

# Mormons

by Sebastian R. Fama

Mormonism was founded by Joseph Smith (1805-1844) who claimed to have had a vision from God when he was a young man. He claims he asked God which church was the true church. Supposedly God told him that they were all corrupt and that he was being chosen to restore the Christian church. A few years later he claims to have discovered some golden plates written in what he called reformed Egyptian. God enabled him to translate them and shortly thereafter, in 1830, he organized the Mormon Church. Once the plates were translated an angel took them back. The translated plates are what constitute the book of Mormon.

Mormons will tell prospective converts that "we must find and accept the truth." On this we agree. But how can we be sure that something is true? Brigham Young once challenged his detractors with the following words: "Take up the Bible, compare the religion of the Latter-day Saints with it, and see if it will stand the test" (*Journal of Discourses* 16:46). I accept Mr. Young's challenge!

Among other things, the book of Mormon claims an Israelite family came to America about 600 BC. In time they multiplied into the millions. After His ascension, Jesus supposedly came to America to preach the "Gospel" to them. First, there is no archeological evidence to support this. Even Mormon leaders cannot agree on where in America all this took place. This is in stark contrast with the mountain of archeological evidence that bears witness to the events recorded in the Old and New Testaments. Second, it contradicts the Bible. The Bible tells us that Jesus ascended into heaven (Acts 1:9-11), He is only coming back once (1 Thessalonians 4:15), He must stay in heaven until that time (Acts 3:19-21), and when He comes, he will judge the living and the dead (Matthew 25:31-46). The living and the dead have not been judged. Hence Jesus has not come back yet.

Mormons believe that God the Father is a physical being. They believe that he was once like us in every respect. He was born of human parents and lived a faithful Mormon life. Consequently, after he died, he was resurrected by his own god and became a god himself. This gave him the right to create planets of his own. Together with his heavenly wives (resurrected Mormon women) he created spirit children who were then placed into the physical bodies of children born on earth. Mormons believe that they can follow the same path to godhood.

Psalm 93:2 refutes this idea when it refers to God as being eternal. John 4:24 refutes this idea when it proclaims, "God is Spirit." And Numbers 23:19 proclaims: "God is not man, that he should lie, neither the son of man that he should repent." Mormons are polytheists. That is, they believe there is more than one god. However, they only worship the god of this world. They see Jesus and the Holy Spirit as being subordinate gods to God the Father. But the Bible says there is only one God: "I am the first and I am the last: there is no God but me" (Isaiah 44:6).

Mormons believe that marriages sealed in a Mormon temple go on into eternity. But when asked about this very issue Jesus said that those in heaven "neither marry nor are given in marriage" (Luke 20:27-35). Curiously enough Mormons can have their eternal marriages unsealed so they can divorce. This is also a contradiction of Scripture. In Mark 10:10-12 Jesus calls divorce and remarriage adultery.

The present Mormon teaching on abortion not only contradicts the Bible but previous Mormon teaching as well. As late as 1988 they taught that abortion is wrong except to save the life of the mother. In 1992 they allowed women to procure abortions for cases of incest and in cases where the fetus is known to have severe defects.

The Book of Mormon teaches that being born with dark skin is a curse or punishment:

And it came to pass that I beheld, after they had dwindled in unbelief, they became a dark, and loathsome, and a filthy people, full of idleness and all manner of abominations (*1 Nephi 12:23*)

That does not sound like divine revelation to me. It sounds more like Joseph Smith adopted an unfortunate but popular prejudice of his time (early 1800's). While blacks have been allowed into the Mormon priesthood as of

1978, nothing has been said to change the teaching that black skin is a punishment for sins committed in a pre-existent state. The passages in the Book of Mormon and other Mormon Scriptures that deal with the issue remain. For those who might think such passages are figurative, consider the comments of Brigham Young:

You see some classes of the human family that are black, uncouth, uncomely, disagreeable, and low in their habits, wild, and seemingly deprived of nearly all the blessings of the intelligence that is generally bestowed upon mankind. The first man that committed the odious crime of killing one of his brethren will be cursed the longest of any one of the children of Adam. Cain slew his brother. Cain might have been killed, and that would have put a termination to that line of human beings. This was not to be, and the Lord put a mark upon him, which is the flat nose and black skin (*Journal of Discourses* 7:290).

Concerning contradictions in Mormon teaching, we are told that the Mormon church is continuously receiving revelations from God. Church members are required to adhere only to current teachings. Apparently, Mormons believe that sometimes, God gets it wrong. Why else would He have to correct Himself?

Modern-day Mormons would not agree with Brigham Young's Scripture challenge. While they will appeal to Scripture, ultimately their proof lies in their feelings or their testimony as they put it. However, truth is verified by facts not by feelings, especially when you consider the fact that feelings are very easily manipulated. A young person may feel that smoking and drinking is right because it makes him feel independent or accepted by his peers. But the fact remains that those are bad choices that can produce some very negative consequences.

Verifying the truth of your beliefs with your feelings is a very clever tactic. How can you argue with someone's feelings? It's like telling them that they really don't like their favorite song. However, if you rely on facts alone your position can be shown to be true or false. And if the goal is to "find and accept the truth" as our Mormon friends tell us, it becomes the only legitimate means for verifying the truth.

Mormons are "in good standing" if they pay a 10% tithe to the church and refrain from coffee, tea, tobacco, and alcohol. They practice baptism for the dead so that even the deceased can become Mormons. They believe that Jesus and Lucifer are spirit brothers. For a time, polygamy was a permitted practice. In fact, it was seen as a duty. After secretly practicing polygamy for years Joseph Smith proclaimed that God had revealed this teaching to him. The teaching was changed due to pressure from the federal government in 1890.

Mormons believe that there are three levels to heaven. The top level is for faithful Mormons. The middle level is for not so faithful Mormons and non-believers who have led good lives. The bottom level is for those who have led evil lives. All three heavens will be filled with joy and peace though to different degrees. There is a place of outer darkness for Mormons who have been convinced of Mormon truth and then turned their backs on it. However, unrepentant murderers, rapists, and thieves will be going to the lowest heaven.

Some of what the Mormon leadership has taught is just silly. Such as the sun and the moon being inhabited (*Journal of Discourses* 13:270-271). I doubt that there are any Mormons who still believe this. However, this information originated from the same "divine authority" which established all the other teachings of Mormonism. At this point an old saying comes to mind: "consider the source." I suppose we could go on but I think we have seen enough to determine the following:

1. Mormonism contradicts the Bible
2. Mormonism contradicts itself
3. There is no archeological evidence for Mormonism's historical claims
4. Mormonism teaches and has taught reprehensible doctrines in the name of God

To claim that Mormonism was established by God is false. I believe that we can confidently conclude that Mormonism, rather than being a restoration of Christianity, is in fact a perversion of it.