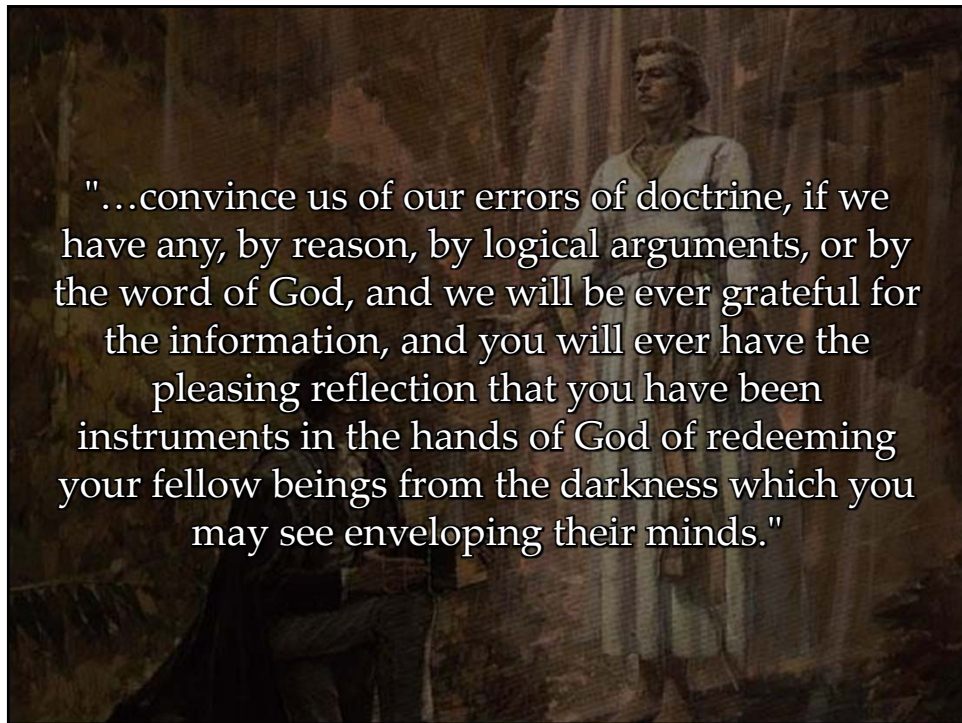
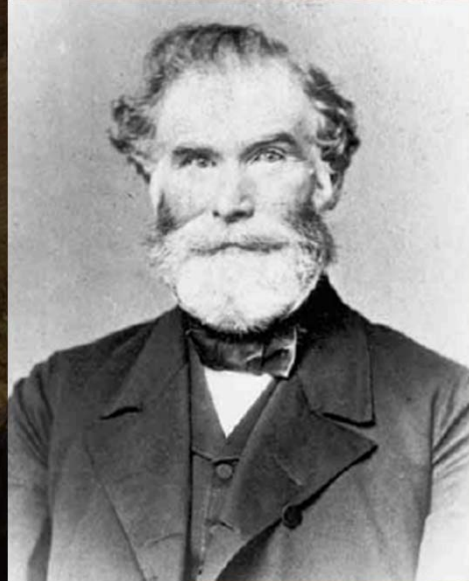


*Convince Us of Our Errors:
Why I Believe that Joseph Smith, Jr.
Is Not a Prophet of God*
by
Richard G. Howe, Ph.D.



"...convince us of our errors of doctrine, if we have any, by reason, by logical arguments, or by the word of God, and we will be ever grateful for the information, and you will ever have the pleasing reflection that you have been instruments in the hands of God of redeeming your fellow beings from the darkness which you may see enveloping their minds."



Mormon Apostle Orson Pratt
The Seer, Vol. 1, No. 1, Jan. 1853, pp. 15-16

Convince Us of Our Errors

The Prophet Joseph Smith:
Essential to Mormonism

"Every intelligent person under the heavens that does not, when informed, acknowledge that Joseph Smith, Jun., is a Prophet of God, is in darkness, and is opposed to us and to Jesus and his kingdom on the earth."

[*Journal of Discourses* (Liverpool: George Q. Cannon, 1861), 8:223.]



Brigham Young
2nd President of the LDS Church

Convince Us of Our Errors

The Prophet Joseph Smith:
Essential to Mormonism



Bruce R. McConkie
Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

"Since the keys of salvation were restored to the Prophet [Joseph Smith], it is in and through and because of his latter-day mission that the full redemptive power of the Lord has again become available to men." [*Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1979): s.v. "Joseph Smith the Prophet," 396.]

Convince Us of Our Errors

The Prophet Joseph Smith:
Essential to Mormonism

"Mormonism as it is called, must stand or fall on the story of Joseph Smith. He was either a prophet of God, divinely called, properly appointed and commissioned, or he was one of the biggest frauds this world has ever seen. There is no middle ground. If Joseph Smith was a deceiver who willfully attempted to mislead the people, then he should be exposed; his claims should be refuted, and his doctrines shown to be false,



Joseph Fielding Smith
10th President of the LDS church

Convince Us of Our Errors

The Prophet Joseph Smith:
Essential to Mormonism

for the doctrines of an imposter cannot be made to harmonize, in all particulars with divine truth. If his claims and declarations were built on fraud and deceit, there would appear many errors and contradictions, which would be easy to detect. The doctrines of false teachers will not stand the test when tried by the accepted standards of measurement, the scriptures." [Doctrines of Salvation, 1: 188]



Joseph Fielding Smith
10th President of the LDS church

Convince Us of Our Errors



The First Vision:
The Basis of
Joseph Smith
Being a Prophet
of God

Convince Us of Our Errors



John A. Widtsoe
Quorum of Twelve Apostles

"The First Vision of 1820 is of first importance in the history of Joseph Smith. Upon its reality rest the truth and value of his subsequent work." [Joseph Smith—Seeker after Truth, p. 19]

Convince Us of Our Errors

"With this vision came the call of that Prophet who, 'save Jesus only,' was destined to do more 'for the salvation of men in this world, than any other man that ever lived in it.' (D. & C. 135:3)"

[Mormon Doctrine, 285.]



Bruce R. McConkie
Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Convince Us of Our Errors

"Joseph Smith's first vision, in 1820, wherein he beheld God the Father and Jesus Christ, is one of the most significant religious events in the history of the world. This glorious vision restored the fullness of the gospel to the earth and established a new prophet to lead God's children out of darkness." [Richard I. Winwood, *Take Heed that Ye Be Not Deceived*, (Salt Lake City: Richard I. Winwood, 1995), 40.]

Convince Us of Our Errors

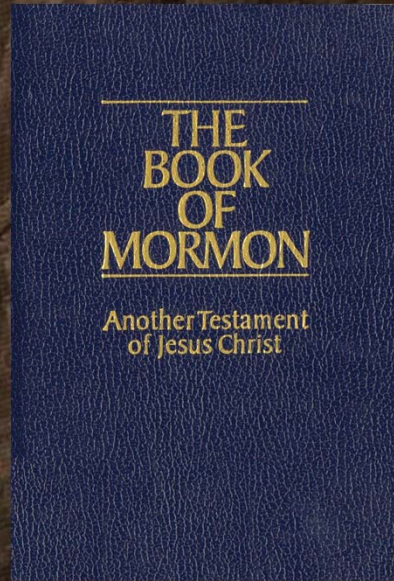


Gordon B. Hinckley
15th President

"We declare without equivocation that God the Father and His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, appeared in person to the boy Joseph Smith. When I was interviewed by Mike Wallace on the 60 Minutes program, he asked me if I actually believed that. I replied, 'Yes, sir. That's the miracle of it.' That is the way I feel about it. Our whole strength rests on the validity of that vision. It either occurred or it did not occur. If it did not, then this work is a fraud. If it did, then it is the most important and wonderful work under the heavens." (General Conference Oct. 2002)

Convince Us of Our Errors

The Mormon
Arguments for
Joseph Smith Being
a Prophet of God:
The "Authenticity"
of the
Book of Mormon

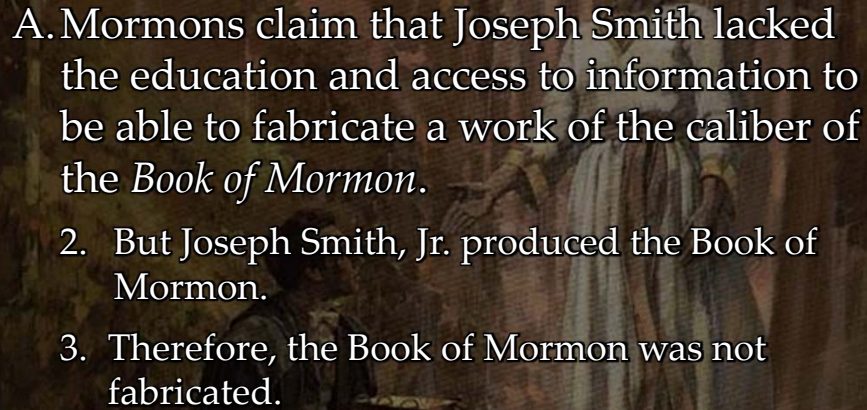


Convince Us of Our Errors

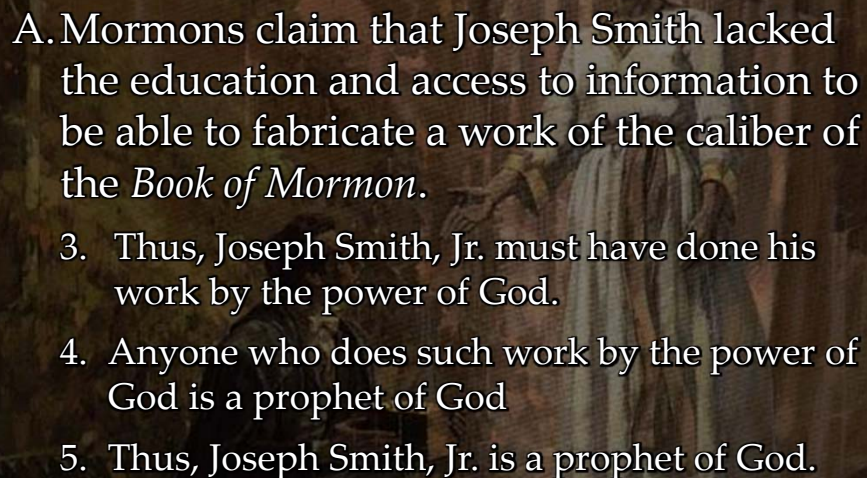
A. Mormons claim that Joseph Smith lacked the education and access to information to be able to fabricate a work of the caliber of the *Book of Mormon*.

1. They challenge anyone to duplicate the work Joseph Smith, Jr. did in writing the Book of Mormon in order to demonstrate that no one who lacks the education and access to information like he did would be able to fabricate a work of the caliber of the Book of Mormon.

Convince Us of Our Errors

- 
- A. Mormons claim that Joseph Smith lacked the education and access to information to be able to fabricate a work of the caliber of the *Book of Mormon*.
 2. But Joseph Smith, Jr. produced the Book of Mormon.
 3. Therefore, the Book of Mormon was not fabricated.

Convince Us of Our Errors

- 
- A. Mormons claim that Joseph Smith lacked the education and access to information to be able to fabricate a work of the caliber of the *Book of Mormon*.
 3. Thus, Joseph Smith, Jr. must have done his work by the power of God.
 4. Anyone who does such work by the power of God is a prophet of God
 5. Thus, Joseph Smith, Jr. is a prophet of God.

Convince Us of Our Errors

B. Mormons argue that the *Book of Mormon* was predicted by the Bible.

1. The one through whom God brought the *Book of Mormon* to light must be a prophet of God.
2. Since this one is Joseph Smith, Jr., then he is a prophet of God.

Convince Us of Our Errors

C. Mormons argue that no evidence, such as archeological or historical, exists against the *Book of Mormon*. Thus, no evidence against Joseph Smith being a prophet of God based on an argument against the *Book of Mormon* is sound.

Convince Us of Our Errors

D. The most important "argument" that Mormons offer to prove that Joseph Smith, Jr. is a prophet of God is a subjective test.

1. No matter what objective evidence is brought against the authenticity of the *Book of Mormon* addressed in the above arguments, this subjective test always overrides it.
2. Thus, ultimately, Mormons feel no obligation to try to answer the evidence against Joseph Smith, Jr., the *Book of Mormon* and their other scriptures, and Mormonism.

Convince Us of Our Errors

The Subjective Test

1. One is to read the *Book of Mormon* and pray and ask God to show him if the *Book of Mormon* is true and is from God. (Moroni 10:4; James 1:5)
2. God will show the one praying that the *Book of Mormon* is true by an "inner" testimony or feeling. (Galatians 5:22-23)

Convince Us of Our Errors

The Subjective Test

3. Once one "knows" that the *Book of Mormon* is true and is from God, then one can conclude that Joseph Smith, who was given the Book of Mormon and translated it, is a prophet of God.
4. Once one accepts Joseph Smith as a prophet of God, then the other writings of Joseph Smith, viz., his "revelations" contained in the *Doctrines and Covenants* and his translation of the *Pearl of Great Price* can also be known to be true and from God.

Convince Us of Our Errors



Problems with Joseph Smith, Junior's Story of His First Vision

Convince Us of Our Errors

- A. Joseph Smith, Jr. supposedly had his vision in 1820, yet a history of the church written in 1834 mentioned nothing about the visions.
- B. The vision was not reported until 1840 (by Orson Pratt) and was not published by Joseph Smith, Jr. until 1842, 22 years later.
- C. Joseph Smith, Jr. claimed in a revelation in 1832 when he supposedly received the priesthood, that no one could see God without it [D & C 84:21-22], yet he supposedly saw God back in 1820.

Convince Us of Our Errors

- D. An account of the vision (presumably the earliest) is dated 1833.
 - 1. It was either dictated by Joseph Smith, Jr. to Frederick G. Williams, scribe to the Prophet and counselor in the First Presidency, or written by Joseph Smith, Jr. himself
 - 2. It was denied to exist by the church officials until it was published in a Master's Thesis at BYU by Paul R. Cheesman in 1965.

Convince Us of Our Errors

- D. An account of the vision (presumably the earliest) is dated 1833.
3. This version is now admitted to be authentic by such Mormon scholars as James B. Allen, Associate Professor of History at BYU in *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Autumn 1966 pp. 30-34.

Convince Us of Our Errors

- D. An account of the vision (presumably the earliest) is dated 1833.
4. The reason it was suppressed is evidently because it contains significant differences from the "official" version.
 - a. The 1833 version does not mention the Father appearing to Joseph Smith, Jr. as does the "official" version.

Convince Us of Our Errors

D. An account of the vision (presumably the earliest) is dated 1833.

4. The reason it was suppressed is evidently because it contains significant differences from the "official" version.
 - b. The 1833 version says that Joseph Smith, Jr. called upon the Lord and had the vision in the 16th year of age, but the "official" version has the vision happening in the spring of 1820. Since Joseph Smith, Jr. was born in December of 1805, he would only be in his 15th year of life in the spring of 1820.

Convince Us of Our Errors

D. An account of the vision (presumably the earliest) is dated 1833.

4. The reason it was suppressed is evidently because it contains significant differences from the "official" version.
 - c. The 1833 version mentions nothing about religious revivals going on, yet the "official" version says a great deal about them.
 - d. In the 1833 version Joseph Smith, Jr. says that, before the visitation, he knew that all the churches were wrong, yet in the "official" version Smith says he went to the Lord to inquire as to which of the churches was right.

Convince Us of Our Errors

E. Another early account, revealed in the autumn of 1966, is located in the back of Book A-1 of the handwritten manuscript of the *History of the Church* and dated around 1835.

1. In this version, the personage that appears to Smith testifies that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.
2. This implies that this personage itself is neither the Father nor the Son.
3. In fact, Smith claims that he was visited by many angels.

Convince Us of Our Errors

F. A published account of the 1st vision in the *Deseret News* Saturday, May 29, 1852, does not mention the Father and Son appearing to Smith, but rather refers to angels visiting him. The reference to angels was deleted in later printings to make the reference be to the first visitation rather than to the first visitation of angels.

Convince Us of Our Errors

G. Joseph Smith, Junior's description of these visitations sounds more like Satan who transforms himself into an angel of light.

2 Corinthians 13-15 "For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works."

Convince Us of Our Errors

G. Joseph Smith, Junior's description of these visitations sounds more like Satan who transforms himself into an angel of light.

1 Timothy 4:1 "Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons,"

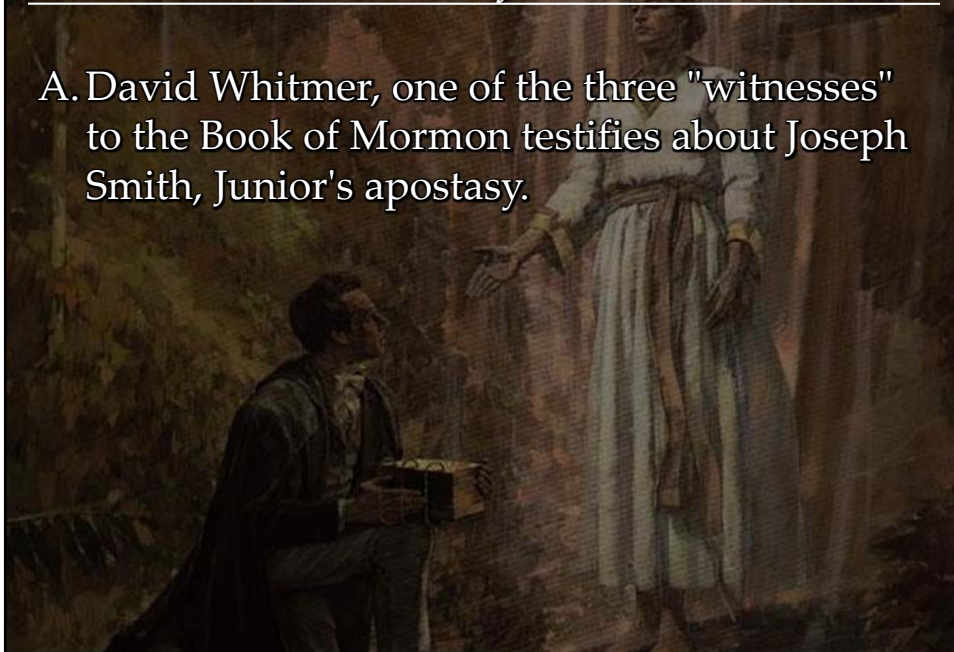
Convince Us of Our Errors

More Problems for
Joseph Smith, Jr.

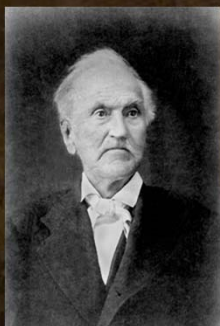


Convince Us of Our Errors

A. David Whitmer, one of the three "witnesses"
to the Book of Mormon testifies about Joseph
Smith, Junior's apostasy.



Convince Us of Our Errors

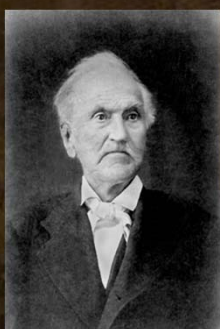


David Whitmer
Witness to the
Book of Mormon

"Then let no man judge hastily as to my authority, lest he judge wrongly and continue in error; but go to God in prayer and fasting, and find out the truth, for the Holy Ghost will guide you into all truth. 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.' In the spring of 1838, the heads of the church and many of the members had gone deep into error and blindness."

[David Whitmer, *An Address to All Believers in Christ by A Witness to the Divine Authenticity of The Book of Mormon* (Richmond, MO: by the author, 1887, reprinted by Pacific Publishing Company, Concord, CA, 1976), 27.]

Convince Us of Our Errors



David Whitmer
Witness to the
Book of Mormon

"There is nothing in the New Testament part of either the Bible or Book of Mormon concerning a one-man leader or head to the church. ... And we had no such office [of Prophet Seer and Revelator] in the church in these last days for the first eight months of its existence, until Brother Joseph went into error on April 6, 1830. ... [The revelations] were changed to mean something entirely different from the way they were first given and printed in the Book of Commandments

... " [Whitmer, *Address*, 46.]

Convince Us of Our Errors

B. The *Book of Abraham* contained in *The Pearl of Great Price* has been proven to be a fraud.

1. The Book of Abraham was supposedly written on papyrus by Abraham about 4,000 years ago.
2. Joseph Smith, Jr. supposedly translated the papyrus, but the papyrus was reportedly lost in the great Chicago fire of 1871.

Convince Us of Our Errors

B. The *Book of Abraham* contained in *The Pearl of Great Price* has been proven to be a fraud.

3. Mormons reported that that the papyrus had been rediscovered in 1967.
 - a. The *Deseret News* of November 27, 1967 said:
"A collection of pa[p]yrus manuscripts, long believed to have been destroyed in the Chicago fire of 1871 was presented to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints ... included in the papyri is a manuscript identified as the original document from which Joseph Smith had copied the drawing which he called 'Facsimile No. 1' and published with the Book of Abraham."

Convince Us of Our Errors

B. The *Book of Abraham* contained in *The Pearl of Great Price* has been proven to be a fraud.

3. Mormons reported that that the papyrus had been rediscovered in 1967.

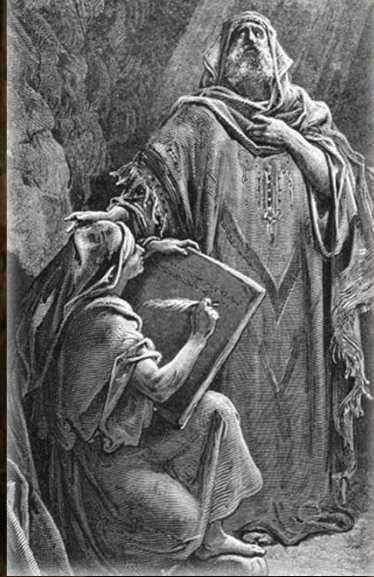
b. Dr. Hugh Nibley of Brigham Young University discusses the papyri in *Brigham Young University Studies*, Winter 1968, p. 171.

Convince Us of Our Errors

B. The *Book of Abraham* contained in *The Pearl of Great Price* has been proven to be a fraud.

4. Analyses by Egyptologists have proven that the papyrus is a fragment from the Egyptian Book of Breathing from the Egyptian Book of the Dead. (Cf. E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Book of the Dead, An English Translation of the Chapters, Hymns, Etc., Of the Theban Recension, With Introduction, Notes, Etc. Vol. 1* (London, 1901): 50-51.

Convince Us of Our Errors



Testing of a
Prophet of God

Convince Us of Our Errors

A. All things must be tested.

1 Thes. 5:21-22 Test all things; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil.

B. The basis of tests is reason not feelings.

Isaiah 1:18 "Come now, and let us reason together," Says the LORD, "Though your sins are like scarlet, They shall be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They shall be as wool."

Convince Us of Our Errors

C. The tests are theological.

1 John 4:1-3 Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world.

Convince Us of Our Errors

D. The standard for the tests is the teachings of the Apostles and Prophets, i.e., the Bible.

1. We know truth and error by the word of the Apostles. 1 John 4:5-6

They are of the world. Therefore they speak as of the world, and the world hears them. We are of God. He who knows God hears us; he who is not of God does not hear us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

Convince Us of Our Errors

D. The standard for the tests is the teachings of the Apostles and Prophets, i.e., the Bible.

2. The Bible is inspired by God.

2 Tim. 3:16-17 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Convince Us of Our Errors

D. The standard for the tests is the teachings of the Apostles and Prophets, i.e., the Bible.

2. The Bible is inspired by God.

2 Peter 1:16-21 For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty. For He received from God the Father honor and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." And we heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain. And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.

Convince Us of Our Errors

D. The standard for the tests is the teachings of the Apostles and Prophets, i.e., the Bible.

3. The Bible has not been corrupted.
 - a. The science of textual criticism proves that the Bible has been handed down to us intact.
 - b. There is every reason to believe that God would not allow His inspired word to be lost or corrupted.

Convince Us of Our Errors

E. False Doctrine, especially about God, indicates a false prophet.

1. Deut. 13:1-3 *If there arises among you a prophet or a dreamer of dreams, and he gives you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder comes to pass, of which he spoke to you, saying, 'Let us go after other gods'; which you have not known; 'and let us serve them, you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams, for the LORD your God is testing you to know whether you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.*

Convince Us of Our Errors

E. False Doctrine, especially about God, indicates a false prophet.

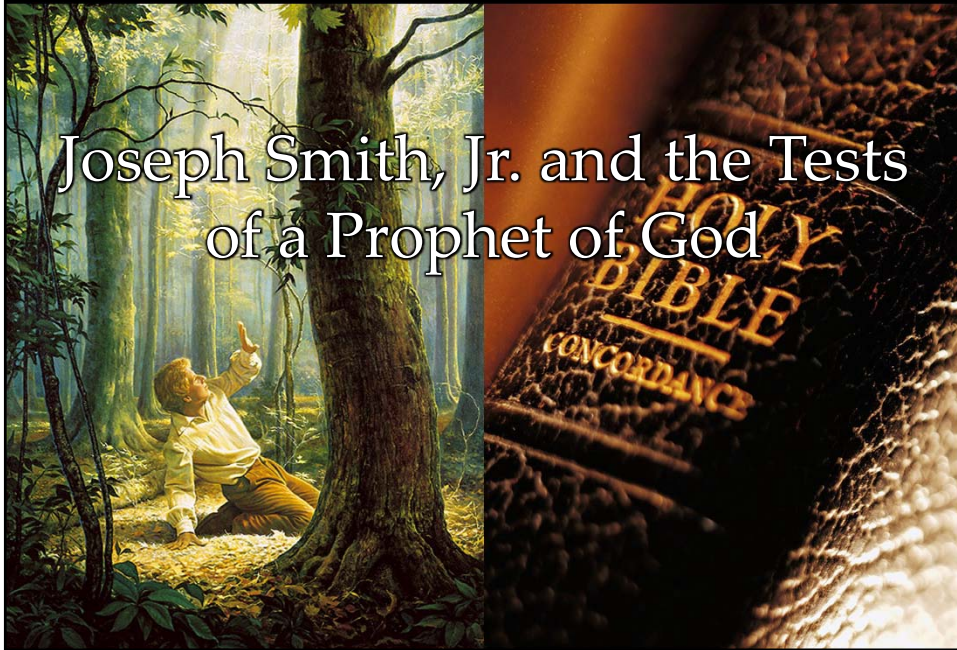
2. 2 Peter 2:1-2 *But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed.*

Convince Us of Our Errors

F. False Prophecies indicate a false prophet.
Deuteronomy 18:20-22

But the prophet who presumes to speak a word in My name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or who speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die. And if you say in your heart, 'How shall we know the word which the LORD has not spoken?'; when a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the thing does not happen or come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him.

Joseph Smith, Jr. and the Tests of a Prophet of God

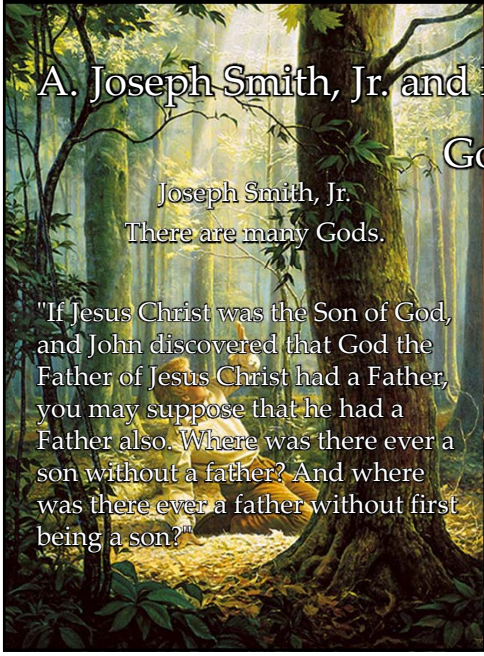
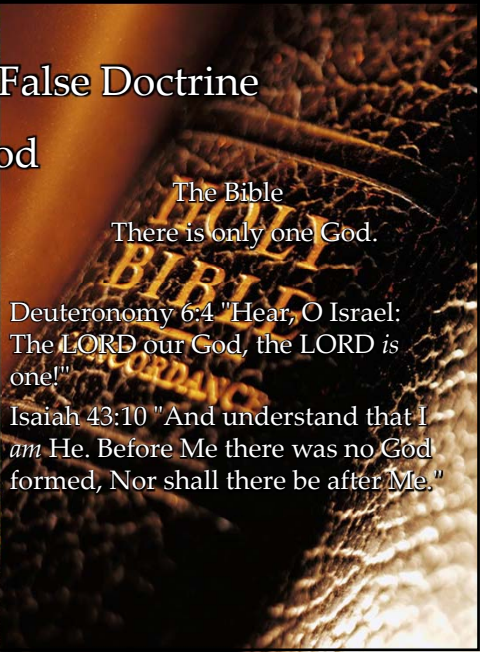


Joseph Smith, Jr. and the Tests of a Prophet of God

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>A. Joseph Smith, Jr. and False Doctrine</p> | <p>God</p> |
| <p>Joseph Smith, Jr. There are many Gods.</p> | <p>The Bible There is only one God.</p> |
| <p>"And they (the Gods) said 'Let there be light' and there was light." (<i>Pearl of Great Price</i>, "Book of Abraham" 4:3) "According to that which was ordained in the midst of the Council of the Eternal God of all other gods before this world was ..." D. & C. 121:32</p> | <p>Deuteronomy 6:4 "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one!" Isaiah 43:10 "And understand that I am He. Before Me there was no God formed, Nor shall there be after Me."</p> |

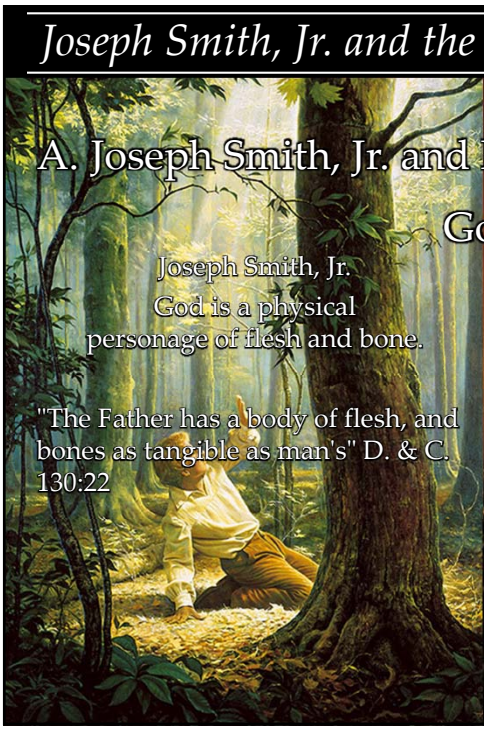
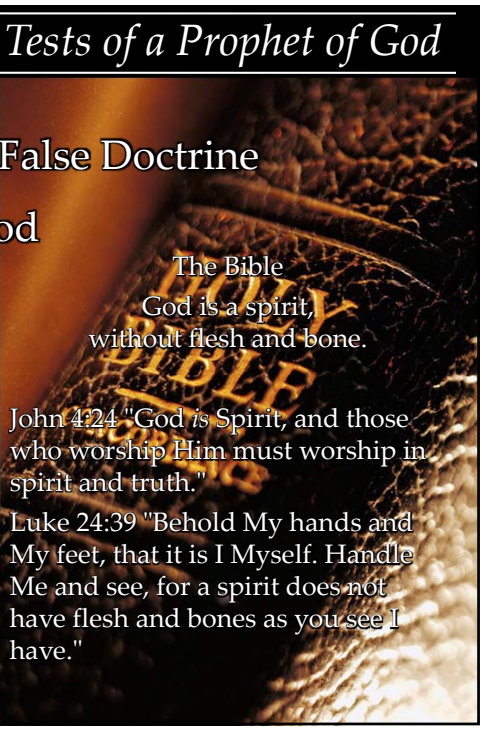
Joseph Smith, Jr. and the Tests of a Prophet of God

A. Joseph Smith, Jr. and False Doctrine

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|---|--|
|  <p>Joseph Smith, Jr. There are many Gods.</p> <p>"If Jesus Christ was the Son of God, and John discovered that God the Father of Jesus Christ had a Father, you may suppose that he had a Father also. Where was there ever a son without a father? And where was there ever a father without first being a son?"</p> |  <p>God</p> <p>The Bible There is only one God.</p> <p>Deuteronomy 6:4 "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one!"</p> <p>Isaiah 43:10 "And understand that I am He. Before Me there was no God formed, Nor shall there be after Me."</p> |
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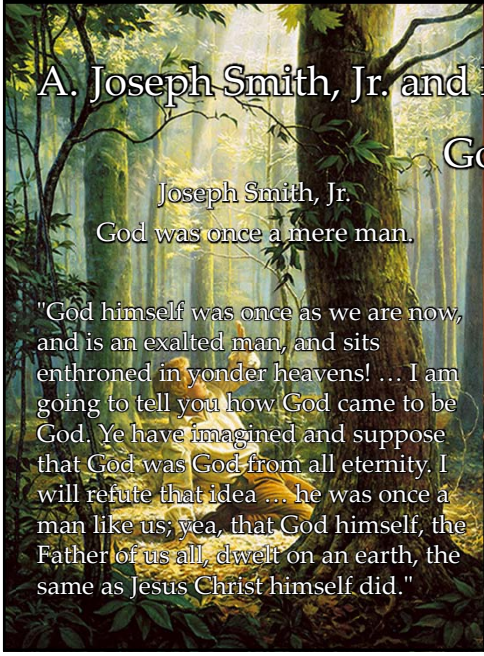
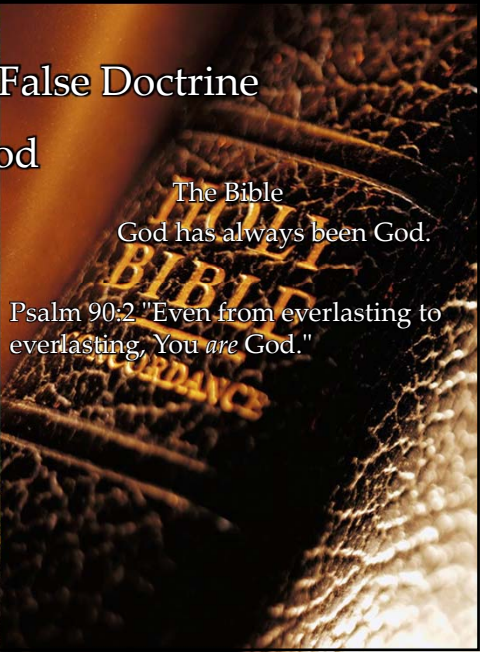
Joseph Smith, Jr. and the Tests of a Prophet of God

A. Joseph Smith, Jr. and False Doctrine

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|  <p>Joseph Smith, Jr. God is a physical personage of flesh and bone.</p> <p>"The Father has a body of flesh, and bones as tangible as man's" D. & C. 130:22</p> |  <p>God</p> <p>The Bible God is a spirit, without flesh and bone.</p> <p>John 4:24 "God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."</p> <p>Luke 24:39 "Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have."</p> |
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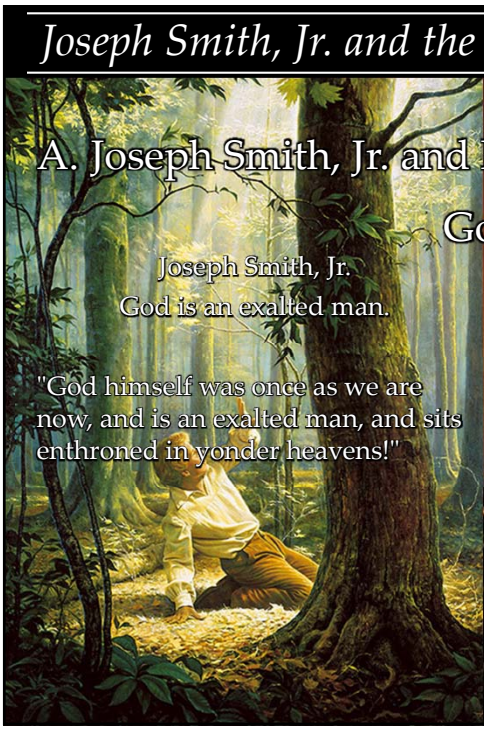
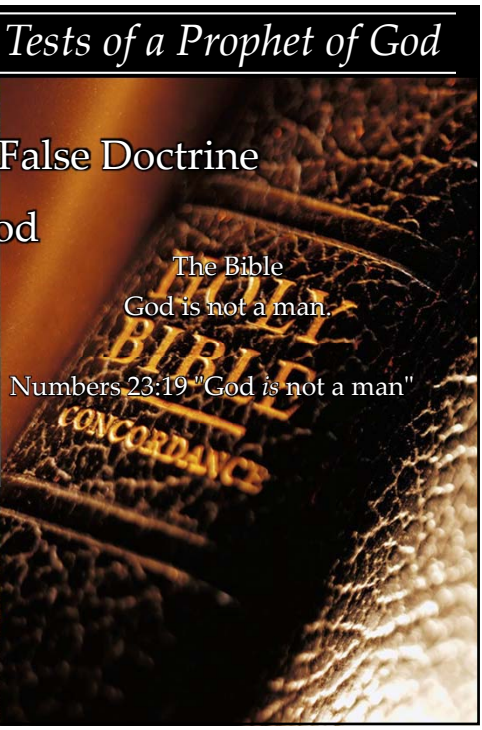
Joseph Smith, Jr. and the Tests of a Prophet of God

A. Joseph Smith, Jr. and False Doctrine

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|  <p>Joseph Smith, Jr. God was once a mere man.</p> <p>"God himself was once as we are now, and is an exalted man, and sits enthroned in yonder heavens! ... I am going to tell you how God came to be God. Ye have imagined and suppose that God was God from all eternity. I will refute that idea ... he was once a man like us; yea, that God himself, the Father of us all, dwelt on an earth, the same as Jesus Christ himself did."</p> |  <p>God</p> <p>The Bible God has always been God.</p> <p>Psalm 90:2 "Even from everlasting to everlasting, You <i>are</i> God."</p> |
|--|---|

Joseph Smith, Jr. and the Tests of a Prophet of God

A. Joseph Smith, Jr. and False Doctrine

| | |
|---|---|
|  <p>Joseph Smith, Jr. God is an exalted man.</p> <p>"God himself was once as we are now, and is an exalted man, and sits enthroned in yonder heavens!"</p> |  <p>God</p> <p>The Bible God is not a man.</p> <p>Numbers 23:19 "God <i>is</i> not a man"</p> |
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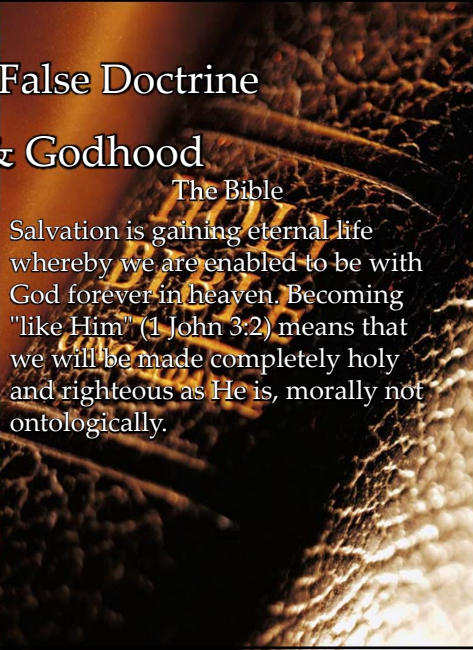
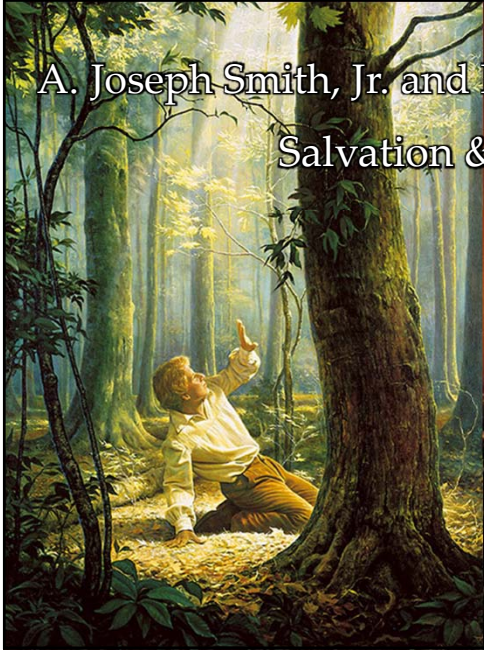
Joseph Smith, Jr. and the Tests of a Prophet of God

A. Joseph Smith, Jr. and False Doctrine

Salvation & Godhood

The Bible

Salvation is gaining eternal life whereby we are enabled to be with God forever in heaven. Becoming "like Him" (1 John 3:2) means that we will be made completely holy and righteous as He is, morally not ontologically.



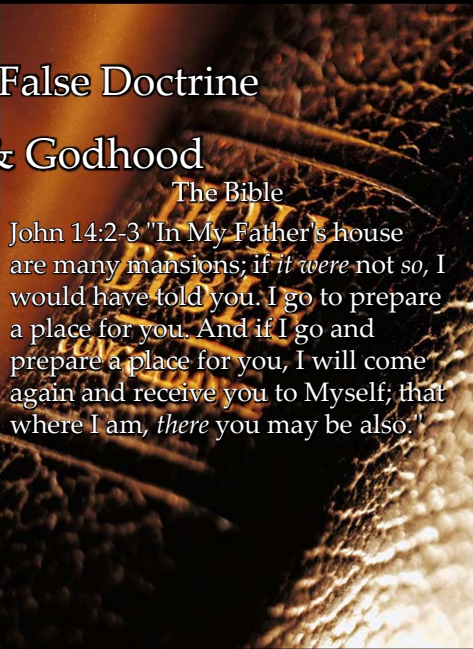
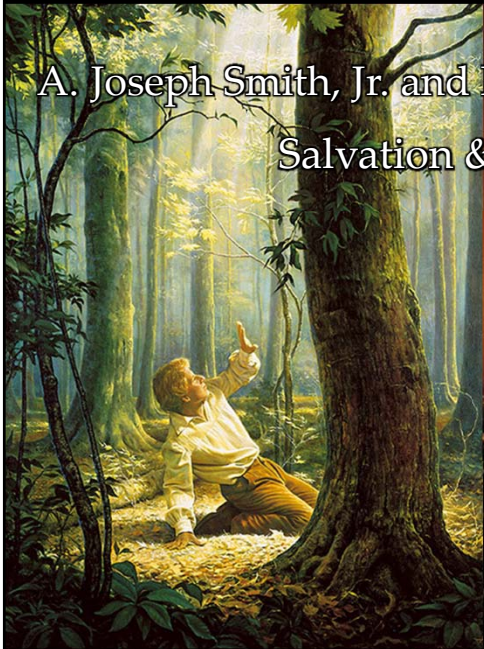
Joseph Smith, Jr. and the Tests of a Prophet of God

A. Joseph Smith, Jr. and False Doctrine

Salvation & Godhood

The Bible

John 14:2-3 "In My Father's house are many mansions; if *it were* not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, *there* you may be also."



Joseph Smith, Jr. and the Tests of a Prophet of God

A. Joseph Smith, Jr. and False Doctrine

Salvation & Godhood

Joseph Smith, Jr.

Salvation means exaltation to Godhood. It involves faith in the Mormon Christ, baptism, obedience to the teaching of the Mormon church.

"Here, then, is eternal life—to know the only wise and true God; and you have go to learn how to be gods yourselves ... the same as all gods have done before you ... from exaltation to exaltation ... until you arrive at the station of a god."

The Bible

Salvation is gaining eternal life whereby we are enabled to be with God forever in heaven. Becoming "like Him" (1 John 3:2) means that we will be made completely holy and righteous as He is, morally not ontologically.

2 Peter 1:3-4 "as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." (cf. Hebrews 12:10)

Joseph Smith, Jr. and the Tests of a Prophet of God

A. Joseph Smith, Jr. and False Doctrine

Salvation by Grace through Faith

The Bible

Salvation is a gift and cannot be earned by works. All that is necessary is belief in the gospel.

Ephesians 2:8-9 "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast."

Joseph Smith, Jr. and the Tests of a Prophet of God

A. Joseph Smith, Jr. and False Doctrine

Salvation by Grace through Faith

Joseph Smith, Jr.

Works are necessary for salvation.

"We believe that through the atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved, by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel."

The Bible

Salvation is a gift and cannot be earned by works. All that is necessary is belief in the gospel.

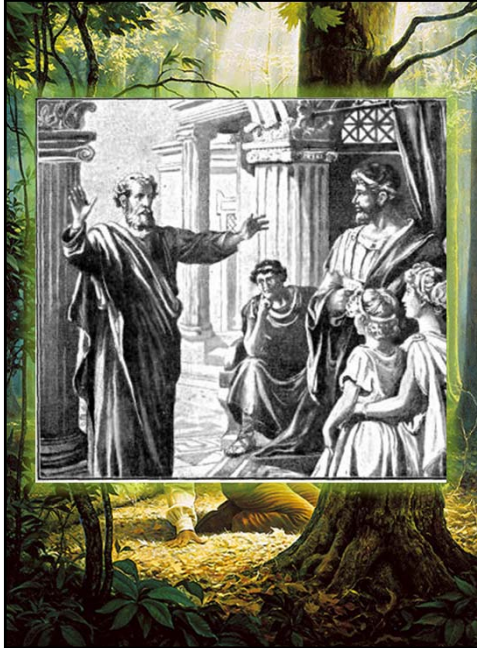
Romans 4:4-5 "Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt. But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness"

Joseph Smith, Jr. and the Tests of a Prophet of God

B. Joseph Smith, Jr. and False Prophecies

1. False prophecy about selling the copyright of the *Book of Mormon* in Canada
2. False prophecy about the coming of the Lord
3. False prophecy about the Civil War
4. David Whitmer testifies that Joseph Smith, Jr. made other false prophecies.

Joseph Smith, Jr. and the Tests of a Prophet of God



Responses to the Mormon Inferential Arguments for Joseph Smith, Jr. Being a Prophet of God via the "Authenticity" of the *Book of Mormon*

Joseph Smith, Jr. and the Tests of a Prophet of God

A. First Argument: Mormons claim that Joseph Smith, Jr. lacked the education and access to information to be able to fabricate a work of the caliber of the *Book of Mormon*.

Responses:

1. Others in Joseph Smith, Junior's day did similar works.
2. Much of the *Book of Mormon* is plagiarized from the King James Bible.

Joseph Smith, Jr. and the Tests of a Prophet of God

A. First Argument: Mormons claim that Joseph Smith, Jr. lacked the education and access to information to be able to fabricate a work of the caliber of the *Book of Mormon*.

Responses:

3. Some of the material of the Book of Mormon is evidently borrowed from the Apocrypha. The name 'Nephi,' which is a very important name in the *Book of Mormon*, comes from 2 Maccabees 1:36.

Joseph Smith, Jr. and the Tests of a Prophet of God

A. First Argument: Mormons claim that Joseph Smith, Jr. lacked the education and access to information to be able to fabricate a work of the caliber of the *Book of Mormon*.

Responses:

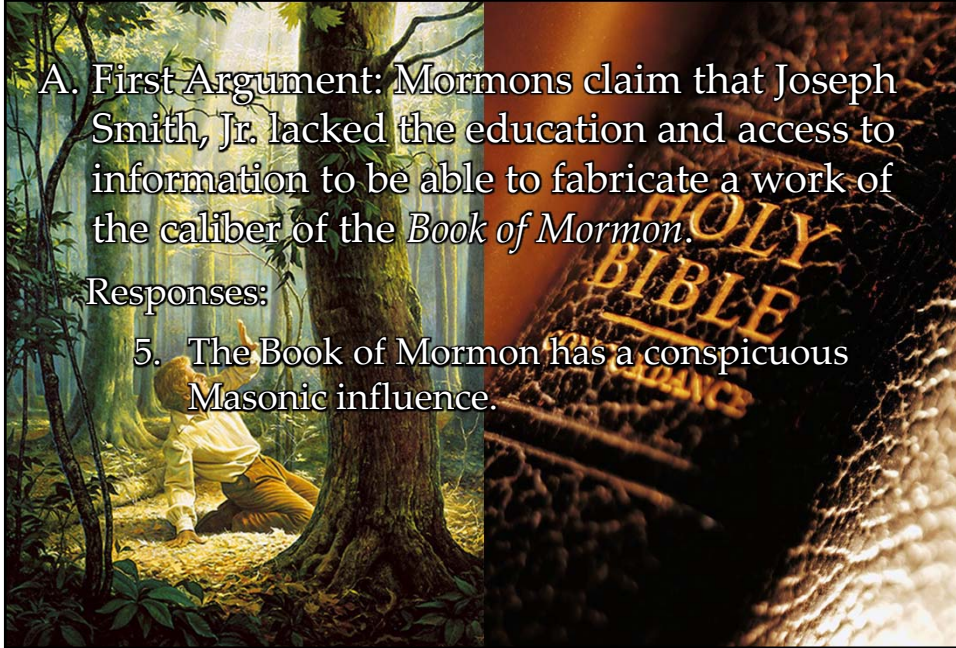
4. Contents of the Book of Mormon reflects the theological times in which Joseph Smith, Jr. lived, including discussions about current theological issues as infant baptism, ordination, the trinity.

Joseph Smith, Jr. and the Tests of a Prophet of God

A. First Argument: Mormons claim that Joseph Smith, Jr. lacked the education and access to information to be able to fabricate a work of the caliber of the *Book of Mormon*.

Responses:

5. The Book of Mormon has a conspicuous Masonic influence.

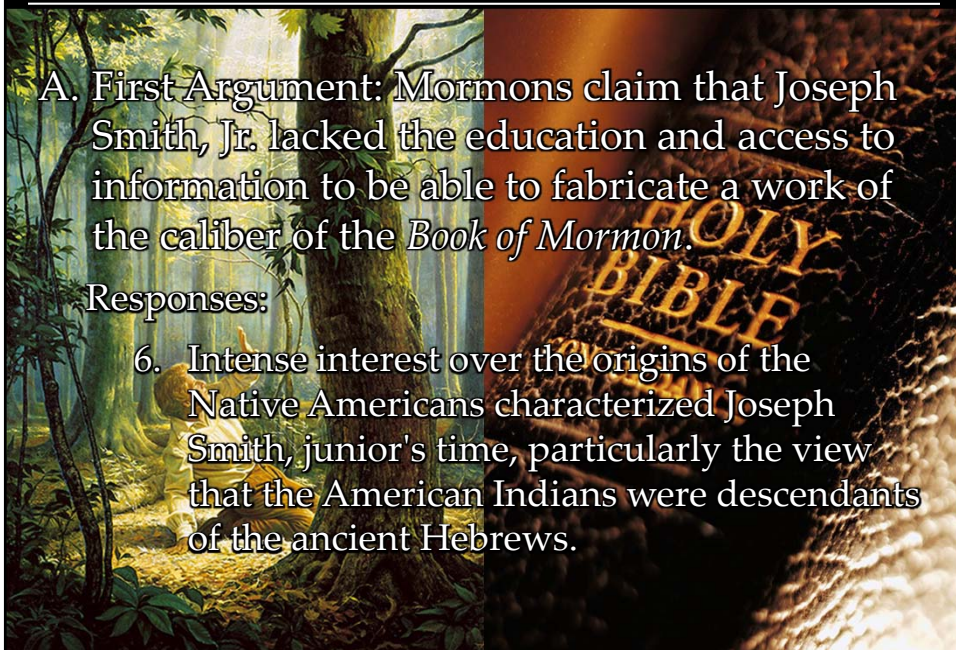


Joseph Smith, Jr. and the Tests of a Prophet of God

A. First Argument: Mormons claim that Joseph Smith, Jr. lacked the education and access to information to be able to fabricate a work of the caliber of the *Book of Mormon*.

Responses:

6. Intense interest over the origins of the Native Americans characterized Joseph Smith, junior's time, particularly the view that the American Indians were descendants of the ancient Hebrews.



Joseph Smith, Jr. and the Tests of a Prophet of God

A. First Argument: Mormons claim that Joseph Smith, Jr. lacked the education and access to information to be able to fabricate a work of the caliber of the *Book of Mormon*.

Responses:

7. Descriptions of the manner of "translation" of the golden plates indicate occultism. Joseph Smith, Jr. was known to use a "seer stone" or "peep stone" in divining occult information.

Joseph Smith, Jr. and the Tests of a Prophet of God

B. Second Argument: Mormons argue that the *Book of Mormon* was predicted by the Bible. The one through whom God brought the *Book of Mormon* to light must be a prophet of God which is Joseph Smith, Jr.

Responses:

1. Jesus' reference to the "other sheep" in John 10:16 has nothing to do with the peoples of the North American continent to whom Jesus supposedly appeared, as recorded in the *Book of Mormon* in 3 Nephi 15:17,21, but rather it has to do with the Gentiles who would be included in the promise to the nation of Israel. (cf. Acts 15:7-9 Ephesians 2:11-19; Romans 11:11, 25)

Joseph Smith, Jr. and the Tests of a Prophet of God

B. Second Argument: Mormons argue that the *Book of Mormon* was predicted by the Bible. The one through whom God brought the *Book of Mormon* to light must be a prophet of God which is Joseph Smith, Jr.

Responses:

2. The "stick of Judah" and the "stick of Joseph" (Ezekiel 37:15-22) has nothing to do with the Bible and the *Book of Mormon*. The context of these verses clearly indicates that this was a promise of God to reunite the divided kingdom of Israel into one nation.

Joseph Smith, Jr. and the Tests of a Prophet of God

C. Third Argument: Mormons argue that no evidence, such as archeological or historical, exists against the *Book of Mormon*. Thus, no evidence against Joseph Smith, Jr. being a prophet of God based on an argument from the *Book of Mormon* is sound.

Responses:

1. Incontrovertible archeological evidence militates against the authenticity of the *Book of Mormon* as is evidenced by the document from the Smithsonian Institution.

Joseph Smith, Jr. and the Tests of a Prophet of God



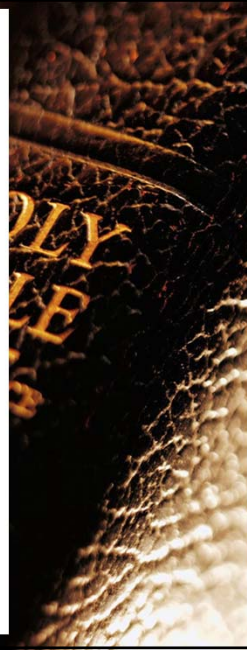
SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20560

Your recent inquiry concerning the Book of Mormon has been received in the Smithsonian Department of Anthropology.

The Book of Mormon is a religious document and not a scientific guide. The Smithsonian Institution does not use it in any way in archeological research. Because the Smithsonian Institution receives many inquiries in this regard and in connection with Mormon statements about the origin and relationships of the American Indian, we have prepared a "Statement Regarding the Book of Mormon," a copy of which is enclosed for your information.

Department of Anthropology

Enclosure



Joseph Smith, Jr. and the Tests of a Prophet of God



SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION
Office of Anthropology
Washington, D.C. 20560

STATEMENT REGARDING THE BOOK OF MORMON

The Smithsonian Institution has received hundreds of inquiries in recent years regarding the use of the Book of Mormon as a guide to archeological researches. Answers to questions most commonly asked are as follows:

1. The Smithsonian Institution has never used the Book of Mormon in any way as a scientific guide. Smithsonian archeologists see no connection between the archeology of the New World and the subject matter of the Book.
2. The physical type of the American Indian is basically Mongoloid, being most closely related to that of the peoples of eastern, central, and northeastern Asia. Archeological evidence indicates that the ancestors of the present Indians came into the New World—probably over a land bridge known to have existed in the Bering Strait region during the last ice Age—in a continuing series of small migrations beginning about 20,000 years ago.
3. Present evidence indicates that the first people to reach this continent from the East were the Norsemen who arrived in the northeastern part of North America around A.D. 1000. There is nothing to show that they reached Mexico or Central America.
4. There is increasing evidence of the spread of cultural traits to South America and the northwestern coast of South America across the Pacific, beginning several thousand years before the Christian era. However, these appear to be the result of accidental voyages originating in eastern and southern Asia and show no relationship to ancient Egyptian or Hebrew cultures.
5. We know of no authentic cases of ancient Egyptian or Hebrew writing having been found in the New World. Reports of findings of Egyptian influence in the Mexican and Central American areas have been published in newspapers and magazines from time to time, but thus far no reputable Egyptologist has been able to discover any relationship between Mexican remains and those in Egypt.
6. There are two copies of the Book of Mormon (and part of a third copy) in the United States National Museum, and another copy

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Joseph Smith, Jr. and the Tests of a Prophet of God



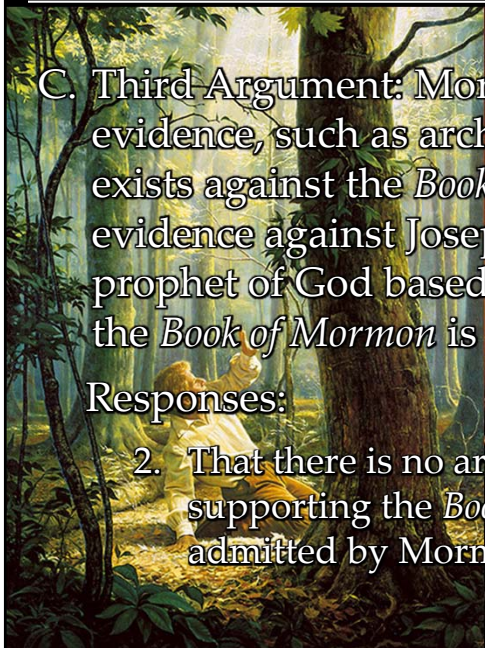
was sent by the Smithsonian library to the Library of Congress for deposit. Two of these were gift copies, and one was received by transfer from another government agency. One or two members of the staff have personal copies that were presented to them by Mormons.

Suggested Reading

- Coe, Michael D.
1962. Mexico. 246 pp., 75 pls., 32 figs., 8 maps, 1 table. Frederick A. Praeger, New York (Ancient Peoples and Places Series, vol. 29). (A well-written and authoritative summary of Mexican archeology.)
- Jennings, Jesse D., and Norbeck, Edward.
1963. Prehistoric Man in the New World. 633 pp., illus. University of Chicago Press, Chicago. (The most recent and thorough survey of New World archeology, written by leading American archeologists.)
- Ferguson, Thomas S.
1958. One Fold and One Shepherd. 468 pp., illus. Books of California, San Francisco. (A book presenting the Mormon point of view.)
- Hunter, Milton R., and Ferguson, Thomas S.
1959. Ancient Peoples and the Book of Mormon. 450 pp., 55 figs., Kolob Book Co., Oakland, California. (Another book presenting the Mormon point of view.)
- MacGowan, Kenneth, and Foster, Joseph A., Jr.
1962. Early Man in the New World. Rev. ed. 333 pp., illus. Anchor Books, Doubleday & Co., Garden City, New Jersey. (The Natural History Library). (Good general reading; also provides some Old World background.)
- Morley, Sylvanus G.
1956. The ancient Maya. 494 pp., 102 pls., 57 figs. (Ed. ed. rev. by George W. Brainerd.) Stanford University Press, Stanford, California (Maya history; origin of their civilization, its rise, first florescence, first decline, renaissance and final decline, Spanish conquest.)
- Thompson, J. Eric.
1954. The rise and fall of Maya civilization. 287 pp., 24 pls., 20 figs., map. University of Oklahoma Press, Norman. (An important account of Maya civilization based upon archeological discoveries.)



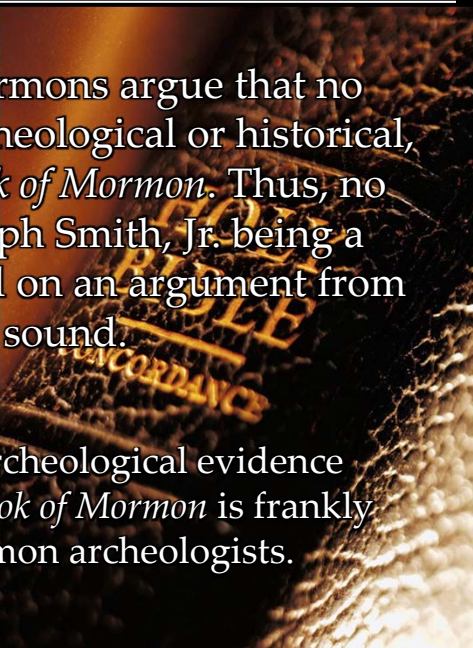
Joseph Smith, Jr. and the Tests of a Prophet of God



C. Third Argument: Mormons argue that no evidence, such as archeological or historical, exists against the *Book of Mormon*. Thus, no evidence against Joseph Smith, Jr. being a prophet of God based on an argument from the *Book of Mormon* is sound.

Responses:

2. That there is no archeological evidence supporting the *Book of Mormon* is frankly admitted by Mormon archeologists.



Joseph Smith, Jr. and the Tests of a Prophet of God

C. **Third Argument:** Mormons argue that no evidence, such as archeological or historical, exists against the *Book of Mormon*. Thus, no evidence against Joseph Smith, Jr. being a prophet of God based on an argument from the *Book of Mormon* is sound.

Responses:

3. There is no such language as "Reformed Egyptian."

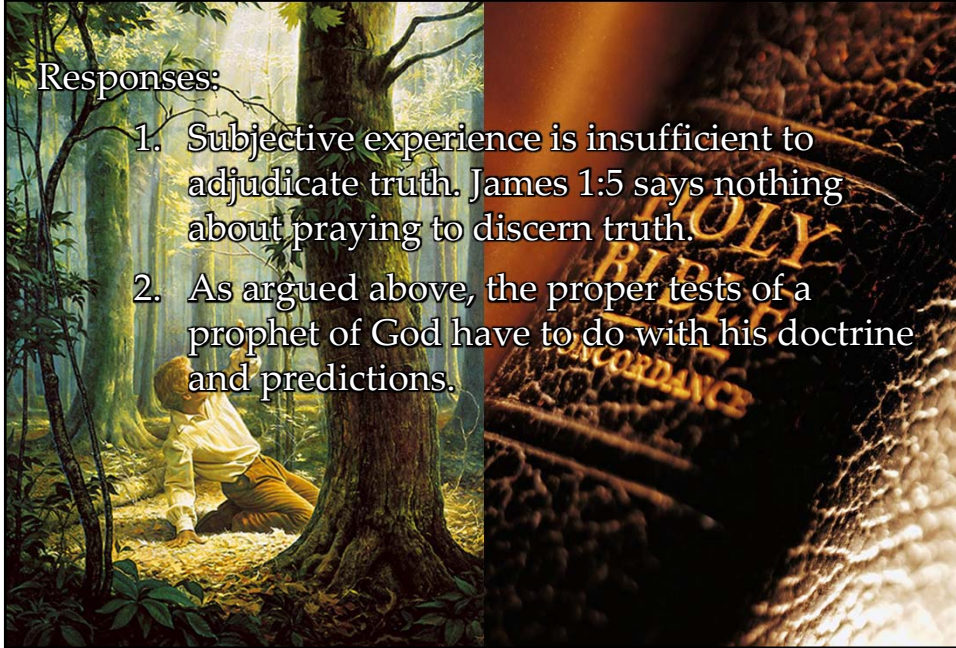
Joseph Smith, Jr. and the Tests of a Prophet of God

D. **Fourth Argument:** The most important "argument" that Mormons offer to prove that Joseph Smith, Jr. is a prophet of God is a subjective one. No matter what objective evidence can be brought against the authenticity of the *Book of Mormon* addressed in the above arguments, this subjective test always overrides it. Thus, ultimately, Mormons feel no obligation to try to answer the incontrovertible evidence against Joseph Smith, Jr., the *Book of Mormon* and their other scriptures, and Mormonism.

Joseph Smith, Jr. and the Tests of a Prophet of God

Responses:

1. Subjective experience is insufficient to adjudicate truth. James 1:5 says nothing about praying to discern truth.
2. As argued above, the proper tests of a prophet of God have to do with his doctrine and predictions.



Convince Us of Our Errors

Conclusion

1. Joseph Smith, Jr. is essential to Mormonism.
2. His role in the founding of Mormonism begins with his first vision.
3. Mormons defend that Joseph Smith, Jr. is a prophet of God by arguing for the authenticity of the *Book of Mormon*.
4. Joseph Smith, Jr. fails the tests for being a prophet of God.

