

A CRACK IN THE IDOL

By Roelf L. Ruffner

For one hundred and eighty-four years the religious-cult-business empire known as the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (LDS) has held up their slain prophet-seer-revelator as almost a semi-divine figure. They speak lovingly of “Joseph” (Joseph Smith, Jr.) and his portraits always seem to have an angelic glow about them. For Mormons his life was akin to Jesus Christ’s in righteousness and sinlessness. Just as Moses received the 10 commandments on Mt. Sinai Smith received on the Hill of Cumorah from an angel the Golden Bible or plates of gold which he translated from “reformed Egyptian” into English and called the Book of Mormon. *“But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed”* (Gal. 1:8).

What Smith did in the western part of New York all religious hucksters eventually do – established a church centered on oneself. Because of his heretical teachings and Smith’s financial shenanigans the Mormons were run out of New York, Ohio, and Missouri and finally settled in Nauvoo, Illinois in 1839. There Smith used his charismatic personality and zealous missionaries to draw the gullible from America and Europe to build a temple and a city with a population of 12,000 by the time of his lynching in 1844.

Charges of adultery and polygamy or “plural marriage” plagued Smith and his followers since the early 1830s. There were rumors and anti-Mormon newspaper articles reporting that Smith and his inner circle had multiple wives. These accusations were vehemently denied by Smith. Yet in 1843 he secretly had a “revelation” from God (He claimed to have had several.) which proclaimed “a new and everlasting covenant” or Celestial marriage in which a Mormon male could be “sealed for time and eternity” to more than one wife. It was kept secret until after his death in 1844 when Smith’s successor Brigham Young revealed it in the LDS’s new refuge in Utah territory. Polygamy was openly practiced by Mormons there until a manifesto by LDS President William Woodruff outlawed it in 1890 just in time for Utah to become a part of the United States of America. Since then this cult has excommunicated and turned in any polygamist members to the authorities. And they have denied that Smith was a polygamist; though historians claim he was “sealed” to upwards of 48 women in his life.

But “the times they are a changin’” and the LDS is a master chameleon. Many of its members are now internet savvy and can read what others say about Mormon history and especially the charlatan Smith. Polygamy is also gradually being accepted in American society as evidenced by the reality TV shows “Sister Wives” and “My Five Wives.” Recently an essay on the church website proclaimed that research has shown that Smith did after all have more than one wife, perhaps as many as forty. Some of those women “sealed” to Smith were for “eternity” as a “spiritual wife” and their marriage did not include sexual relations. The essay maintains that Smith and his legal wife Emma struggled mightily to accept his revelation. I’ll bet they did!

If Smith lied to the world about plural marriage, what other things did he lie about? The tales Smith told about seeing and talking with God, Jesus, the angel Moroni, John the Baptist, and finding the golden plates and translating them must now also be suspect. Since the LDS church hierarchy has kept this skeleton in its closet for so long, what other things has it not revealed? Their idol known as Joseph is now cracked and Lord willing it will be shattered into many pieces in the days to come.

“For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error. While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage” (2 Peter 2:18,19).

Doctrine and Covenants/Pearl of Great Price, Salt Lake City, Utah: Corporation of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, 1982; pp. 266-267.

<https://www.lds.org/topics/plural-marriage-in-kirtland-and-nauvoo?lang=eng> as of November 17, 2014.