- وَ إِنِّي أُرْسِلْتُ مِنْ رَبِّي بِكُلِّ قُوَّةٍ وَ بَرَكَتِهِ وَ عِزَّةٍ- وَ إِنَّ قَدَمِي هَذِهِ عَلَى مَنَارَةٍ خُتِمَ عَلَيْهَا كُلُّ رَفْعَةٍ- فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ أَيُّهَا الْغَيْثَانُ- وَ اعْرِفُونِي وَ أَطِيعُونِي وَ لَا تَمُوتُوا بِالْعِصْيَانِ- وَ قَدْ قَرَّبَ الزَّمَانَ- وَ حَانَ أَنْ تُسْأَلَ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ وَ تُدَانَ- الْبَلَايَا كَثِيرَةٌ وَ لَا يَنْجِيكُمْ إِلَّا الْإِيمَانُ-

And I have certainly come to complete the institution of sainthood just as our Master, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) completed [and perfected] the institution of prophethood. And he is the Seal of the Prophets, while I am the Seal of the Saints. There is no saint after me [i.e. outside the scope of my obedience] except he who is from me [i.e. my community] and upon my pledge [of allegiance]. And I have been sent from my Lord with utmost strength, blessings, and honour. And my footstep is upon such a minaret which is

the apex of all heights. So fear God O ye youthful! And recognize me and do not disobey me, nor die in a state of disobedience. The era has arrived close at hand and the hour is nigh when every soul shall be questioned about its actions and shall be requited. There is an abundance of vice and only faith will grant you salvation.³³⁵

The Ultimate Future of Humankind

The Promised Messiah^{as} outlines the ultimate future of humankind (which includes the Latter-day Saints) in the following words:

دنیا کے لوگ جو تاریک خیال اور اپنے پرانے پرانے تصورات پر جمے ہوئے ہیں وہ اس کو قبول نہیں کریں گے مگر عنقریب وہ زمانہ آنے والا ہے جو ان کی غلطی ان پر ظاہر کر دے گا۔ دنیا میں ایک نذیر آیا پر دنیا نے اس کو قبول نہیں کیا لیکن خدا سے قبول کریگا اور بڑے زور آور حملوں سے اس کی سچائی ظاہر کر دے گا۔ یہ انسان کی بات نہیں خدا تعالیٰ کا الہام اور رب جلیل کا کلام ہے۔ اور میں یقین رکھتا ہوں کہ ان حملوں کے دن نزدیک ہیں۔ مگر یہ حملے تنغ و تبر سے نہیں ہونگے اور تلواروں اور بندو قوں کی حاجت نہیں پڑیگی۔ بلکہ روحانی اسلحہ کے ساتھ خدا تعالیٰ کی مدد اترے گی... اور ہر ایک حق پوش دجال دنیا پرست یک چشم جو دین کی آنکھ نہیں رکھتا حجت قاطعہ کی تلوار سے قتل کیا جائے گا اور سچائی کی فتح ہوگی اور اسلام کے لئے پھر اس تازگی اور روشنی کا دن آئیگا جو پہلے وقتوں میں آچکا ہے اور وہ آفتاب اپنے پورے کمال کے ساتھ پھر چڑھے گا جیسا کہ پہلے چڑھ چکا ہے۔

True, there are men steeped in darkness or in thoughts of their own. They will not accept. But the time is near when God will make plain to them their error. God has said:

"A warner came into the world but the world accepted him not. God, however, will accept him and manifest his truth by mighty signs."

These words proceed not from the mouth of man. They are God's words, words of the Mighty Lord Himself. The mighty attacks mentioned in this prophecy are near.

But these attacks are not by physical weapons, not swords or guns. These are spiritual weapons, which will come as help from God ... All those who resemble the Anti-Christ, those who love this world over-much and who have only one eye, having lost the eye for spiritual truth, all of them will end by the sword of solid unanswerable arguments. **Truth will prevail. A new bright day will dawn again for Islam. Same as it did before. The sun of Islam will rise in full bloom, same as it did before.**³³⁶

وآخر دعوانا ان الحمد لله رب العالمين والصلوة والسلام على نبينا ﷺ
افضل الصلوة والتسليم-

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INDEX

A

Aaron, 60, 142, 173
Aaronic priesthood, 60
Aaronic Priesthood, 11
Abominable church, 22, 23
Abraham, 40, 48, 65, 102, 120, 141, 143, 144, 162
Abridgement, 27
Adam, 40, 51, 52, 53, 54, 59, 60, 62, 102, 130, 182, 183
Adultery, 135, 144, 145, 147, 184, 185
African origin, 185
African race, 185
Agency
 Free Will, 49, 52, 79, 182
Alcohol, 108
All-Seeing Eye, 123, 127
Archaeology, 147, 148, 149
Architectural constructions, 122
Aristotle, 150, 151
Aristotle's Four Causes, 150
Armageddon, 75
Articles of Faith, 40, 41, 49, 243
Atonement, 50, 51, 52, 57, 186, 187

B

Baptism, 49, 58, 59, 62
Begotten Son, 52
Bishop Solomon, 57
Book of Mormon, 26, 27, 38, 72, 73, 93, 147, 148, 149, 154, 155
Brigham Young, 15, 74, 93, 119, 120, 147, 149, 168, 169, 184, 185
Bruce R. McConkie, 23, 24, 45, 70, 71, 163, 236, 243

C

Carthage Jail, 16, 107, 108, 109
Celestial bodies, 80, 81, 82
Celestial Kingdom, 49, 80
Celestial marriage, 81
Cholera, 15, 116
Christ, 12, 22, 24, 28, 51, 52, 53, 57, 58, 60, 61, 69, 70, 72, 75, 76, 79, 83, 101, 140, 147, 160, 162, 163, 164, 170, 184, 206, 207, 217, 219, 233
Christianity, 8, 69, 164, 170, 180, 183
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 3, 12, 21, 22, 23, 24, 39, 48, 50, 56, 58, 60, 61, 65, 67, 68, 69, 72, 73, 76, 79, 80, 81, 82, 91, 139, 147, 180, 184, 207
Complete Book, 142, 147, 149, 154, 155
Contradictions, 140, 142, 146
Creation, 40, 117, 131, 133, 144, 164, 188
Cumorah, 10

D

David Whitmer, 36, 147
Death, 27, 50, 59, 62, 76, 77, 79, 97, 134, 179, 185, 207, 208
Denominations, 207
Doctrine and Covenants, 12, 13, 14, 21, 22, 38, 39, 47, 50, 55, 56, 57, 60, 61, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 73, 74, 75, 78, 80, 82, 83, 84, 92, 101, 108, 112, 114, 115, 116, 117, 135, 140, 141, 142, 144, 159, 180, 181, 183, 243
Doctrine of godhood, 180
Dr. Reed C. Durham, 118, 119

Dr. Seymour Epstein, 165

E

Efficient cause, 150, 152

Egyptian, 25, 27, 120, 131, 133

Eight witnesses, 37, 243

Emma

Joseph Smith's wife. See Emma Smith

Emma Hale, 10

Encyclopedia, 59, 63, 95, 118, 169, 181, 235

Endowment ceremonies, 128

Enduring to the end, 49

England, 7, 13, 121, 129

Eternal life, 52, 64, 167

Eve, 52, 182, 183

Everlasting covenant, 48

everlasting Gospel, 10, 29

Expositor, 104

Ezekiel, 25, 26, 72, 243

F

Faith in Jesus, 49, 50, 58

Falah Odeh, 165

Fall, 51, 53, 182, 184

Fall of Adam, 51

false prophet, 93, 96, 110, 113, 114, 207

Female Relief Organization, 128

Final cause, 150

Formal cause, 150

Free Mason, 118, 119

Freemasonry, 118, 119, 120

G

Garden of Eden, 52, 182

George Quayle Cannon, 93

god, 48, 142, 159, 162, 163, 164, 168, 169, 170, 173, 175, 181, 182, 187, 189

God, 4, 8, 9, 12, 13, 16, 20, 21, 22, 23, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 68, 69, 71, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 79, 81, 82, 83, 84, 92, 93, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 110, 112, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 120, 128, 130, 131, 132, 133, 135, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 146, 152, 153, 154, 155, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 180, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 207, 209, 210, 212, 214, 215, 217, 219, 230, 231, 232, 233

goddess wives, 181

Godhead, 45, 48

godhood, 181

gods, 45, 46, 90, 97, 141, 144, 158, 159, 160, 163, 164, 165, 167, 168, 171, 172, 173, 180, 181, 182, 183, 208

gold plates, 10, 25, 27, 29, 30, 36, 37, 120, 133, 147, 148

H

Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad

The Promised Messiah, 96, 220, 235

Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^{as}, 216

Hadrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^{as}, 179, 208, 210, 214, 229

headquarters, 3, 13, 16, 66

Heaven, 37, 46, 47, 49, 53, 59, 68, 69, 72, 74, 76, 77, 78, 140, 142, 145,

160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 166, 180,
184, 188, 214, 218, 219, 230
Heavenly Parents, 163
Heber C. Kimball, 120, 121, 129, 186
Hebrew, 75, 130, 160, 161, 165, 166
Hell, 77, 78
Holy Bible, 21, 22, 71, 75, 92, 97,
113, 166, 168, 230, 243
Holy Ghost, 12, 13, 21, 23, 24, 36, 44,
45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 58, 59, 60, 62,
63, 64, 83, 84, 140, 141, 142, 159,
160, 161
Holy Qur'an, 92, 93, 94, 97, 98, 110,
113, 114, 139, 146, 154, 164, 166,
167, 168, 171, 172, 174, 175, 178,
186, 187, 188, 189, 209, 210, 212,
213, 214, 215, 230
Hyrum Smith, 16, 37, 106, 107, 119,
147

I

Incarcerated, 3, 15, 107, 116
Inspired Translation
 Inspired Version, 23, 47
Inspired Translation of the Bible
 Joseph Simth Translation, 23
Isaiah, 25, 72, 166, 243
Islam, 94, 99, 146, 154, 178, 187, 206,
217, 229, 233, 235
Israel, 25, 26, 28, 49, 69, 72, 73, 74,
79, 102, 165, 166, 167, 170, 178

J

Jackson County, 14, 15, 16, 74, 112,
116, 207
James, 11, 23, 24, 161, 243
Jesus Christ, 3, 11, 12, 21, 22, 23, 24,
26, 28, 31, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 45,
47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 54, 56, 57,
58, 59, 60, 61, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67,

68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76,
78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 91, 100,
139, 147, 160, 162, 164, 167, 168,
169, 171, 176, 178, 180, 184, 186,
207, 208, 217, 219, 220
Jesus in India, 179, 208
John, 11, 26, 37, 46, 47, 59, 61, 71, 79,
92, 93, 101, 105, 108, 109, 120,
134, 160, 162, 167, 173, 176, 243
John, the Baptist, 11
Joseph Smith
 The LDS Prophet, 3, 7, 8, 9, 10,
11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 21, 22,
23, 24, 25, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 36,
37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 46, 47, 48, 50,
60, 61, 65, 67, 68, 69, 72, 73, 74,
75, 77, 78, 80, 81, 91, 92, 93, 94,
95, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105,
106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111,
112, 114, 115, 116, 118, 119,
120, 121, 122, 128, 129, 130,
133, 134, 135, 140, 141, 145,
146, 147, 148, 153, 155, 159,
162, 163, 165, 180, 182, 183,
185, 207, 208, 216, 220, 236,
243

K

Kingdom of Glories, 80
Kirtland, 13, 14, 15, 16, 102, 122, 125

L

Laman, 26, 149
Lamanites, 26
Lamb, 22
Last Judgement, 79
Lehi, 26, 31, 114
Life after Death, 76
Literal Son of God, 52

literal sons and daughters of god,
168
Living Hope Ministry, 146
Lucifer, 163, 168, 183
Lucy Smith
Mother of Joseph Smith, 7, 8

M

Martin Harris, 25, 30, 36, 114
Masonic influence, 120, 121, 134
Masonic legend, 130, 133
Material cause, 150
Megiddo, 75
Melchizedek Priesthood, 12
Michael Douglas Coe, 148
migration, 13, 14, 26
Militia, 14, 15, 16, 106
missionaries, 13, 38, 73, 91, 93, 109,
159
Money digger, 94
Mormon, 3, 12, 16, 20, 22, 23, 24, 25,
26, 27, 28, 30, 31, 37, 38, 39, 40,
45, 48, 49, 50, 51, 59, 61, 62, 63,
70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 77, 93, 100, 105,
120, 121, 122, 123, 128, 129, 130,
133, 135, 140, 142, 143, 146, 147,
148, 149, 153, 154, 155, 180, 181,
182, 183, 209, 235, 236, 243
Moroni, 9, 10, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 36,
72, 101, 183
Muhammad
Prophet Muhammad, Mohamed,
6, 93, 231
Myth, 148, 149

N

Nauvoo, 16, 74, 103, 104, 106, 107,
118, 119, 120, 123, 124, 126, 134,
207
Nauvoo Legion, 16, 106

Nauvoo Temple, 123, 124, 126
Nephi, 22, 26, 27, 30, 31, 143, 243
Nephites, 26, 27, 31
New World Archaeological Foundation
NNAF, 147, 148

O

Old Testament, 10, 24, 163, 165, 166,
167
Oliver Cowdery, 11, 30, 102, 147,
153
Outer Darkness, 80

P

Pagan, 46, 165
Palmyra, 7, 28, 30, 119
Paradise, 77
Parley Parker Pratt, 121
Paul
St. Paul, 70, 80, 102, 160, 162, 164
Pearl of Great Price, 22, 40, 243
Pentagram, 126
Persecution
Opposition, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 27,
74, 178, 209
Peter, 11, 37, 58, 79, 95, 100, 236
Pistol, 108, 109
Plan of Salvation, 24, 48, 49, 50, 61
Plurality of gods, 159
Polygamy, 104, 135, 144, 145, 146,
208
Practises, 14, 58
Pre-Mortal, 40, 52
Priesthood, 11, 94, 101, 121, 122
Prophecies, 10, 27, 31, 37, 39, 75, 97,
102, 111, 112, 113, 218
Prophet Muhammad, 92, 189, 231

R

Ransom, 52
 Redeemer, 48
 Religious excitement, 8
 Repentance, 49, 52, 53
 Resurrection, 28, 51, 59, 76, 77, 78,
 170, 180
 Revelations, 23, 27, 38, 39, 96, 98,
 101, 102, 103, 108, 110, 111, 120,
 159, 209, 214, 215, 216, 220

S

Salvation, 21, 40, 48, 49, 52, 53, 62,
 63, 64, 76, 81, 140, 184, 185, 186,
 229, 231, 232
 Satan, 9, 52, 84, 85, 168, 182, 183
 Second advent, 66, 70, 216, 217, 220
 Second Advent
 Second Coming, 69, 70, 75
 Secret Handshake, 127
 Seed of Cain, 185
 Sidney Rigdon, 102
 Sin, 51, 52, 53, 55, 56, 62, 70, 92, 144,
 145, 184, 185
 Smith's family, 7
 Son ship of Jesus, 51
 Spirit World, 76
Sunstone, 126

T

Taylor John, 93, 105, 108, 109, 134
 Telesial Kingdom, 80
 Temple, 14, 15, 16, 68, 69, 74, 81,
 112, 118, 124, 128, 132, 133, 176
 Terrestrial Kingdom, 80
 Testimonies, 36
 The Father, 44, 47, 142, 159, 181
 The first criterion, 92
 The First Vision, 8

the Gold Plates, 10, 11, 25
 the Holy Ghost, 21, 44, 47, 63, 64,
 140, 142, 159
 the Latter-day Saints, 3, 13, 14, 15,
 16, 65, 67, 68, 74, 75, 164, 210,
 216, 232
The Millennium, 70, 76
 the new and everlasting covenant,
 180, 208
The new and everlasting doctrine, 135
 the New Testament, 10, 24, 58, 64,
 69, 73, 79, 160, 164, 167, 183
 The Qur'anic Criterion, 139
 the Savior, 10, 168
 the Son, 13, 36, 44, 45, 46, 47, 53, 58,
 59, 60, 66, 79, 81, 82, 102, 140,
 141, 142, 159, 161, 162, 168, 169,
 173, 184, 216
 The Third Criterion, 111
 Three witnesses, 36, 37, 114, 133,
 243
 Tithing, 65, 66
 Transgression, 52, 68, 182, 183
 Treason, 15, 16, 103, 106, 107
 Trinity, 46, 141

U

United States, 3, 13, 14, 16, 105
 Upper Canada, 13
 Urim and Thummim, 10, 29

V

Victory of Islam, 217

W

Weather Vane, 125
 Wilford Woodruff, 65, 93
 Word of Wisdom, 56, 67, 68, 69

Z

Zion, 13, 14, 15, 16, 65, 66, 112, 115,
116, 207
Zion March, 15

ENDNOTES

Chapter 1

- ¹ History of the Church, Vol. 1, pg. 2
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Chapter 2

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Chapter 3

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Chapter 4

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- 138 *Durr-e-Thamin Urdu* – A collection of the Urdu poems of the Promised Messiah^{as}, pp. 117-118
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- 142 Doctrine and Covenants 2:1-3
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- 151 History of the Church, V.7, pg. 100
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Chapter 6

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"The author takes us on an intriguing journey of the Mormon faith from its beginnings with Joseph Smith and his claims, to the Church's history of persecution and its various beliefs and practices. This book is unique as Imtiaz Ahmed Sra, a Muslim theologian, evaluates the Church and its teachings through the Quranic criterion. It is notable that Joseph Smith's lifespan overlapped, at least partly, with that of the Promised Messiah, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^{as}, indicating the deep yearning of souls for a spiritual guide from the Creator. This is a must-read book for those who want a deeper understanding of the Mormon faith while simultaneously gaining a new perspective on the magnitude and importance of the Promised Messiah's^{as} claims."

— Dr. Usama Zafar Awan

(Houston, Texas)



Imtiaz Ahmed Sra is a Missionary of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community. He is also an engaging speaker, writer, and author. Imtiaz acquired his degree in Islamic Theology and Comparative Religions in 2010, Canada. He has served in Ghana and is currently the Imam of Bait ul Islam Mosque in Vaughan. Imtiaz keeps a full schedule working to bridge relations in the community at interfaith events and promotes the true, peaceful narrative of Islam through speeches, lectures, media engagements and community education. Imtiaz was also acknowledged as one of 25 most influential young Canadians by the Power and Influence Magazine.

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