

## Prophets in Mormonism – Part 8

by Marvin W. Cowan

Christians believe when God says something it is *true*. And if He says something will happen, it *will* happen. If God's word can't be trusted, nothing and nobody can be trusted! That is why it was considered a heinous crime in the Old Testament if someone claimed to be a prophet with a message from God when his message was not from God. Deuteronomy 13:5 and 18:20 say the penalty for false prophesy is death. In spite of that warning and the warnings of Jesus in Matthew 7:15 and 24:11, 24, there have been numerous false prophets throughout history.

But notice what the Bible says about God and His word. Titus 1:2 declares "God cannot lie," and Hebrews 6:18 says it is "impossible for God to lie." In Numbers 23:19 God gave these words to Balaam: "God is not a man that He should lie; neither the son of man, that He should repent. Hath He said, and shall He not do it? Or hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good?" 1 Timothy 2:13 also says that God "cannot deny Himself" or contradict what He has said. Since "God knows all things" (1 John 3:20), He doesn't make mistakes. Jesus said of God the Father, "He that sent me is *true*" (John 7:28; 8:26). John also said, "*No lie is of the truth*" (1 John 2:21).

The Mormon Church claims to be led by a Prophet even though most of their Prophets have never actually "prophesied." But when Joseph Smith started the Mormon Church, he prophesied about many things and a lot of those prophecies are now in LDS scripture in the *Doctrine and Covenants*. As we have shown in previous articles, many of those prophecies failed to happen as Smith predicted.

On April 6, 1830, the day that the Mormon Church was organized, Smith claimed he received a revelation from the Lord which said, "Wherefore, meaning the [LDS] church, thou shalt give heed unto all his [Smith's] words and commandments which he shall give unto you as he receiveth them, walking in all holiness before me; For *his word ye shall receive, as if from mine own mouth*, in all holiness" (*Doctrine and Covenants* 21:4-5).

Just two Sections later, in *Doctrine and Covenants* 23:2, 3, and 5, Smith claimed he received a revelation from the Lord for Oliver Cowdery, Hyrum Smith, and Joseph Smith Sr. to preach the truth "from henceforth and *forever*." Forever is a long time! But, Cowdery apostatized from the LDS Church in 1838 and was called a *liar* by Smith. So, did Cowdery preach the truth of Mormonism "from henceforth and

forever?” Hyrum Smith was killed just moments before Joseph Smith in Carthage, IL, and Joseph Smith Sr. died before Joseph was killed; so none of these men preached the LDS message “from henceforth and forever.” Since God knows all things (1 John 3:20) and cannot lie (Titus 1:2) did He give this message to Joseph Smith?

*Doctrine and Covenants* 24:12, dated July 1830, has “the Lord” saying through Joseph Smith that Oliver Cowdery would “*at all times, and in all places, he shall open his mouth and declare my gospel as with the voice of a trump, both day and night. And I will give him strength such as is not known among men.*” Since Cowdery apostatized in 1838 and died March 3, 1850 at the age of 43, he didn’t do these things, so did God really reveal this to Joseph Smith? If Cowdery had “*strength such as is not known among men,*” nobody ever mentioned it.

In verse 10 “the Lord” said “Oliver shall continue in bearing my name before the world, and also in the (LDS) Church...And lo, I am with him to the end.” But Oliver apostatized from the LDS Church 12 years before he died. He lived in Richmond, MO, where he joined the Methodist Church and held an office in it. When he died he was buried by the Methodist minister in Richmond. So, was Oliver witnessing to the LDS Church during his apostasy and was the Lord with him then too? If not, did Smith’s message come from the Lord?

Mormons believe that the *Book of Mormon* story about Nephites and Lamanites is a sacred history of the ancestors of the American Indians. Therefore, they have had an interest in doing missionary work among the various Indian tribes ever since the Mormon Church was started. According to a revelation in *Doctrine and Covenants* 30:5-6, dated September 1830, “the Lord” spoke through Joseph Smith and said of Oliver Cowdery, “I have given him power to *build up my church among the Lamanites*” (American Indians).

In another revelation dated October 1830 “the Lord” spoke again through Joseph Smith of Parley P. Pratt saying, “And that which I have appointed unto him is that he shall go with my servants Oliver Cowdery and Peter Whitmer, Jun. into the wilderness of the Lamanites.”

Cowdery and others did briefly visit some Catteraugus Indians near Buffalo, NY, in 1830, but never established a church among them. Again in 1831 Cowdery and others visited the Delaware tribe just west of Missouri and Cowdery spoke to them at least once (*History of the Church*, vol. I, pp. 182-183). But the Mormons were asked to leave, so Cowdery did not establish the LDS Church among the Delaware or any other Indian tribe. If God knows all things and He does not lie, did He really say that Cowdery was to build up the Church among the Lamanites?

More can be read about Smith’s revelations concerning Oliver Cowdery in the *Doctrine and Covenants*. Prophets in Mormonism will be continued in our next article.