

Mormonism's Prophetic Record

Are There Demonstrable False Prophecies Within Mormon Scripture and Literature?

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The legitimacy and validity of the entire Mormon church rested squarely upon its declaration that Joseph Smith was a genuine prophet of God. If he was not, then the Mormon church has been guilty of promoting a false prophet to the world for over 170 years.

Mormons themselves freely confess that upon the authority of Joseph Smith the church stands or falls. If he was a false prophet, the church cannot be genuine. This is why the issue of prophecy is so vital. Apostle James Talmage said of Smith, "If his claims to divine appointment be false, forming as they do the foundation of the church in this last dispensation, the superstructure cannot be stable."¹ Given this, Mormon authorities have no choice but to perpetuate the claim that Joseph Smith was a true prophet and that his hundreds of prophecies were "literally fulfilled," and are therefore the "marvelous proof" of his divine appointment. For example, the late leading doctrinal theologian Bruce McConkie argues:

By their works it shall be known whether professing ministers of religion are true or false prophets. Joseph Smith was a true prophet. What fruits did he leave? There is probably more evidence of his divine call and mission than of any other prophet who ever lived, Jesus himself only excepted. Joseph Smith has... uttered hundreds of prophecies which have been literally fulfilled.²

Joseph Smith himself emphasized that one who claims to be a true prophet of God must have his prophecies evaluated by the standard of God's Word. By his statement "the ancient Word of God" he clearly referred to biblical standards in part:

The only way of ascertaining a true prophet is to compare his prophecies with the ancient Word of God, and see if they agree, and if they do and come to pass, then certainly he is a true prophet.... When, therefore any man, *no matter who*, or how high his standing may be, utters, or publishes, anything that afterwards proves to be untrue, *he is a false prophet*.³

By Joseph Smith's own words, then, he is proven to be a false prophet. And by the very words of Mormon authorities the Mormon religion also is proven to be fraudulent. Not only do the many prophecies given by Joseph Smith in *Doctrine and Covenants* deny every biblical doctrine they comment upon, but Joseph Smith's specific predictions of future events have also characteristically proven wrong. While we have not studied every alleged prophecy Mormons claim for Smith, every one we did study proved false.

In 1844, while in jail, Smith was killed by an angry group of townspeople. By that time, he had uttered scores of prophecies "in the name of the Lord." But according to biblical standards, anyone who claims to be a prophet must prove himself so by establishing a perfect record of prediction. Again, the biblical requirement is for absolute accuracy in prophetic revelation. What this means is that a single false prophecy—just one—is sufficient to establish a person as a false prophet. God Himself warned all men:

But a prophet who presumes to speak in my name anything I have not commanded him to say, or a prophet who speaks in the name of other gods, must be put to death." You may say to yourselves, "How can we know when a message has not been spoken by the Lord?" If what a prophet proclaims in the name of the Lord does not take place or come true, that is a message the Lord has not spoken. That prophet has spoken presumptuously. Do not be afraid of him (Deut. 18:20-22 NIV).

In other words, if anyone spoke in the name of the Lord (Joseph Smith), but spoke presumptuously (Joseph Smith), or in the name of other gods (Joseph Smith), and if the prophecy did not come true (Joseph Smith), that prophet was to die—as, unfortunately, Joseph Smith did in 1844. When Mormon authorities claim that Smith's prophetic record is infallible and that this proves him a true prophet, they are regrettably only continuing the well-established tradition of Mormon distortion in religious matters.

Mormons have in fact devised various ways to "explain" Smith's many false prophecies. There are so many different rationalizations that one wearies of reading them. For example, they may claim, as Smith himself did, that a prophet is only a prophet when he is acting as such—that is, presumably, when he claims to speak in the name of the Lord and is therefore under divine inspiration. Mormons claim that any errors which do exist were, therefore, given when Smith was not "acting" as a prophet.

However, since many of Smith's false prophecies *were* given "as a prophet," when he *was* speaking in the name of the Lord, the explanation is irrelevant.

For anyone who lets words mean what they say, the inescapable conclusion is that, according to biblical standards, Joseph Smith was a false prophet. Just as the single act of marital infidelity or a single premeditated killing makes a person an adulterer or a murderer, so a single false prophecy makes one a false prophet.⁴ Joseph Smith himself agreed to that standard.

In the following cases, we include examples where Smith clearly prophesied

“in the name of the Lord,” so there can be no mistake that the prophecy was being claimed as divine.

The Canadian Prophecy

David Whitmer (one of the three principal witnesses to the *Book of Mormon*) tells a highly relevant story which not only reveals Smith to be a false prophet, but sprouts seeds of doubt about any purported prophecy or revelation Smith claimed to receive. Just as the Mormon scriptures, in particular *Doctrine and Covenants*, contain the “feel” of occult revelation, here we also sample the flavor of spiritistic “humor.”

Here is the story in Whitmer’s own words:

When the Book of Mormon was in the hands of the printer, more money was needed to finish the printing of it.... Brother Hyrum said it had been suggested to him that some of the brethren might go to Toronto, Canada and sell the copyright of the Book of Mormon for considerable money: and he persuaded Joseph to inquire of the Lord about it. Joseph concluded to do so. He had not yet given up the [seer] stone. Joseph looked into the hat in which he placed the stone, and *received a revelation* that some of the brethren should go to Toronto, Canada, *and that they would sell the copyright* of the Book of Mormon. Hyrum Page and Oliver Crowderly went to Toronto on this mission, but *they failed entirely to sell the copyright*, returning without any money. Joseph was at my father’s house when they returned. I was there also, and am *an eyewitness* to these facts. Jacob Whitmer and John Whitmer were also present when Hyrum Page and Oliver Crowderly returned from Canada.

Well, we were all in great trouble; and we asked Joseph how it was that he had received a revelation from the Lord for some brethren to go to Toronto and sell the copy-right and the brethren had utterly failed in their undertaking. Joseph did not know how it was, so he inquired of the Lord about it, and behold the following revelation came through the stone:

Some revelations are of God: some revelations are of man: and some revelations are of the devil.

So we see that [even though Smith claimed it was] the revelation to go to Toronto and sell the copyright was not of God, but was of the devil or of the heart of man.... This was a lesson for our benefit *and we should have profited by it in [the] future more than we did.*

Whitmer concludes his discussion with a warning to every living Mormon:

Remember this matter brethren; it is very important.... Now is it wisdom to put your trust in Joseph Smith, and believe all his revelations in the *Doctrine and Covenants* to be of God?... I will say here, that I could tell you *other false revelations* that came through Brother Joseph as mouthpiece (not through the stone), but this will suffice. Many of Brother Joseph’s revelations were never printed. The revelation to go to Canada was written down on paper, but was never printed (emphasis added).⁵

Let’s consider this account carefully. Smith and the other Mormons were obviously convinced of the divine authority of the initial revelation—or else they

would never have taken the difficult journey to Canada. When the prophecy inexplicably failed, they naturally sought an answer from God (by occult means)—and what happened? They received a reply that could not help but strike dread into their hearts: “Some revelations are of God; some revelations are of man; and some revelations are of the devil.” Apparently, then, there was no way to distinguish a true prophecy from a false one!

Thus, if this *false* revelation was *indistinguishable* from the genuine revelations of Smith, how can Mormons today know that any of Smith’s revelations were legitimate? And what does this fact do to the credibility of the revelations given by any Mormon president and prophet? What is worse, such revelations will never be objectively verified or invalidated. Why? Because the Bible itself is rejected by Mormonism as a reliable authority. This means that the only “Scripture” left to test such revelation by is Mormon scripture, which is itself contradictory and perpetually “open.” New revelations can come at any time and be added to the canon of scripture. Whether or not they contradict earlier revelation is irrelevant. In the end, we see that no Mormon should logically place trust in any of Smith’s prophecies (or any of his other revelations) because 1) they could just as easily be false as true, and 2) there is no way to tell the difference until it is too late.

Doctrine and Covenants

Nevertheless, we will proceed to document some of the false prophecies of Joseph Smith. Let us begin with the alleged scripture. *Doctrine and Covenants*. The first false prophecy is found in chapter one, where “God” Himself promises that the prophecies in the book are all true and will come to pass:

Search these commandments, for they are true and faithful, and the prophecies and promises which are in them *shall all be fulfilled*. What I the Lord have spoken, I have spoken, *and I excuse not myself*; and though the heavens and the earth pass away, my word shall not pass away, but *shall all be fulfilled*, whether *by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same*. For behold, and lo, the Lord is God, and the Spirit beareth record, and *the record is true*, and the truth abides forever and ever. Amen (D&C, 1:37,38, emphasis added).

Note that this section of Mormon scripture claims first, that the commandments “are true” and that the prophecies and promises “shall all be fulfilled”; second, that the Mormon deity is placing his own authority on the line when he says, “I excuse not myself” (for having spoken them), and third, that the prophecies “shall all be fulfilled” whether by God’s own voice “or by the voice of my servants”—which is the same thing.

These claims leave no room to maneuver: A single indisputable false prophecy anywhere in *Doctrine and Covenants* will completely invalidate the entire book. Obviously, then, the existence of dozens and scores of false prophecies in *Doctrine and Covenants* means that Mormons who trust this book are being deceived. If 1) the Mormon God has spoken falsely, and 2) “some revelations are of God, some revelations are of men, and some revelations are of the devil,” and 3)

there is no way of knowing which are which, then the logical conclusion is that 4) Mormons should not place their trust in any of them. We will now prove that *Doctrine and Covenants* contains false prophecies.

The City and Temple Prophecy

In a revelation given to Joseph Smith on September 22 and 23, 1832, “the word of the Lord” declares that both a city and a temple are to be built “in the western boundaries of the state of Missouri” (that is, in Independence, Missouri):

A revelation of Jesus Christ unto his servant Joseph Smith, Jun[ior].... Yea, *the word of the Lord* concerning his church... for the gathering of his saints to stand upon Mount Zion, which shall be the city of New Jerusalem. Which *city shall be built*, beginning at the temple lot... *in the western boundaries of the state of Missouri*, and dedicated by the hand of Joseph Smith.... Verily *this is the word of the Lord*, that the city New Jerusalem shall be built by the gathering of saints, beginning at this place, even the place of the temple, which temple shall be reared *in this generation*. For verily *this generation shall not all pass away* until an house shall be built unto the Lord, and a cloud shall rest upon it, which cloud shall be even the glory of the Lord, which shall fill the house.... Therefore, as I said concerning the sons of Moses—for the sons of Moses and also *the sons of Aaron shall offer an acceptable offering and sacrifice in the house of the Lord*, which house shall be built under the Lord *in this generation*, upon the consecrated spot as *I have appointed* (D&C, 84:1-5, 31, emphasis added).

This prophecy clearly teaches that a temple and a city will be built in western Missouri in the generation of the men *then living* and that it will be dedicated by the hand of Joseph Smith himself. This temple will stand (in western Missouri) “upon Mount Zion” and the city will be named “the city of New Jerusalem.” It was to be the place Christ returned to at His Second Coming.⁶

In *Doctrine and Covenants*, 97:19 (August, 1833) and 101:17-21 (December, 1833), God further declares that He is absolutely certain as to His intent and the location of this temple: “Zion cannot fall, nor be moved out of her place, for God is there, and the hand of the Lord is there,” and “there is none other place appointed than that which I have appointed; neither shall there be any other place.”

It is interesting to note that on July 20, 1833, when Smith was giving this prophecy in Kirtland, Ohio—and unaware of the events taking place in Missouri—the Mormon community had already agreed to leave Missouri because of “persecution.” In other words, even as Smith was giving the prophecy “in the name of the Lord,” “Zion” was already being “moved out of her place.”⁷

How do Mormons respond? They claim the prophecy failed because the Mormon community itself was unfaithful. However, how can Mormons credibly claim this when the church itself was being “persecuted”? Surely, if they had not been living as committed and zealous Mormons, they would never have encountered the social response they did. It was thus undoubtedly the *faithful* Mormons who were driven from Missouri, leaving the prophecy unfulfilled. And even Mormon historians concede that when they moved to Quincy, Illinois, their promised

Missouri “temple” comprised only four cornerstones.⁸

In the ensuing 160 years no temple has ever been built in western Missouri, let alone a Mormon city. Thus Joseph Smith never dedicated a temple, nor were sacrifices offered there. It was not built in “this generation,” no cloud “rested upon” the temple, etc. This revelation alone thus contains at least *four* false prophecies. Neither can Mormons logically claim that Zion was “reestablished” in Salt Lake City, for the December 1833 prophecy clearly says there will be “none other place” than the western boundaries of Missouri.

Nevertheless, the Mormon reaction to this prediction illustrates the basic Mormon approach to their many false prophecies. Divine predictions are vigorously maintained until proven false. Then they are rationalized. Consider the following train of events.

In spite of being driven from Missouri, the early Mormons intended to return and fulfill the prophecy. In 1861, thirty years after the prophecy was first given, Apostle George Smith emphasized, “Let me remind you that it is predicted that this generation shall not pass away till a temple shall be built, and the glory of the Lord rest upon it, according to the promises.”⁹

Then in 1870, almost forty years after the prophecy, Apostle Orson Pratt stated that Mormons could expect a literal fulfillment of the prophecy as much as they do the rising and setting of the sun. Why? “*Because God cannot lie. He will fulfill all his promises. He has spoken, it must come to pass. This is our faith!*”¹⁰

Perhaps sensing a growing problem, the 1890 edition of *Doctrine and Covenants* (almost sixty years later) carried a footnote declaring that a generation lasted more than a hundred years.¹¹ This note is not found in *modern* editions of *Doctrine and Covenants*.

Again, in 1900, almost seventy years later, the fifth Mormon president and prophet, Lorenzo Snow, reiterated that Mormons would still go back and build the divinely prophesied temple.¹²

Even in 1931, ninety-nine years after the prophecy (when “that generation” would surely have been dead), the tenth president and prophet of the Mormon church, Joseph Fielding Smith, was stating his “firm belief” that the temple and city would be built. Thus, he promises that when the temple is reared it will be by:

Some of that generation who were living when this revelation was given.... I have full confidence in the word of the Lord that *it shall not fail.... We have not been released from this responsibility, nor shall we be. The word of the Lord will not fail....* No matter what the correct interpretation may be, the fact remains that *the city Zion, or New Jerusalem, will eventually be built in Jackson County, Missouri and the temple of the Lord will also be constructed.*¹³

Incredibly, recent editions of Smith’s book (e.g., 1975) continue to retain this embarrassing statement! Logically, one would think that he would have had to confess that his “full confidence in the word of the Lord” proved futile. Who could disagree with his words when he stated in a more recent text: “It is also reasonable to believe that no soul living in 1832, is still living in mortality on the earth.”¹⁴

It is now more than 160 years since the prophecy, and neither the temple nor the city has been built. There is no way to escape the conclusion that this prophecy is false. But, of course, since Mormonism assumes that Joseph Smith was a true prophet of God, this cannot possibly be a false prophecy. So the process of rationalization sets in. For example, Joseph Fielding Smith dealt with the problem by finally claiming that the term “generation” meant an *indefinite* period of time and that, due to “persecution,” God had “absolved the saints and postponed the day.”¹⁵

Now everyone could relax. There never was a false prophecy.

For some reason, Mormon presidents, prophets and leaders see “no conflict whatever” between the outcome of the prophecy just cited and the teaching of the *Book of Mormon* in Nephi 3:7 which says, “The Lord giveth no commandments unto the children of men, save he shall prepare a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which he commandeth them.”

What is most disconcerting is that modern Mormons do not seem to be concerned with such an unquestionably false prophecy and refuse to recognize the implications.¹⁶ They continue to believe, and to teach others, that *Doctrine and Covenants* is the inerrant “word of the Lord.”

The Civil War Prophecy

The Civil War prophecy represents another false prediction. It is found in *Doctrine and Covenants* 87:1-8, concerning a prophecy given on December 25, 1832. In his *Articles of Faith*, James Talmage refers to “the facts establishing a complete fulfillment of this astounding prophecy.”¹⁷

However, there was no “complete fulfillment,” neither was the prophecy “astounding.” It was patently false. What is astounding is that Talmage applies the 1832 prophecy to World War I (1914-1918) when it has nothing at all to do with that war. Indeed, to apply the prophecy to World War I only increases the magnitude of its errors. For one thing, its own declaration requires it be applied to the “wars that will shortly come to pass, beginning... at South Carolina.” The prophecy declares:

Verily, *thus sayeth the Lord* concerning the wars that will shortly come to pass, beginning at the rebellion of South Carolina, which will eventually terminate in the death and misery of many souls; And the time will come when that war will be poured out upon *all nations*, beginning at this place.... And the Southern States will call on other nations, even the nation of Great Britain, as it is called, and they shall also call upon other nations, in order to defend themselves against other nations; and then war shall be poured out upon *all nations*.... And thus, with the sword and by bloodshed *the inhabitants of earth* shall mourn; and with famine, and plague, and earthquake, and the thunder of heaven, and the fierce and vivid lightening also, shall the *inhabitants of the earth* be made to feel the wrath, and indignation, and chastening hand of Almighty God until the consumption decreed hath made a *full end of all nations*.¹⁸

Joseph Smith made other predictions relating to this great war. Elsewhere he

spoke another false prophecy when he declared “in the name of the Lord God” that these tumultuous events would precede the Second Coming of Jesus Christ:

I prophecy [sic], *in the name of the Lord God*, that the commencement of the difficulties which will cause much bloodshed *previous to the coming of the Son of man* will be in South Carolina. It may probably arise through the slave question. This a voice declared to me while I was praying earnestly on the subject, December 25, 1832.¹⁹

But listening to voices can be perilous.

In looking at this prophecy, we should note several facts. First, it has been demonstrated historically that Smith could have expected a civil war, hence to write of an expected war, one that is public knowledge, is hardly “astounding.” For example, “Joseph Smith was familiar with the fact that South Carolina had rebelled at the time he gave the revelation.”²⁰ Also, “many people believed there would be a civil war before it actually took place.”²¹ For example, five months *previous* to Smith’s “revelation,” on July 14, 1832, Congress passed a tariff act, refused by South Carolina, and Andrew Jackson alerted the troops. So, even at this time, “the nation was fully expecting a Civil War to begin promptly in South Carolina.”²²

Second, even God Himself didn’t seem to know whether or not this great war would arise over the issue of slavery. (He said, “It may *probably* arise through the slave question.”)

Third, the revelation itself was wrong on numerous counts. First, the war did not start until 1861, thirty years later—it did not “come to pass shortly.” Second, war was not “poured out upon all nations” but only on one nation. Third, there were no “earthquakes,” “thunder of heaven,” or lightening which struck the “inhabitants of the earth” as evidence of God’s wrath. Nor did the remainder of the earth’s population feel “the wrath of Almighty God.” Fourth, there was hardly “a full end of all nations.”

Finally, Smith’s revelation on the war was not printed until 1851, almost twenty years *after* the revelation, and “Mormon leaders have suppressed part of Joseph Smith’s diary which tended to discredit the revelation.”²³ (This concerned a “dream interpretation” of the prophecy which stated that the United States Government would call on Joseph Smith to defend the “western territory” against England. Smith was obviously dead at the start of the Civil War, thus the interpretation was false, which cast doubt on the revelation itself.²⁴) In conclusion, no one can deny that this is another false prophecy.

Brigham Young was also guilty of false prophecy relating to the Civil War. He predicted that the war would not end until it had emptied the land to allow Mormons to return to Missouri, something that was never fulfilled.²⁵ He also predicted that the slaves would *not* be freed: “Will the present struggle free the slaves? No;... they cannot do that.”²⁶

Joseph Smith’s Civil War prophecy and his “Rocky Mountain” prophecy are considered his “most important prophecies.”²⁷ We have seen that the first is a

false prophecy; and the Tanners have documented that the latter is not worth considering in that it is a “forgery which was written after Joseph Smith’s death.”²⁸

The Second Coming

Along with Jehovah’s Witnesses and Seventh-day Adventists, Joseph Smith predicted that the Second Coming of Christ would occur in the latter part of the nineteenth century. In his *History of the Church*, Smith taught that the Second Coming would occur between 1890 and 1891. Thus, in 1835 he declared Christ’s return would occur fifty-six years later; and in 1843 he predicted it would occur in forty-eight years. Smith claimed that the generation then living would not die “till Christ comes.”²⁹ For example, under the date of April 6, 1843, in his *original History* (taken from Smith’s diary, March 10, 1843, to July 14, 1843) one can read, “I prophecy [sic] *in the name of the Lord God*—& let it be written: that the Son of Man will not come in the heavens until I am 85 years old, 48 years hence or about 1890” (emphasis added).³⁰ Of course. Smith was dead within a year—and Christ still has not returned.

Some of the twelve Mormon apostles were told that they also would remain until Christ returned. For example, according to the Tanners, Lyman E. Johnson was told he would “see the Savior come and stand upon the earth with power and great glory”; and William Smith was told that he would “be preserved and remain on the earth, until Christ shall come.”³¹ Because of such a strong belief in the imminence of the Second Coming, Apostle Parley P. Pratt wrote in 1838:

I will state as a *prophecy* [sic], that there will not be an unbelieving Gentile upon this continent 50 years hence; and if they are not greatly scourged, and in a great measure overthrown, within five or ten years from this date, *then the Book of Mormon will have proved itself false.*³²

Perhaps not unexpectedly, the entire prophecy has been deleted from the modern versions of the *Writings of Parley P. Pratt*.

But there have been many other false prophecies throughout the history of the Mormon church, far too numerous to list. We cite only seven others for purposes of illustration:

1. In the *Book of Mormon*, 2 Nephi 3:14 it is prophesied that “that seer” (which Mormons interpret as Joseph Smith) will be protected by God: “They that seek to destroy him shall be confounded;... this promise... shall be fulfilled.”

But it was not fulfilled, for “they that seek to destroy him” did in fact destroy him at a young age in 1844 when he was killed by townspeople in a gun battle in Carthage, Illinois. Smith himself had said in October, 1843, “I prophecy, *in the name of the Lord God of Israel...* they never will have power to kill me till my work is accomplished, and I am ready to die.”³³ But again, less than a year later, Joseph Smith was dead. And according to accounts of his death, he certainly was not yet “ready to die.” While in jail, facing the prospect of confronting the angry people that would kill him, he quickly wrote to his Nauvoo Legion to break into the jail and “save him at all costs.”³⁴ Eyewitnesses noted that just before he was

shot he gave the Masonic signal of distress and cried out, “Is there no help...?”—and then after he was shot came the exclamation of unbelief, “Oh Lord; my God!”³⁵ Furthermore, given the tremendous obstacles facing the church he had founded, who could reasonably say his work had been “accomplished?”

2. In *Doctrine and Covenants*, (114:1) it was prophesied in the name of the Lord that David W. Patten would go on a mission one year later:

Verily thus sayeth the Lord: It is wisdom in my servant David W. Patten, that he settle up all his business... that he may perform a mission unto me next spring, in company with others, even twelve including himself, to testify of my name and bear glad tidings unto all the world.

This prophecy was given April 17, 1838. Six months later, on October 25, 1838, David W. Patten was shot and killed—he “instantly fell, mortally wounded, having received a large ball in his bowels.”³⁶ No one can deny, then, that this is another false prophecy. But if the Mormon God is genuine, why would He prophesy that a man was to preach for Him whom He knew would shortly be killed and thus be unable to fulfill His mission? Patten’s death cannot be rationalized with the claim that he was guilty of sin or apostasy because Smith’s own remarks after his death claim he was a faithful Mormon until his demise.³⁷

3. On May 18, 1843, in the “name of the Lord” and “in the name of Jesus Christ” Joseph Smith prophesied the complete overthrow of the United States Government. This never occurred, nor did the Government ever redress “its crimes” as Smith promised:

President Smith, in concluding his remarks, said... “*I prophesy in the name of the Lord of Israel, unless the United States redress the wrongs committed upon the saints in the state of Missouri and punish the crimes committed by her officers that in a few years the Government will be utterly overthrown and wasted, and there will not be so much as a potsherd left*” (emphasis added).³⁸

And,

I prophesied by virtue of the holy priesthood vested in me, *and in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ*, that, if Congress will not hear our petition and grant us protection, *they shall be broken up as a government*, and God shall damn them, and there shall be *nothing* left of them—not even a grease spot.³⁹

But again, Congress never granted the Mormons their petition. It correctly concluded that Mormon problems with other settlers were a result of their own religious excesses and evil practices such as polygamy, violence against non-Mormons and their terrible doctrine of blood atonement. In fact, the Government so increased its pressure against the polygamist activity of the church that a new “revelation” in 1890 conveniently “reversed” the polygamist doctrines which had prevented Utah’s entry into the Union.

Thus, the United States Government was not “utterly overthrown and wasted,” nor was there “nothing” left of it, “not even a grease spot.” The United States grew to become the most powerful nation on earth.

4. In *Doctrine and Covenants* (104:1) “Jesus” claimed that the Mormon “United

Order”—the Mormon communities in Ohio and Missouri—would remain until He returned. However, the “United Order” failed and was disbanded, and over 150 years later Jesus still has not returned.

5. In the *Book of Mormon* (Alma 7:10) it is falsely prophesied that the Messiah will be born in Jerusalem when, of course, He was born in Bethlehem. Four biblical books of history attest to Jesus’ birthplace as Bethlehem: one prophet who wrote a miraculous prediction in 700 b.c., and three contemporary biographers of Jesus (Micah 5:2; Matthew 2:4-6; Luke 2:4-7; John 7:42).

6. Heber Kimball falsely prophesied that “Brother Brigham Young will become President of the United States.”⁴⁰

7. Joseph Smith’s father falsely prophesied that Joseph, Jr., “should continue in the Priest’s office until Christ comes.”⁴¹

Many other false prophecies could be listed.⁴²

With so many false prophecies by Smith and other Mormons, one is tempted to assume that they were either carried away by false visions of their own mind or through spiritistic duplicity. Certainly a truthful God could not be the author of such wrong predictions.

In spite of all these false prophecies, again, Mormons do not show much concern about the issue. Apparently, this is because they have never come to grips with the biblical teaching on what God requires of a true prophet and what a false prophet really is:

It is somewhat ironic that most Mormons are basically unimpressed by the evidence against their “prophets” concerning the many false prophecies that have issued forth from them. This behavior is so unusual because of the reverence Mormons give their Presidents as “prophets of God.” Their attitude of indifference is primarily based upon ignorance and conditioning. The average Mormon is unaware of the biblical tests for a true prophet and is therefore ignorant of how to properly determine if a man is a true prophet or a false prophet. However, the greatest difficulty Mormons have is overcoming their “conditioning.” They have been programmed to believe that the greatest test of a prophet is their own personal “testimony” that he is a prophet.⁴³

But it must also be said that many Mormons aren’t even aware of these false prophecies. For example, if one examines the *Doctrine and Covenants’* student manual, an extensive five-hundred-page commentary on *Doctrine and Covenants*, one finds that the false prophecies are either ignored or carefully reinterpreted. For example, concerning the rebuilding of the temple, the *Manual* equivocates on the word “generation” and defines it as an indefinite period.⁴⁴ Further,

The Lord later excused the Saints from building that temple because mobs prevented it... and because the Saints at that time had not kept the commandments as they should.... The day will come, however, when the holy city of God will be established in Jackson County, Missouri, and the temple will be filled with the glory of God as envisioned by the prophets.⁴⁵

This completely ignores the clear statements of the prophecy itself that it must

be built in “this generation.”

Its explanation of the Civil War prophecy is equally distorting. The text cites various wars around the world spanning almost a century, from 1861 to 1958. This is the alleged pouring out of wars upon “all nations” as described in the prophecy. But anyone who actually reads the prophecy can see that such an interpretation is completely false. To claim that “the Civil War was the beginning of the war that will bring about the end of the world” (the “full end of all nations” prophesied in *D&C*, 87:6) is a statement that could be made for any war at any period of history—if we are ignoring the factor of time.⁴⁶ Again, anyone who reads the prophecy can see that it is the end of the world itself that is predicted, and this is to happen within a set period.

But again, what else can Mormon leaders do when faced with proof of false prophecies? Being unwilling to accept the implications, which would require them to accept that Joseph Smith *was a false prophet* and to thus have to forsake Mormonism, they have no choice but to rationalize his failures. However, in doing this, they are guilty of foisting a deliberate deception upon unsuspecting converts and the very Mormon people they claim to shepherd.

Notes

- ¹ James Talmadge, *The Study of the Articles of Faith: Being a Consideration of the Principle Doctrines of the Churd of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City, UT: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1976), pp. 7-8.
- ² Bruce R. McConkie, *Doctrinal New Testament Commentary, Matthew-Revelation* Vol. 1 (Salt Lake City, UT: Bookcraft, 1976), pp. 252-253.
- ³ *The Evening and Morning Star*, July 1933, p. 1, emphasis added.
- ⁴ From an analogy by Bob Whitte, “And It Came to Pass” (tract) (Safety Harbor, FL: Ex Mormons for Jesus).
- ⁵ David Whitmer, *An Address to All Believers in Christ by a Witness to the Divine Authenticity of the Book of Mormon* (1887, rpt. Concord, CA: Pacific Publishing Co., 1972), pp. 30-31.
- ⁶ John Ankerberg, K. H. Christensen, Lawrence Flake, James Bjornstad, Sandra Tanner, Ed Decker, Walter Martin, “Mormon Officials and Christian Scholars Compare Doctrines,” (Chattanooga, TN: The John Ankerberg Show, 1983), program transcript, p. 7.
- ⁷ Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, Vol. 1 (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book Company/The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1975), p. 400.
- ⁸ *Ibid.*, 394, 400, 403, Walter Martin, *The Maze of Mormonism*, rev. ed. (Santa Ana, CA: Vision House Publishers, 1978), pp. 353-354.
- ⁹ Brigham Young et al, *Journal of Discourses*, vol. 10, p. 344, cited by Jerald and Sandra Tanner, *The Changing World of Mormonism: A Behind the Scenes Look at Changes in Mormon Doctrine and Practice*, rev. ed. (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1981), p. 421.
- ¹⁰ *Journal of Discourses*, 13:362, cited in *ibid.*
- ¹¹ *Doctrine and Covenants*, 1890 edition, Section 84, p. 289.
- ¹² *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Autumn 1955, p. 74, cited in Jerald and Sandra Tanner, *Changing World*, p. 422.
- ¹³ Joseph Fielding Smith, *Way to Perfection* (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book Company, 1975), pp. 268-271.
- ¹⁴ Joseph Fielding Smith, *Answers to Gospel Questions* (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book Company, 1976), vol. 4, p. 122.
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 111-115.
- ¹⁶ John Ankerberg, Ed Decker, “Mormonism Revisited” (Chattanooga, TN: The John Ankerberg

- Show, 1983), program transcript, p. 19.
- ¹⁷ Talmage, *Articles of Faith*, p. 25.
- ¹⁸ *Doctrine and Covenants*, 87:1-8.
- ¹⁹ Joseph Smith, *History*, 5:324, in Jerald and Sandra Tanner, *Changing World*, p. 428, emphasis added.
- ²⁰ See "Rebellion in South Carolina" in *The Evening and Morning Star*, January 1833 (This magazine was available to Smith in December); Joseph Smith, *History*, 1:301; Larry S. Jonas, *Mormon Claims Examined*, 1961, p. 52 in Jerald and Sandra Tanner, *Changing World*, pp. 424-425.
- ²¹ A civil war was considered a possibility even before 1832. This fact was discussed on American Adventure, a two-part program on Jacksonian America on WTCL-TV34 Saturday, November 2, 1991, 7:00-8:00 am, produced by the Dallas Community College. See also Jerald and Sandra Tanner, *Changing World*, p. 425; Martin, *Maze*, p. 357.
- ²² Harry L. Ropp, *The Mormon Papers: Are the Mormon Scriptures Reliable?* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, retitled *Are the Mormon Scriptures Reliable?* 1987), p. 64.
- ²³ Jerald and Sandra Tanner, *Changing World*, p. 430.
- ²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 428-430.
- ²⁵ *Journal of Discourses*, 9:142-143, cited in Jerald and Sandra Tanner, *Changing World*, p. 426.
- ²⁶ *Journal of Discourses*, 10:250; see *The Millennial Star*, 25:787.
- ²⁷ Jerald and Sandra Tanner, *Changing World*, p. 430.
- ²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 428-430.
- ²⁹ Joseph Smith, *History*, 5:336.
- ³⁰ Cited in Jerald and Sandra Tanner, *Changing World*, p. 419.
- ³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 420.
- ³² This was copied from the microfilm original at the Mormon Church Historian's Library; cf. Jerald and Sandra Tanner, *Changing World*, p. 420.
- ³³ Smith, *History*, 6:58, emphasis added.
- ³⁴ Fawn M. Brodie, *No Man Knows My History: The Life of Joseph Smith*, 2nd ed, rev. (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1976), p. 392.
- ³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 393-394.
- ³⁶ Smith, *History*, 3:170-171.
- ³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 171.
- ³⁸ Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, comp. Joseph Fielding Smith* (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book Company, 1977), p. 302; cf. Smith, *History*, 5:394.
- ³⁹ Joseph Smith, *Millennial Star*, 22:455; cited in Bob Whitte, "And It Came to Pass," (tract).
- ⁴⁰ *Journal of Discourses*, 5:219.
- ⁴¹ Smith, *History*, 1:323.
- ⁴² See our *Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About Mormonism* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1992), p. 353n for other examples.
- ⁴³ Bob Whitte, *Witnessing to Mormons: Where Does it Say That?* (Safety Harbor, FL: Ex-Mormons for Jesus Ministries, n.d.), p. 17.
- ⁴⁴ Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, *The Doctrine and Covenants Student Manual* (Salt Lake City, UT: Church Educational System, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saint, 1981), p. 181.
- ⁴⁵ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 194.