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POST-MORMON JOURNEY

“The man who cannot listen to an argument which opposes his views either has a weak position or is a weak defender of it. No opinion that cannot stand discussion or criticism is worth holding. And it has been wisely said that the man who knows only half of any question is worse off than the man who knows nothing of it. He is not only one sided, but his partisanship soon turns him into an intolerant and a fanatic. In general it is true that nothing which cannot stand up under discussion and criticism is worth defending.”

– James E. Talmage –

(quoting “The Intolerant Spirit.” Editorial. *Pittsburgh Leader*. November 13, 1919.)

"It is the duty of every man, as far as his ability extends, to detect and expose delusion and error"

Thomas Paine

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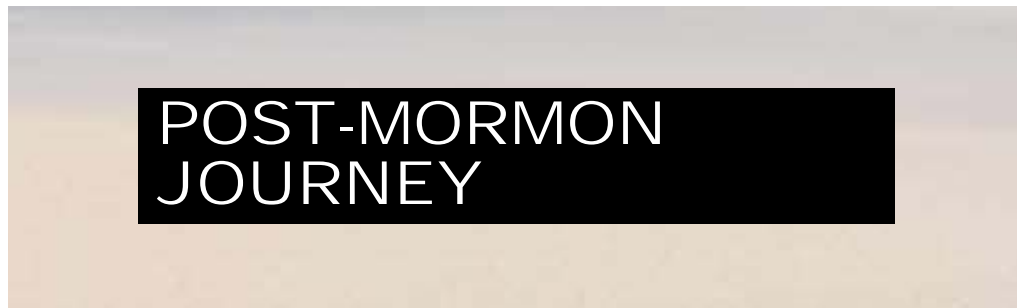
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HELPFUL LINKS

These are some of my favorite links for research into the LDS church.

LDS CHURCH-APPROVED LINKS

- [LDS.org](#)- The Front page of the LDS church
- [Gospel Topic Essays](#)- general link to all the gospel topics discussing controversial LDS history
- [Polygamy](#)- The beginning of plural marriage in Nauvoo
- [Polygamy](#)- Plural marriage and families in Utah
- [Polygamy](#)- The end of plural marriage and The Manifesto
- [Joseph Smith Papers](#)- scans of Joseph Smith's documents, journals, thoughts, etc
- [The 1830 Edition of the Book of Mormon](#)- a complete scan of a 1st edition copy
- [FairMormon](#)- the unofficial apologetic website for the LDS church discussing complex questions/history
- [Encyclopedia of Mormonism](#)- The History, Scripture, Doctrine, and Procedure of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
- [History of the Church](#)- Volumes 1 through 7
- [Journal of Discourses](#)- Volumes 1 through 26. A couple of easier websites to see the complete JOD [HERE](#) and [HERE](#)
- [BYU Research Library](#) - Great place for finding articles about

anything LDS related

- [Response to the CES letter by former CES employee](#)- 300 page document debunking every line of the CES letter

NON-CHURCH APPROVED SITES

- [Mormon Essays](#)- non-lds website pointing to each Gospel Topic essay on lds.org- easier to find the polygamy ones.
- [Mormonthink](#)- Comprehensive website covering all major controversial topics in LDS history. Negative tone (IMO), but is a good starting point to learn about all major issues with the LDS church.
- [The CES Letter](#)- Very popular document detailing historical inaccuracies of the LDS church. A popular starting point to start down 'the rabbit hole'.
- [Mormon Bandwagon](#)- Eric Nelson wrote a similar document like the CES Letter that has just as much if not better info (IMO)
- [The Mormon Challenge](#)- A presentation of the other side of Mormonism using only LDS-approved sources
- [20 Truths about Mormonism](#)- By Jim Day PhD who tried to document and challenge the 20 biggest issues with the LDS church, showing both sides.
- [The Wives Of Joseph Smith](#)- A website dedicated to the wives of Joseph Smith- Very insightful
- [The Mormon Curtain](#)- A collection of articles, books, sources, etc of everything ex-mormon. A LOT of info.
- [Letter from a Doubter](#)- A well put-together blog with all major controversial issues researched very well
- [Rethinking Mormonism](#)- A collection of articles about mormonism, Polygamy, Temples, History and Sexuality
- [Rational Faiths](#)- blog site with a collection of articles on many topics about mormonism
- [Thoughts on Things and Stuff](#)- Blog site addressing hot topics in

the LDS church.

- [Comparison of "The Late War" and "The Book of Mormon"](#) - a comparison of similarities between both books
- [Book of Mormon Depot](#)- website dedicated to changes between the 1830 and the current BOM
- [After All We Can Do](#)- website describing everything Mormons must do in order to be saved by grace
- [Book Of Mormon Origins](#)- crowd-sourced analysis of the historical origins of the BOM
- [General Authority Censorship](#)- A talk given by Ronald E. Poelman that the church made him change for print/video release.

RESOURCES WITH MORE LINKS

- [Mormonthink LDS Links](#)- Has LDS as well as critical links
- [Recovery from Mormonism](#)- A very active ex-mormon community that has A LOT of links to go through
- [Rethinking Mormonism](#)- Many different post-mormonism links to go through
- [The Mithryn Bookshelf](#)- A great set of books to read after mormonism

FORUMS

- [Reddit Exmormon](#)- By far my favorite forum to connect with people going through very similar situations post-mormonism. Currently there are 300+ active members on the boards at any given time.
- [Recovering From Mormonism](#)- VERY active ex-mormon community. More negative and satirical IMO
- [New Order Mormon](#)- A community for those who find themselves stuck in the middle between active member and post-

mormon.

PODCASTS/VIDEOS

- [Mormon Stories](#)- probably one of the most popular post-mormon podcast with host John Dehlin
- [NewNameNoah](#)- Youtube channel with secretly recorded videos of the LDS temple rituals
- [Year of Polygamy](#)- a podcast site that talks about Polygamy issues in the LDS church
- [Zelph on the Shelf](#)- articles and podcasts about current LDS issues, part humorous, part serious
- [Mormon Matters](#)- a weekly podcast exploring mormon culture and current events
- [Brother Jake Videos](#)- satirical videos explaining LDS issues, seems to be mentioned alot, very popular
- [Dan Vogel Videos](#)- serious historical videos about Joseph Smith, the LDS church, etc
- [Infants on Thrones](#)- humorous ex-mormon podcast
- [Hard To Find Mormon Video's](#)- just what it states

SUPPORT SITES

- [Mormon Spectrum](#)- support for any LDS member, from true-believing to ex-mormon
- [Reddit Exmormon Forum](#)- Great for interactions and support from people going through the same thoughts and feelings mostly after a crisis of faith, people range from active members to post-mormons
- [Recovering From Mormonism Exmormon Forum](#)- Another very active forum for support from post/exmormons
- [New Order Mormon](#)- support for those members who want to maintain activity in the church, but no longer believe in alot of

what Mormonism has to offer

- [Exmormon Foundation](#)- personal stories, conferences, articles, books, etc for post-mormons
- [Stay LDS](#)- finding ways to stay in the LDS church after a crisis of faith. I found a very informative article entitled "How to stay in the church" on this website, very useful and can be found [HERE](#)
- [Mormon Path](#)- for anyone who may be interested in the author's thoughts surrounding literal belief, non-literal belief, and non-belief in Mormonism
- [The Pros and Cons of Mormonism](#)- LDS friendly website helping one to decide if the church has an overall positive or negative effect

LDS AUTHORITY NOTABLE QUOTES

- [Mormonthink Quotes](#)
- [Mormonquotes.com](#)

DOCUMENTS/FILES

- [Shared Google Drive folder](#)- contains PDF's and documents of literature about the LDS church, ie CES letter, mormon masturbation, the sealed portion of the Gold Plates, etc
- [Mormon File Leaks](#)- contains leaked LDS documents, ie handbooks, financial records, etc

RESIGNING FROM THE LDS CHURCH

- [Quitmormon](#)- Seems to be the easiest way to have your records removed from the church with minimal/no contact from your local ward/branch. Keep in mind though, all of your info is still technically on the records after resigning, they just won't contact you anymore. Free legal help to leave the church.

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ADAM-GOD DOCTRINE

From [Fairmormon.com](#)... “Brigham Young taught that **Adam**, the first man, **was God the Father**. Since this teaching runs counter to the story told in Genesis and commonly accepted by Christians, critics accuse Brigham of being a false prophet. Also, because modern Latter-day Saints do not believe Brigham's "Adam-God" teachings, critics accuse Mormons of either changing their teachings or rejecting teachings of prophets they find uncomfortable or unsupportable.

Brigham Young gave over 1,500 sermons that were recorded by transcribers. Many of these were published in the Journal of Discourses, the Deseret Evening News, and other Church publications. **In about 20 of these** he brought up the subject of **God the Father's relationship to Adam**. Many of his comments fit easily into current LDS doctrine, while some have engendered controversy.

He made the best known, and probably earliest, controversial statement in a sermon given on 9 [April 1852](#):

"Now hear it, O inhabitants of the earth, Jew and Gentile, Saint and sinner! When our father Adam came into the Garden of Eden, he came into it with a celestial body, and brought Eve, one of his wives, with him. He helped to make and organize this world. **He is MICHAEL, the Archangel**, the ANCIENT OF DAYS! about whom holy men have written and spoken--**He is our FATHER and our GOD**, and the only God with whom WE have to do. Every man upon the earth, professing

Christians or non-professing, must hear it, and will know it sooner or later. They came here, organized the raw material, and arranged in their order the herbs of the field, the trees, the apple, the peach, the plum, the pear, and every other fruit that is desirable and good for man; the seed was brought from another sphere, and planted in this earth. The thistle, the thorn, the brier, and the obnoxious weed did not appear until after the earth was cursed. When Adam and Eve had eaten of the forbidden fruit, their bodies became mortal from its effects, and therefore their offspring were mortal. (Prophet Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, v. 1, p. 51)

Based on these remarks, and others he made in public and in private, it is apparent that **Brigham Young believed that:**

- **Adam was the father of the spirits of mankind, as well as being the first parent of our physical bodies.**
- **Adam and Eve came to this earth as resurrected, exalted personages.**
- **Adam and Eve fell and became mortal in order to create physical bodies for their spirit children.**
- **Adam was the spiritual and physical father of Jesus Christ.**

Brigham claimed to have received these beliefs **by revelation**, and, on at least three occasions, claimed that he learned it from Joseph Smith. While this doctrine was never canonized, Brigham expected other contemporary Church leaders to accept it, or at least not preach against it. (Orson Pratt did not believe it, and he and Brigham had a number of heated conversations on the subject.)

The historical record indicates that some contemporary Latter-day Saints took Brigham's teachings at face value and attempted to incorporate the doctrine into mainstream LDS teachings. This response was far from universal, however, and **lost steam after the turn of the 20th century.**

Adam-God was eventually incorporated into the teaching of some 20th century polygamous break-off sects, who consider it a doctrine whose absence in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is proof that the Church is in apostasy.”

A quote...““President Young followed & made many good remarks . . . He said that our God was Father Adam. He was the Father of the Savior Jesus Christ--Our God was no more or less than Adam . . . Michael the Archangel.”

- Prophet Wilford Woodruff, Journal of Wilford Woodruff, February 19, 1854;”

Another Quote... ““Then the subject was brought up concerning Adam being made of the dust of the earth, and Elder Orson Pratt pursued a course of stubbornness and unbelief in what President young said that will destroy him if he does not repent and turn from his evil ways.” Prophet Wilford Woodruff, Journal of Wilford Woodruff, March 11, 1856”

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- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adam%E2%80%93God_doctrine
- Prophet Wilford Woodruff, Journal of Wilford Woodruff, February 19, 1854
- Prophet Wilford Woodruff, Journal of Wilford Woodruff, March 11, 1856
- <http://mit.irr.org/adam-god-doctrine>
- <http://www.mormonthink.com/QUOTES/adamgod.htm>
- <http://www.mrm.org/adam-god>

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BLACKS AND THE PRIESTHOOD

Since the beginning of the LDS church, people of every race and ethnicity could be baptized into the church as full members. Joseph Smith openly opposed slavery.

From the [LDS topics essay entitled "Race and the Priesthood"](#) it states; "During the first two decades of the Church's existence, a few black men were ordained to the priesthood. One of these men, Elijah Abel, also participated in temple ceremonies in Kirtland, Ohio, and was later baptized as proxy for deceased relatives in Nauvoo, Illinois. There is no reliable evidence that any black men were denied the priesthood during Joseph Smith's lifetime. In a private Church council three years after Joseph Smith's death, Brigham Young praised Q. Walker Lewis, a black man who had been ordained to the priesthood, saying, "We have one of the best Elders, an African.

In 1852, President Brigham Young publicly announced that men of black African descent could no longer be ordained to the priesthood, though thereafter blacks continued to join the Church through baptism and receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost. Following the death of Brigham Young, subsequent Church presidents restricted blacks from receiving the temple endowment or being married in the temple. Over time, Church leaders and members advanced many theories to explain the priesthood and temple restrictions."

It was largely taught in the Church that up through the 1980's blacks were denied the priesthood because they were from the lineage of Cain, who was cursed with a black skin after killing his brother Abel. People were born black because they were less valiant in the pre-existence.

One reason for this has been suggested that Brigham Young, the president of the church at the time, was influenced by racial tensions back then. This was a time of racial unrest. He might have just acted on his racist views.

Again from the race essay; "The justifications for this restriction echoed the widespread ideas about racial inferiority that had been used to argue for the legalization of black "servitude" in the Territory of Utah.

According to one view, which had been promulgated in the United States from at least the 1730s, blacks descended from the same lineage as the biblical Cain, who slew his brother Abel. Those who accepted this view believed that God's "curse" on Cain was the mark of a dark skin. Black servitude was sometimes viewed as a second curse placed upon Noah's grandson Canaan as a result of Ham's indiscretion toward his father. Although slavery was not a significant factor in Utah's economy and was soon abolished, the restriction on priesthood ordinations remained."

The [Fairmormon website states](#) that "Members have generally taken one of three perspectives:

1. the ban was based on revelation to Joseph Smith, and was continued by his successors until President Kimball
2. the ban did not originate with Joseph Smith, but was implemented by Brigham Young by revelation
3. the ban began as a series of administrative policy decisions, rather than a revealed doctrine, and drew partly upon ideas regarding race common in mid-19th century America. The passage of time gave greater authority to this policy than intended"

Past Prophets have stated such things as... “You see some classes of the human family that are black, uncouth, un-comely, disagreeable and low in their habits, wild, and seemingly deprived of nearly all the blessings of the intelligence that is generally bestowed upon mankind.” (Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses* 7:290-291, October 9, 1859)

“Not only was Cain called upon to suffer, but because of his wickedness he became the father of an inferior race. A curse placed upon him and that curse has been continued through his lineage and must do so while time endures. Millions of souls have come into this world cursed with a black skin and have been denied the privilege of Priesthood and the fullness of the blessings of the Gospel.” (Joseph Fielding Smith, *The Way to Perfection*, pages 101-102)

June 1978, President Spencer W. Kimball, president of the church at the time, received a “revelation”. They reversed the ban on Blacks which made it so all black people could receive the priesthood and go to the temple (See *Official Declaration 2*)

Today... “the Church disavows the theories advanced in the past that black skin is a sign of divine disfavor or curse, or that it reflects unrighteous actions in a premortal life; that mixed-race marriages are a sin; or that blacks or people of any other race or ethnicity are inferior in any way to anyone else. Church leaders today unequivocally condemn all racism, past and present, in any form”

MY THOUGHTS: The church stopped giving the blacks the priesthood starting with Brigham Young but I'm not sure of the reasons behind the ban. Most likely he was influenced by racism in his day, and that's what he felt like he had to do this. My question is... WHY would the lord tell his prophets to deny the blacks the priesthood starting back in 1852, and then tell the prophet in 1978 that it was an error, and that they can have

the priesthood now? Did Brigham Young receive revelation for this from God? Or did Brigham Young act on his own personal beliefs and feelings? Either way, why would God tell one prophet one thing, and then a hundred years down the road, would God reverse his “revelations” and instruct the prophet to do the exact opposite?

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- http://en.fairmormon.org/Mormonism_and_racial_issues/Blacks_and_the_priesthood/Origin_of_the_priesthood_ban
- <http://jod.mrm.org/7/282>
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THE BLOOD ATONEMENT

From Wiki ... “In Mormonism, **blood atonement** was a controversial doctrine which taught that murder is so heinous that the atonement of Jesus does not apply. Thus, to atone for these sins the perpetrators must have their blood shed upon the ground as a sacrificial offering. The concept was **originally taught by Brigham Young**, though it appears to be an expansion of the previous teachings of Joseph Smith, Jr. This doctrine is no longer accepted by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS Church)

From the **Encyclopedia of Mormonism**: “The doctrines of the Church affirm that the Atonement wrought by the shedding of the blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is efficacious for the sins of all who believe, repent, are baptized by one having authority, and receive the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands. However, if a person thereafter commits a grievous sin such as the shedding of innocent blood, the Savior's sacrifice alone will not absolve the person of the consequences of the sin. Only by voluntarily submitting to whatever penalty the Lord may require can that person benefit from the Atonement of Christ.

Several early Church leaders, most notably **Brigham Young**, taught that in a complete theocracy the Lord could require the voluntary shedding of a murderer's blood-presumably by capital punishment-as part of the process of Atonement for such grievous sin. This was referred to as "blood Atonement." Since such a theocracy has not been

operative in modern times, the practical effect of the idea was its use as a rhetorical device to heighten the awareness of Latter-day Saints of the seriousness of murder and other major sins. This view is not a doctrine of the Church and has never been practiced by the Church at any time.

Early anti-Mormon writers charged that under Brigham Young the Church practiced "blood Atonement," by which they meant Church-instigated violence directed at dissenters, enemies, and strangers. This claim distorted the whole idea of blood atonement-which was based on voluntary submission by an offender-into a supposed justification of involuntary punishment. Occasional isolated acts of violence that occurred in areas where Latter-day Saints lived were typical of that period in the history of the American West, but they were not instances of Church-sanctioned blood Atonement (see the Mountain Meadow Massacre)”

From Fairmormon.com... “Brigham Young spoke of a doctrine called "blood atonement." Despite a number of rhetorical statements by LDS leaders in the late 1850s, there is no evidence that anyone was "blood atoned" at the orders of Brigham Young or any other general authority. Contemporary claims for such actions uniformly come from anti-Mormon books and newspapers with lurid titles such as *The Destroying Angels of Mormondom* and *Abominations of Mormonism Exposed*.

The First Presidency issued an official declaration on the matter of killing apostates, as a form of blood atonement, in 1889. This declaration reads, in part:

Notwithstanding all the stories told about the killing of apostates, no case of this kind has ever occurred, and of course has never been established against the Church we represent. Hundreds of seceders from the Church have continuously resided and now live in this territory, many of whom have amassed considerable wealth, though bitterly opposed to the

Mormon faith and people. Even those who made it their business to fabricate the vilest falsehoods, and to render them plausible by culling isolated passages from old sermons without the explanatory context, and have suffered no opportunity to escape them of vilifying and blackening the characters of the people, have remained among those whom they have thus persistently calumniated until the present day, without receiving the slightest personal injury.

We denounce as entirely untrue the allegation which has been made, that our Church favors or believes in the killing of persons who leave the Church or apostatize from its doctrines. We would view a punishment of this character for such an act with the utmost horror; it is abhorrent to us and is in direct opposition to the fundamental principles of our creed”

My thoughts: This is an interesting topic. Early church leaders taught that SOME sins were so heinous that the only way that one could be forgiven of these sins was to die for them because the atonement wouldn't cover you. There are many quotes from mostly Brigham Young who taught this doctrine to church members, although it looks like this doctrine was introduced with Joseph Smith at one point.

The thing that bothers me is that early church leaders taught this, and NOW in 2010, current church leaders denounce this practice, and state that this doctrine has never existed nor practiced. If you research it, there definitely was talk of it. Now whether or not the doctrine was actually practiced, I didn't look that far into it. But once again, this shows that God has changing policies according to either who's in charge, or the time period. Just because Joseph Smith taught one thing, doesn't mean that a current or future prophet can one day denounce that teaching and make it false.

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THE BOOK OF ABRAHAM

This topic is probably the biggest and most important topic that made me change the way I think about the church. One day I came across a website where it talked about the Book of Abraham in the Pearl of Great Price. The LDS church believes that the Book of Abraham was written by the hand of Abraham about his life. Joseph Smith came across some old ancient Egyptian papyri that the church purchased in 1835. There are 3 facsimiles, one specifically that supposedly show Abraham sacrificing his son on the altar.

There have been many scientists and Egyptologists through the years that have studied the pictures that are presented (the facsimiles) and they all agree that these pictures are a representation of **funerary texts** and nothing what Joseph Smith claimed to have "translated". It is the start of a **"Breathing Permit"**. It has been proven over and over that the scene depicts the embalming of a deceased person, with a strong allusion to the god Osiris.

Recently, the LDS church wrote an essay specifically addressing the controversies surrounding the Book of Abraham and its contents. Read the full essay [HERE](#).

According to mormonthink...“Ancient Egyptians believed that when a person died, he/she must make a journey to Osiris. To aid them on their way, priests included in their coffins documents with magic spells that

would aid the deceased, with the help of their guide Anubis (a jackal-headed god), through the afterlife with their five senses intact, into the presence of Osiris. These spells and diagrams are all part of what is collectively known as the Book of the Dead. Not all the spells and diagrams were used for any one person. On the contrary, different people would have different spells and diagrams buried with them”.

As you can see in the graphic below, Egyptologists have clearly explained what each of the symbols mean in this funerary text.



Below is a comparison between Joseph's interpretations and our current Egyptological understanding of these images.

Figure #	Joseph Smith	Egyptology
Figure 1	The Angel of the Lord.	Egyptologists see this as the "ba" of the deceased. The ba is basically a person's personality — all of his/her non-physical attributes. Therefore, ancient Egyptians would have recognized this figure as the "ba" of Hôr (the deceased priest), who is also figure 2. It would normally have a human head instead of a bird's head.
Figure 2	Abraham fastened upon an altar	This is, as we've already discussed, actually the deceased with whom this papyrus was found. His name is Hôr.
Figure 3	The idolatrous priest of Elkenah attempting to offer up Abraham as a sacrifice.	There has been a little bit of controversy over the years regarding this figure. Prior to the papyrus's recovery in 1968, Egyptologists had been puzzled that there was a man with a man's head standing over the deceased. It was so atypical. Normally, during other similar scenes, this figure would have a jackal's head and would have represented the god of embalming, Anubis. During the controversy at the beginning of the 20th century (before the original papyrus had resurfaced) Egyptologists generally said this figure was probably representing a priest doing the actual embalming — which was odd for an ancient document of this sort, but interesting. Now, however, we realize that where the picture begins to go awry is the exact place where it is damaged in the original (see a close-up in footnote 2). How do we know that it wasn't damaged after Joseph Smith's time? Because the scroll was originally rolled up. Any substantial damage to the outside could have "bled through", so to speak, to the inside layers. And, in fact, this is exactly what happened. When looking at the scroll all laid out, you can see a repeating pattern of damage that retains it's basic shape, but gets smaller toward what would have been the inner layers. Facsimile #1 would have been at the beginning of the scroll, so the damage luckily wasn't as great, but it reflects the same damage pattern as can be seen on the outer layers of the scroll. This, along with other indicators, such as the black coloring, the type of clothing, the context, etc., allows us to recognize Figure 2 as Anubis, the god of embalming, and the god who helps the deceased along in the afterlife.
Figure 4	The altar for sacrifice by the idolatrous priests, standing before the gods of Elkenah, Libnah, Mahanackrah, Korash, and Pharaoh.	In reality, this is a "lion couch" — simply a funeral bier. You can see this in many funeral scenes in ancient Egyptian art. Human sacrifice was never practiced in Egypt (except possibly very early in Egyptian history (1st Dynasty) and possibly in Egyptian pre-history, all of which would have pre-dated Abraham by a very, very long time). Therefore, an "altar for sacrifice" for humans would have been unknown to Egyptians.
Figure 5-8	The idolatrous god[s] of Elkenah... Libnah... Mahanackrah... Korash... Pharaoh.	First of all, there are no gods called "Elkenah," "Libnah," "Mahanackrah," or "Korash" in the 5000+ years of Egypt's recorded history. And, as we will discuss later, the word "Pharaoh" may not have even existed in Abraham's day, depending on when Abraham would have lived. Secondly, these figures are extremely well-known in ancient Egyptian funeral scenes. They are canopic jars containing the deceased's internal organs that were always removed during the embalming process. They represent the four sons of the god Horus, who are: (fig. 5) Qebehsenuef — receives the intestines ⁴ , (fig. 6) Duamutef — receives the stomach ⁵ , (fig. 7) Hapy — receives the lungs ⁶ , and (fig. 8) Imsety — receives the liver. ⁶
Figure 9	The idolatrous god of Pharaoh.	Stephen E. Thompson, professor of Egyptology at Brown University and member of the LDS Church, identifies this crocodile as representing the god Horus. ⁷ While Sobek is often portrayed in the form of a crocodile, (see this link on Sobek) in the case of this re-enactment of the Osiris-myth, it would be more appropriate to identify this figure as Horus. As Klaus Baer noted: "The versions of the Osiris myth differ in telling how Seth disposed of Osiris after murdering him, but he was commonly believed to have cut Osiris into little pieces, which he scattered into the Nile, leaving Isis the task of fishing out and assembling the parts of her brother and husband so that he could be resurrected and beget Horus. In this she was helped by Horus in the shape of a crocodile, who is represented in the water (the zigzags) below the vignette... ⁸ "Möller... discusses the occasionally attested practice of having a small (and prudently muzzled) crocodile swim alongside the boat carrying the mummy across the Nile to the cemetery." ⁹
Figure 10	Abraham in Egypt.	It is actually a libation platform bearing wines, oils and a stylized papyrus plant. In Egyptian art, it is found in almost all drawings of major god figures, and has absolutely nothing whatsoever to do with Abraham. ¹⁰
Figure 11	Designed to represent the pillars of heaven, as understood by the Egyptians.	On the contrary, the Egyptians would have seen this as a palace facade, called a "serakh" which, according to Egyptologist Stephen E. Thompson, was a frequent decoration on funerary objects. The "serakh" originally depicted the front of a fortified palace, and the reason it seems to be on the bottom of the picture is due to the way Egyptians would draw in perspective. This fortification would have been seen as being in front of this scene rather than underneath it. In other words, the embalming and resurrection of the Osiris Hôr would have taken place inside the safe confines of the serakh. ¹¹
Figure 12	Raukeeyang, signifying expanse, or the firmament over our heads; but in this case, in relation to this subject, the Egyptians meant it to signify Shamuana, to be high, or the heavens, answering to the Hebrew word, Shaumalyeem.	First of all, none of these words are Egyptian. They are all Hebrew transliterations — Joseph was studying Hebrew with a Prof. Joshua Seixas at the time he obtained the papyrus, and even though Joseph interpreted these figures during the Nauvoo period (after 1838), these transliterations are specifically in Seixas's style. ¹² Secondly, these strokes represent water in which the crocodile swims — which makes sense in this context. If figure #11 is a palace fortification, then these crocodile-infested waters would be a second line of defense against intrusion, keeping the deceased doubly-safe. ¹²

Facsimile #1 figures: Joseph Smith's interpretations versus current Egyptological understanding

MY THOUGHTS: This information startled me, so I looked deeper into

it, and it's really hard for me to believe that Joseph translated the ancient papyri correctly, when lots of experts have looked at it, and THEY all agree that Joseph was WAY off, and his translations were gibberish! There lots of books and articles written on this subject. I have only scanned through some articles, but I am now of the opinion that if Joseph Smith got this wrong, what else did he get wrong? I can't accept the Book of Abraham as a book of Scripture.

For very good reading on the subject, please see the following...

- [Examining the Book of Abraham](#)- Short book examining its contents
- [Mormonthink and their analysis](#)-
- [By His Own Hand Upon Papyrus](#)- an excellent book
- [Wikipedia article about the subject](#)-
- [CES letter](#) addressing the Book of Abraham issues
- [FairMormon](#)- their interpretation of the Book of Abraham
- [LDS.org](#)- Why does the translation of the Papyri match the Book of Abraham?After reading all of these resources, make up your own mind as to whether or not Joseph Smith got it right or wrong.

After reading all of these resources, make up your own mind as to whether or not Joseph Smith got it right or wrong.

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POST-MORMON JOURNEY

BOOK OF MORMON INCONSISTENCIES

This section will contain several things that have been found inside the Book of Mormon that don't fit the time period. “An **anachronism** is when an author's writing contains something from a future time period which couldn't realistically be in the time period they've written it into. For example, William Shakespeare wrote in his play, "Julius Caesar," that Brutus said, "Peace! Count the clock," with Cassius replying, "The clock has stricken three." The problem is that the play took place in 44 BC—a time period in which such clocks had not yet been invented. Shakespeare took something familiar to him, a clock that strikes the hours, and placed it in his story when no such clocks existed. Because the play was fictional, it is seen as simply an error on Shakespeare's part. If, however, someone were to claim that they had found an ancient writing from 44 BC that had the play written on it, it would clearly be seen as a forgery on someone's part because of the clock anachronism.” Here is a [list of many of the common anachronisms](#) (not my list, but good none the less)

ANACHRONISMS:

1. **HORSES:** Notice the horse in the LDS depiction of the Stripling Warriors from the Book of Mormon. Scientists say that the modern-day horse did not exist in the Americas during Book of Mormon times. It is universally accepted among mainstream archaeologists, anthropologists, and historians that there is no evidence of the existence of a pre-Columbian horse, excepting

the long-extinct species.

Horses are mentioned fourteen times in the Book of Mormon, and are portrayed as an integral part of the cultures described. There is no evidence that horses existed on the American continent during the 2500-3000 year history of the Book of Mormon (2500 B.C. - 400 A.D.) Horses evolved in North America, but became extinct at the end of the Pleistocene). Horses did not reappear in the Americas until the Spaniards brought them from Europe. They were brought to the Caribbean by Christopher Columbus in 1493 and to the American continent by Cortez in 1519.

Apologists assert that there is fossil evidence that some New World horses may have survived the Pleistocene–Holocene transition, though these findings are disputed by critics. If the horse did exist in Mesoamerica during Book of Mormon times, then not a single bone or tooth from any of these horses has ever been discovered, despite the fact that the remains of an abundance of other animals have been discovered in Mesoamerica.

If horses existed in ancient Mesoamerica during the Book of Mormon time period, then despite the fact that ancient Mesoamericans depicted many animals in art and ideology, they never depicted a horse or included the horse in any of their mythology.

If the horse existed in Mesoamerica since Jaredite times, then it left no trace of the sort of social evolutionary impact that we see in other cultures that possessed the horse.

If the Book of Mormon "horse" is really a **tapir**, then tapirs were

domesticated only by one small group of people, never to be replicated by anyone else, despite sharing characteristics that disqualify large mammals from domestication.”

2. **ELEPHANTS:** Elephants are mentioned twice in a single verse in the Book of Ether. Mastodons and mammoths lived during the Pleistocene in the New World, however, as with the prehistoric horse, the fossil record indicates that they became extinct along with most of the megafauna about the end of the last Ice Age. The source of this extinction is speculated to be the result of human predation, a significant climate change, or a combination of both factors. It is known that a small population of mammoths survived on St. Paul Island, Alaska up until 8,000 B.P., but even this date is thousands of years before the Jaredite record in the Book of Mormon begins.”

Ether 9:19 "And they also had horses, and asses, and there were elephants..."

“LDS Church Response: We regret that we could not find this issue answered by the LDS church in any church publication or web site. However we found responses from LDS apologists. Scientists just haven't found the evidence yet.

Mastodons lived in North America starting about 2 million years ago and thrived until 11,000 years ago—around the time humans arrived on the continent—when the last of the 7-ton (6.35-metric-ton) elephant like creatures died off.

So although Mastodons (once again not elephants) lived in the Americas, they died out several thousands of years before the Jaredites even came to the Americas.”

<http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2006/10/061003->

3. **CATTLE and COWS:** There are six references to cattle made in the Book of Mormon, including verbiage suggesting they were domesticated. There has been no evidence recovered that Old World cattle (members of the genus *Bos*) inhabited the New World prior to European contact in the sixteenth century AD.

Apologists argue that the term "cattle" may be more generic than suggesting members of the genus *Bos*, and may have referred to bison, mountain goats, llamas, or other American species.

According to the Book of Mormon, varieties of "cattle" (including goats and sheep) could be found in ancient America. Without these the Nephites could not have kept the Law of Moses, as directed.

LDS Apologists note that the word "cattle" may refer to the ancestor of the American bison, *Bison antiquus* (of the subfamily Bovinae). *Bison antiquus*, sometimes called the ancient bison, was the most common large herbivore of the North American continent for over ten thousand years, and is a direct ancestor of the living American bison.

However, no species of bison is known to have been domesticated as the "cattle" in the Book of Mormon are suggested to have been. Furthermore, it is widely accepted that the only large mammal to be domesticated in the Americas was the llama; no species of goats, deer, sheep, or other "cattle" were domesticated before the arrival of the Europeans to the continent.

Apologists counter that the wording in the Book of Mormon does not require the "cattle" to have been domesticated in the strictest sense. For example, Enos in the Book of Mormon tells that the Nephites raised "flocks of all manner of cattle of every kind..." - Enos 1:21, see also 2 Nephi 17:25

4. **GOATS:** Goats are mentioned three times in the Book of Mormon placing them among the Nephites and the Jaredites. In two of the verses, "goats" are distinguished from "wild goats" indicating that there were at least two varieties, one of them possibly domesticated, or tamed.

Domesticated goats are not native to the Americas, having been domesticated in pre-historic times on the Eurasian continent. Domestic goats were introduced on the American continent upon the arrival of the Europeans in the 15th century, 1000 years after the conclusion of the Book of Mormon, and nearly 2000 years after they are last mentioned in the Book of Mormon. The mountain goat is indigenous to North America, but it has never been domesticated, and is known for being very aggressive.

Matthew Roper, a FARMS writer, discussed the topic of goats in, Deer as "Goat" and Pre-Columbian Domesticate. He noted that when early Spanish explorers visited the southeastern United States they found Native Americans herding tame deer. Quoting an early historian of Spain, Peter Martyr d'Anghiera, recorded:

"In all these regions they visited, the Spaniards noticed herds of deer similar to our herds of cattle. These deer bring forth and nourish their young in the houses of the natives. During the daytime they wander freely through the woods in search of their food, and in the evening they come back to their little ones, who have been cared for, allowing themselves to be shut up in the courtyards and even to be milked, when they have suckled their fawns. The only milk the natives know is that of the does, from which they make cheese."

Mr Roper also noted early Spanish colonists called native

Mesoamerican brocket deer goats. He quotes, "Friar Diego de Landa noted, 'There are wild goats which the Indians call yuc.'" He quoted another friar in the late 16th century, "in Yucatán 'there are in that province ... great numbers of deer, and small goats'.

5. **SWINE:** "Swine are referred to twice in the Book of Mormon, and the narrative of the Book of Mormon suggests that the swine were domesticated. There have not been any remains, references, artwork, tools, or any other evidence suggesting that swine were ever present in the pre-entrada New World.

Apologists note that Peccaries (also known as Javelinas), which bear a superficial resemblance to pigs, have been present in South America since prehistoric times. LDS authors advocating the original mound builder setting for the Book of Mormon have similarly suggested North American peccaries (also called "wild pigs") as the "swine" of the Jaredites. Critics rebut that peccaries have never been domesticated.

6. **BARLEY and WHEAT:** "Grains are mentioned twenty-eight times in the Book of Mormon, including barley and wheat. The introduction of domesticated modern barley and wheat to the New World was made by Europeans sometime after 1492, many centuries after the time in which the Book of Mormon is set.

FARMS apologist Robert Bennett offered two possible explanations for this anachronism: "Research on this matter supports two possible explanations. First, the terms barley and wheat, as used in the Book of Mormon, may refer to certain other New World crop plants that were given Old World designations; and second, the terms may refer to genuine varieties of New World barley and wheat," states Mr Bennett of

the Maxwell Institute. "For example, the Spanish called the fruit of the prickly pear cactus a "fig," and emigrants from England called maize "corn," an English term referring to grains in general. A similar practice may have been employed when Book of Mormon people encountered New World plant species for the first time."

Apologist Robert R. Bennett of FARMS postulates that references to "barley" could refer to *Hordeum pusillum*, also known as "Little Barley", a species of grass native to the Americas. The seeds are edible, and this plant was part of the Pre-Columbian Eastern Agricultural Complex of cultivated plants used by Native Americans. *Hordeum pusillum* was unknown in Mesoamerica, where there is no evidence of pre-Columbian barley cultivation, but evidence exists that this plant was domesticated in North America in the Woodland periods contemporary with mound builder societies (early centuries A.D.). He states that this information "should caution readers of the Book of Mormon not to quickly dismiss references to pre-Columbian wheat as anachronistic."

Critics rebut these claims, rejecting the notion that *Hordeum pusillum* was the "barley" that Joseph Smith referred to in the Book of Mormon. They also note that the earliest mention of barley in the Book of Mormon dates to 121 B.C. which is several hundred years prior to cultivation of *Hordeum pusillum* in North America, and the arrival of the Norse.

7. **SILK** (Alma 1:29)
8. **CHARIOTS** (Alma 18:9) Archaeologists say that wheels were not used for travel in Pre-Columbian America. The knowledge of the wheel for transportation may have been in existence but

seems to be limited to the use in toys. If the Nephites and Lamanites used chariots, why wouldn't this extremely valuable idea continue to be used by the descendants of the Ancient Americans? If Lehi's descendants did use a wheel, there would be evidence of wheels in the Americas before Columbus.

Technology spreads quickly, especially an innovative one like the wheel.

9. **SEVEN DAY WEEK** (Mosiah 13:18) (not known to Ancient Americans)

10. **CIMETERS** (Old-World two-handed steel blade) Mosiah 9:16 (and other verses) Cultural artifacts or circumstances mentioned in the Book of Mormon that have not been discovered or verified in any ancient American archaeological expedition or historical investigation in the last 200 years

11. There are others, the **Book of Mormon currency** for example, but I think this is sufficient for my needs.

Critical Questions regarding the Book of Mormon that I agree with...
(not my questions...)

- Why is it that numerous LDS books and papers describe proposed Book of Mormon locations for cities and the "narrow neck of land"? No city has been identified as being Nephite, Lamanite, Jaredite, etc. For example, Zarahemla was occupied for hundreds of years, but we still don't have any real evidence of it ever existing. The Book of Mormon describes a time period from 2000 BC to 400 AD and millions of people. No city they occupied has yet to be found.
- Why didn't any of the place names from the Book of Mormon still exist when Columbus arrived?

Where was the Hill Cumorah? Was it in New York or Central America? If it was in Central America, why hasn't it been found? If it was in New York, how did they move that quickly and where are all the remains?

- Why don't significant gaps exist in the archaeological record of Mesoamerica if these "missing" people existed?
- Did the Book of Mormon take place outside of Mesoamerica? The History of the Church records an incident from June, 1834 in which Joseph Smith identified a skeleton found in an Indian burial mound in Illinois: "... the visions of the past being opened to my understanding by the Spirit of the Almighty, I discovered the person whose skeleton was before us was a white Lamanite, a large, thick-set man, and a man of God. His name was **Zelph** ... who was known from the Hill Cumorah, or eastern sea to the Rocky Mountains." (**HOC 1904 ed., II: 79-80**).
- Why don't [non-Mormon] archeologists theorize Hebrew or Egyptian linkages or influences in Mesoamerica?

MY OWN THOUGHTS: I was researching about the Book of Mormon, and the current thought is that the "Narrow neck of land" most likely would be down in Central America somewhere, and the geographic area of the Book of Mormon is probably not more than 200-300 miles in diameter. How could they travel all around the lands by foot otherwise? I have also seen predictions that the Book of Mormon took place down on the Baja California Peninsula, as well as upstate New York.

This also brings into question the white Lamanite that Joseph Smith discovered, some sort of skeleton that was allegedly a "White Lamanite" named Zelph. So did the Book of Mormon take place up by New York? Where's the narrow neck of land?

The Book Of Mormon is not supported by any linguistic evidence:

"The Book of Mormon is further undermined by the fact that there is no

evidence of a Semitic/hieroglyphic/demotic hybrid script (called **Reformed Egyptian** in the text) or a spoken Hebrew dialect ever being used by pre or post-Columbian natives of North or South America. To the contrary, the current body of evidence indicates that there were many different spoken and written languages utilized among the various peoples of Ancient America that have no resemblance to Hebrew or Egyptian texts or languages.

This proliferation of language variants among existing Native tribes undermines the Book of Mormon claim of a single language used for the entire Book of Mormon people. Language does evolve; but not at such an unprecedented rate as to leave such a scattering of textual and vocal variants (all with no resemblance to the Book of Mormon 'mother tongue') within such a short period of time (less than 2000 years from the end of the Book of Mormon narrative to the present).

In fact, the text of the Book of Mormon indicates that the peoples within the narrative took great care to preserve their language from evolving or fracturing into different dialects. In 1st Nephi, Nephi is commanded to get the brass plates from Jerusalem to preserve "unto our children the language of our fathers" (1 Nephi 3:19). Later in the text, the Nephite nation encounters a second group of Hebrew migrants and finds that their "language had become corrupted; and they had brought no records with them". As a result, Mosiah (the Nephite leader) found it necessary that they should be taught in his (Nephite - Hebrew) language (Omni 1:17-18). For the duration of the Book of Mormon narrative, there is no indication that the principle narrative groups ever deviated from their language of origin (spoken or written) for 1000 years.

How then do we account for the thousands of languages that were spoken in North and South America prior to first contact with Europeans in the early 11th century?

How can a civilization on the scale described in the Book of Mormon maintain linguistic homogeneity for 1000 years and then splinter into thousands of varying and demonstrably unrelated languages in the next

1000 years?

Due to the physical absence of the gold plates, there is no body of Ancient American evidence with which to compare Joseph Smith's claim that Ancient Americans used a Hebrew/Egyptian hybrid language. The only evidence in existence is the 'Anthon Transcript' which (according to Smith and his associates) was taken to Professor Charles Anthon for a certificate of authenticity.”

DNA: “DNA disproves that the Lamanites are the principal ancestors of the Indians.

With the advances in modern science, biologists have made remarkable progress in tracing human migratory patterns based on identifiable gene markers contained within mitochondrial DNA. Of particular interest to Americans (and to Latter-day Saints) was the origin of Native Americans - long hypothesized to have migrated from Asia over the Bearing Strait several thousand years ago? This widely accepted theory contradicts the Book of Mormon's hypothesis that American Natives are the descendants of Semitic migrants who arrived here descended from Asia, not Israel as the church teaches. Asian migrants have populated this continent for over 50,000 years. The thousands of DNA samples from every known tribe of Native Americans indicate an Asiatic rather than Semitic origin and give greater support to the theory of a prehistoric Asiatic migration across the Bearing Strait.

The most common defense proffered by Mormon apologists in this case is that the Book of Mormon does not offer a testable hypothesis. In fact, in 2005, noted Mormon historian Richard L. Bushman went so far as to say that the American continent was not even the definite location of the Book of Mormon peoples. He writes: "The Book of Mormon deposited its people on some unknown shore -- **not even definitely identified as America** -- and had them live out their history in a remote place in a distant time." - Richard Bushman, *Rough Stone Rolling*, p. 97”

Recent change to the Title Page of the Book of Mormon: Recently the church has changed some of the wording on the title page. It USED to say... "Past editions of that page say all of the people chronicled in the book "were destroyed, except the Lamanites, **and they are the principal ancestors** of the American Indians.""

The new editions changed one word... "The Lamanites "are **among the ancestors** of the American Indians."

MY THOUGHTS: To me, this is a huge change. When I was first taught about the book of Mormon and the church history, I was taught that the book of Mormon teaches about the Native Americans that were the first ones to settle North America. They were the principle Native Americans, and all current Indians descend from these Native Americans from the book of Mormon.

So now the church is acknowledging or saying that there were Native American's that existed or lived here in North America long before the Book of Mormon times, and that Nephi and family were NOT the principal ancestors.

Another thing that has bothered me is the claim that there are 1769 King James Version edition errors in the Book of Mormon, errors that are unique to the 1769 edition. So what were they doing in the Book of Mormon if it is supposedly an ancient text? How did that happen? For further discussion on this point, [SEE HERE](#).

For more problems with the Book of Mormon, please see the references below. There are too many for me too go through here, and other people have done a much better job.

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POST-MORMON JOURNEY

BOOK OF MORMON TRANSLATION (SEERSTONE)

This was one topic that was very new to me. I was always taught in church and seminary that the way Joseph Smith translated the Gold Plates was by looking at the gold plates, studying them, and divine inspiration came to him so he could see them in English. He would verbally read them, while someone who dictated what he said, would sit on the other side of a sheet or veil, so they couldn't cast their eyes upon the plates. This is how I was taught he translated the plates.

Turns out, this isn't true at all. From what I've learned during my research, it sounds like Joseph first used the Urim and Thummim (the interpreters) fastened to some sort of breastplate to translate the first 116 pages of the BOM. It was later given to Oliver Cowdrey after constant begging, and those pages were lost. After it was lost, the rest of the translation of the BOM was translated using a Seer Stone that he found while digging a well years before "out of convenience".

Joseph would put his seer stone in his top hat, put the hat up to his face, and look at the stone. The stone would glow white, and reveal a sentence of translated reformed Egyptian. He would read these to a scribe. The gold plates would normally be sitting on the table close to where he was sitting, wrapped in a cloth. Joseph didn't even need the gold plates present to translate them. He would just put his seer stone in his hat, put his face up to the hat so as to keep out the light, and then read from the

stone what appeared.



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From LDS.org’s new [essay on the translation process](#)... “The scribes and others who observed the translation left numerous accounts that give insight into the process. Some accounts indicate that Joseph studied the characters on the plates. Most of the accounts speak of Joseph’s use of the Urim and Thummim (either the interpreters or the seer stone), and many accounts refer to his use of a single stone. According to these accounts, **Joseph placed either the interpreters or the seer stone in a hat, pressed his face into the hat to block out extraneous light, and read aloud the English words that appeared on the instrument.** The process as described brings to mind a passage from the Book of Mormon that speaks of God preparing “a stone, which shall shine forth in darkness unto light.

The scribes who assisted with the translation unquestionably believed that Joseph translated by divine power. Joseph’s wife Emma explained that she “frequently wrote day after day” at a small table in their house in Harmony, Pennsylvania. She described Joseph “sitting with his face buried in his hat, with the stone in it, and dictating hour after hour with nothing between us.” According to Emma, the plates “often lay on the table without any attempt at concealment, wrapped in a small linen table cloth.” When asked if Joseph had dictated from the Bible or from a

manuscript he had prepared earlier, Emma flatly denied those possibilities: “He had neither manuscript nor book to read from.” Emma told her son Joseph Smith III, “The Book of Mormon is of divine authenticity—I have not the slightest doubt of it. I am satisfied that no man could have dictated the writing of the manuscripts unless he was inspired; for, when acting as his scribe, your father would dictate to me for hour after hour; and when returning after meals, or after interruptions, he would at once begin where he had left off, without either seeing the manuscript or having any portion of it read to him.”

Another scribe, Martin Harris sat across the table from Joseph Smith and wrote down the words Joseph dictated. Harris later related that as Joseph used the seer stone to translate, sentences appeared. Joseph read those sentences aloud, and after penning the words, Harris would say, “Written.” An associate who interviewed Harris recorded him saying that Joseph “**possessed a seer stone**, by which he was enabled to translate as well as from the Urim and Thummim and for convenience he then used the seer stone.”

MY FEELINGS: I don’t ever remember being taught this process. The church has always taught me that the translation process was more like Joseph Smith sitting at a table by himself looking at the plates, while some scribe was behind a curtain so he/she couldn’t see the plates. Joseph would read the plates as though they were in English and somehow received inspiration to translate these plates.

I was never taught that Joseph Smith looked at a magical rock placed in his hat, and looked inside the hat to reveal the translation of the BOM, without even having to look at the plates. Some suggest that the plates were even hidden away somewhere during the translation process. The plates weren’t even needed! So why were they given to him? Why did Joseph Smith allegedly have the gold plates when he didn’t even have to look at them to translate them? To me it almost seems as though the

special magical rock was some sort of magic ball! This is difficult for me to believe in.

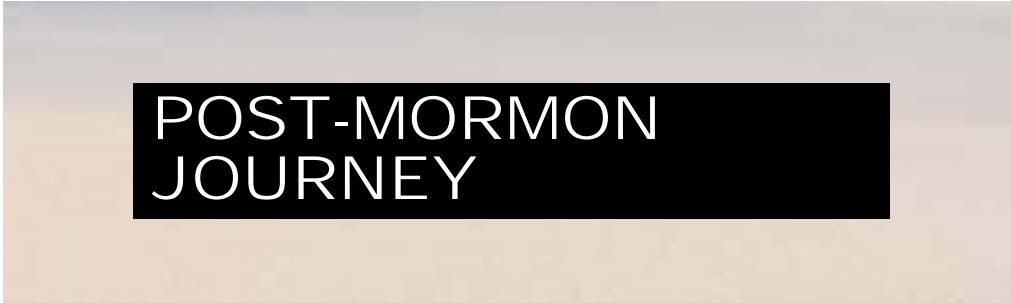
Here are more references for further reading on this subject...

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- [The Gold Plates and the translation of the Book of Mormon](#)
- [Wikipedia's article about the seer stone](#)
- [Book of Mormon Translation- CES letter](#)
- [A seer stone and a hat](#)
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CONDITIONAL CHURCH/GOD

I feel like everything about the church is conditional. If you want God to love you, you have to obey him, read his scriptures, obey his commandments, etc. If you do not do these things, God will not love you. If you want to reach the celestial kingdom, you must...

1. Be baptized by immersion at 8 years of age
2. Receive the holy ghost by the laying on of hands by those who have the Holy Priesthood
3. Receive the Aaronic Priesthood at age 12
4. Receive the Melchizedek Priesthood at age 18
5. Go through the temple and receive your endowments
6. Serve a 2 year mission
7. Wear your garments every day of your life
8. Pay 10% tithing every month of your life
9. Get married in the temple
10. Preach the gospel to everyone
11. Repent all the time of all your sins because you will never be perfect in this life
12. Study the scriptures every day (mostly just the Book of Mormon)
13. Pray every night and day, over food, and any other time of day when you feel like you need to
14. Attend 3 hours of church every Sunday
15. Keep the Sabbath day holy, meaning don't buy anything, don't go

out to eat, no fishing, hiking, etc on Sunday, church videos only

16. Endure to the end

17. etc, etc, etc.

If you do not do these things, you will never be worthy enough to live with God again. Is God really like this? I couldn't imagine telling my own kids something to the effect of... "you have to do this, this, that, that, this, etc,ect or else you are not worthy or qualified to come live with me forever. You can live in a different world or lower kingdom, but not with me". Is this how God is? I sure don't think so.

Take a look at a website called... "[After all we can do](#)". This site show 613 things that the LDS people are expected to do. Crazy long list, but well worth a brief look-over.

I do not want to believe in this attitude anymore. I believe in a God that is loving, caring, and would do anything for his kids, regardless of whether or not they screw up in life. I believe in a God that would want to see his children come home and live with him, regardless of their choices in life. I would be the same way with my children. If my child turns gay (which is against church policy to actively live a gay lifestyle), am I going to kick him out of the house and disown him and never let him come home again? No, absolutely not.

What if he kills someone and becomes a convicted felon? I would still love him and want him to come home and visit with us. What ever happened to unconditional love, like they say in the scriptures? What about the story of the Pridigal Son? Father was happy to see his wayward son come home. I could debate the word wayward, but the point is that his father accepted his faults and mistakes, and welcomed him home. **THIS is what I imagine God to be like. We do our best here on earth (each choosing different paths), and God will make up the difference in the afterlife.** I don't believe that God will make up the

difference in the afterlife **IF AND ONLY IF** we strive for perfection and hit a set number of checkmarks in this life... (Baptism, endowment, temple marriage, mission, etc). It's VERY conditional love in the church.

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POST-MORMON JOURNEY

THE CURSE OF CAIN

This was always taught during church... that black people were descendants from Cain, and their skin is black because of Cain killing his brother or something like that. This apparently has been debunked, even by Mormon apologists today. I will include the discussion from Fairmormon.org, a very pro-Mormon website...

Fairmormon states... “Prior to 1978, the **doctrinal folklore** that **blacks are the descendants of Cain** and Ham and that they **carry the “mark of Cain”** was a belief among some members of the Church, and is **occasionally heard even today**. The dubious “folk doctrine” in question is no **longer even relevant**, since it was used to **incorrectly explain and justify a Church policy** that was reversed over thirty years ago. Prior to the 1978 revelation, however, the Saints used the “mark of Cain” to explain the policy of denying priesthood ordination to those of African descent—a policy for which no revelation or prophetic explanation was ever actually given.

Early members of the Church were, for the most part, **converts from Protestant sects. It is understandable that they naturally brought this culturally-conditioned belief in the "curse of Ham" with them into Mormonism.** Many modern members of the Church, for instance, are unaware that Joseph Smith ordained at least one African-American man to the priesthood: Elijah Abel.

At some point during Brigham Young's administration, the priesthood ban was initiated. No revelation, if there ever was one, was published, although many throughout the history of the Church have assumed that the reason for the ban must be that blacks were the cursed seed of Cain, and therefore not allowed the priesthood (usually stemming from a misreading of Abraham 1). The correct answer as to why the ban was put into place is: **we don't know.**

Bruce R. McConkie in 1978, said after the revelation granting blacks the priesthood: It is time disbelieving people repented and got in line and believed in a living, modern prophet. **Forget everything that I have said, or what President Brigham Young...or whomsoever has said in days past that is contrary to the present revelation.** We spoke with a limited understanding and without the light and knowledge that now has come into the world. We get our truth and our light line upon line and precept upon precept. We have now had added a new flood of intelligence and light on this particular subject, and it erases all the darkness and all the views and all the thoughts of the past. They don't matter anymore. It doesn't make a particle of difference what anybody ever said about the Negro matter before the first day of June of this year. It is a new day and a new arrangement, and the Lord has now given the revelation that sheds light out into the world on this subject.

The speculation was that in the premortal existence, certain spirits were set aside to come to Earth through a lineage that was cursed and marked, first by Cain's murder of his brother and covenant with Satan (Genesis 4:11–15; Moses 5:23–25, Moses 5:36–40), and then again later by Ham's offense against his father Noah. The reasons why this lineage was set apart weren't clear, but it was speculated they were somehow less valiant than their premortal brethren during the war in heaven. In this life, then, the holy priesthood was to be withheld from all who had had any trace of that lineage.

As neat and coherent as that scenario might seem, the scriptures typically cited in its support cannot logically be interpreted this way unless one starts with the priesthood ban itself and then works backward, looking for scriptures to support a predetermined belief.

MY THOUGHTS: I was taught this as a child and all growing up, that blacks were cursed with this curse of Cain, and that they were less valiant during the pre-earth life, therefore they had to be cursed with a black skin in THIS life. I think this was used as a justification as to why black people were not allowed to hold the Priesthood. Prior to the ban on black people from the priesthood, there actually a feeling among other churches that blacks were descendants from Cain and some people suspect that this is how it got into LDS Folklore... some of the early saints were influenced by this and it just perpetuated.

I personally think that either Brigham Young was told by God to implement this, or Brigham Young was a racist. If Brigham Young was told by God to do this, then why would God tell future prophets that the ban was wrong and it should be lifted? Eternal principles don't change, right? If Brigham Young was racist and he acted on his racism, is that a quality of one of God's prophet?

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POST-MORMON JOURNEY

FIRST VISION (MULTIPLE ACCOUNTS)

Recently the LDS church published one of their [essays on the 4 main different versions](#) of the First Vision that Joseph Smith received. I want to touch briefly on all 4. I learned that there are actually more than 4 main accounts, but they are secondhand accounts. You can read the other alternate accounts [HERE](#) on the Joseph Smith Papers website.

1. 1832 Account: The earliest known account, the only one written in Joseph Smith's own hand. Joseph Smith described his consciousness of his own sins and his frustration at being unable to find a church that matched the one he had read about in the New Testament and that would lead him to redemption. He emphasized Jesus Christ's Atonement and the personal redemption it offered. He wrote that **"the Lord" appeared and forgave him of his sins**. As a result of the vision, Joseph experienced joy and love, though, as he noted, he could find no one who believed his account. [Read the actual account HERE](#).
 1. Smith started serious study of the scriptures at age 12
 2. **Felt convicted of sins**
 3. Determined all churches were wrong
 4. **No mention of a revival**
 5. Omits money-digging context
 6. **Age 15 (in his 16th year)**
 7. **Location not clear**

8. **Vision of the Savior – Jesus Christ (has a “Christian experience”)**
9. **Told his sins were forgiven. Fell back into transgression.**
10. At age 17 he again prayed and an angel appeared telling him about the plates and announced again he was forgiven of his sins
11. About this time Smith dictated Sec. 84 of the D.&C. stating that no man can see the face of God without the priesthood and live

2. 1835 Account: In the fall of 1835, Joseph Smith recounted his First Vision to Robert Matthews, a visitor to Kirtland, Ohio. The retelling, recorded in Joseph’s journal by his scribe Warren Parrish, **emphasizes his attempt to discover which church was right**, the opposition he felt as he prayed, and **the appearance of one divine personage who was followed shortly by another**. This account also notes the appearance **of angels** in the vision.
[Read the actual account HERE.](#)

1. “Wrought up” in his mind about religion
2. **Age 14 (1820)**
3. In a grove
4. **Had a vision of one personage and then another**
5. **One personage testifies about Jesus, but neither is identified as Jesus**
6. **Saw many angels** in this first visitation
7. Was told sins were forgiven
8. Later (age 17) has another vision of angels
9. No mention of revival
10. 1835 Account: (as told to a different person)

1. Age 14 (1820)

2. Had a vision of angels
 3. Later had revelations about the Book of Mormon
 4. This account parallels the one given to Joshua
3. 1838 Account: The narration of the First Vision best known to Latter-day Saints today is the 1838 account. First published in 1842 in the Times and Seasons, the Church's newspaper in Nauvoo, Illinois, the account was part of a longer history dictated by Joseph Smith between periods of intense opposition. Whereas the 1832 account emphasizes the more personal story of Joseph Smith as a young man seeking forgiveness, the 1838 account focuses on the vision as the beginning of the "rise and progress of the Church." Like the 1835 account, the central question of the narrative is which church is right. **Read the actual account [HERE](#).**
1. **A local revival** caused him to wonder which church was right, it had never occurred to him all were wrong
 2. **Age 14 (1820)**
 3. **He was in a grove**
 4. Had a vision of **two personages**
 5. **One identifies the other as his son (by implication God the Father and Jesus, but not explicitly stated)**
 6. **Was told all churches are wrong and is to join none of them**
 7. Claimed to come under great persecution
 8. Fell into all kinds of temptations
 9. Three years later has vision of an angel
 10. **THIS is the account that the LDS church accepted as the OFFICIAL vision.**
4. 1842 Account: Written in response to Chicago Democrat editor

John Wentworth's request for information about the Latter-day Saints, this account was printed in the Times and Seasons in 1842. (The "Wentworth letter," as it is commonly known, is also the source for the Articles of Faith.) The account, intended for publication to an audience unfamiliar with Mormon beliefs, is concise and straightforward. As with earlier accounts, Joseph Smith noted the confusion he experienced and the appearance of two personages in answer to his prayer. The following year, Joseph Smith sent this account with minor modifications to a historian named Israel Daniel Rupp, who published it as a chapter in his book, *He Pasa Ekklesia [The Whole Church]: An Original History of the Religious Denominations at Present Existing in the United States*. [Read the actual account HERE](#).

1. Began reflecting on the importance of being prepared for the future state, but upon inquiring found a great conflict of religious opinion
2. **No mention of a revival**
3. **Age 14 (1820)**
4. He was **in a grove**
5. **Had a vision of two personages - unidentified**
6. Was told all churches are wrong and is to join none of them
7. Was told a future revelation would teach him of the fullness of the gospel
8. **Three years later has vision of a single personage (same description as previous personages) which is identified as an angel**

My Thoughts: I never learned that there were differing accounts of the first vision. Why was I never taught about this? One account says he only saw angels. Another account states that he saw God and Jesus Christ. Another account says that he saw only Jesus Christ. Yet another

one says that he saw God followed by Jesus Christ (separately).

LDS.org states that all 4 of these accounts go hand in hand and complement each other, or add to one another. Yet, to me, any of them could be true, or false. I'm not sure which one to believe, if any. Why would each account differ, depending on who Joseph was telling? I understand that over time, people tend to forget memories and experiences, and things change, but if Joseph Smith saw God and Jesus Christ together in a vision, wouldn't he have written it down? Or at least if it made such a huge impression on him, wouldn't he remember it?

For more detailed analysis of the multiple first visions see...

- [LDS.com's analysis](#)
- [Institute for Religious Research](#)
- [MormonThink's analysis](#)
- [CES Letter w/ debunking](#)
- [FairMormon's analysis](#)

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POST-MORMON JOURNEY

GARMENTS

What is the history of the garment? "In 1842, just two months after being initiated into Freemasonry, Joseph Smith introduced the wearing of garments to a select group of men. On Wednesday, May 4th, 1842, Joseph Smith initiated nine men into his new inner-circle called the "Holy Order," the "Quorum," the "Holy Order of the Holy Priesthood," or the "Quorum of the Anointed." This ritual would later come to be known as the LDS temple endowment. Performed in the upper story of Smith's Nauvoo store, this new ritual was a significant departure from the simple feet washings Joseph Smith taught in Kirtland. In addition to body washing and anointings, these select men of Smith's "Quorum of the Anointed" received garments.

The original garment was designed only for priesthood men, after the pattern of mid-nineteenth century long johns. It was originally a one-piece garment made of plain, unbleached cotton cloth that covered the body from ankles to wrists. No buttons were used on the garment. Four to five tie-strings took their place to hold the front closed. The garment had little collars which were not visible from the outside of the shirt worn over it.

In the crotch area was a large flap, which ran from the back below

the waist all the way under the body and met the front tie closing. The flap was completely double so the men had to pull it apart in order to expose themselves.

Ceremonial markings on the garment were originally snipped into the cloth as part of the man's washing and anointing ceremony. This helped keep the markings secret from those who had not been through the ritual, including the women who sewed the garments. These marks made during the endowment were much more prominent than the marks in garments today."

Mormon Newsroom **says this** regarding the garments... "Temple garments are worn by adult members of the Church who have made sacred promises of fidelity to God's commandments and the gospel of Jesus Christ in temples of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

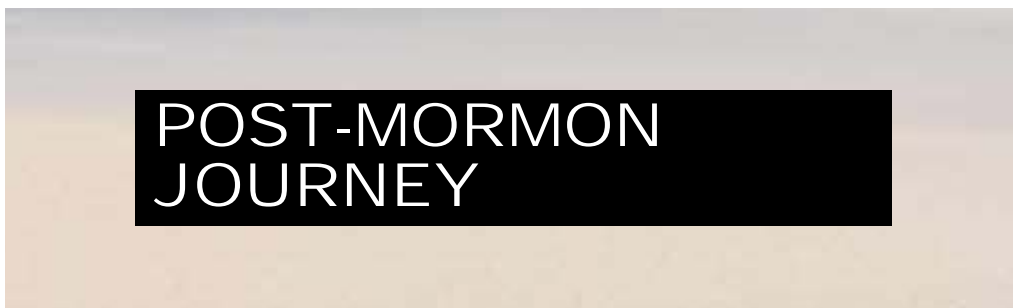
To Church members, the modest temple garment, worn under normal clothing, along with the symbolic vestments worn during temple worship, represent the sacred and personal aspect of their relationship with God and their commitment to live good, honorable lives.

MY THOUGHTS: I don't like wearing garments. I wore my old nasty mission ones because they aren't so long. I feel they are very old fashioned. I don't think they have to be all the way down to the knee to remember what the symbols stand for. Silly! I also don't like that the only company that makes the garments is a church-owned company. Imagine it... a business requires you to wear a certain type of underwear, and the only company that makes that underwear is that business that requires it! That's called job security!

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HANDBOOK OF INSTRUCTIONS- BOOK 1

This is the handbook that only the privileged ones get to see and read, namely the bishop, his counselors. I got to see this book when I was serving as the ward clerk, and the stake presidency. All it is, is a book of how to run the church in certain situations. Why does it have to be secret? I don't understand this at all. I've looked through it before. I have a copy of it in PDF. Nothing shocking in it. It's just how to respond to certain sins, how to run the church, how to do tithing, etc. Why isn't this public knowledge? Also, why don't women leaders have access to it?

You can find links to the **PDF scanned manual** in the references below and **HERE** if there are any future updates

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POST-MORMON JOURNEY

THE KINDERHOOK PLATES

There was a town in Illinois called Kinderhook, where some people allegedly found 6 ancient brass plates. They were excited to see if someone could translate them, so they brought them to Joseph Smith for translation. Joseph thought it was a trap. He started to translate but then stopped abruptly. The whole story is fascinating and can be found in one of the churches [Ensign Articles found HERE](#).

A statement signed by W. P. Harris, M.D., of Barry, Pike County, informed the *Times and Seasons* readers of the discovery:

“On the 16th of April last a respectable merchant by the name of Robert Wiley, commenced digging in a large mound near this place: he excavated to the depth of 10 feet and came to rock; about that time the rain began to fall, and he abandoned the work. On the 23d he and quite a number of the citizens with myself, repaired to the mound, and after making ample opening, we found plenty of rock, the most of which appeared as though it had been strongly burned; and after removing full two feet of said rock, we found plenty of charcoal and ashes; also human bones that appeared as though they had been burned; and near the eciphalon [correctly spelled “encephalon,” or head] a bundle was found that consisted of six plates of brass, of a bell shape, each having a hole near the small end, and a ring through them all, and clasped with two clasps, the ring and clasps appeared to be of iron very much oxidated, the plates appeared first to be copper, and had the appearance of being covered with characters. It was agreed by the company that I should

cleanse the plates: accordingly I took them to my house, washed them with soap and water, and a woolen cloth; but finding them not yet cleansed I treated them with dilute sulphuric acid which made them perfectly clean, on which it appeared that they were completely covered with hieroglyphics that none as yet have been able to read.”

“Circumstances are daily transpiring which give additional testimony to the authenticity of the **Book of Mormon**. ... The following ... will, perhaps have a tendency to convince the sceptical, that such things [metal plates] have been used, and that even the obnoxious Book of Mormon, may be true.”

By 1912, however, at least two items of evidence had come to light indicating that the Kinderhook plates were not authentic. One was a letter written in 1855 (but not published until 1912) by Dr. W. P. Harris—the same W. P. Harris who authored the statement that appeared in the *Times and Seasons* article. In this letter he wrote that in 1843 he had accepted the discovery of the plates as genuine. “I washed and cleaned the plates and subsequently made an honest affidavit to the same,” he said. “But since that time, Bridge Whitton [a blacksmith in Kinderhook, Illinois] said to me that he cut and prepared the plates and he (B. Whitton) and R. Wiley engraved them themselves, and that there was nitric acid put upon them the night before they were found to rust the iron ring and band. And that they were carried to the mound, rubbed in the dirt and carefully dropped into the pit where they were found.”

PERSONAL THOUGHTS

The problem for me is that the church accepted them as doctrine and swore they were authentic for almost 100 years until the mid 1940s when some Chicago Historical Society got a hold of the plates. They did some tests on them and found them to be complete fakes. Why did the church swear by them until they were disproved 100 years later? I thought Joseph Smith felt that he was being caught in a trap, so he didn't

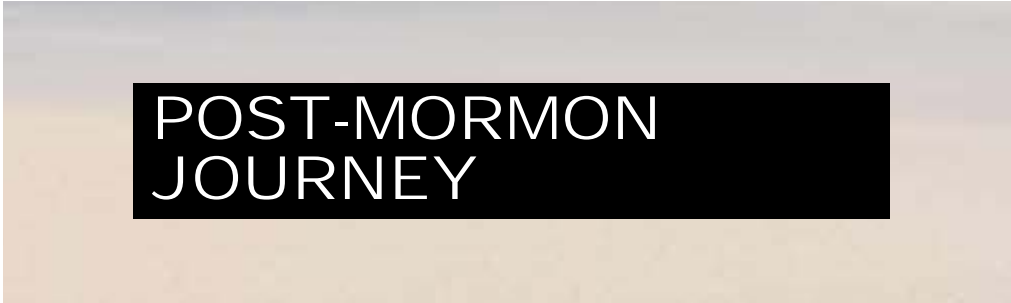
translate them. It all doesn't make sense to me. Kind of sounds similar to the blacks and the priesthood incident (see topic on left).

Also, after looking at the [History of the Church reference](#), it appears that Joseph admits that he translated a portion of the Kinderhook Plates. There's arguments for and against this theory, but if it was all a hoax, how could he translate these plates when in fact they were made up?

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THE LAW OF VENGEANCE/PENALTIES IN THE TEMPLE PRE-1990

This was something new that I didn't know about. The oath of vengeance was discussed earlier in the "Temples" section. It was the oath that people going through the temple had to take in order to avenge Joseph Smith's death.

The original temple ceremony practiced by the saints included an **oath of vengeance against the United States government** for the death of Joseph Smith. The change was **added by Brigham Young** after Joseph was killed by the mob. **This was removed in early 1927.** Imagine if Mitt Romney was running for president after taking an oath against the United States government

The oath in part was:

- You and each of you do covenant and promise that you will pray, and never cease to pray, Almighty God to **avenge the blood of the prophets upon this nation**, and that you will teach the same to your children and your children's children unto the third and fourth generations."

There were also penalties associated with this Law of Vengeance that were very disturbing and finally taken out in 1990. From Wikipedia...

- **Stage 1 : "my throat ... be cut from ear to ear, and my tongue**

torn out by its roots;"

- **Stage 2 : "our breasts ... be torn open, our hearts and vitals torn out and given to the birds of the air and the beasts of the field;"**
- **Stage 3 : "our body ... be cut asunder and all your bowels gush out."**

Each of the penalties was accompanied by gestures known as the **"execution of the penalty"** which simulated the actions described in the oath.

- Stage 1: The participant placed his or her right hand palm-down with the thumb extended and the tip of the thumb just under the left ear. The execution of the gesture was made by drawing the tip of the thumb swiftly across the throat until the thumb was just under the right ear, then dropping the hand and arm quickly to the side of the participant's body.
- Stage 2: The participant placed his or her hand in a cup form over the left breast. The execution of the gesture was made by pulling the hand-cup swiftly across the breast, then quickly dropping the hand and arm to the side of the participant's body.
- Stage 3: The participant placed his or her right hand palm-down with the thumb extended and the tip of the thumb on the left of the torso, just above the left hip. The execution of the gesture was made by drawing the thumb swiftly across the stomach until the thumb was just above the right hip, and the hand and arm were quickly dropped to the side of the participant's body.

The oaths and their accompanying gestures resembled certain oaths performed in a particular Freemasonry tradition in western New

York at the time, in which participants promised:

Oath of an "Entered Apprentice Mason": "I will ... never reveal any part or parts, art or arts, point or points of the secret arts and mysteries of ancient Freemasonry. . . binding myself under no less penalty than to have my throat cut across, my tongue torn out by the roots" (Morgan 1827, pp. 21–22). "This is given by drawing your right hand across your throat, the thumb next to your throat." (Morgan 1827, p. 23).

Oath of a "Fellow Craft Mason": "I ... most solemnly and sincerely promise and swear, that I will not give the degree of a Fellow Craft Mason to any one of an inferior degree, nor to any other being in the known world, ... binding myself under no less penalty than to have my left breast torn open and my heart and vitals taken from thence ... to become a prey to the wild beasts of the field, and vulture of the air" (Morgan 1827, p. 52). "The sign is given by drawing your right hand flat, with the palm of it next to your breast, across your breast from the left to the right side with some quickness, and dropping it down by your side" (Morgan 1827, p. 53).

Oath of a "Master Mason": "I ... most solemnly and sincerely promise and swear, in addition to my former obligations, that I will not give the degree of a Master Mason to any of an inferior degree, nor to any other being in the known world, ... binding myself under no less penalty than to have my body severed in two in the midst, and divided to the north and south, my bowels burnt to ashes" (Morgan 1827, p. 73–75). "The Penal Sign is given by putting the right hand to the left side of the bowels, the hand open, with the thumb next to the belly, and drawing it across the belly, and letting it fall; this is done tolerably quick. This alludes to the penalty of the obligation: 'Having my body severed in twain,' etc." (Morgan 1827, p. 77).

For more information on the similarities between the temple and freemasonry, see [THIS LINK](#). This was taken from the book

"Illustrations of Masonry by one of the Fraternity".

Fairmormon has this to say about the penalties in the temple... "It is easy for people to misrepresent this part of the temple ceremony, since only members endowed prior to April 1990 will have had direct experience with the penalties mentioned.

Contrary to this representation, the ceremony said nothing about what would happen to people if they revealed that which they had covenanted to keep secret. Nor did the ceremony encourage anyone to inflict penalties on another.

Rather, the person making the covenant indicated what they would be willing to have done to themselves rather than reveal sacred things. (The penalties also had symbolic implications that are rooted in the Old Testament, which are beyond the scope of this article). So, the temple ceremony did not involve descriptions of what God (or others) would do to someone if they failed to keep their covenants, but instead illustrated the seriousness with which the participant should make the temple covenants.

The penalties served, among other things, to teach us how determined we should be to resist those who would encourage us to violate covenants. The endowment said nothing about the consequences of violating covenants save that one would be judged by God for doing so. Such judgment of necessity remains always in the hands of God alone. (The Church might, of course, discipline a member for violation of covenants via excommunication, but this is the extent of the penalty which the Church can apply; see D&C 134:10.)

This important distinction was sometimes not well understood by some members, and this is likely one reason that penalties were removed from the current ceremony. The penalties confused people more than it helped

them, in our era, and the presentation of the endowment has changed (and will likely continue to change) when necessary to administer the ordinances and associated doctrinal teaching in the most effective way.

Still today, our common vernacular is laced with mentions of penalties. Solemn claims are often followed with, for instance, "cross my heart, hope to die" or "may Heaven strike me dead". Obviously, such penalties are not to be taken literally (the person saying them does not literally want to die, or ask someone to kill them, or commit suicide), but rather to convey the veracity of a claim or the seriousness with which claims are made."

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LGBT ISSUES IN THE CHURCH

The **official statement from the LDS church** regarding same-sex attraction states: The Church's doctrinal position is clear: Sexual activity should only occur between a man and a woman who are married. However, that should never be used as justification for unkindness. Jesus Christ, whom we follow, was clear in His condemnation of sexual immorality, but never cruel. His interest was always to lift the individual, never to tear down.

In short, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints affirms the centrality of doctrines relating to human sexuality and gender as well as the sanctity and significance of marriage as the union of a man and a woman. However, the Church firmly believes that all people are equally beloved children of God and deserve to be treated with love and respect. Church apostle Elder Quentin L. Cook stated, "As a church, nobody should be more loving and compassionate. Let us be at the forefront in terms of expressing love, compassion and outreach. Let's not have families exclude or be disrespectful of those who choose a different lifestyle as a result of their feelings about their own gender."

But then you get leaders of the church saying things like the following...

- "Homosexuality is an ugly sin, repugnant to those who find no

temptation in it, as well as to many past offenders who are seeking a way out of its clutches. It is embarrassing and unpleasant as a subject for discussion but because of its prevalence, the need to warn the uninitiated, and the desire to help those who may already be involved in it, it is discussed in this chapter.”

- Prophet Spencer W. Kimball, *The Miracle of Forgiveness*, p. 78

- How Serious Is the Sin of Homosexuality? Of the adverse social effects of homosexuality none is more significant than the effect on marriage and home. The normal, God-given sexual relationship is the procreative act between man and woman in honorable marriage where stands the perversion of homosexuality? Clearly it is hostile to God's purpose in that it negates his first and great commandment to "multiply and replenish the earth." If the abominable practice became universal it would depopulate the earth in a single generation. It would nullify God's great program for his spirit children in that it would leave countless unembodied spirits in the heavenly world without the chance for the opportunities of mortality and would deny to all the participants in the practice the eternal life God makes available to us all. Because of the seriousness of this sin it carries a heavy penalty for the unrepentant. The offender may realize that disfellowshipment or excommunication is the penalty for heavy petting, adultery, fornication and comparable sins if there is not adequate repentance, yet he often supposes that because his acts have not been committed with the opposite sex he is not in sin. Let it therefore be clearly stated that the seriousness of the sin of homosexuality is equal to or greater than that of fornication or adultery; and that the Lord's Church will as readily take

action to disfellowship or excommunicate the unrepentant practicing homosexual as it will the unrepentant fornicator or adulterer. After consideration of the evil aspects, the ugliness and prevalence of the evil of homosexuality, the glorious thing to remember is that it is curable and forgivable. The Lord has promised that all sins can be forgiven except certain ones enumerated, and this evil was not among those named. Thus it is forgivable if totally abandoned and if the repentance is sincere and absolute. Certainly it can be overcome, for there are numerous happy people who were once involved in its clutches and who have since completely transformed their lives. Therefore to those who say that this practice or any other evil is incurable, I respond: "How can you say the door cannot be opened until your knuckles are bloody, till your head is bruised, till your muscles are sore? It can be done." Many have been misinformed that they are powerless in the matter, not responsible for the tendency, and that "God made them that way." This is as untrue as any other of the diabolical lies Satan has concocted. It is blasphemy. Man is made in the image of God. Does the pervert think God to be "that way"? Sometimes not heavenly but earthly parents get the blame. Granted that certain conditions make it easier for one to become a pervert, the second Article of Faith teaches that a man will be punished for his own sins. He can, if normal, rise above the frustrations of childhood and stand on his own feet. A man may rationalize and excuse himself till the groove is so deep he cannot get out without great difficulty. But temptations come to all people. The difference between the reprobate and the worthy person is generally that one yielded and the other resisted. And if the yielding person

continues to give way he may finally reach the point of "no return." The Spirit will "not always strive with man." (D&C 1:33.) (Kimball, *Miracle of Forgiveness*, pp. 80–86.)

- “It was intended that we use this power only with our partner in marriage. I repeat, very plainly, physical mischief with another man is forbidden. It is forbidden by the Lord. “There are some men who entice young men to join them in these immoral acts. If you are ever approached to participate in anything like that, it is time to vigorously resist. “While I was in a mission on one occasion, a missionary said he had something to confess. I was very worried because he just could not get himself to tell me what he had done. “After patient encouragement he blurted out, ‘I hit my companion.’ “ ‘Oh, is that all,’ I said in great relief. “ ‘But I floored him,’ he said. “After learning a little more [his companion was gay], my response was ‘Well, thanks. Somebody had to do it, and it wouldn't have been well for a General Authority to solve the problem that way.’ “I am not recommending that course to you, but I am not omitting it. You must protect yourself. "There is a falsehood that some are born with an attraction to their own kind, with nothing they can do about it. They are just "that way" and can only yield to those desires. That is a malicious and destructive lie. While it is a convincing idea to some, **it is of the devil. No one is locked into that kind of life.** From our premortal life we were directed into a physical body. There is no mismatching of bodies and

spirits. **Boys are to become men --masculine, manly men -**
-ultimately to become husbands and fathers. No one is
predestined to a perverted use of these powers."
-(Boyd K. Packer, "To Young Men Only," General
Conference, Oct. 1976; online at [Link is here.](#))

- **"Sometimes masturbation is the introduction to the more serious sins of exhibitionism and the gross sin of homosexuality.** We would avoid mentioning these unholy terms and these reprehensible practices were it not for the fact that we have a responsibility to the youth of Zion that they be not deceived by those who would call bad good, and black white."
"The unholy transgression of homosexuality is either rapidly growing or tolerance is giving it wider publicity. If one has such desires and tendencies, he overcomes them the same as if he had the urge toward petting or fornication or adultery. The Lord condemns and forbids this practice with a vigor equal to his condemnation of adultery and other such sex acts. And the Church will excommunicate as readily any unrepentant addict."
"Good men, wise men, God-fearing men everywhere still denounce the practice as being unworthy of sons of God; and Christ's church denounces it and condemns it so long as men have bodies which can be defiled."

The Prophet Spencer W. Kimball, "President Kimball Speaks Out on Morality," Official Mormon Publication, LDS New Era, Nov. 1980, Page 39

- "I do not find in the Bible the modern terms "petting" nor "homosexuality," yet I found numerous scriptures which forbade such acts under by whatever names they might be called. **I could not find the term "homosexuality," but I did find numerous places where the Lord condemned such a practice with such vigor that even the death penalty was assessed.**"

- *Apostle (later the prophet) Spencer W. Kimball, "Love Versus Lust", BYU Doctinal Speech January 5, 1965*

- Question: How can homosexual members of the church live and remain steadfast in the gospel?

Answer: First I want to change the question. **There are no homosexual members of the church.** We are not defined by sexual attraction. We are not defined by sexual behavior. We are sons and daughters of God and all of us have different challenges in the flesh. **There are many different types of challenges.** Would it be a challenge to be very beautiful or very handsome, and in the world in which we live, never develop deep character because we are able to open doors and have success just because of our physical appearance? And we become shallow and superficial in many aspects of our lives. **That can be a challenge in the flesh.** Some people have physical limitations. They may be born with a body that is not fully functional, **or we may have an inclination to be attracted to those of the same sex.** Through the atonement of Jesus Christ we are blessed with moral agency. **Agency is the capacity to act and not simply be acted upon.**

(David A. Bednar, February 23, 2016, found here

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BQ4_wTGv8Ao&feature=youtu.be)

[v=BQ4_wTGv8Ao&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BQ4_wTGv8Ao&feature=youtu.be)

MY THOUGHTS: After going through the transition that I have, I guess I have a different perspective on this topic. I believe that Christ would never condemn or shun anyone, no matter their choices in life. And we have been commanded to love one another.

I believe that sexuality is NOT a choice or something that you can pray away or repent of. I can understand why people outside the church get upset at the church because they SAY that they will always support gay

members at church. But what are they doing to support them? How do they show their support? **During Prop 8, the church advocated against the gay community.** The **recent November 2015 policy** goes against the children of gay parents. **Gay's can't get married or be recognized by the church.** How would the church propose that an openly gay person be comfortable in the church, when they're asked to not act on their feelings and be celibate and single for the rest of their lives or pretend to be straight and get married? For these and other reasons, I guess its hard for me to see how the church is supporting the gay community. I know that not long ago, the church advocated for fair housing based on sexual orientation, so that was a good thing. Other than that, what else?

Where does a Gay person stand in the plan of salvation? Single and lonely, unless they repent? I guess that's why I wish the church would show more support rather than just say that they are showing support. I've come to realize that I just want to love and accept everybody, despite how different their lifestyle is to mine. People are all different, and my whole life, i've looked at people with almost a chip on my shoulder, thinking that I have the fullness of the gospel, and that I'm somehow better than they are. I hate that about myself, and didn't realize I did this until recently. So I'm trying to be more open to differing opinions and not shut down just because someone has a different opinion than me.

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THE MOUNTAIN MEADOWS MASSACRE

"Called **"the darkest deed of the nineteenth century,"** the brutal 1857 murder of 120 men, women, and children at a place in southern Utah called Mountain Meadows remains one of the most controversial events in the history of the American West. Although only one man, John D. Lee, ever faced prosecution (for what probably stands as one of the four largest mass killings of civilians in United States history), many other Mormons ordered, planned, or participated in the massacre of wagon loads of Arkansas emigrants as they headed through southwestern Utah on their way to California. Special controversy surrounds the role in the 1857 events of one man, **Brigham Young**, the fiery prophet of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints who led his embattled people to the "promised land" in the valley of the Great Salt Lake. What exactly Brigham Young knew, and when he knew it, are questions that historians still debate.

The tragedy in Mountain Meadows on September 11--a date that would later come to stand for another senseless loss of life--can only be understood in the context of the colorful history of the most important American-grown religion, Mormonism. Today, Mormonism has gone mainstream and Mormons seem to be just one more strand among many in the nation's religious fabric. Mormonism, however, as it existed in the mid-nineteenth century, was an altogether different matter. Brigham Young's provocative communalist religion endorsed polygamy, supported a theocracy, and advocated the violent doctrine of **"blood**

atonement--the killing of persons committing certain sins as the only way of saving their otherwise damned souls. It is not surprising that practitioners of such a religion might grow suspicious of persons outside of their religious community, nor should it be surprising that non-Mormons living in, or traveling through, the very Mormon territory of Utah might feel like "strangers in a strange land."

In July 1847, seventeen years after Joseph Smith and a group of five other men founded the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in New York and three years after an Illinois lynch mob killed Smith, Brigham Young and his band of followers entered Salt Lake valley. When a territorial government was formed in Utah in 1850, Young, the second head of the Church of Latter-day Saints, became the territory's first governor. The principle of "separation of church and state" carried little weight in the new territory. The laws of the territory reflected the views of Young. In a speech before Congress, federal judge and outspoken Mormon critic **John Cradlebaugh** said, "The mind of one man permeates the whole mass of the people, and subjects to its unrelenting tyranny the souls and bodies of all. It reigns supreme in Church and State, in morals, and even in the minutest domestic and social arrangements. Brigham's house is at once tabernacle, capital, and harem; and Brigham himself is king, priest, lawgiver, and chief polygamist."

For the best research on this very important, yet skipped over topic, please see some of the links below as well as a book called "**The Mountain Meadows Massacre**", by Juanita Brooks, or "**Blood of the Prophets: Brigham Young and the Massacre at Mountain Meadows**", by Will Bagley.

Personally **THIS LINK** gives a very concise summary of the events.

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POLYGAMY AND POLYANDRY

Polygamy is defined as a marriage that includes more than two partners.

Typically this is one man and multiple wives. **Polyandry** is defined as a form of polygamy whereby a woman takes two or more husbands at the same time.

Polygamy was introduced as a doctrine by Joseph Smith back when he was prophet. The reasons I was taught Polygamy was introduced were the following (**not my list, but sums up nicely**)

1. There were more women than men in the 1800's and polygamy provided a way for women, particularly widows, to have the benefits of a husband
2. Polygamy was not practiced until after the Saints started immigrating to Utah, and done so that women, whose husbands had died from the exertions of the trek, could be taken care of
3. Polygamy was not illegal in the 1800's and was not in violation of U.S. law or against the 12th article of faith, which supports obeying the laws of the land
4. Polygamy was an acceptable way to rapidly increase the Church membership
5. Restoration of a Biblical practice
6. Commanded from God

At the time, Polygamy was illegal. This is the law at the time... "Most

of Joseph Smith's polygamous marriages occurred in Illinois in the early 1840s. The Illinois Anti-bigamy Law enacted February 12th, 1833 clearly stated that polygamy was illegal. It reads:

"Sec 121. Bigamy consists in the having of two wives or two husbands at one and the same time, knowing that the former husband or wife is still alive. If any person or persons within this State, being married, or who shall hereafter marry, do at any time marry any person or persons, the former husband or wife being alive, the person so offending shall, on conviction thereof, be punished by a fine, not exceeding one thousand dollars, and imprisoned in the penitentiary, not exceeding two years. It shall not be necessary to prove either of the said marriages by the register or certificate thereof, or other record evidence; but the same may be proved by such evidence as is admissible to prove a marriage in other cases, and when such second marriage shall have taken place without this state, cohabitation in this state after such second marriage shall be deemed the commission of the crime of bigamy, and the trial in such case may take place in the county where such cohabitation shall have occurred."

Revised Laws of Illinois, 1833, p.198-99"

Times and Seasons (LDS-owned newspaper)

"The law of the land and the rules of the church do not allow one man to have more than one wife alive at once." (Times and Seasons, vol. 5, p. 715, November 15, 1844.)"

The recent church essay on polygamy admits that it was illegal at the time, and it states... "In Joseph Smith's time, monogamy was the only legal form of marriage in the United States. Joseph knew the practice of plural marriage would stir up public ire. After receiving the commandment, he taught a few associates about it, but he did not spread this teaching widely in the 1830s."

MY THOUGHTS: The thing that was very surprising to me about this issue was found in the LDS's new church essay regarding polygamy. In that essay, the church admits that Joseph Smith was married to children as young as 14, and he was married to 40+ women including his first wife EMMA. Some of these wives were already married to other men! This is called Polyandry.

WHY would GOD tell Joseph Smith to marry young girls first off? I've heard many arguments that it was more common for people back in that day to get married to younger women than what we are used to in our day. **I've also researched** and seen that this is **simply not the case** But if Polygamy was illegal at the time, why would God tell Joseph to marry 40+ women and go against his own article of faith stating that we should "honor, obey and sustain the law"?

Also, why would God tell Joseph to marry women who were already married to another man? Makes no sense to me at all. Do I believe in a god who would do this? That's hard for me to say right now.

Another thing that doesn't make sense to me is the fact that Joseph Smith claimed that an angel of god came down and threatened him with a sword to kill him if he didn't practice polygamy. **From the essay...** "When God commands a difficult task, He sometimes sends additional messengers to encourage His people to obey. Consistent with this pattern, Joseph told associates that an angel appeared to him three times between 1834 and 1842 and commanded him to proceed with plural marriage when he hesitated to move forward. During the third and final appearance, **the angel came with a drawn sword, threatening Joseph with destruction unless he went forward and obeyed the commandment fully.**⁹ Fragmentary evidence suggests that Joseph Smith acted on the angel's first command by marrying a plural wife, **Fanny Alger, in Kirtland, Ohio, in the mid-1830s.** Several Latter-day Saints who had lived in Kirtland reported decades later that Joseph Smith

had married Alger, who lived and worked in the Smith household, after he had obtained her consent and that of her parents"

How did it end? This is [from the LDS website](#)... "In many parts of the world, polygamy was socially acceptable and legally permissible. But in the United States, most people thought that the practice was morally wrong. These objections led to legislative efforts to end polygamy. Beginning in 1862, the U.S. government passed a series of laws designed to force Latter-day Saints to relinquish plural marriage. In the face of these measures, Latter-day Saints maintained that plural marriage was a religious principle protected under the U.S. Constitution. The Church mounted a vigorous legal defense all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court. In *Reynolds v. United States* (1879), the Supreme Court ruled against the Latter-day Saints: religious belief was protected by law, religious practice was not. According to the court's opinion, marriage was a civil contract regulated by the state. Monogamy was the only form of marriage sanctioned by the state. "Polygamy," the court explained, "has always been odious among the northern and western nations of Europe. Latter-day Saints sincerely desired to be loyal citizens of the United States, which they considered a divinely founded nation. But they also accepted plural marriage as a commandment from God and believed the court was unjustly depriving them of their right to follow God's commands. Confronted with these contradictory allegiances, Church leaders encouraged members to obey God rather than man. **Many Latter-day Saints embarked on a course of civil disobedience during the 1880s by continuing to live in plural marriage and to enter into new plural marriages.** The federal government responded by enacting ever more punishing legislation. Between 1850 and 1896, Utah was a territory of the U.S. government, which meant that federal officials in Washington, D.C., exercised great control over local matters. In 1882, the U.S. Congress passed the Edmunds Act, which made unlawful cohabitation (interpreted as a man living with more than one wife) punishable by six months of imprisonment and a \$300 fine. In 1887

Congress passed the Edmunds-Tucker Act to punish the Church itself, not just its members. The act dissolved the corporation of the Church and directed that all Church property over \$50,000 be forfeited to the government. But as federal pressure intensified, many essential aspects of Church government were severely curtailed, and civil disobedience looked increasingly untenable as a long-term solution. Between 1885 and 1889, most Apostles and stake presidents were in hiding or in prison. After federal agents began seizing Church property in accordance with the Edmunds-Tucker legislation, management of the Church became more difficult. In May 1890, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of the Edmunds-Tucker Act, allowing the confiscation of Church property to proceed. President Woodruff saw that the Church's temples and its ordinances were now at risk. On September 25, 1890, President Woodruff wrote in his journal that he was "under the necessity of acting for the Temporal Salvation of the Church." He stated, "After Praying to the Lord & feeling inspired by his spirit I have issued ... [a] Proclamation." This proclamation, now published in the Doctrine and Covenants as Official Declaration 1, was released to the public on September 25 and became known as the Manifesto! The Manifesto was silent on what existing plural families should do. On their own initiative, some couples separated or divorced as a result of the Manifesto; other husbands stopped cohabiting with all but one of their wives but continued to provide financial and emotional support to all dependents. In closed-door meetings with local leaders, the First Presidency condemned men who left their wives by using the Manifesto as an excuse. "I did not, could not and would not promise that you would desert your wives and children," President Woodruff told the men. "This you cannot do in honor." Believing that the covenants they made with God and their spouses had to be honored above all else, many husbands, including Church leaders, continued to cohabit with their plural wives and fathered children with them well into the 20th century. Continued cohabitation exposed those couples to the threat of prosecution, just as it did before the Manifesto. Under exceptional circumstances, **a smaller**

number of new plural marriages were performed in the United States between 1890 and 1904.”

MY THOUGHTS: Basically, the USA decided that they were going to go after the Mormon Church for breaking the law. The church members willfully disobeyed, and were TOLD to willfully disobey the law. When threat of seizing all of their property was upon them, the prophet at the time went and prayed. God told him to END polygamy. This was known as the Manifesto. After God told the prophet that they should end polygamy, members continued to willfully disobey the law (and GOD) and continue polygamy! The church continued to perform plural marriages despite being told not to. They stopped polygamy because they were in Utah, and they wouldn't let Utah join the union if they were breaking all the laws. Crazy stuff!

The other issue I have with polygamy is that we **still practice it today**, except it's only **in the temples**. Men can be sealed to more than one lady. How is this not polygamy? I don't agree with this practice. I do not want to be sealed to more than one lady and I don't agree with sealing's taking place on behalf of the dead either, especially to more than one person.

Here's a direct link to the 3 polygamy essays on lds.org for your reading enjoyment...

- [Plural Marriage and Families in Early Utah](#)
- [Plural Marriage in Kirtland and Nauvoo](#)
- [The Manifesto and the End of Plural Marriage](#)

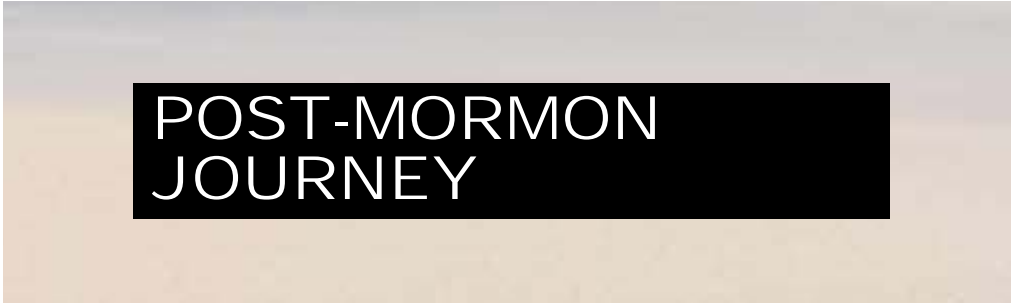
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RESTORATION OF THE MELCHIZEDEK PRIESTHOOD

From BYU's [Encyclopedia of Mormonism](#)...

“The Prophet and Oliver Cowdery received the **Aaronic Priesthood on May 15, 1829**, under the hands of **John the Baptist**. He informed them that he acted under the direction of Peter, James, and John, who held the keys of the Melchizedek Priesthood, and that that priesthood would be given to them (JS-H 1:72). **Although the precise date of this restoration is ***NOT KNOWN***, it is certain that it occurred after May 15, 1829, and before August 1830** (D&C 27:12). The documents available and the date of the formal organization of the Church give support to a time of restoration before April 6, 1830. Many students have concluded that **late May or early June 1829 is the most probable time frame** (HC 1:40n-42n; Porter, pp. 5-10).

Sometime before June 14, 1829, the Lord instructed Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery concerning their ordination as elders, which is a Melchizedek Priesthood office (HC 1:60-61). Furthermore, when Peter, James, and John appeared to Joseph and Oliver, they ordained them also as apostles (D&C 27:12) and committed to them "the keys of the kingdom, and of the dispensation of the fullness of times" (D&C 128:20; cf. 27:13).”

MY THOUGHTS: Why do we not know the exact date when the Melchizedec priesthood was restored, when we know the exact date when

the Aaronic Priesthood was restored to Joseph? Why wouldn't Joseph document it or write it down somewhere? Why didn't Oliver Cowdery write it down? We know the exact date of the Aaronic Priesthood restoration. We know the exact date of the 1st vision. We know the exact date of what day the church was restored and officially organized. Heck, we even "know" the exact day of Christ's birthday! Why not this ever important day? Doesn't make sense to me.

PROBLEMS with the RESTORATION... (not from me, but I agree)

- Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery failed to testify to the members nor record anything about the appearances of "John the Baptist" and "Peter, James, and John" in any publications prior to 1834 (**five years after the events purportedly took place**)—nor did they teach that men ordained to offices in the church were receiving "priesthood authority".
- Nobody in or out of the church knows the exact date of the restoration of the Melchizedek Priesthood, and Oliver Cowdery was inconsistent in describing which heavenly being(s) had come to confer that authority.
- Joseph Smith and other early members stated that the first conferral of the Melchizedek priesthood happened in **June 1831** in Ohio at a conference of Elders, and that Joseph himself was ordained to the high priesthood by church elder Lyman Wight at that time. (This point was mentioned in Richard Lyman Bushman's book "Rough Stone Rolling". There is some definite confusion because of this. **If the priesthood was first confirmed in June 1831, then how did Joseph have the authority to organize the church in April 1830?**)
- Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery changed the wording of earlier revelations when they compiled the 1835 D&C, adding verses about the appearances of John the Baptist and Peter, James, and John AS IF those appearances were mentioned in the earlier revelations, which they weren't. The Book of

Commandments, which later became the D&C says nothing about these appearances.

Several quotes from the same reference above... “Even Joseph's own family heard nothing from him concerning the two priesthood restoration events. D. Michael Quinn noted that when Joseph's mother, Lucy Mack Smith, wrote a letter in 1831 to her brother to tell him about the new church, she made no reference to the angelic visits of Joseph's later telling (Origins of Power, p. 19). Even as late as 1844-45, when the stories of the resurrected visitors were known among many members, Lucy still failed to mention the events when she dictated her history of the prophet to Martha Jane Corray:

One morning [Joseph and Oliver were translating in Third Nephi in the Book of Mormon] the first thing that presented itself to Joseph was a commandment from God that he and Oliver should repair to the water & each of them be baptized. They immediately went down to the Susquehanna (sic) river and obeyed the mandate given them . . . They had now received authority to baptize (quoted in Grant Palmer, "An Insider's View of Mormon Origins", pp. 215-216).

As Grant Palmer has noted, “Accounts of angelic ordinations from John the Baptist and Peter, James, and John are in none of the journals, diaries, letters, or printed matter **until the mid-1830s**” (Grant Palmer, "An Insider's View of Mormon Origins", pp. 223-224”

“If Christ's resurrected apostles appeared to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery in 1829 with the express purpose of authorizing them preparatory to the restoration of the true Church of Christ again on the earth, why didn't Joseph and Oliver mention these angels and their authority on the historic day of the Church's organization (April 6, 1830)? Why did they wait 5 years before mentioning these ancient apostles?”

“If Joseph and Oliver did not claim at first to have received their divine appointments from resurrected apostles, how did they convince early converts that they were indeed authorized to preach, baptize, and, ultimately, to organize a new Christian church?”

“Oliver Cowdery remarked in 1848 about his attendance at the restoration of the Melchizedek Priesthood: "I was also present with Joseph when the higher or **Melchizedek Priesthood was conferred by the holy angel on high**. This Priesthood, we then conferred on each other by the will and commandment of God" (recorded by Bishop Reuben Miller and quoted in History of the Church, Vol. 1, p. 40 footnote). Despite Joseph's 1838 claim that three angelic personages, Peter, James, and John, had come, why did Oliver forget and refer to them as “the” holy angel?”

Mormon scholar **Richard Bushman stated this** regarding the restoration of the Priesthood in his landmark biography about Joseph Smith...
"As Joseph told the story in 1838, the person said he was John the Baptist and that he had been sent by Peter, James, and John. Then he laid his hands upon their heads to ordain them...but Joseph did not tell anyone about John the Baptist at first. *Summarizing the key events in his religious life in an 1830 statement, he mentioned translation but said nothing about the restoration of priesthood or the visit of an angel. The first compilation of revelations in 1833 also omitted an account of John the Baptist. David Whitmer later told an interviewer he had heard nothing of John the Baptist until four years after the Church's organization.* Not until writing in his 1832 history did Joseph include “reception of the holy Priesthood by the ministering of angels to administer the letter of the Gospel” among the cardinal events of his history, *a glancing reference at best...The late appearance of these accounts raises the possibility of later fabrication.* Did Joseph add the stories of angels to embellish his early history and make himself more of a visionary? If so, he made little of the occurrence. Cowdery was the first

to recount the story of John's appearance, not Joseph himself. In an 1834 Church newspaper, Cowdery exulted in his still fresh memory of the experience. 'On a sudden, as from the midst of eternity, the voice of the Redeemer spake peace unto us, while the vail was parted and the angel of God came down clothed with glory, and delivered the anxiously looked for message, and the keys of the gospel of repentance! When Joseph described John's visit, he was much more plainspoken. *Moreover, he inserted the story into a history composed in 1838 but not published until 1842.* It circulated without fanfare, and more like a refurbished memory than a triumphant announcement

MY OPINION: This sums up pretty well how I feel about this subject... As Richard Bushman admits (*Rough Stone Rolling*, 75): **“the late appearance of these accounts raises the possibility of later fabrication”** Why would Joseph Smith not write down how and when exactly he received the Melchizedec priesthood if it was such an important event in church history? Why would he wait years to say anything to anybody? Was the priesthood restored BEFORE or AFTER the beginning of the Mormon Church? You pretty much have to take it on faith that it was restored, but I can't say that I believe it completely.

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POST-MORMON JOURNEY

REVELATION TODAY

[Eric Nelson wrote a great documentary](#) regarding his truth crisis and all the major issues with the LDS church. One of the issues he wrote about beautifully was this topic of revelation today, and people receiving revelation saying that their church is the only true church on the earth. This is not unique to the LDS church. [Here are HIS words...](#)

"The Church teaches that we can obtain knowledge and truth through the power of the Holy Ghost, which is typically associated with certain feelings and sensations. However, the feelings typically associated with the Holy Ghost are felt by people of all different backgrounds in daily life. Many religious and non-religious individuals feel "spiritual" feelings (or get goosebumps, a lump in their throat, or teary-eyed, etc.) while watching fictional movies, listening to music, reading novels, or enjoying a hike. Likewise, most atheists would acknowledge feeling "tingling, warm sensations" in many activities.

But if God sends certain feelings and emotions to help individuals decipher truth, Mormons should be the only people who feel the Holy Ghost in determining whether their Church is true. However, this is simply not the case. People from all religions report having the same feelings that witness to them that their particular religion, beliefs, or church is true. In fact, members of other faiths often

follow virtually the same method of finding truth as members of the LDS church. Even so, these non-members gain testimonies of their own church based, in large part, on the same spiritual feelings LDS members feel about their church. Obviously, not all religions can be right. And it seems more than a bit far-fetched to believe that only members of the LDS Church, who constitute a miniscule portion of the world's population, are able to accurately use their feelings to decipher truth, spiritual or otherwise.

For example, this [video](#) contains the testimonies of individuals from 16 different religions all of whom believe God has told them through the spirit that they belong to God's one true church. Many of these individuals testify that they know God is speaking to them when they feel emotions that are stronger or different than the typical emotions they feel on a day-to-day basis. Therefore, they know these feelings and insights are from God as opposed to regular feelings or emotions. However, how can all these individuals experience the same feelings and emotions about their respective churches that Mormons feel about the LDS Church?"

MY THOUGHT: When Joseph Smith was essentially a nobody at the time, and he was "called" to be a prophet of god, who's to say someone else claiming to be a prophet receiving revelation from god today isn't true? I've done lots of praying over the months, and I've not received any sort of confirmation that Joseph Smith was the only one true prophet that could receive direct revelation from God at the time. How is this any different than Joseph Smith at the time claiming that he saw God and Jesus and was called to be a prophet? People obviously believed him. I personally just have a hard time saying or believing that only Joseph Smith was the one called of God, and nobody else has been called or can receive revelation like Joseph did.

For example, there's a guy named [Denver Snuffer](#). He is some old dude that was excommunicated from the LDS church. But apparently a lot of people like what he has to say. He did a series of lectures starting in Boise and ending in Utah I believe. He would give a lecture about a topic one day, then go to a different location and then give another talk. They're known as "The Boise Lecture" or "The Ogden Lecture". He also recently organized a small renewal movement and organized a wave of rebaptisms, where members of the church have to get "re-baptized", but not sure why. He does not intend to start a new church.

There is another guy named [John Dehlin](#). He started a podcast website called Mormon Stories Podcast. He does podcasts about difficult and controversial topics in Mormon history. He's pretty radical and liberal in his thinking of gay marriage, women in the priesthood; the priesthood wasn't officially restored back to the earth, etc. He was told by his stake president that he had to take down his controversial podcasts from the internet or he would be excommunicated for apostasy. He did not take them down, so he was officially excommunicated.

Another person named [Kate Kelly](#). She started an organization called "Ordain women". She and others feel that women are treated unfairly in the church and feel that they should be given the priesthood just like the men. Recently over 500 women tried to gain entry into the Priesthood session of General Conference. All of them were denied entry. While I disagree with some of what they do, I do agree with some of their points. For example this was interesting...

"We have 122 General Authorities, **only 9 positions are held by women** in auxiliary capacities, all 9 are presided over by men"

I also took this from Kate's website...

- I feel unequal when women have less prominent, prestigious, and public roles in the church, even before and after childrearing

years

- I feel unequal when males handle 100% of the church finances
- I feel unequal when I am taught at church that my husband presides in my family, he is the head, and all things being equal, he has the final say
- I feel unequal when I realize that at church all men have the final say. Good leaders might consult with female auxiliary leaders, but ultimately even after being called to a position via inspiration, men still make the final decisions. (**I've seen this first hand in the bishopric**)
- I feel unequal when fathers and mothers are encouraged to fulfill primary roles to provide and nurture, but only the fathers are given the freedom to seek out the best way for them to provide, whereas, mothers are told the best way for them to nurture—to be stay at home moms
- I feel unequal because church disciplinary courts are made up of solely men and there are no female voices in the very sensitive matters of church discipline
- I feel unequal when women have to talk to men about their sins, especially sexual ones, and have no other church sanctioned options. (**I really don't like this, especially for my daughter growing up**)
- I feel unequal when women don't pray in General Conference and usually only give 2 or 3 of the many talks
- I feel unequal when female employees of the Church Educational System and temple ordinance workers are no longer allowed to keep their positions after they have children

The point I am trying to make is this... when Joseph Smith was however young he was at the time of “religious upheaval”, he was told to join no other churches by God and Jesus Christ. He received revelation directly from god when others around the world were supposedly receiving their

own revelations from god (see Rough Stone Rolling book for more examples).

Today, we're told "follow the prophet, you'll never go astray". In another section of the website, I talked about Brigham Young implementing the policy that blacks can't hold the priesthood. I know this isn't exactly leading the church astray, but NOW the church says that this policy wasn't warranted, and not correct. So the prophet might not lead us astray, but who's to say a different person can't receive direct revelation on behalf of a group? Only the prophet can receive revelation for a large group, meaning the church? I feel like this whole "follow the prophets, they'll NEVER lead you astray" is putting too much faith in a single person. We're supposed to follow God, not man! Prophets are men too. They screw up, just like Brigham Young did. I feel like Brigham was influenced by racism that was prevalent in society at the time. It was common to have slaves during that time period. Maybe he just acted on his own feelings instead of gods. But if that were the case, why did all the other following prophets perpetuate the ban?

When Joseph Smith was "Called by God" to be a prophet, he was the only one authorized to receive revelation. I am not sure if this was HIS design, or God's design. There's a great historical explanation about this in "Rough Stone Rolling" Whenever the people would question something, Joseph would go to the lord, and a "revelation" would be received. For example, when the men would all sit around the meetings chewing tobacco, Emma asked Joseph if it's the right thing to do. Lo and behold, He received a revelation about not smoking or drinking. If they had a question about something, he would ask the lord, and a revelation would be given to him.

Now applying that to today, people (not me) care and think that women should have the priesthood. How come someone can't go to the lord and receive revelation about it? Does it HAVE to be the prophet? Joseph

was a nobody when he received revelation. It's hard for me to understand that revelation has stopped since the last revelation that was given (probably the end of blacks and the priesthood). We believe in revelation, that's what the church is all about. So how come we never receive new revelation today? Most people will say... "We're just not ready for it", or "we don't use what we've got", or "we have the prophet's words every conference". Well I don't buy these excuses. I would argue that when the prophet stands up during conference and speaks, he never prophecies, or reveals anything new, he just tells fun and uplifting spiritual stories. I couldn't tell you when the last revelation for the church was received.

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POST-MORMON JOURNEY

THE SECOND ANNOINTING

Wiki states that "The Second Anointing, also known historically and in Latter Day Saint scripture as the fullness of the priesthood, is an obscure and relatively rare ordinance usually conducted in temples as extension of the Nauvoo Endowment ceremony. Founder Joseph Smith cited the "fullness of the priesthood" as one of the reasons for building the Nauvoo Temple. In the ordinance, a participant is anointed as a "priest and king" or a "priestess and queen", and is sealed to the highest degree of salvation available in Mormon theology. Those who participate in this ordinance are said to have their "calling and election made sure" and their celestial marriage "sealed by the holy spirit of promise". They are said to have received the "more sure word of prophecy".

The Church has performed the ceremony for nominated couples from the 1840s to at least the mid-1900s. Current information about the practice by that denomination, or whether the ordinance is still in use, has not been made public. The ordinance is also performed by many Mormon fundamentalist groups. However, it is not performed by denominations, such as the Community of Christ, who historically never practiced the Nauvoo Endowment ceremony."

The FairMormon website that supports the church says this about the second anointing... "The second anointing is an ordinance performed in the temple. It is not regarded as an essential ordinance which one must receive in this life for exaltation. In the early Utah period, this ordinance

was performed more widely than it is today.

Those who receive the second anointing and keep their temple covenants would never discuss the specifics in any public forum. Written accounts that purport to describe the second anointing should be viewed with extreme caution and skepticism.

FairMormon is confident that no faithful Latter-day Saint would want to learn about such a sacred matter from unauthorized sources.

Furthermore, no Latter-day Saint would wisely seek such information prematurely, any more than a parent would want a child to read an unauthorized transcript of the temple endowment prior to attending the temple for the first time.

Adequate, reliable, circumspect information can be found in recent Church publications on the subjects of "calling and election made sure," "fullness of the priesthood," and "sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise." For an excellent example, see Bruce R. McConkie's article in the June 1978 New Era, a publication sanctioned by the Brethren, entitled "Celestial Marriage"

There is a man by the name of Tom Phillips. He has a very intriguing and interesting story regarding the second anointing. **Allegedly he has received this ordinance and this is HIS story.** A PDF of the article is linked in the references below.

"Tom Phillips is a retired management consultant. He joined the Church as a convert in 1969 and served in most leadership positions including Bishop, Stake President and Area Executive Secretary. He also served as the Area Controller for the British Isles and Africa as well as the Financial Director for the Church's U.K. corporate entities.

With 33 years of experience in Church leadership and teaching, he is well versed in church doctrine and policy. He has also been personally acquainted with many Apostles and Seventies of the Church. In late

2012, Tom took over as the managing editor of MormonThink and continued until March 2014. The [last two managing editors](#) resigned from the church after the LDS leadership called them to church courts for writing about church history and doctrine, as well as being involved with the MormonThink website.

Tom's extensive leadership experience within the LDS Church is impressive, making him very qualified to speak to the issues. Tom writes: "I hope to be able to continue the good work that MormonThink has done thus far in spreading forth knowledge about Mormonism's unique history that few members know about. I want every faithful member, as well as critic, to know that their viewpoints are always welcome at MormonThink, even if they are not in harmony with what is generally taught in the LDS chapels. I hope others can benefit from my story and experiences within the LDS environment".

My Second Anointing Experience in written form - [html format found below](#) or a [nicely formatted pdf version](#).

Podcast - [Tom's four hour podcast on John Dehlin's mormonstories](#) - you can also [download the PDF Transcript of the podcast](#).

Book - ["Romney's Religion" The Man Who Would be God](#)

Radio Interview - [Drew Marshall radio Show with Tom Phillips and Tal Bachman](#)

Youtube - [Short Video made from the mormonstories podcast detailing 2nd anointing](#)

Letter Exchanges - [Between Tom and Apostle Jeffrey Holland](#)

More Letter Exchanges - [Response to Elder Holland's reply MormonThink Comment](#)

My Second Anointing Experience There already exist sources of details of the second anointing and I probably will not add to that body of knowledge. However, I am posting this account to confirm the ordinance does actually take place currently, as I have received the ordinance, and how it is currently performed.

I state the names of the Apostle and Seventy involved as well as the date and actual temple so that the credibility cannot be questioned.

Invitation

Preparation

The day itself - what happened

Feelings afterwards

Asked to nominate others

Aftermath

Invitation

In April 2002 Elder Harold G. Hillam of the First Quorum of Seventy, as President of the Europe West Area, called me into his office. He said he was extending to me and my wife (she was not present), on behalf of President Hinckley, an invitation to receive a 'special blessing' in the Preston England Temple. He asked whether I had heard of the 'second endowment' to which I replied no. I later told him that I had heard of it, but was so stunned by his invitation my mind went blank regarding the matter.

He told me very few people receive this blessing and it must be kept secret. He said if the general membership knew about it there would be problems. More would want to receive the ordinance than the apostles have time to accommodate and members would wonder why so and so had received it but they had not. I must not even tell my children. He said I should just tell them that their mother and I were going away for the day or weekend. He recommended I read all that Elder Bruce R. McConkie had written on the subject of making your calling and election sure.

Elder Hillam promised me it would be a 'life changing' experience. He said the ordinance was performed in Joseph Smith's time but had been discontinued during President David O. McKay's time. This resulted in

only 2 of the then apostles, Harold B. Lee and Spencer W. Kimball, having had this ordinance on the death of President Joseph Fielding Smith. It was therefore re-introduced and is still practiced today. (I have seen no source that quotes this suspension of the ordinance, only Elder Hillam's word).

We were to be at the Preston England Temple on Sunday 19th May 2002 where Elder M. Russell Ballard, of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, would perform the ordinance. We should have our temple recommends and our temple robes etc. with us.

Preparation

I went home and told my wife. She accepted it quite calmly. I reflected on my own life and personal worthiness. I read all that Elder McConkie had written on the subject and looked forward to the day with excitement. Basically, Elder McConkie wrote that , during the first endowment you are given certain blessings to become a king and a priest (queen and priestess) to the most high God, and these blessings are conditional on you remaining worthy of them. With the second endowment, the conditions are removed as you have already proven your faithfulness and entitlement to the blessings. Therefore, you are sealed up to the highest degree of the celestial kingdom unconditionally. Any sins committed afterward may render you liable to the buffetings in the flesh but they will not prevent you from attaining your exaltation. The only sin that is unpardonable is denying the Holy Ghost (or in some passages the shedding of innocent blood).

I had never expected this to happen to me. I assumed I would be judged in the next life, not have that judgment made in this life. It meant I and my wife would be guaranteed a celestial glory unless we committed the 'unpardonable sin' which seemed to be unthinkable at the time. We had made it, the Lord, through his prophet, had informed us we were worthy of this high exaltation. I never thought it would be done in this way. I

had assumed that, if anyone did deserve to have their calling and election made sure, the Lord would appear to them Himself. Like most members of the church I assumed all the apostles had made sure their calling and election and many of the other General Authorities of the church.

I felt a power helping me be a better person and more dedicated to the church.

I telephoned the temple to book accommodation for my wife and myself on Saturday 18th May so that we could make the most of the experience. I did not like lying to my family and friends as to our whereabouts that weekend. I did not feel comfortable as it was dishonest but I was instructed not to disclose what was happening. To tell people you will be at the temple on a Sunday, when supposedly all temples are closed, would raise further questions. I therefore told my children we were going to the temple for the weekend and would be attending a special meeting with Elder Ballard and the Area President on Sunday. This was not too unusual for my children to accept as I regularly attended Area Presidency meetings and had been assisting these same brethren the day before at a training session for stake presidents. Also, it was as truthful as I considered I could be while still keeping the second anointing secret.

On Saturday 18th May 2002, after Priesthood Leadership Training by Elder Ballard in Birmingham England, my wife and I drove to the Preston England Temple. We were surprised and delighted to discover that we had been given a 'bridal suite' as our accommodation. It added to the special occasion. While walking in the temple grounds in the early evening we unexpectedly met a member of our ward who had attended a family wedding that day. She asked us what we were doing at the temple on a Saturday evening. I quickly mentioned something about Area Presidency meetings (she knew of my calling at the time, that I worked closely with the Area Presidency) and changed the subject. Again, I did not feel comfortable lying for the Lord.

Anyway, my wife and I had a very pleasant evening preparing ourselves spiritually for our life changing experience.

At the Temple

Upon entering the temple we changed into our temple robes, met the other couples who were to receive the ordinance that day, and were led to an upper room that had been set apart for this purpose. I knew 3 of the other 4 couples. 2 of the husbands were former stake presidents and 1 was a mission president who had just completed his mission.

We were all seated in the room with Elder Ballard officiating, Elder Harold G. Hillam assisting, with Sister Carol Hillam, Elder Wayne S. Peterson and Sister Peterson as observers. A counselor in the temple presidency was also present. The temple president was absent because his wife was seriously ill in hospital.

Elder Ballard explained what would be happening. We were to have our feet washed and be anointed by him. He was acting under the direction of the Prophet, President Gordon B. Hinckley. We would then be allocated a sealing room for each couple to be alone and perform the second part of the ordinance. We would then all meet again with Elder Ballard in the celestial room.

The following is my best recollection of what happened in performing this ordinance. It has been nearly 6 years since it happened so I may well have omitted some things. I have briefly reviewed published accounts of the second anointing to jog my memory.

I. THE ORDINANCE OF THE WASHING OF THE FEET

I was beckoned to sit on a particular chair. Elder Ballard knelt and washed my feet, then dried them. This ordinance cleansed me from the blood and sins of this generation.

II. THE ORDINANCE OF SECOND ANOINTINGS -- Part One Anointed & Ordained a King/Priest, Queen/Priestess

I was anointed with oil, on the top of my head, and then hands were laid upon my head, and I was ordained a king and a priest unto the Most High God, to rule and reign in the House of Israel forever. My head, brow, eyes, ears nose, lips etc. were anointed with oil and specific blessings were given related to knowing, understanding and speaking the truth. This ordinance gave me the fullness of the priesthood and a blessing was given which included the following :-

Sealing power to bind & loose, curse & bless.

Blessings of Abraham, Isaac & Jacob.

The Holy Spirit of Promise bestowed.

Blessed to live as long as life is desirable.

Blessed to attain unto the Godhood.

Power to be a member of a Godhead bestowed.

Sealed up to eternal life

Power to have the heavens opened.

We were charged not to reveal to other individuals that we had received this ordinance. My wife was also anointed and ordained a queen and priestess.

THE ORDINANCE OF SECOND ANOINTINGS -- Part Two

'The Washing of The Feet', Wife to Husband

The second part of the second anointing was explained to us. We (my wife and I) were to go to another sealing room where we would be alone as a couple. There would be a bowl of water and a towel. My wife was to wash my feet (as Mary did to Jesus) and dry them. She would then place her hands upon my head and pronounce a blessing upon me as the spirit dictated.

This was a very moving and personal experience for us as a couple and we both ended in tears of great joy.

Following this we met in the celestial room with Elder Ballard and the others. Elder Ballard summarized what had happened and asked if there were any questions as they could only be answered at this time, in this place as we were charged to tell nobody that we had received this ordinance.

I have stated earlier some of the things mentioned in the blessing given to me. I cannot recall everything and I did not record it at the time. As illustration, however, the following is apparently the blessing given to Heber C. Kimball by President Brigham Young and it is similar to the one I received :

Brigham Young proceeded to anoint Br. Heber C. Kimble and Vilate his wife --- and pronounced the following blessing namely Bro Heber C. Kimble in the name of Jesus Christ we pour upon thy head this Holy oil & we anoint thee a King and Priest unto the most High God & in & over the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Days Saints and also Israel in this the Holy Temple of the Lord, at Nauvoo the City of Joseph State of Ills. & I seal upon you power to bind on Earth & it shall be bound in Heaven & whomso-ever thou shalt loose on Earth shall be loosed in Heaven, & whomsoever thou shalt curse shalt be cursed, & whomsoever thou shalt bless, shall be blessed & I anoint thy head that it may be sound & thy brains shall be quick to think & to regulate thy whole body. & thine ears to hear the cries of the Poor & needy of thy Brethren, who shall come to thee for council & thine eyes that thou mayest see and understand the things of God--& that thou mayest behold Angels & thy mouth that [p. 4] thou mayest speak forth the great things of God & Seal upon you all the blessings of thy Progenitors Even Abraham Isaac & Jacob & even as Far back as the Priesthood: & I say that thou shalt live to a good old age Even to three score & ten & longer if thou desire it -- & thou shalt have Power to redeem thy progenitors & thou shalt have power over thy Posterity & shall Save all of them & bring them into thy Kingdom we also seal upon thee all the power & blessing of the Holy Reserection

Even to the Eternal God head & no blessing that thy heart can conceive will be withheld from you & in the name of the Father & of the Son & of the Holy Spirit Amen

He then anointed Sister Vilate Kimble a queen and Priestess unto her Husband [H. C. Kimball] in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Days Saints & in Iseral. & pronounced all the blessings upon her head in common with her husband.

/s/ John D. Lee

2. Taken from the Nauvoo Temple 'Book of Anointings'; Historian's Office Library; January 8 - February 7, 1846; Book end title: 'W. Richards' in gold leaf; C.H.D., CR/342/3/box 4.

Feelings Afterwards

There is no doubt this had been a 'life changing experience' as promised by Elder Hillam. I felt the spirit even stronger.

Nominating Others for the Ordinance

A little time after this 'life changing' experience Elder Hillam asked me to nominate 2 couples I knew to receive this ordinance. I took this charge very seriously and asked Elder Hillam what qualities I should consider. He answered find another you, mature people who have been tried and tested yet remained absolutely committed and dedicated to the church. This was a flattering response. I knew the final decision would not be mine but, nevertheless, I considered it a very grave responsibility to make such nominations. I therefore went about it in the same manner I had done all my church life. I prayed for guidance to know Heavenly Father's will in this respect, made a list of all the people I knew who could be considered, worked it out in my own mind and fasted and prayed.

Previously I had assumed, if anyone made sure their calling and election, it was received at a personal visit from Jesus Christ. He knows us and is

the perfect judge. Now I was in a position of nominating others for something so sacred, more onerous than nominating bishops, patriarchs, stake presidency counselors etc. I still assumed all nominations from all sources would be whittled down by an Area President and Apostle and the final decisions would be made by President Hinckley as he personally consulted with the Lord. (Years later I saw that these, like everything else in the church, were purely the decisions of mortal men. What arrogance for a church leader to assume he has the right to decide who will go to the 'highest heaven'.")

The rest of Tom's story, including email exchanges back and forth between him and his friend Elder Jeffrey R. Holland about Tom's disbelief of the church are very interesting to read and can be found [HERE](#).

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POST-MORMON JOURNEY

SEX EDUCATION IN THE CHURCH

This is a sensitive topic, so if you don't want to read through this one, please skip. This is your only warning...

See, that's another thing...why does it have to be such a taboo subject?

All growing up, I don't remember too many lessons on sex, masturbation, porn, etc. It was kind of hush, hush. I don't remember my parents talking about it much, if at all. Either they were too embarrassed, or just didn't feel right about talking about it. I wish I was exposed to more appropriate sex talk while growing up. I think everything needs to be in the open with the family...telling it like it is. I don't think I've ever heard a talk in local church on masturbation, yet some think of it as one of the most grievous sins there is. They talk occasionally about the dangers of porn, but that's about it. People at church would probably freak out if someone started talking about masturbation over the pulpit. Sad, but true.

Masturbation: One of the articles I have read was about the attitudes of [masturbation in the LDS church](#) was an interesting read. It was more of a historical paper on what prophets and apostles have said regarding the topic throughout the years. One story they shared was about a boy named Kip. He was from Boise, ID. Apparently back in 1981 or somewhere close to that, he committed suicide and left a note saying that he felt so much pressure from the church to stay morally clean. He had a masturbation addiction, and everyone in the church kept telling him that

they would rather see the youth dead than alive with moral sin. So he felt that he had to die because he couldn't get out of his addiction, and that was what he was taught. It was very sad to me. The church over the years has compared masturbating to one of the most grievous sins, next to committing adultery. I don't believe this at all. What if this were my boys? Are we going to raise our kids with the attitude that "we would rather see you dead and clean and pure, than alive and impure"? What is that teaching our kids? I would be so sad if my boys were to kill themselves over a masturbation addiction. And I firmly believe that most if not every boy has tried it. They might not continue to do so. But in the grand scheme of things, is masturbating so bad that you are not going to make it to the celestial kingdom because of it? I don't believe that for a minute. Here's an archive.org article about the situation...

https://archive.org/stream/LatterDayTragedy/Latter-Day-Tragedy_djvu.txt

"Some years ago the First Presidency said to the youth of the Church, **"Better dead, clean, than alive, unclean"** (In Conference Report, Apr. 1942, p. 89). I remember how my father impressed the seriousness of chastity upon my mind. He and I were standing in the railroad station in Rexburg, Idaho, in the early morning of November 12, 1920. We heard the train whistle and knew that in three minutes I would be on my way to Australia to fill a mission. In that short interval my father said to me, among other things, "My son, you are going a long way from home. But your mother and I, your brother and sisters, will be with you constantly in our thoughts and prayers, we shall rejoice with you in your successes, and we shall sorrow with you in your disappointments. When you are released and return, we shall be glad to greet you and welcome you back into the family circle. **But remember this, my son, we would rather come to this station and take your body off the train in a casket than to have you come home unclean, having lost your virtue.**" I pondered that statement at the time. I did not then have the full understanding of it that my father had, but I have never forgotten it."

(Marion G Romney, 2nd Counselor in 1st Presidency, April 1979 General Conference, [lds.org](#)"

Other one.. **"There is no true Latter-day Saint who would not rather bury a son or a daughter than to have him or her lose his or her virtue**—realizing that virtue is of more value than anything else in all the wide world”

(President Heber J Grant, Oct 1944 General Conference, [archive.org](#))"

Another one... "Your **virtue is worth more than your life**. Please, young folk **preserve your virtue even if you lose your lives.**"

(President David O McKay as quoted by Spencer W Kimball, “The Miracle of Forgiveness”, pg. 63, [archive.org](#))

Do you not see how harmful that could be? Or how much un-needed pressure these types of statements put on someone? What if I was talking about my sons? Would you tell him this? You'd rather have them dead, than lose their virtue? THAT'S the thing I don't like; the attitudes like this. I think having an open conversation and teaching correct principles is a much better way to address these issues.

Masturbation has been scientifically shown to have health benefits including, but not limited to...

- enhance sex with partners, physically and emotionally
- help people learn how they like to be touched and stimulated sexually
- increase the ability to have orgasms
- improve relationship and sexual satisfaction
- improve sleep
- increase self-esteem and improve [body image](#)
- provide sexual pleasure for people without partners, including the elderly

provide sexual pleasure for people who choose to abstain from sexual activities with another person

- provide treatment for sexual dysfunction
- reduce stress
- release sexual tension

*I do recognize that this list did not come from a scientific source, but you can find plenty of scientific sources to show this elsewhere online.

Pornography: I was a 'porn addict' for years and years. For the first 8 years of my married life, I was 'addicted' to porn. I couldn't stop, I couldn't say no, I couldn't just ignore it, I couldn't help myself. And yes, I almost got divorced over this. My wife couldn't handle my addiction, couldn't live with me, couldn't handle knowing what filth I was looking at.

Step back about a year now when I started to detach emotionally from the church. My desire to look at porn started to leave. I no longer felt like I HAD to look at it for that release, for the next high. I no longer felt like I HAD to look up bad videos and pictures to spite my wife after an argument.

Now look at me today, I have detached A LOT from the church. No longer attend, still technically a member, but don't believe in a lot of what the church says. My desire for porn has mostly disappeared! I didn't have to confess to the bishop and work through his steps of repentance to lower my desire. I tried and failed with the local LDS 12 step program, and never went back. I just don't have those desires I once had.

Now is it because I'm 10 years older than I was when I first started looking at porn, or is it because I've detached from the source that

constantly taught me that it was forbidden and bad and that I will get divorced if I look at porn? I would say that the desire disappearing is directly correlated with my detachment from the church!

So is pornography as damaging and addicting as the LDS church says it is? The [American Psychological Society says this...](#) "Putting a label on a porn habit isn't an idle exercise. Understanding what drives the behavior is a necessary step toward designing effective treatments for people who can't control the urge. While science is far from settling this debate, some treatment programs continue to push the idea that porn is an addiction. "There's a tremendous treatment industry that needs this to be a disease — a thing they can charge people to treat," Prause says. But promoting certain therapies may be ill-advised. "You can harm patients by using treatment models that aren't research-supported," Prause says. **Whether or not pornography is a diagnosable addiction, it's clear it hurts some people.** For them, there just isn't much evidence about how best to control this behavior. "There is a real dearth of good, evidence-based therapeutic literature," Voon says."

They also point to a few studies that have been done on how porn affects males and females. [One such study](#) showed that male pornography use outcomes were negative, and female pornography use showed improved sexual quality. Interestingly this study was in part researched by researchers at Brigham Young University! [Another study](#) showed negative outcomes in males and positive outcomes for females using pornography.

The next study I thought was most interesting was [THIS ONE](#). "When pornography use becomes excessive, romantic relationships can suffer. Destin Stewart, PhD, and Dawn Szymanski, PhD, at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, surveyed female college students and found that

those who perceived their boyfriends' porn use to be problematic experienced lower self-esteem, poorer relationship quality and lower sexual satisfaction"

In conclusion, for ME, there is still more research to be done regarding sexuality and pornography use, but masturbating has been show to be very beneficial and should be continued, and children should not be taught that masturbating can turn you gay, or should not be shamed for doing it, like the LDS church has done in the past.

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POST-MORMON JOURNEY

TEMPLES AND TEMPLE WORK

I have a real hard time with the temple because the sole purpose of temples is to do the work for the dead who didn't have the opportunity to do it in this life. To me this says that everyone who has ever lived, or will ever live, will have to accept Mormonism and the plan of salvation, or else they will not go live with God again, no matter what you've done with your life. What about all those great people who attend a church of their choosing, never sin, and always do good in the world? They won't have a shot at the celestial kingdom if they don't accept the Mormon way? That makes no sense to me. I guess I can understand doing those covenants and stuff for yourself, but I disagree when it comes to doing it for random people you don't even know. They get to choose to accept it or not, I know this. I was taught this as well. What if they choose not to accept it? They go to hell? This seems way off in my opinion.

[The Mormonthink website](#) says... “The LDS temple ceremony has many parallels to Masonic rites, and for good reason: Joseph Smith introduced the rites into the LDS temple about two months after becoming a Freemason himself, and fourteen years after his brother Hyrum and (possibly 34 years) after his father both became Freemasons. The rituals taken from Masonry cannot have come from Solomon's time (as many LDS believe) as Masonry did not originate until the Middle Ages. Although claimed to be sacred, the rites within the temple are secret because of their cult-like trappings and because of the blood oaths initiates were required to make (although these oaths have now been

removed from the ceremony itself, anyone going through the endowment ceremony before 1990 remembers them well). Many members feel that requiring an entrance fee (in the form of tithing) to get to God's greatest reward is not in keeping with Christ's atoning sacrifice being a free gift to all.”

THAT is a good way to sum up how I feel about the Temple. I feel that the temple is only for the “privileged” or “the most righteous”, the ones that pay the most tithing.

More quotes from Mormonthink: “Heber C. Kimball, a Mason himself said, "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." (Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 13 November, 1858, 1085, LDS archives; see also Stanley B. Kimball, "Heber C. Kimball and Family, The Nauvoo Years, Brigham Young University Studies 15 (Summer 1975): 458. See also David John Buerger, *The Mysteries of Godliness: A History of Mormon Temple Worship*, Smith Research Associates, San Francisco, 1994, 56.)

To anyone who has knowledge of both the LDS Temple Ceremony (especially the pre-1990 temple ceremony) and Mason Rites it is very apparent that they have many similarities. Many things are exactly the same. Even knowledgeable Mormons admit that the endowment ceremony (especially in its earlier versions) contains many details that are similar to the Masonic initiation rites of Joseph Smith's day. **The symbols, oaths, handclasps, and terminology resemble the Masonic ritual in hundreds of ways.**

The clearest evidence of Masonic influence on the Nauvoo temple ceremony is a comparison of texts. Three elements of the Nauvoo endowment and its contemporary Masonic ritual resemble each other so

closely that they are sometimes identical. These are the tokens, signs, and penalties. (David Buerger, *Mysteries of Godliness: A History of Mormon Temple Worship*, Chapter 3: Joseph Smith's Ritual)”

“The Mormon Temple endowment ceremony is without a doubt taken from the Masonic ceremonies Joseph Smith participated in just weeks before he introduced the temple endowment. The grips, tokens, covenants, secret words, keys, etc. were word for word the same when first introduced. Members who were Masons previous to Joseph joining the fraternal order unashamedly referred to the Mormon endowment as "celestial masonry." Fawn Brodie, *No Man Knows My History*, pp. 279-283”

“Perhaps in the 1800s the secrecy of the temple was so outsiders (as well as the bulk of the LDS membership) would not find out about the practice of plural marriage. However, why is it secret now? God may have commanded it to be secret of course, or maybe there are more practical, earthly answers.

The temple ceremony can seem very strange to many people. We've heard even many faithful members refer to the experience as not at all what they expected and even bizarre. It definitely is very different than the worship services in the LDS chapels every Sunday.

Simply put, people outside the Church wouldn't understand it. How many people would join the church if the temple ceremony was explained to them in detail by the missionaries?

However, making it a 'sin' to discuss the temple ceremony outside the temple causes people to simply accept the strangeness of the ceremony. If it wasn't for this, members would likely talk amongst themselves about the ceremony and probably not in flattering ways. Perhaps with open discussion, members would come to the conclusion that the ceremony

isn't something they comfortably believe in.

Generally when people or organizations have secrets, it is usually for nefarious reasons. Even the Book of Mormon condemns 'secret combinations'. You would think that God's true church would be the most open and honest of any organization, but this is far from true. If God commanded it to be this way then that's fine, but if it is done by man, then the reasons are suspect.”

From [Mormonthink](#)... “The original temple ceremony practiced by the saints included an **oath of vengeance against the United States government** for the death of Joseph Smith. The change was **added by Brigham Young** after Joseph was killed by the mob. **This was removed in early 1927**. Imagine if Mitt Romney was running for president after taking an oath against the United States government.

The oath in part was:

You and each of you do covenant and promise that you will pray, and never cease to pray, Almighty God to **avenge the blood of the prophets upon this nation**, and that you will teach the same to your children and your children's children unto the third and fourth generations.”

The Full Oaths read...

- "Should you reveal the **first token of the Aaronic priesthood**, you agree that your throat be cut from ear to ear, and your tongue torn out by its roots."
- "Should you reveal the **second token of the Aaronic priesthood**, you agree that your breasts be torn open, your heart and vitals torn out and given to the birds of the air and the beasts of the field."
- "Should you reveal the **first token of the Melchizedek priesthood**, you agree that your body be cut asunder and all your bowels gush out."

- "You do covenant and promise that you will pray and never cease to pray to Almighty God to **avenge the blood of the prophets upon this nation**, and that you will teach the same to your children and to your children's children unto the third and fourth generation."

“The significant changes made in 1990 include:

1. Elimination of the penalties associated with the signs and tokens. After 1990, patrons were no longer required to pantomime their own deaths by slashing their throats or disemboweling themselves by slicing a knife across their stomachs.
2. The protestant ministers were no longer referred to as agents of Satan.
3. Changing of words from the Adamic Language to English.
4. The elimination of **the Five Points of Fellowship**.
 1. The five points of fellowship is so strange, we're sure many LDS must have wondered why it was ever in the temple ceremony to begin with (other than the fact that it was in the Mason's ceremony). Many women expressed their discomfort in the touching that went on with a total stranger of the opposite sex. At the veil, the temple attendee had to engage in the following ritual with whoever was the temple officiator at the veil at the time:
 1. inside of right foot by the side of right foot,
 2. knee to knee,
 3. breast to breast,
 4. hand to back, and
 5. mouth to ear.

Not many women were comfortable touching their breasts and legs to other men's chests and legs. Men didn't like doing it with other men either. It's one thing to do that with your spouse

and quite different with a stranger or worse, someone from your ward that you didn't particularly care for. Perhaps complaints from members also helped the leadership of the Church decide that this part of the ceremony was no longer required for exaltation. We again must wonder why it was required as part of the ceremony for 150 years but all of a sudden changed with no explanation.

I thought this sums up nicely how I feel about eternal marriages and the possible problems with how the church presents them.

1) Unworthy spouse: It isn't enough for people to get into the Celestial Kingdom to have an eternal family. One must make it into the top 1/3 of the Celestial Kingdom. The odds are pretty low that the average church member would make it to the top 1/3 of the Celestial Kingdom. My stake president estimated that maybe only 1 in 10 church members would (he gave that in a talk chastising the stake members for not being better people). So how many families would have one spouse worthy of the top 1/3 of the CK, but the other spouse only makes it to the middle 1/3 or even to another kingdom? Those people would have to then be separated, regardless of the devotion of the one that made it to the top.

2) Less Worthy children: In a typical LDS family of say 4-5 children, what are the chances that both spouses and all the children (and their spouses) will be of the same worthiness level? We know of very few members that even have all active immediate family members, let alone Celestial Kingdom-bound members.

3) Grandparents and grandchildren: What defines an eternal family? To us, we of course think of our parents on one end and our children on the other so we have grandparents, us and our children. But what about

our parents? Since they are children themselves, their version of the eternal family is their parents and us. So what about their parents? Well, our grandparents would want their children for their eternal family, and their parents (our great grandparents). Our great grandparents would want them (our grandparents) for their eternal family, etc. The never-ending chain doesn't really make sense to break it into families because one family is part of another. And of course, many of these people wouldn't make it to the top 1/3 of the CK anyway.

4) Homosexuals: What about gay people? Well of course they can't make it to the top of the CK without a spouse of the opposite sex, so I guess they are out of luck - and their families will just have an empty chair in the CK. Also, is their sexual orientation all of a sudden going to change in the next life - basically a huge part of their identity and personality will just be 100% reversed? It is really so unrealistic to expect a gay person to live the "Celestial Law" all their lives, alone and celibate because of the way they were born.

5) Polygamy: What about the husband that gets sealed to another woman after his first wife dies (such as in the case of apostles Nelson and Oaks)? Now what if the first wife doesn't like this arrangement in the next life? Can she boot the second wife out of her husband's eternal marriage to her? Then what does she do - just get another man assigned to her because they are all interchangeable? We don't really think that everyone will just accept polygamy in the next life, despite some member's claims.

6) Divorce: When marriages dissolve that causes many potential problems in the eternal family concept. What happens to the children of divorced couples? Do they go to the mom or dad? Which one does not get their children in their own eternal family? With the divorce rate so very high, this would effect a huge number of potential eternal families.

7) Sealings of first marriage not cancelled: If Ann & John are married in the temple and they don't have any children and end up getting divorced, but never get their sealing cancelled (which happens for several reasons such as one spouse dies, one spouse refuses to cancel the sealing or the church simply won't allow it, etc). Then Ann marries Paul. They aren't allowed to be sealed unless Ann has her first sealing cancelled, which she can't do. So all of the children that Ann & Paul have are actually sealed to Ann & John, even though they are Paul's children. I know people that this has happened to and her first husband doesn't even know that his ex-wife had children that are now sealed to him. It makes little sense.

8) In-laws: How many people would even want to live with their parents, their children, their in-laws, their children's spouses, etc.? The simple fact is that many "good" people don't really want to be that close with their in-laws and non-blood relatives in this life, let alone the next one.”

Here's another good quote by a prophet...

“Those who receive the fullness will be privileged to view the face of our Father. There will not be such an overwhelming number of the Latter-day Saints who will get there. President Francis M. Lyman many times has declared, and he had reason to declare, I believe, that if we **save one-half of the Latter-day Saints**, that is, with an exaltation in the celestial kingdom of God, we will be doing well. Not that the Lord is partial, not that he will draw the line as some will say, to keep people out. He would have every one of us go in if we would; but there are laws and ordinances that we must keep; if we do not observe the law we cannot enter. Many come into the Church, like fish that are gathered into the net, that have to be sorted and thrown out again or put into piles where they belong. And so it will be with us

Joseph Fielding Smith, from Vol. 2 (page 15) of his collected writings known as “**Doctrines of Salvation**”.

Here's another quote... "If performing baptisms and temple endowments is commanded by God, then the saints are performing a much needed and heaven-sanctioned service regardless of whether nonmembers approve or not. If however, this practice turns out to be merely something instituted by the church without that direct instruction from Deity, then **it's the height of arrogance to assume that every nonmember (or 99.8% of the living population) is unable to enter heaven without the assistance of the LDS Church and its temples.**

Legally (so we've been told) it's been ruled that a dead person cannot be harmed by performing such rituals so they will be continued to be practiced (at least in the USA) regardless of whether nonmembers want them to be performed or not. (Note: we have not been able to confirm that this is indeed the law.)

Whether it's true or not, many people believe that anyone not wishing this service performed for them should have their request honored. If it turns out that it is indeed necessary, then those that requested the service not be performed can take it up with God. Actually since most nonmembers have no idea that this is going on, perhaps the church should obtain permission from the people while they are living or from their closest relatives."

Another great one... "WHAT IF ALL THE CHURCHES DID THIS? **The Catholic Church rejects Mormon baptisms as valid. But do you see the Catholic Church 'baptizing' Mormons and others they consider to not have valid baptisms into the Catholic Church when they die? It would be ridiculous if all the other churches felt the need to perform ordinances after people die so they can be saved.**"

MY CONCLUSIONS... I have a hard time wanting to go back to the temple. To me, it was weird and uncomfortable from the first time I

attended. And it has been uncomfortable and weird every time thereafter. I feel that it is very cult-like, and all the rituals I feel are not needed to get to heaven. What if someone never gets to go to the temple? They don't get to learn the signs and tokens necessary to pass through the veil into God's presence? What if we do it for a dead person... only after one time, do THEY have all the signs and tokens necessary to pass through the veil into God's presence? Do you think I or anybody who hasn't desensitized themselves to the rituals will remember everything necessary to get into God's presence?

I'm not sure it's going to work that way. I feel that the more you go the less weird it is. To me, that is just desensitization, just like medicine works. The more you hit a receptor in the body, the less it responds to the stimulus, therefore the less reaction. I feel this is why long time members don't have any problem with the temple, because they've gone so many times, that they see it as normal. It's weird and uncomfortable to me.

ANOTHER THOUGHT: **Misogynistic views of women in the temple.** This is a topic that I had never realized until I studied up on temple rituals. All throughout the temple, the man covenants to obey Father in Heaven, while the woman covenants to obey her HUSBAND! Also, when God is speaking during the endowment ceremony, the women have to veil their faces. To me, this is a blatant statement that the woman is not worthy to speak with God, and her role is to covenant to serve her husband. The women are not allowed to be in the presence of God. They have to cover up! So God speaks to the man, and the woman has no say in the matter. So crazy.

- "Prior to 1990, the **LDS church endowment** ceremony both taught that Eve's punishment was, "In sorrow shalt thou bring forth children; nevertheless, thou mayest be preserved in childbearing. Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee in righteousness." It taught that Adam was

punished because he "hearkened unto the voice of thy wife" and partake of the fruit. And women were literally put "under covenant to obey the law of their husbands."

- Post 1990, the first two references were removed, and women are now told to "hearken to the counsel of her husband, as her husband hearkens unto the counsel of the Father". Okay, but "hearken" means to "listen and obey" in the LDS church. So they're saying the same thing, but in a way that won't offend the younger crowd.
- [Gender roles in the church](#)

[CLICK HERE](#) for a comparison of pre/post 1990 temple endowment ceremonies and changes that have been made. It's interesting to compare.

[CLICK HERE](#) to see full temple endowment session online

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[Tithing/Fast Offerings](#)

POST-MORMON JOURNEY

TITHING/FAST OFFERINGS

TITHING:

I have a hard time wanting to pay tithing to the church and then have no way of knowing how it's being used. You can tell me that tithing is to further the work and blah blah, but all that means to me is that tithing is used to build churches and temples, and whatever else a group of brethren sees fit. I don't like that. Why can't I know exactly what my money is going to? We pay thousands every year! I get nothing in return. Seems like a bad investment to me.

When we give tithing, it should be a voluntary donation to help the church. It is not set up that way for our church. Its "Voluntary", but it's really required to be a member. You have to give to the church to be a member in good standing; you have to give to be worthy to get into the temples. It's not voluntary, it's required. Have you ever even thought about this? Also, when you give tithing to the church, you're not giving it to the lord like they say; you're giving it to the church to use.

I don't think that the sole reason I got through college was because I paid tithing to the lord and the lord blessed me. I truly believe the lord blessed me and helped me through pharmacy school, but I don't believe that it is a result 100% because I paid my tithing.

I know where the money goes when we pay tithing. It goes to Salt Lake, and they divvy it up as they see fit. No one could tell me exactly where

my money went. They don't keep track of it like that. We assume it's being used as it's supposed to, but we don't know that. Doesn't that make you worry? It does me.

I feel that it is a waste. Many months have gone by and I get less and less from church. The church has a way of putting doubts and negative things on the person, not on the church. I get nothing from church; in fact I just get angry at church, because I don't agree with attitudes and things that are said there. Maybe it's only me. I feel that I am being forced to go to church every week when I don't want to. I feel that I get nothing out of church. Shouldn't we be happy to go to church? Well I'm not, and so I don't want to support the church.

“Joseph Smith and Sydney Rigdon produced [D&C 119:4](#) (1838). It states (emphasis added):

And after that, those who have been thus 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.

Webster's 1828 Dictionary defines "interest" as any surplus advantage. Webster's defines "advantage" in pertinent part, as interest; increase; overplus.

In the 1820's, the word "interest" was synonymous with the phrase "surplus advantage."

This is what tithing meant back when the Law of Tithing was instituted... a 1/10th of your surplus, not increase. Back in the day, people would get paid, then take care of all of their expenses, and THEN pay their tithing of their overplus or surplus. That's the way it WAS done. Then in 1970, the bretheren changed the meaning...

Then, back in 1964, Howard W. Hunter stated this...

"The law is simply stated as 'one-tenth of all their interest.' Interest means profit, compensation, and increase. It is the wage of one employed the profit from the operation of a business, the increase of one who grows or produces, or the income to a person from any other source.

The Lord said it is a standing law "forever" as it has been in the past.

*In 1970, the bretheren cleared up what is meant...

“On March 19, 1970, the First Presidency sent a letter to presidents of stakes and missions, bishops of wards, and presidents of branches in answer to the question, What is a proper tithe? For your guidance in this matter, please be advised that we have uniformly replied that the simplest statement we know of is that statement of the Lord himself that the members of the Church should pay one-tenth of all their *interest* annually, which is understood to mean income. *No one is justified in making any other statement than this. We feel that every member of the Church should be entitled to make his own decision as to what he thinks he owes the Lord, and to make payment accordingly.*

The General Handbook of Instructions quotes from the March 19, 1970 letter from the First Presidency sets forth a definition of what is tithed. Here is a portion of the General Handbook of Instructions from that section: “The simplest statement we know of is the statement of the Lord himself, namely that the members of the Church should pay "one-tenth of all their interest annually," which is understood to mean income. No one is justified in making any other statement than this. (First Presidency letter, 19 Mar. 1970; see also D&C 119:4).”

Then, back in 1964, Howard W. Hunter stated this... "The law is simply stated as 'one-tenth of all their interest.' Interest means profit, compensation, and increase. It is the wage of one employed the profit from the operation of a business, the increase of one who grows or

produces, or the income to a person from any other source. The Lord said it is a standing law "forever" as it has been in the past.”

MY THOUGHTS: It’s a 10th of our excess after taking care of our monthly needs... aka (bills, food, shelter, etc). I will end with a quote that I think sums up nicely how I feel on the subject... “I require all their surplus property to be put into the hands of the bishop" Let us consider for a moment this word 'surplus.' What does it mean when applied to a man and his property? Surplus cannot mean that which is indispensably necessary for any given purpose, but what remains after supplying what is needed for that purpose. Is not the first and most necessary use of a man's property that he feed, clothe and provide a home for himself and family! Was not 'surplus property,' that which was over and above a comfortable and necessary substance? In the light of what had transpired and of subsequent events, what else could it mean? Can we take any other view of it when we consider the circumstances under which it was given in far west, in July, 1838? I have been unable in studying this subject to find any other definition of the term 'surplus,' as used in this revelation, than the one I have just given. I find that it was so understood and recorded by the Bishops and people in those days, as well as by the prophet Joseph himself, who was unquestionably the ablest and best exponent of this revelation.

(Franklin D. Richards, Nov. 6, 1882. JD 23:313. (Emphasis added)”)

FAST OFFERINGS:

Wiki states... **Fast offering** is the term used in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS Church) to denote money or usable commodities donated to that church, which are then available to provide financial help to those in need. The local bishop or branch president is responsible for the use of the fast offering resources to those in need, and is usually assisted by other local church leaders to identify individuals and families to receive assistance and to disburse the resources. Members are encouraged to fast once a month on Fast Sunday and to

give the money they save by not eating two meals to the church; those who can afford to be more generous are encouraged to give more than simply the money saved as a fast offering

Here's a [quick recap according to LDS.org](#) on what happens to the fast offering funds...

Here's a quick look at what happens after you fill out the donation slip.

1. Aaronic Priesthood holders help collect fast offerings and then turn them in to the bishopric. Members also include fast offerings in their donations to the Church.

2. The bishopric then deposits all the donations in a bank account.

The funds are carefully accounted for and managed by Church employees. Each ward is then given funds according to the needs of its members. [1](#)

3. With the help of the Relief Society president and other ward leaders, the bishop determines the needs of the families in the ward. Usually the bishop does not give money to the person being assisted but pays directly for the things the person needs. A family can receive help in the form of commodities (like groceries), payment of certain obligations (like rent or medical bills), or other aid.

4. If a Church facility such as a bishop's storehouse or a Deseret Industries store is nearby, the bishop or Relief Society president can help a family fill out an order form so that the family can obtain specific items from those facilities. [2](#)

5. With a bishop's order form, the family can go to a bishop's storehouse to get necessary groceries or to a Deseret Industries store to get clothing and other goods.

6. Those who receive help are expected to work for what they

receive, if they are able. For example, they may stock shelves at the bishops' storehouse, help clean Church property, or perform other assignments from their bishop.

MY THOUGHTS: So if fast offerings are used at the local level, and used to help feed the hungry, clothe the needy, and help the poor out, how come we give so little to the community, when we are required to give 10% of our income to the church to further the church's agenda? I personally think the roles should be swapped. **Tithing should be used to feed the hungry, and give back to your local community, and the fast offerings can be used to further the church's agenda and build the kingdom.** THIS would make such a difference in the world.

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