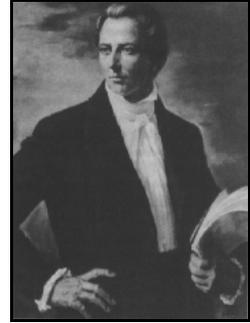


The Cults Exposed

Mormonism – Part I

Mormonism Historical Overview:



"Wobbly-Knees" Smith

Context: "The Burned-over District"

Mormonism	Adventism	Christian Science	Jehovah's Witnesses
1830	1843	1866	1884

Rise of Mormonism:

I. Their Founder: Joseph Smith, Jr. [1805-1844]

A. Family Background:

Born - Sharon, Vermont [Dec. 22 or 23, 1805]

Education - his family was barely literate, Joseph could read, but his writing was poor.

Religion - grandfather was anti-institutional church and anti-creed; mom and brother, Hyrum, were Presbyterians; dad was a skeptical Methodist who had an vision while walking in the woods. A spirit told him the dead trees around him were like the world's religions, yet he was promised that he would find a box of food that would give him wisdom. Horned beasts prevented him from eating the food." The vision intensified his distrust of preachers.

Treasure Hunting - burial mounds in the area encouraged treasure hunters. Joseph was an avid treasure hunter (aided by a "peeping stone"). In 1826 he was tried for fraud over his claims to be able to locate treasure.

B. Early Years:

Moves to "burned-over District" [Palmyra, NY - 1816]

In his supposed confusion over the conflicting views of the Methodists, Baptists and Presbyterians he gave up on understanding the Bible and encouraged by James 1:5, Smith asked for wisdom.

C. His Visions & the Book of Mormon:

1st Vision [1820] - Moroni: "Lord's Anointed Prophet in this Dispensation"

Galatians 1:8-9 "But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned! As we have already said, so now I say again, If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let him be eternally condemned!"

2nd Vision(s) [1823] - Moroni: Golden Plates, Urim / Thumim and Their Location

- Bedroom (3 visits same, night)
- Field (next day)
- Hill Cumorah (same day)

- Annual Visits [1823-27]

Smith told by Moroni on his 1826 visit that he must bring the “right person” to be shown the plates. Smith, looking into a glass, discovers it is Emma Hale his girlfriend.

Note: Smith's Marriage to Emma Hale [1827] - he visits her, proposes and elopes contrary to her parents' desires and without their permission.

Plates Unearthed & Translated - Book of Mormon [1827]

Unearthed the “golden plates”

Translation (2 Years) -

Smith uses special glasses initially and later a “seer stone” to translate the plates while dictating to Emma and Hyrum, his scribes.

Oliver Cowdery, who also had a past fondness for divining rods, becomes a colleague. Cowdery claimed an angel showed him a vision of the golden plates.

Martin Harris, in 1828, was loaned the unfinished manuscript (the sole copy). He either lost it or it was stolen. Moroni told Smith not to retranslate rather he gave Smith a second account. [Note: You don't want the original to surface later only to contradict you!]

Brief Association with the Methodists [1828] - Smith applied with Emma to join a local Methodist church but Smith was soon ejected as a fraud and a hypocrite.

3rd Vision [1829] - John the Baptist: Smith & Cowdery "Aaronic Priests" - they baptise each other.

Book of Mormon Published [1830]

Harris' Reluctance to Finance the Project - Harris wanted to invest his life savings to publish the *Book of Mormon*, but his wife strenuously objected. Smith received a revelation threatening dire consequences to Harris. (*D&C*, 19:15, 26)

Content of the *Book of Mormon*:

The account of the migration of Lehi and Nephi in 600BC from Jerusalem to Central America. Their descendants build a temple and multiply. Mormon, whose son is Moroni, was a historian of their experiences. Noteworthy events:

- 1 - Nephi's authority is challenged and those who rebelled are cursed by God – their skin is turned from white to black!
- 2 - Jesus Christ appeared to Nephi to commission twelve apostles (and to repeat the Sermon on the Mount).

Sources of the *Book of Mormon*:

- 1- Solomon Spaulding's, *Manuscript Found*
Spaulding was a minister who wrote fictional narratives of the early American inhabitants. There is debate whether his lost work was used as a guide to Smith.

- 2- Ethan Smith, *View of the Hebrews: The Ten Tribes of Israel in America* [published in VT, 1823] - argued that the American natives were Hebrew in origin.

"It may be never proved that Joseph saw the *View of the Hebrews* before writing the Book of Mormon, but the striking parallelisms between the two books hardly leave a case for mere co-incidence. (Fawn Brodie, No Man Knows My History, 62-3.)

- 3- Smith's imagination

"He (Joseph Smith) would describe the ancient inhabitants of this continent, their dress, mode of traveling, their buildings, with every particular; their mode of warfare; and also their religious worship, This he would do with as much ease seemingly, as if he had spent his whole life among them." (Lucy Mack Smith [his mother], Biographical Sketches of Joseph Smith, 87.)

D. Mormon Church Established [1830]

Joseph Smith's Leadership Revelation

The leader would be "a seer, a translator, a prophet, an apostle of Jesus Christ, an elder of the church through the will of God." (Doctrine & Covenants [D&C] 21:1-2.)

The congregation of six plus Oliver Cowdery and Joseph Smith (Emma was absent) were admonished to accept "his (Smith's) word as if from mine (God's) own mouth, in patience and faith." (*D&C*, 21:4-5.)

Elect Lady Revelation [Elect Lady = Emma Smith]

"Murmur not because of the things which thou has not seen for they are withheld from thee and the world." (*D&C*, 25:1-5, 7,11.)

Send out missionaries with the *Book of Mormon* to neighboring villages securing converts. Causes a stir and reaction (there is another factor at work as we shall see).

Numerous revelations given to Smith on a variety of "timely" topics.

Relocation to Kirtland, Ohio (opposition then revelation to move) 1831

II. Their Journey Westward

A. Palmyra, NY [1830-31]

B. Kirtland, OH [1831-37]

1831 - *Book of Commandments* - God commands a written record of divine revelations be established by the prophet [the grammar required significant editing] (*D&C*, 70:3).

1831- Smith "inquires of God" privately regarding polygamy

Fanny Algier (age 19, housemaid) - "a varry nice & comly young woman" who became the Smiths' maid and Joseph's mistress. Emma caught them in a "hay mow" and forced her to leave (while expecting). Cowdery castigated Smith for the "dirty, nasty, filthy affair."

1832 - Nancy Marinda (age 16). Nancy's brothers, aided by a mob, tar and feather Smith for his suspected "improper relationship" with their sister.

Smith leads a group to Independence, MO ("Zion") and he returns to Ohio

1835 - "Article on Marriage" approved unanimously while Smith is away, declaring one man - one woman until death as God's pattern. This was included in *D&C* until its removal in 1876!

Book of Abraham Scam - Smith purchased (for over \$2,000) an Egyptian papyri from a traveling seller of artifacts. Smith claimed it was Reformed Egyptian and translated what he claimed was *The Book of Abraham*. This is a key source of the strangest of Mormon beliefs and is the foundation of the theology of polygamy. Subsequently the papyri was thought to be destroyed in the Chicago fire but in 1967 it was located in the Metro Museum. Modern Egyptologists (thanks to the Rosetta Stone) have translated the hieroglyphics – it is an ordinary funerary notice (i.e., obituary).

1836 - Mormon bank (unchartered) fails, their creditors are irrate. Zion, here we come.

C. Independence, MO [1837-39]

Mormon "promised Land" terminology causes concerns of local Missourians. Tensions escalate.

1838 - The governor asks the Mormons to leave or be driven from the state or be exterminated. Smith was jailed (Liberty, MO) and later was released. Brigham Young leads the group back to Nauvoo, IL. Smith rejoins them.

D. Nauvoo, IL [1840-1845]

"Thirteen Articles of Faith"

"Celestial Marriage, Polygamy Revelation & a Word for Emma" (D&C 132)

"Celestial Marriage"

This world only marriages.

Marriages for time and eternity.

"Multiple Wives"

"Emma's Directive"

"And let mine handmaid, Emma Smith, receive all those given unto my servant Joseph... And I command mine handmaid, Emma Smith, to abide and cleave unto my servant Joseph, and to none else. But if she will not abide this commandment she will be destroyed, saith the Lord." (*D&C*, 132:52-56)

Emma's Reaction:

Emma causes Eliza Snow to miscarry by throwing her down the stairs
Emma unsuccessfully poisons Smith's food, he breaks his jaw throwing up.
Emma threatens suicide.

Note: How many wives? (Jensen - 27; Brodie - 48; Irvine - 84)

His modus operandi?

While Emma was away shopping in St. Louis in 1843, Smith approached 17 year old Lucy Walker saying, "I have no flattering words to offer. It is the command of God to you. I will give you until tomorrow to decide this matter. If you reject this message, the gate will be closed forever against you." (Cited in Brodie, p. 337.)

1842- Nauvoo mayor publishes an expose of Mormons

1844- Joseph Smith becomes a Presidential candidate (or perhaps "king"), some "saints" depart and expose their corruption further in the local paper. After Mormons destroy the presses, the Smiths (Joseph and Hyrum) are jailed in nearby Carthage, IL. Two weeks later they are shot by a mob and become martyrs!

Brigham Young, President of Twelve Apostles selected to replace Smith.

Splinter Groups:

Reorganized Church of LDS, Independence, MO [Emma Smith joins.]

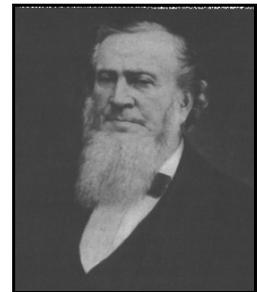
Other smaller splinter groups

E. Salt Lake, UT [1846-1847 a 1500 mile trek]

Brigham Young (1844-1877)

"Prophet, Seer and Revelator" / Organizer

"Young exercised real power, and he felt little need to promulgate formal revelations to bolster his authority. Instead, Young simply told the Saints what to do and expected them to obey." (Lawrence Foster, cited in Tucker, Another Gospel, 70. D&C 136 is a revelation to Young, next revelation 82 years later to a successor.)



"Bring-em Young"

1857 - US Army ordered into region (same concerns as in OH and MO)
Mountain Meadows Massacre - more than 100 Arkansas immigrants killed by Mormons who blame the Indians. Young calls it a "just act" making a "blood atonement."

(Period of great organization, expansion and development under Young.)

1887 - Edmunds-Tucker Act -- US Congress
- Bans polygamy, dissolves their church
- Disenfranchised those not agreeing to obey the law
- Appealed and upheld by US Supreme Court [May 1890]

1890 - *Official Declaration # 1* [President Wilford Woodruff] agrees to abide by the law, advises Mormons to refrain from plural marriages and to abide by the laws of the land. His basis was expediency.

Note: Brigham Young had said, "Now if any of you will deny the plurality of wives

and continue to do so, I promise you will be damned..." (*Deseret News*, 10-14-1855)

1896 - Utah becomes a state.

1978 - *Official Declaration # 2* - priesthood is open to "all worthy males." This enabled blacks to become priests. Again expediency *vis-a-vis* the civil rights movement.

"Much of the high leadership of the church has for its 150 plus years of existence been in the hands of about 20 families -- the Smiths, Romneys, Kimballs, Cannons, Richards, Bensons and others."

- *"Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.*

*But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them--bringing swift destruction on themselves. Many will follow their shameful ways and will bring the way of truth into disrepute. In their greed these teachers will exploit you with stories they have made up." -- **2 Peter 1:20 - 2:3***

Bibliography:

Fawn Brodie, No Man Knows My History.

Scholarly biography of Joseph Smith. Appendix C: "The Plural Wives of Joseph Smith" list 48 wives and the tawdry circumstances surrounding Joseph's acquisitions.

Ann Eliza Young, Wife No. 19.

600 page expose of plural marriage by Brigham Young's 19th wife who left the faith.

Robert Lindsay, A Gathering of Saints. (OP)

Steven Naifeh and Gregory W. Smith, The Mormon Murders.

Linda Silltoe and Allen Roberts, Salamander: The Story of the Mormon Forgery Murders.

These three books are documentaries about Mark Hoffman who in the mid 1980s forged documents that would discredit Mormonism. The Mormon Church spent thousands to purchase these and hide them in their vaults. Hoffman came under suspicion of forgery and murdered one of his investigators with a letter bomb. He too was injured by one of his own bombs. His attorney, the prosecutor, and the judge were all Mormons so he was allowed to plea prior to trial --thus avoiding the documents from being produced as evidence in court.