

MORMONISM AND THE BIBLE

I. BACKGROUND OF MORMONISM

A. Its Founder And His Claims - Joseph Smith, Jr., claimed that the Father and the Son appeared to him in 1820 while he was praying for guidance. He was allegedly told not to join any sect. Smith further claimed that in 1823 the angel Moroni appeared to him telling him that God had a special purpose for him. The angel supposedly revealed to Smith the location of the "golden plates" of Nephi which contained a sacred record. At last Smith was allowed to obtain the plates and was commissioned by God to translate them with the help of the "Urim and Thummim" which were found with the plates. The translation began in 1829 and was completed in 1830. It was published by Smith as "The Book of Mormon". Smith then organized the church. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints and the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, both claim to be this church, along with other Book of Mormon-believing groups.

B. What Is The Book of Mormon? - It claims to be a history of North & Central America from its first inhabitants, immediately after the Tower of Babel, to about the year 400 A.D. - a period of about 4,000 years. It claims this continent was peopled by two principal families:

- (1) The Jaredites - descendants of Jared who came to this continent from Babel. This nation was destroyed in war in about 590 B.C.
- (2) The Family of Lehi - who immigrated from Jerusalem in about 600 B.C. His descendants split into two nations, the Nephites, the righteous portion, and the Lamenites, the wicked portion. The Lamenites annihilated the Nephites. The cursed descendants of the Lamenites are supposedly the American Indians.

- The Book of Mormon claims to be not only a history, but it is looked upon by Mormons as "the fulness of the Everlasting Gospel". It records the existence of the Lord's church on this continent and even a personal visit of Christ to Central America!

C. Other Mormon Standards

1. Doctrine And Covenants - A collection of purported revelations from God received principally by Joseph Smith, Jr.
2. The Pearl of Great Price - A collection of Smith's writings and "translations". This book is not accepted by the RLDS. Portions of it have been severely questioned by some Mormon researchers.
3. Various declarations of the "Prophet" are accepted as revelation, consistent with their doctrine of "continuous revelation".

II. WHY EXAMINE MORMONISM?

A. Because of Bible Commands - 1 Thess. 5:21; Eph. 5:11; I John 4:1

B. Because of Mormon Invitation:

- Statements of Mormon Apostle, Orson Pratt:

"This book must be either true or false. If true, it is one of the most important messages ever sent from God to man, affecting both the

temporal and eternal interests of every people under heaven... If false, it is one of the most cunning, wicked, bold, deep-laid impositions ever palmed upon the world, calculated to deceive and ruin millions who will sincerely receive it as the word of God..." - Orson Pratt's Works, 1899 Edition, p. 63.

"If after a rigid examination, it be found an imposition, it should be extensively published to the world as such; the evidences and arguments upon which the imposture was detected should be clearly and logically stated, that those who have been sincerely yet unfortunately deceived, may perceive the nature of the deception, and be reclaimed, and that those who continue to publish the delusion, may be exposed and silenced, not by physical force, neither by persecutions, bare assertions, nor ridicule, but by strong and powerful arguments - by evidences adduced from scripture and reason." - Ibid., p. 69.

### III. EXAMINATION OF MORMON CLAIMS CONCERNING THE BIBLE - that the Bible is Incomplete and Unreliable.

#### A. Book of Mormon Statements

1. 1 Nephi 13:26-28 (Utah Edition), p. 35-36, RLDS Edition:

"And after they go forth by the hand of the twelve apostles of the Lamb, from the Jews unto the Gentiles, thou seest the foundation of a great and abominable church, which is most abominable above all other churches; for behold, they have taken away from the gospel of the Lamb many parts which are plain and most precious; and also many covenants of the Lord have they taken away. And all this have they done that they might blind the eyes and harden the hearts of the children of men. Wherefore, thou seest that after the book hath gone forth through the hands of the great and abominable church, that there are many plain and precious things taken away from the book, which is the book of the Lamb of God."

2. 2 Nephi 29:3,6,10 (p. 156-157): "And because my words shall hiss forth - many of the Gentiles shall say: A Bible! A Bible! We have got a Bible, and there cannot be any more Bible...Thou fool, that shall say: A Bible we have got a Bible and we need no more Bible. Have ye obtained a Bible save it were by the Jews? ....Wherefore, because that ye have a Bible ye need not suppose that it contains all my words; neither need ye suppose that I have not caused more to be written."

#### B. Statement of Orson Pratt:

"What shall we say then, concerning the Bible's being a sufficient guide? Can we rely upon it in its present known corrupted state, as being a faithful record of God's word? We all know that but a few of the inspired writings have descended to our times, which few quote the names of some twenty other books which are lost, and it is quite certain that there were many other inspired books that even the names have not reached us. What few have come down to our day, have been mutilated, changed and corrupted, in such a shameful manner that no two manuscripts agree. Verses and even whole chapters have been added by unknown persons; and even we do not know the authors of some whole books; and we are not certain that all those which we do know were wrote (sic) by inspiration. Add all this imperfection to the uncertainty of the translation, and who, in his right mind, could, for one moment, suppose the Bible in its present form to be a perfect guide? Who knows that even one verse of the whole Bible has escaped pollution, so as to convey the same sense now that it did in the original? Who knows how many important doctrines and ordi-

nances necessary to salvation may be buried in oblivion in some of the lost books? Who knows that even the ordinances and doctrine that seem to be set forth in the present English Bible, are anything like the original?" - Orson Pratt's Works, p. 140

C. Q U E S T I O N: Do Mormons know that even one verse of the Bible has escaped corruption and mistranslation? If not, then they do not believe the Bible! For one cannot believe that which may be false, corrupted, or mistranslated!

D. But in spite of Mormons claims of the Bible's unreliability, the Book of Mormon contains numerous quotations from the Bible, including 26 complete chapters, copied verbatim from the King James Version - Isa. 2-14, 18, 19, 21, 48-52, 54; Matt. 5-7; 1 Cor. 13. (Remember that the Book of Mormon is supposed to have been composed no later than a few centuries after Christ came, and that the King James Version was not published until 1611!) The above chapters constitute 11 percent of the chapters in the Book of Mormon (Utah Edition). Are we then to believe that 11 percent of the Book of Mormon is unreliable?!

E. Consequences of LDS Position

- According to their claims, the Bible was not an adequate guide; in fact, many are led to Satan by it!! See 1 Nephi 13:29 (p. 36):

"...because of these things which are taken away out of the gospel of the Lamb, an exceeding great many do stumble, yea, insomuch that satan hath great power over them."

- No written guide after 1st century; no prophet after first century. Therefore, mankind left without God for over 17 centuries. WHO CAN BELIEVE IT?

IV. IF THE BIBLE IS COMPLETE AND UNCORRUPTED, MORMONISM IS FALSE

A. Orson Pratt's Statement:

"If it could be proven from scripture that God had revealed all that He ever intended to reveal, then a professed revelation would not require investigation; for it would be known at once, that every thing of the kind was an imposition. It would be folly in the extreme to inquire whether a professed new revelation were true or false; for if God had declared in His word that no more was to be given, all writings or books purporting to be a new revelation could not be otherwise than false." - Ibid., p. 70.

B. But The Bible IS Complete And Uncorrupted

1. Jesus promised ALL truth to the apostles  
- John 14:26; 16:13

2. They received ALL truth - 2 Peter 1:3; Eph. 3:5; 1 Cor. 2:9-13  
- (The apostles received ALL truth; but they did not receive the peculiar "revelations" of Mormonism. Either the Bible is wrong and they did not receive ALL truth, or, Mormonism is not part of the truth!)

3. They delivered ALL truth - Acts 20:26; Romans 6:17 ("form")

4. It was delivered "ONCE" - Jude 3

- The Greek word is HAPAX, which means: "Used of what is so done as to be of perpetual validity and never need repetition, once for all"

- Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, page 54

See also Heb. 9:27,28; 10:10 for use of "once".

5. It was written with a view to general use

- 1 John 1:1-4; John 20:30-31; 2 Tim. 1:13; 2:2; 2 Pet. 3:15-16;  
2 Tim. 3:16,17.

6. Guaranteed against corruption - 1 Peter 1:22-25; Psalms 12:6-7.

- Question: What "lives and abides forever"? From the Mormon point of view, it could not be "continuous revelation", for they agree that it ceased as of the 4th Century. What is it that has lived and abode from the 1st century even until now? It is the New Testament, the writings of the apostles and prophets which contain ALL truth.

- The Testimony of Mormon Scholar, Dr. Richard Lloyd Anderson, Professor of History and Scripture at Brigham Young University:

"In tracing the history of manuscript investigation, the student finds that two great facts emerge. First, no new manuscript discovery has produced serious differences in the essential story. This survey has disclosed the leading textual controversies, and together they would be well within one percent of the text. Stated differently, all manuscripts agree on the essential correctness of 99% of the verses in the New Testament. The events and the great truths contained there are agreed upon by all major manuscripts of the New Testament.

"The second great fact that such a survey demonstrates is the progress that has placed the world in possession of manuscripts very near the time of their writing...."

(At this point, Dr. Anderson quoted from Sir Frederic Kenyon, a firm believer in the accuracy of the present New Testament text.)

"We are now much closer to the time of the writing of some New Testament books than when Kenyon made the foregoing confident appraisal, and we possess other confirming manuscripts. There is more reason today, then, to agree with him that we possess the New Testament 'in substantial integrity' and to under line that 'the variations of text are so entirely questions of detail, not of essential substance.'"

- from Papers Of The Fourteenth Annual Symposium On The Archaeology Of The Scriptures, Presented April 13, 1963, pages 57 and 58.

7. Apostolic teaching intended to be final

- John 17:20; Galatians 1:6-9; 1 John 4:1-6.

CONCLUSION: Since the Bible is complete and uncorrupted, and contains "all things pertaining to life and godliness", the religious system which we call "mormonism" is proven to be false.

# LECTURES ON MORMONISM - II

by Robert H. West

## MORMONISM CONTRADICTS THE BIBLE

INTRODUCTION: We know that the Bible is true. It is a basic axiom that truth does not contradict truth. Anything, therefore, which contradicts the Bible cannot be the truth. In this lesson we shall establish that the writings of Mormonism do, in fact, contradict the Bible, thus proving that they are false.

### I. THE MORMON PRIESTHOOD AND THE BIBLE

#### A. Book of Mormon Characters Violate the Law of Moses

1. The Law of Moses stated that only the sons of Aaron of the tribe of Levi to be Priests - Numbers 3:10; Deut. 21:5; Hebrews 7:13-14; 8:4

2. But, Lehi an alleged descendant of Joseph

a. 1 Nephi 5:14 (p. 15, RLDS) - "And it came to pass that my father, Lehi, also found upon the plates of brass a genealogy of his fathers; wherefore, he knew that he was a descendant of Joseph; yea, even that Joseph who was the son of Jacob:"

b. Alma 10:3 (p. 334) - "And Aminadi was a descendant of Nephi, who was the son of Lehi, who came out of the land of Jerusalem, who was a descendant of Manasseh, who was the son of Joseph."

3. Yet, it is claimed that he offered sacrifice, and his sons were priests!

a. 1 Nephi 5:9 (p. 14) - "And it came to pass that they did rejoice exceedingly, and did offer sacrifice and burnt offerings unto the Lord."

b. 2 Nephi 5:26 (p. 97) - "And it came to pass that I, Nephi, did consecrate Jacob and Joseph, that they should be priests and teachers over the land of my people." (Jacob and Joseph were supposedly the sons of Nephi.)

4. The Book of Mormon claims that they kept the Law of Moses!! - An obvious contradiction and error!

a. 2 Nephi 5:10 (p. 95) - "And we did observe to keep the judgments, and the statutes, and the commandments of the Lord in all things according to the law of Moses."

b. 2 Nephi 25:24 (p. 143) - "And, notwithstanding, we believe in Christ, we keep the law of Moses, and look forward with steadfastness unto Christ until the law shall be fulfilled."

#### B. The Aaronic Priesthood

1. John the Baptist is said to have conferred this priesthood upon Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery in May, 1829 - Pearl of Great Price, 56:69.

2. In the Bible we have shown that only the descendants of Aaron could have this priesthood - not two uncircumcised Gentiles! This constitutes a glaring contradiction between the Bible and the teaching of Mormonism!

#### 3. Brigham Young's Attempt To Reconcile This Difficulty

- Journal of Discourses, Vol. II, p. 269: "The Book of Mormon came to Ephraim, for Joseph Smith was a pure Ephraimite, and the Book of Mormon

was revealed to him, and while he lived he made it his business to search for those who believed the Gospel.

"Again, if a pure Gentile firmly believes the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and yields obedience to it, in such a case I will give you the words of the Prophet Joseph - 'When the Lord pours out the Holy Ghost upon that individual he will have spasms, and you would think that he was going into fits.'

"Joseph said that the Gentile blood was actually cleansed out of their veins, and the blood of Jacob made to circulate in them; and the revolution and change in the system were so great that it caused the beholder to think they were going into fits."

- But Brigham Young's explanation is not only absurd, but it doesn't explain, it only compounds the difficulty. For, remember that the priesthood in the Law of Moses was limited to those in the tribe of Levi - not Ephraim. Also, recall that the Book of Mormon characters were supposed to be of the tribe of Manasseh (Alma 10:3), not Ephraim. So it appears that Brigham Young not only missed the teaching of the Bible, but also confused his Book of Mormon teaching!

#### C. The Melchizedek Priesthood

1. Peter, James & John supposedly conferred this priesthood upon Smith and Cowdery not long after May, 1829.

2. But the Bible teaches Jesus alone was THE priest after the order of Melchizedek.

a. First mention in prophecy - Psalms 110:4

b. The following passages demonstrate clearly that this prophecy had fulfillment ONLY in Christ:

- Heb. 5:5,6,9,10; 6:19,20; 7:11-17, 20-24, 28.

#### D. Requirement For High Priests Which Cannot Be Met By Any Mormon

- Heb. 5:1. Notice that EVERY high priest must offer sacrifices for sin. No Mormon priest does this! Yet they will use this very passage to try to sustain their position!

### II. THE MORMON APOSTLESHIP AND THE BIBLE

A. The Mormon claim is that living Apostles must be in the church today; otherwise it cannot be the true church.

#### B. Qualifications For Apostles Revealed In The Bible

1. There are false apostles - Rev. 2:2; 2 Cor. 11:13-15 - This suggests that there was a test for apostles.

2. An apostle must be a witness of the resurrection - Acts 1:21-23; 13:31

3. An apostle must be able to perform "signs" - 2 Cor. 12:12.

4. There is not a living man today who can meet these qualifications!!

### III. MORMONISM AND THE VIRGIN BIRTH

A. The Teaching of the Bible - Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:18-23

#### B. Book of Mormon Teaching

- Alma 7:10 (p. 323) - "And behold, he shall be born of Mary, at Jerusalem which is the land of our forefathers, she being a virgin a precious and chosen vessel, who shall be overshadowed and conceive by the power of

of the Holy Ghost, and bring forth a son, yea, even the Son of God.

C. Contradictory Statements of Brigham Young

- Journal of Discourses, I, p. 50-51: "When the virgin Mary conceived the child Jesus, the Father had begotten him in his own likeness. He was not begotten by the Holy Ghost...."

"...Jesus, our elder brother, was begotten in the flesh by the same character that was in the garden of Eden, and who is our Father in Heaven.

"...Now remember from this time forth, and for ever, that Jesus Christ was not begotten by the Holy Ghost."

IV. OTHER PLAIN CONTRADICTIONS

A. Elders And Deacons

1. Mormons make a distinction between "elder" and "bishop"; but, refer to the same man in the Bible.

a. Titus 1:5,6; 1 Tim. 3:1-2ff

b. Acts 20:17-28

2. Mormons teach that "elders" may be young, unmarried men.

a. "Elder" means "older man"

b. Bible requires marriage & children

- 1 Tim. 3:2,4; Titus 1:6.

3. Mormons teach that "deacons" may be young boys.

a. Bible requires marriage and children - 1 Tim. 3:12

b. Even Brigham Young agreed with the Bible on this point:

- Journal of Discourses, Vol. II, p. 89 - "It is not the business of an ignorant young man, of no experience in family matters, to inquire into the circumstances of families, and know the wants of every person. Some may want medicine and nourishment, and to be looked after, and it is not the business of boys to do this; but select a man who has got a family to be a deacon, whose wife can go with him, and assist him in administering to the needy in the ward.

"These are simply my views in a few words on this subject, and always have been since I have reflected upon the doctrine that the fathers teach us in the Holy Scriptures. I will venture to say the view I take of the matter is not to be disputed or disproved by Scripture or reason."

B. Where Jesus Was Born

1. What the Bible teaches - Matthew 2:1

2. Book of Mormon - Alma 7:10 (p. 323) - "And behold, he shall be born of Mary, at Jerusalem which is the land of our forefathers..."

3. Mormons sometimes explain that Bethlehem was merely a "suburb" of Jerusalem, therefore, no contradiction. But Jerusalem was a walled city. Also, see Matthew 21:17. Notice that Bethany was "out of the city", being only  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles away from Jerusalem. But Bethlehem was 7 miles away! The truth is that the Book of Mormon misses the truth by 7 miles!!

C. Christians - When First Called

1. What the Bible teaches - Acts 11:26 (about 44 A.D.)
2. Book of Mormon - Alma 46:15 (p. 470) (footnote: "73 B.C.") - "...yea, all those who were true believers in Christ took upon them, gladly the name of Christ, or Christians as they were called..."

D. Nature of God

1. Bible - John 4:24; Luke 24:39; 1 Timothy 6:16. These passages set forth the fact that God is a spirit, and is immaterial.

2. Mormon contradictions:

a. Joseph Smith in the King Follett Discourse:

"God himself was once as we are now, and is an exalted man, and sits enthroned in yonder heavens! That is the great secret. If the vail were rent today, and the great God who holds this world in its orbit, and who upholds all worlds and all things by his power, was to make himself visible - I say, if you were to see him today, you would see him like a man in form - like yourselves in all the person, image, and very form as a man; for Adam was created in the very fashion, image and likeness of God, and received instruction from, and walked, talked, and conversed with him, as one man talks and communes with another." - p. 8

b. Doctrine & Covenants 130:22 : "The Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man's..."

V. THE "ADAM-GOD" DOCTRINE

A. Journal of Discourses, Vol. I, p. 50-51 (Brigham Young): "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.

"....He was not begotten by the Holy Ghost. And who is the Father? He is the first of the human family...

"Jesus, our elder brother was begotten in the flesh by the same character that was in the garden of Eden, and who is our Father in Heaven."

B. Journal of Discourses, Vol. V, p. 331 (Brigham Young): "Some have grumbled because I believe our God to be so near to us as Father Adam. There are many who know that doctrine to be true.....then we shall be very glad to see the white locks of Father Adam. But those are ideas which do not concern us at present, although it is written in the Bible - 'This is eternal life, to know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou has sent'."

C. Journal of Discourses, Vol. IV, p. 1 (Heber C. Kimball): "I have learned by experience that there is but one God that pertains to this people, and He is the God that pertains to this earth - the first man. That first man sent his own Son to redeem the world, to redeem his brethren; his life was taken, his blood shed, that our sins might be remitted."



It is obvious that one cannot accept the Bible and at the same time accept the foregoing statements about the identity of God. It is true that many modern-day Mormons deny that they believe the "Adam-God" doctrine. But no amount of denials removes the FACT that Brigham Young and others taught and believed that Adam is our Heavenly Father. If the modern Mormon denies this, remember he is denying the testimony of one whom he claims was "the Prophet of God". If he denies the testimony of the 2nd President, why not the testimony of the 1st President, Joseph Smith?

CONCLUSION: What has been presented represents only a small amount of available material in the Mormon writings which plainly contradicts the Bible. One cannot consistently accept the Bible and the Mormon system at the same time, for they are contradictory!

Brother Robert H. West preached in a meeting here at Bessemer, October 24-29, 1976. During our day services he presented the material contained in these outlines, which he has also presented in a number of places in this country and Canada.

Robert H. West is one of the best informed gospel preachers on the subject of Mormonism. Several requests were made for copies of his material during our meeting. Several things have caused the delay in getting it out until now.

Brother Huey Hartsell typed all the stencils, and he, with Barney Keith, Bob West, myself and others put it together. The Bessemer Church is glad to make this material available in this edition free of charge. For additional copies, write, Robert H. West, 4909 - 43rd. Way, North, Birmingham, Ala. 35217. Include postage.

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# LECTURES ON MORMONISM - III

by Robert H. West

## CONTRADICTIONS IN MORMON WRITINGS

INTRODUCTION - We observe again that truth does not contradict itself. We shall demonstrate that there are contradictions in Mormon writings, thus proving that they did not come from God.

### I. CONTRADICTION CONCERNING POLYGAMY

#### A. Teaching of the Book of Mormon

1. Jacob 2:24,27 (p. 171) : "Behold, David and Solomon truly had many wives and concubines, which thing was abominable before me, saith the Lord....Wherefore, my brethren, hear me, and hearken to the word of the Lord: For there shall not any man among you have save it be one wife; and concubines he shall have none."

2. Jacob 3:5 (p.173): "Behold, the Lamanites your brethren, whom ye hate because of their filthiness and the cursing which hath come upon their skins, are more righteous than you; for they have not forgotten the commandment of the Lord, which was given unto your fathers - that they should have save it were one wife, and concubines they should have none..."

(This is consistent with Section 101:4 (111:4) of the original 1835 Edition of the Doctrine and Covenants: "Inasmuch as this church of Christ has been reproached with the crime of fornication, and polygamy: we declare that we believe, that one man should have one wife; and one woman, but one husband, except in case of death, when either is at liberty to marry again." - This section was included in every edition of the Utah Doctrine and Covenants until 1876, then removed and Section 132 (on polygamy) was inserted!!)

#### B. Teaching of Doctrine And Covenants 132:38-39 which contradicts the above:

"David also received many wives and concubines, and also Solomon and Moses my servants, as also many others of my servants, from the beginning of creation until this time; and in nothing did they sin save in those things which they received not of me. David's wives and concubines were given unto him of me, by the hand of Nathan.... and in none of these things did he sin against me SAVE in the case of Uriah and his wife."

C. Notice that Jacob said it was David's having "wives" (plural) which was "abominable". Doctrine And Covenants says "in nothing did he sin," except in the case of Bathsheba. - A clear-cut contradiction!!!

### II. CONTRADICTION CONCERNING THE STATE OF THE DEAD

A. Doctrine And Covenants 124 (110) - Authorizes a "baptismal font" to be used by faithful Mormons who are to be baptized by proxy in behalf of unregenerate relatives and some others who died without baptism, in order that they might be saved.

#### B. Statements In The Book of Mormon

##### 1. State of the wicked dead

a. Alma 34:35 (p. 431): "For behold, if ye have procrastinated the day of your repentance even until death, behold, ye have become sub-

jected to the spirit of the devil, and he doth seal you his; therefore, the spirit of the Lord hath withdrawn from you, and hath no place in you, and the devil hath all power over you; and this is the final state of the wicked."

b. 2 Nephi 9:38 (p. 110): "And, in fine, wo unto all those who die in their sins; for they shall return to God, and behold his face, and remain in their sins."

2. What about Infants and the Ignorant?

- Moroni 8:22-23 (p. 770): "For behold that all little children are alive in Christ, and also all they that are without the law. For the power of redemption cometh on all them that have no law; wherefore, he that is not condemned, or he that is under no condemnation, cannot repent; and unto such baptism availeth nothing - But it is a mockery before God, denying the mercies of Christ, and the power of his Holy Spirit, and putting trust in dead works."

C. If the wicked go to their FINAL state, and if baptism is not required for infants and the ignorant, obviously the "baptism for the dead" doctrine is superfluous and contradictory!!!!

### III. CONTRADICTION CONCERNING THE ATONEMENT OF CHRIST

#### A. Book of Mormon Teaching

- 2 Nephi 25:16 (p. 141): "...until they shall be persuaded to believe in Christ, the Son of God, and the atonement, which is infinite for all mankind."

#### B. Brigham Young's Contradictory Statements:

1. Journal of Discourses, Vol. IV, p. 53-54: "And furthermore, I know that there are transgressors, who, if they knew themselves, and the only condition upon which they can obtain forgiveness, would beg of their brethren to shed their blood, that the smoke thereof might ascend to God as an offering to appease the wrath that is kindled against them, and that the law might have its course. I will say further; I have had men come to me and offer their lives to atone for their sins.

"It is true that the blood of the Son of God was shed for sins through the fall and those committed by men, yet men can commit sins which it can never remit."

2. Journal of Discourses, Vol. IV, p. 219-220: "All mankind love themselves, and let these principles be known by an individual, and he would be glad to have his blood shed. That would be loving themselves, even unto an eternal exaltation. Will you love your brothers or sisters likewise, when they have committed a sin that cannot be atoned for without the shedding of their blood? Will you love that man or woman well enough to shed their blood? That is what Jesus meant....

"This is loving our neighbour as ourselves; if he needs help, help him; and if he wants salvation and it is necessary to spill his blood on the earth in order that he may be saved, spill it. Any of you who understand the principles of eternity, if you have sinned a sin requiring the shedding of blood, except the sin unto death, would not be satisfied nor rest until your blood should be spilled, that you might gain that salvation you desire. That is the way to love mankind."

#### IV. CONTRADICTIONS CONCERNING THE APPEARANCES OF GOD TO MAN

- Ether 3:15 (p. 721): "And never have I showed myself unto man whom I have created, for never has man believed in me as thou hast..."

CONTRADICTS --

- Doctrine & Covenants 107:53-54 (104:28): "...he called Seth, Enos, Cainan, Mahalaleel, Jared, Enoch, and Methuselah... And the Lord appeared unto them..."

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- Pearl of Great Price 48:14,17: "Early in the spring of eighteen hundred and twenty... I saw two personages, whose brightness and glory defy all description, standing above me in the air. One of them spake unto me, calling me by name and said, pointing to the other - This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!"

CONTRADICTS --

- Doctrine & Covenants 84:21-22 (83:3): "And without the ordinances thereof, and the authority of the priesthood, the power of godliness is not manifest unto men in the flesh; For without this no man can see the face of God, even the Father, and live."

(Joseph Smith claimed that it wasn't until nine years later that he received the "priesthood".)

#### V. CONTRADICTION CONCERNING THE GODHEAD

A. Lectures On Faith, included in 1835 original edition of Doctrine & Covenants, but removed from all editions beginning with 1921.

In Lectures On Faith 5:2 - "There are two personages who constitute the great, matchless, governing, and supreme, power over all things.... They are the Father and the Son - the Father being a personage of spirit, glory, and power, possessing all-perfection and fullness, the Son, who was in the bosom of the Father, a personage of tabernacle..."

- On the next page Smith asked: "How many personages are there in the Godhead? Two: the Father and Son."

1. Father a "personage of spirit", as contrasted with Son who is a "personage of tabernacle."

2. Only two "personages" in Godhead.

B. Doctrine & Covenants 130:22: "The Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man's; the Son also; but the Holy Ghost has not a body of flesh and bones, but is a personage of Spirit."

1. Father has "flesh and bones", like son. No contrast as in Lectures On Faith.

2. Holy Spirit also a "personage" of Spirit, making 3 personages in the Godhead.

#### VI. SIGNIFICANT CHANGES IN THE BOOK OF MORMON SINCE 1830

##### A. Claims About The Manner of Translation

1. Statement of "three witnesses"

- "And we also know that they have been translated by the gift and power of God, for his voice hath declared it unto us..."

2. Statement of David Whitmer, in An Address To All Believers In Christ, p. 12:

"I will now give you a description of the manner in which the Book of Mormon was translated. Joseph Smith would put the seer stone into a hat, and put his face in the hat, drawing it closely around his face to exclude the light; and in the darkness the spiritual light would shine. A piece of something resembling parchment would appear, and on that appeared writing. One character at a time would appear, and under it was the interpretation in English. Brother Joseph would read off the English to Oliver Cowdery, who was his principal scribe, and when it was written down and repeated to Brother Joseph to see if it was correct, then it would disappear, and another character with the interpretation would appear. Thus the Book of Mormon was translated by the gift and power of God, and not by any power of man."

3. If these statements are reliable, then Mormons are to believe that the very words of the Book of Mormon are God's words, and that there would be no room for revision. In spite of these claims, there have been thousands of changes both major and minor, in the wording of the Book of Mormon since 1830!!

B. Some Significant Examples

1. 1 Nephi 11:18,21,32 (p. 28).

- "And he said unto me, Behold, the virgin which thou seest, is the mother of (inserted: 'the Son of') God, after the manner of the flesh."

- "...behold the Lamb of God, yea, even the ('son of the') Eternal Father!"

- "And I looked and beheld the Lamb of God, that he was taken by the people; yea, the ('son of the') Everlasting God."

2. 1 Nephi 20:1 (p. 52): "Hearken and hear this, O house of Jacob, which are called by the name of Israel and are come forth out of the waters of Judah, ('or out of the waters of baptism') which swear by the name of the Lord..."

- As late as the 1920 edition, the original reading was retained. But after 1920, the change was made as it now appears.

3. Ether 4:1 (p. 546): "...and for this cause did king Benjamin ('Mosiah') keep them, that they should not come into the world until after Christ should shew himself unto his people."

- None of these additions and corrections can be explained away on the grounds of "grammatical corrections" or typographical errors.

CONCLUSION: These are only a few of the many contradictions among Mormon writings. But since truth does not contradict truth, it becomes obvious on the basis of these presented herein, that Mormonism cannot be true.

# LECTURES ON MORMONISM - IV

by Robert H. West

## BOOK OF MORMON EVIDENCES EXAMINED

INTRODUCTION - In this lesson we shall examine two of the most commonly used "proofs" which are used in an effort to establish the veracity of the Book of Mormon.

### I. EZEKIEL 37:15-20

A. LDS Argument - "Stick" = "Book". "The stick of Judah" = The Bible, since it is the record written by the Jews. "The stick of Joseph" = The Book of Mormon, since it is the record written by Nephites, who were descendants of Joseph. The Bible and the Book of Mormon are to be "joined" together to comprise one record of mankind.

### B. The Argument Is A Multitude Of Assertions Without Proof!

#### 1. That "stick" = book, NO PROOF!

Hebrew word for "stick" is ETS, translated gallows - 8 times, helve - 1, plank - 1, staff - 1, stick - 14, stock - 4, timber - 23, tree - 162, wood - 103. BUT THE WORD IS N E V E R TRANSLATED "BOOK"!!

#### 2. That "stick of Judah" = Bible, NO PROOF!

#### 3. That "stick of Joseph" = Book of Mormon, NO PROOF!

C. The Mormon Interpretation of This Passage Contrary To The Teaching of The Book of Mormon: for the Book of Mormon claims the Nephites were descendants of Manasseh, not Ephraim:

- Alma 10:3 (p. 334): "And Aminadi was a descendant of Nephi, who was the son of Lehi, who came out of the land of Jerusalem, who was a descendant of Manasseh, who was the son of Joseph..."

- But Ezekiel 37 says "The stick of Ephraim" (v.10), and "the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim" (v.19). The Book of Mormon, then, is supposedly the record of Manassehites, not Ephraimites, and thus, from even a Book-of-Mormon point of view, could not be the fulfillment of the Mormon interpretation of this prophecy!

### D. The True Meaning of the Prophecy

1. When Ezekiel was written, the Israelites had existed in two divided kingdoms, referred to in Scripture as Judah and Ephraim. See Isaiah 7:8,9; 9:8-9; 11:13; Hosea 4:16,17; 5:3; 9:3; etc.

2. Verse 18 - "What do these things mean?" God then proceeds to give HIS interpretation of the Sticks and other matters.

3. See verses 21-22: God promises to take Israelites from the North and bring them back and join them with the other kingdom, "and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all."

4. The sticks with the inscriptions on them were, according to God's own explanation, representing the kingdom of Judah and the kingdom of Israel (Ephraim), which were to be united under one king (David - v.25). The prophecy finds complete fulfillment in the coming of Christ (the son of David), the establishment of the kingdom, and the uniting of all peoples in the one body (See Ephesians 2:11-17).

## II. THE TESTIMONY OF THE WITNESSES (See Preface to The Book of Mormon)

A. The Mormon Claim - That these eleven men, by their testimony, substantiate the fact that the Book of Mormon is the word of God.

### B. The Testimony of the Three Witnesses (see Book of Mormon Preface)

1. Character of the witnesses - For testimony to be admissible, it must be from men of recognized honesty and integrity. Let us notice some statements regarding the character of these men:

a. Martin Harris - Referred to as a "wicked man", BEFORE his testimony which is dated July, 1828:

- Doctrine & Covenants 3:12-13: "And when thou deliveredst up that which God had given thee sight and power to translate, thou deliveredst up that which was sacred into the hands of a wicked man, who has set at naught the counsels of God, and has broken the most sacred promises which were made before God, and has depended upon his own judgment and boasted in his own wisdom." (The superscription to this "revelation", states that this relates to Harris.)

- Martin Harris subsequently left the LDS Church and associated with a "faction" referred to as the Strangites and was denounced and condemned by Smith and other Mormon leaders. Thus, they have impeached the character of one of the witnesses to the Book of Mormon.

b. Oliver Cowdery - Indicted by Hyrum Smith as a wicked man in the Mormon periodical, Times and Seasons, Vol. I, pp.22-23: Dec., 1839:

"...those with whom I had been acquainted from my youth, and who had ever pretended the greatest friendship towards me, came to my house while I was in prison, and ransacked and carried off many of my valuables, this they did under the cloak of friendship. Amongst those who treated me thus I cannot help making particular mention of Lyman Cowdery, who, in connection with his brother Oliver, took from me a great many things; and to cap the climax of his iniquity, compelled my aged father, by threatening to bring a mob upon him, to deed over to him, or his brother Oliver, about 160 acres of land to pay a note which he said I had given to Oliver for \$165, such a note I confess I was, and still am entirely ignorant of, and after mature consideration, I have to say that I believe it must be a forgery."

- Oliver Cowdery left the LDS church and joined the Methodist church. He claimed that the Lord had "revealed" to him that he should separate himself from the LDS church:

- In his book, Defense, p. 3-4: "I had a message from the Most High, as from the midst of eternity; for the vail was parted and the Redeemer Himself, clothed in glory, stood before me. And he said:

"After reproving the Latter Day Saints for their corruption and blindness in permitting their President, Joseph Smith, Jr., to lead them forth into errors, where I led him not nor commanded him, and saying unto them 'Thus saith the Lord,' when I said it not unto him, thou shalt withdraw thyself from among them."

"And I testify that Jesus whose words I have been rehearsing, hath even so commanded me in an open vision."

- Mormons in the past and present reject this "testimony" of Cowdery. In doing so, they affirm that he is an unreliable witness.

c. David Whitmer - Here is what Joseph Smith said concerning him:

- Times & Seasons, Vol. I, p. 81: "At this time there were several persons living in Far West, who were disaffected with the church and had dissented from it; and were cut off from the church according to the rules and regulations of the same. These characters were busy in striving to stir up strife and turmoil among the brethren, and urging on mean and vexatious lawsuits; they were also, studiously engaged in circulating false and slanderous reports against the saints, to stir up our enemies to anger against us, that they might again drive us from our homes, and enjoy the spoils together. We are disposed here, to give the names of some of those characters, believing that justice to an injured people, requires it at our hands. They are as follows, viz: Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmore, W. W. Phelps, John Whitmore, and Lyman E. Johnson, of whom we may have occasion to speak hereafter."

- Whitmer left the LDS church in 1839 and started a group called "The Church of Christ" in 1875.

- An Address To All Believers In Christ (a book written by Whitmer), pp. 27, 28: "If you believe my testimony to the Book of Mormon; if you believe that God spake to us three witnesses by his own voice, then I tell you that in June, 1838, God spake to me again by his own voice from the heavens, and told me to 'separate myself from among the Latter Day Saints, for as they sought to do unto me, so should it be done unto them...' God commanded me by his own voice to stand apart from you."

d. The character and statements of each one of these "witnesses" are impugned by the LDS church. Their own witnesses have, therefore, been impeached by the Mormons themselves!

## 2. The experience of the witnesses entirely subjective

a. Joseph Smith's statement in History of the Church, Vol. I, p. 47, After telling of an angel appearing to Whitmer, Cowdery & himself, he said: "I now left David and Oliver, and went in pursuit of Martin Harris, whom I found at a considerable distance, fervently engaged in prayer. He soon told me, however, that he had not yet prevailed with the Lord, and earnestly requested me to join him in prayer that he also might realize the same blessings which we had just received. We accordingly joined in prayer, and ultimately obtained our desires, for before we had yet finished, the same vision was opened to our view, at least it was again opened to me, and I once more beheld and heard the same things; whilst at the same moment, Martin Harris cried out, apparently in an ecstasy of joy, 'Tis enough; tis enough; mine eyes have beheld; mine eyes have beheld;' and jumping up, he shouted, 'Hosanna', blessing God, and otherwise rejoiced exceedingly."

b. Belief in the plates required before the witnesses could view them.

- Doctrine & Covenants 5:24-27: "Behold, I say unto him, he exalts himself and does not humble himself sufficiently before me; but if he will bow down before me, and humble himself in mighty prayer and faith, in the sincerity of his heart, then will I grant unto him a view of the things which he desires to see. And then he shall say unto the people of this generation: Behold, I have seen the things which the Lord hath shown unto Joseph Smith, Jun., and I know of a surety that they are true, for I have seen them, for they have been shown unto me by the power of God and not of man. And I the Lord command him my servant Martin



Harris, that he shall say no more unto them concerning these things, except he shall say: I have seen them, and they have been shown unto me by the power of God; and these are the words which he shall say: But if he deny this he will break the covenant which he has before covenanted with me, and behold, he is condemned."

c. Martin Harris was told in advance what he MUST see and MUST say, otherwise he would be condemned. He testified to that which he experienced under duress; therefore, his testimony not objective and is valueless!!

### 3. An Analysis of Their Testimony

- a. Knew they had seen plates - But this was only a vision!
- b. Knew those plates were record of Nephites -but only what they had been told by Smith!
- c. Knew they were translated by power of God - But, again, only what Smith had told them!

### C. The Testimony of the Eight Witnesses

(See this "testimony" in the Preface of the Book of Mormon)

1. None but the three to testify regarding the plates, but then eight others testified!

- Doctrine & Covenants 5:11-15: "And in addition to our testimony, the testimony of three of my servants, whom I shall call and ordain, unto whom I will show these things, and they shall go forth with my words that are given through you...And to none else will I grant this power, to receive this same testimony among this generation..."

#### 2. Analysis of their testimony:

a. They saw the very plates from which the Book of Mormon was translated. But how did they of their own knowledge know they were the plates? It is heresay testimony!

b. Plates contained engravings that appeared ancient. But none of them competent to testify to the nature of the engravings, or who put them there!

3. The best that can be said for their "testimony" was that they claimed to see some plates. But what does this prove? Hear the statement of Mormon apostle Orson Pratt, Orson Pratt's Works, p. 156:

"Many suppose that if they could see the plates, it would at once convince them of the divine origin of this great and marvelous work. But, we ask such, how could they know by barely seeing the plates, whether they were of ancient or modern construction? How could they tell, by seeing the engravings upon them, that they were translated correctly?"

#### GOOD QUESTION INDEED!!

Especially good when applied to the eight witnesses.

### D. All The "Witnesses" Testified To Book of Mormon Before It Was Finished:

- A New Witness For Christ In America, by Francis W. Kirkham, Vol. I, p. 223:

"From the above quotations the reader will note that the prophet states that he resided at Fayette until the translation was completed, that David Whitmer writes that the translation there continued from June 1 to

July 1, and that the witnesses saw the plates late in June when only forty-seven pages of the book remained to be translated. Thus from these witnesses we conclude the translation was completed about July 1, 1829, or shortly thereafter."

E. Summary

- The "testimony" of the witnesses is virtually worthless in that (1) it is not by men of acknowledged honesty; (2) It is not objective testimony, but the result of subjective vision; (3) It is heresay testimony; and (4) It is testimony to the completion of the Book of Mormon BEFORE completion - THUS FALSE ON THE FACE OF IT!!

CONCLUSION: These two facets of "proof" for the Book of Mormon are seen to be inadequate and erroneous.

# LECTURES ON MORMONISM - V

by Robert H. West

## THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL ARGUMENT

INTRODUCTION: The Book of Mormon purports to be a history of ancient peoples of America until about 400 A.D., telling of their Jewish origin, great cities, culture, etc. Mormons claim that the findings of archaeological researches have confirmed the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon, and that the knowledge of the ancient cities was unknown in Joseph Smith's time.

### I. AVAILABILITY OF INFORMATION AND THEORIES CONCERNING ANCIENT AMERICA BEFORE 1830.

#### A. Mormon Claims

1. Dr. M. Wells Jakeman, BYU Archaeologist:

"No one in 1830 had any idea where the great centers of ancient America civilization in the Book of Mormon period could be found, or that there even existed any such cities."

- Discovering The Past, p. 327.

2. Milton R. Hunter & Thomas Stuart Ferguson, in Ancient America and the Book of Mormon, p. 9:

"Further, since 1830 a vast wealth of historical - documentary material has become available to the students interested in the higher civilizations of the ancient peoples of this land. None of this material was accessible to Joseph Smith on the frontier of western New York in 1830."

#### B. Materials Published In America Before 1830 Which Told of Ancient American Civilizations Along With Theories of Their Origin:

- History of Mexico, by Clavigero (2 Vols.), 1st English edition in 1787, 2nd in 1807, translated by Charles Cullen.
- A Star In The West, by E. Boudinot, 1816.
- Spanish Colonies, by Walton - 1810.
- Researches In Mexico, by A. De Humboldt, translated into English by H. M. Williams, 1814.
- History of America, by Herrera, 1725
- A View of S. America and Mexico, by Niles, 1826.
- Spanish America by R.H. Bonnycastle, 1818.
- European Settlements In America, by Burke, 1808.
- Bullock's Mexico, 1824.
- Researches On America, by James H. McCullah, 1817.
- Archaeologia Americana, 1820.
- Notes On Mexico by Poinsett, 1825.
- The American Geography, by Jedidiah Morse, 1789.
- History of the American Indians, by James Adair, 1775.
- The Hope of Israel, by Manasseh ben Israel, 1649-1656.
- View of the Hebrews, by Ethan Smith, 2nd Ed., 1825.
- The Wonders of Nature and Providence, by Josiah Priest, 1824.

1. Priest's book was copyrighted June, 1824 in the office of R.R. Lansing, the same office in which the Book of Mormon was copyrighted! This proves that some material was available in New York BEFORE Book of Mormon was published!

2. Of the above-listed 17 books, the following ones contained "Jewish origin of the Indians" theory: Priest, Smith, Manasseh ben Israel, and Adair.

C. Joseph Smith Told Stories About Ancient America BEFORE 1830!

- Lucy Mack Smith, Joseph Smith's mother:

"During our evening conversations, Joseph would occasionally give us some of the most amusing recitals that could be imagined. He would describe the ancient inhabitants of this continent, their dress, mode of travelling, and the animals upon which they rode; their cities, 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 with them." - Biographical Sketches of Joseph Smith The Prophet and His Progenitors For Many Generations, p. 85 of the original 1853 Edition.

S U M M A R Y: Information WAS available before 1830 about ancient civilizations in the Americas as well as the Jewish origin of the Indians theory. Notice that Joseph Smith also KNEW something about Indian customs, either actual or imaginary.

II. DOES ARCHAEOLOGY SUSTAIN THE BOOK OF MORMON?

A. Mormon Claims

1. Apostle Orson Pratt, Orson Pratt's Works, p. 278:

"Now since that invaluable book made its appearance in print, it is a remarkable fact, that the mouldering ruins of many splendid edifices and towers, and magnificent cities of great extent, have been discovered by Catherwood and Stephens in the interior wilds of Central America, in the very region where the ancient cities described in the Book of Mormon were said to exist. Here, then, is a certain and indisputable evidence that this illiterate youth -- the translator of the Book of Mormon, was inspired of God."

2. Apostle Legrand Richards, A Marvelous Work And A Wonder, p. 75:

"Modern archaeological research has accounted for many of these buried cities; uncovered cement highways mentioned in the Book of Mormon; located temples and other magnificent buildings erected by those people who reached a high stage of civilization and culture in the land of America."

3. In addition to these and other published statements, virtually all Mormon and RLDS teachers make claims that Archaeology has "proved" the Book of Mormon. They usually carry about with them various illustrated books which they claim depicts the ruins of the Nephite cities.

B. Position of Non-Mormon Archaeologists:

-Mimeographed form-letter from the Smithsonian Institution, Bureau of American Ethnology, Washington, D.C.:

"The Smithsonian Institution has never used the Book of Mormon in any way as a scientific guide. Smithsonian archaeologists see no connection between the archaeology of the New World and the subject matter of the Book."

C. Admissions of Mormon Archaeologists

1. Dr. Pöss T. Christensen, Archaeologist, and professor at Brigham Young University:

"In the first place, the statement that the Book of Mormon has already been proved by archaeology is misleading. The truth of the matter is that we are only now beginning to see even the outlines of the archaeological time-periods which could compare with those of the Book of Mormon. How, then, can the matter have been settled once and for all? That such an idea could exist indicates the ignorance of many of our people with regard to what is going on in the historical and anthropological sciences.... Latter-day Saints who have had any formal training in archaeology are exceedingly few. In other words, the interest which they have had in this field has been up to the present largely on an amateur rather than professional level.... As for the notion that the Book of Mormon has already been proved by archaeology, I must say with Shakespeare, 'Lay not that flattering unction to your soul.' (Hamlet III:4)." - The University Archaeological Society Miscellaneous Papers, No. 19: Some Views On Archaeology And Its Role At Brigham Young University, Dec., 1960, pp. 8 & 9.

2. Dr. M. Wells Jakeman, Archaeologist and BYU Professor:

"It must be confessed that some members of the 'Mormon' or Latter-day Saint Church are prone, in their enthusiasm for the Book of Mormon, to make claims for it that cannot be supported. So far as is known to the writer, no non-Mormon archaeologist at the present time is using the Book of Mormon as a guide in archaeological research. Nor does he know of any non-Mormon archaeologist who holds that the American Indians are descendants of the Jews, or that Christianity was known in America in the first century of our era..." - U.A.S. Newsletter, No. 57, March 25, 1959, p. 4.

3. Dee F. Green, M.A., LDS Archaeologist, Editor of the U.A.S. Newsletter:

"...However, we must not overlook the fact that some Mormons have popularized equally mistaken ideas, which they have held, about the Book and have thus helped to retard the development of Book of Mormon archaeology.

"For example some popular 'Mormon' books show pictures of classic Maya, Inca, and Aztec ruins and attribute them to the Nephites. Scholars are aware that these civilizations postdate Book of Mormon times. Other gross errors include the use of outdated and otherwise unreliable source materials and the tendency to make every piece of evidence fit neatly into the Book of Mormon picture, whether it belongs there or not." - U.A.S. Newsletter, No. 54, November 19, 1958, p. 2.

4. Dr. Clark S. Knowlton, Associate Professor of Social Sciences, New Mexico Highlands University, Mormon archaeological writer and Speaker:

"The publication of magnificent volumes of photographs of the ruins of buildings and cities located in the area of high civilizations in the Americas is another example. These lavishly illustrated books are frequently written and published in an endeavor to prove that complex civilizations existed in the Book of Mormon period. Unfortunately, their

photographs for the most part are of cities that were built after the Book of Mormon period had ended. " - Papers of The Thirteenth Annual Symposium On The Archaeology Of The Scriptures presented April 1, 1961; Published 1962, by BYU, p. 53.

5. Other statements by Dr. Jakeman in his book, Discovering The Past:

"The archaeologists have not yet found any evidence of metal-working, writing, or architecture in this early period, such as required by the Book of Mormon." , p. 331.

- There are, moreover, a number of points where correspondence should have been found in American archaeology, but to this date has not been; for example, no authenticated Near Eastern or Book of Mormon writing (i.e. Hebrew or Egyptian) has been found in America, nor any trace of the Near Eastern plants (wheat, barley, etc.) which the Book of Mormon peoples brought with them to the New World." p. 338

- "Although the area of the Book of Mormon civilizations is quite clearly Mesoamerica...the exact -- or even approximate -- location in this area of the various cities of the Book of Mormon is still unsolved. Even the principal cities or main centers of the Book of Mormon civilizations... have not yet been placed. It is obvious that before the final archaeological test of excavation can be applied to the Book of Mormon record, at least the approximate location of its main settlements must be determined." - p. 339.

### III. CONCLUSION

A. Materials were available to Joseph Smith BEFORE 1830 telling of the ancient cities of Mesoamerica. These books also set forth the theory of the Jewish origin of the ancient inhabitants.

B. Joseph Smith told stories about ancient inhabitants before 1830, thus proving that he had knowledge of such things as mentioned in the Book of Mormon.

C. Non-Mormon archaeologists deny archaeological accuracy of the Book of Mormon.

D. Mormon archaeologists, while affirming their faith in the Book of Mormon, nevertheless admit that the book is not proved by their findings!!

The "Archaeological Argument" for the Book of Mormon, is, therefore, based upon false premises and completely inaccurate!!!

# LECTURES ON MORMONISM - VI

by Robert H. West

## AN EXAMINATION OF THE MORMON TESTIMONY

INTRODUCTION: Important because this is the "last ditch" proof, to most Mormons, of the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon. The source is found in Moroni 10:4-5: "And when ye shall receive these things, I would exhort you that ye would ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true; and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost. And by the power of the Holy Ghost ye may know the truth of all things."

- Mormon Teachers Make Conflicting Claims Concerning This "Testimony"
- Some claim anyone can have proof for the Book of Mormon by this test - just read it once and through prayer an answer will immediately be given.
- Others claim it applies only to the one who already believes the Book of Mormon.

A. Statement of John D. Widtsoe, Evidences & Reconciliations, (1943), pp. 9-10:

"A testimony of the truth of the gospel comes, then, from: (1) Desire, (2) Prayer, (3) Study, and (4) Practice. This is really the formula given by Moroni ... So far, no one who, with flaming desire, sincere prayer, earnest study, and fearless practice, has sought the truth of 'Mormonism' has failed to find it."

B. Many experienced Mormons freely admit that, even though they were raised in LDS church, they received their "testimony" only after years of great effort on their part! How, then, can they call upon inexperienced unbelievers to apply the test?

C. But we shall show that as a personal proof to Mormons or as a test for the "gentiles", it is a failure.

### I. THE CLAIM IS NOT UNIQUE

A. Roman Catholics, Adventists, most of the "Holiness" groups, and many others make the same claim.

B. Many other Book of Mormon-believing groups make the same claim that their "testimony" proves that they are right:

1. Since 1830 there have been at least 89 Book of Mormon-believing groups founded! Of these, at least 45 of them claimed to have been founded upon Divine Revelation received by leaders!

2. Testimony of Oliver Cowdery, Defense, pp. 3-4

- "I remembered his experience as he had related it to me, and lacking wisdom, I went to God in prayer. I said: 'O! Lord, how dark everything is! Let thy glory lighten it, and make bright the path for me.' Show me my duty. Let me be led of thy Spirit."

"Shall I relate what transpired? I had a message from the Most High, as from the midst of eternity; for the vail was parted and the Redeemer Himself, clothed in glory, stood before me. And He said:

"After reproving the Latter Day Saints for their corruption and blindness in permitting their president, Joseph Smith, Jr., to lead them forth into errors, where I led him not, nor commanded him, and saying unto them, 'Thus saith the Lord,' when I said it not unto him, thou shalt withdraw thyself from among them."

"And I testify that Jesus whose words I have been rehearsing, hath even so commanded me in an open vision."

3. Testimony of David Whitmer - Address, pp. 27,28

"If you believe my testimony to the Book of Mormon; if you believe that God spake to us three witnesses by his own voice, then I tell you that in June, 1838, God spake to me again by his own voice from the heavens, and told me to 'separate myself from among the Latter Day Saints, for as they sought to do unto me, so should it be done unto them ...' God commanded me by his own voice to stand apart from you."

C. Question: Whom are we to believe? Are all others (besides the LDS) dishonest in their claims of receiving miraculous guidance and "testimony" from God? This test cannot be viewed as either conclusive or reliable!

- This test is not only inconclusive and unreliable, but we shall show that it is expressly contradicted by the teaching of the Bible:

II. BIBLE TEACHING ABOUT OBTAINING REAL CONVICTION

A. How Faith In Jesus Is Established

1. Prayer excluded - John 5 32-39, 45-47
2. Requires exercise of the senses - Matthew 13:13-17
3. Comes through the written word (scripture)
  - a. Jno. 20:30-31 b. Rom. 10:17 c. Lk. 1:3-4

B. How The Holy Spirit Convicts

1. The Holy Spirit Convicts The World - John 16:7-13
2. But not directly - John 14:16-18
3. Through the word spoken by the apostles and prophets
  - a. Jno. 16:13 b. 1 Cor. 2:12-13 c. Eph. 6:17 d. 1 Tim. 4:1
  - e. Pentecost - Acts 2:1-36
4. How The Apostles Induced Faith - Acts 18:4,8; 19:9; 26:27-29; 17:11

C. The Divine Test Not Prayer

1. Gal. 1:6-9 2. 1 John 4:6 3. 1 John 2:3

III. AN EXAMINATION OF JAMES 1:5

A. Joseph Smith's Claim - That he read James 1:5, retired to the woods to pray and received a miraculous answer - P. of G.P., pp. 47-48

B. A Misapplication of the Passage (To Christians)

1. "Wisdom" - "Knowledge" different
  - a. Rom. 11:33 b. Col. 2:3 c. James 3:13,17

- A careful study of the passages and contexts in which the word is used shows that it is that mental maturity or excellence which enables us to cope successfully with every situation; that faculty of mind which permits us to understand the ultimate purpose behind God's decrees. Observe this application in vv. 2-5.



2. No supernatural answer implied in passage.

- we pray for daily bread. -Does it come in a miraculous fashion?

3. The first passage Smith tried to apply to his life, HE MISAPPLIED!!  
Thus, if he really had any kind of religious experience in the grove, it was not from God!!!

4. We ask amiss if pray for miraculous knowledge - James 4:3; I John 5:14

#### IV. TRUE SOURCE OF THE "TESTIMONY"

- We do not doubt that members of the many Book of Mormon-believing groups and others have had emotional experiences which they have judged to come from the Holy Spirit. We are convinced, however, that these "testimonies" are in reality delusions of the heart.

##### A. God's Warnings Not To Follow The Heart

1. Jer. 3:17 2. Jer. 7:24 3. Jer. 9:13-14 4. Jer. 10:23 5. Jer. 17:9  
6. Prov. 14:12

##### B. God Allows Delusions To Those Who Seek Them

1. David Whitmer's Explanation of Smith's Errors - Address, pp. 35,36:.

- "In Kirtland, Ohio, in 1831, Rigdon would expound the Old Testament scriptures of the Bible and the Book of Mormon (in his way) to Joseph, concerning the Priesthood, high priests, etc. and would persuade Brother Joseph to inquire of the Lord about this doctrine and that doctrine, and of course a revelation would always come just as they desired it. Rigdon finally persuaded Brother Joseph to believe that the high priests which had such great power in ancient times, should be in the Church of Christ today. He had Brother Joseph inquire of the Lord about it, and they received an answer according to their erring desires ..."

"In this manner the revelations came through Brother Joseph as mouth-piece from time to time. Brother Joseph would listen to the persuasions of men, and inquire of the Lord concerning different things, and the revelations would come just as they desired and thought in their hearts."

##### 2. Bible Statements

- a. Ezekiel 14:2-5 b. 2 Thess. 2:9-12

3. Anyone who has (1) a pre-disposition of thought, and (2) makes the effort based upon that pre-disposition, will (3) achieve the desired result.

4. Illustrations from "Psycho-Cybernetics" and experience.

CONCLUSION: If man turns away from the truth as revealed in the Scriptures, he will find a "testimony" according to his desires. If he desires to believe that the Virgin Mary will appear to him, no doubt he will receive such a "testimony" if he makes effort to achieve it. If he desires to believe that Joseph Smith was a true prophet and seeks "revelation" to that effect, no doubt he will receive such "testimony". And if he desires to receive an emotional experience concerning the Book of Mormon, doubtless he will receive one. THEN ONCE HAVING RECEIVED THIS SUBJECTIVE EXPERIENCE, NO AMOUNT OF OBJECTIVE INQUIRY CAN CONVINCE HIM THAT HE IS WRONG.