

“I Will Be a Second Mohammed”

Who would say such a thing? And why? Read on to discover the startling answer!

In the heat of the Missouri “Mormon War” of 1838, *Joseph Smith* made the following claim — and threat,

I will be a second Mohammed to this generation...whose motto, in treating for peace, was “the Alcoran [Koran] or the Sword,” so shall it be eventually with us, “Joseph Smith or the Sword.”¹

It is most interesting that a self-proclaimed Christian prophet would liken himself to Mohammed, the founder of Islam. His own comparison invites us to take a closer look as well. And when we do, we find some striking — and troubling — parallels. Consider the following.

- Mohammed and Joseph Smith both had humble beginnings. Neither had formal religious connections or upbringing, and both were relatively uneducated. Both founded new religions by creating their own scriptures. In fact, followers of both prophets claim these scriptures are miracles since their authors were the most simple and uneducated of men.²
- Both prophets claim of having angel visitations, and of receiving divine revelation to restore pure religion to the earth again. Mohammed was told that both Jews and Christians had long since corrupted their scriptures and religion. In like manner, Joseph Smith was told that all of Christianity had become corrupt, and that consequently the Bible itself was no longer reliable. In both cases, this corruption required a complete restoration of both scripture and religion. Nothing which preceded either prophet could be relied upon any longer. Both prophets claim they were used of God to restore eternal truths which once existed on earth, but had been lost due to human corruption.
- Both prophets created new scripture which borrowed heavily from the Bible, but with a substantially new “spin.” In his Koran, Mohammed appropriates a number of Biblical themes and characters — but he changes the complete sense of many passages, claiming to “correct” the Bible. In so doing he changes many doctrines, introducing his own in their place. In like manner, Joseph Smith created the Book of Mormon, much of which is plagiarized directly from the King James Bible. Interestingly, the Book of Mormon claims that this same Bible has been substantially corrupted and is therefore unreliable. In addition, Joseph Smith went so far as to actually create his own version of the Bible itself, the “Inspired Version,” in which he both adds and deletes significant portions of text, claiming he is “correcting” it. In so doing he also changes many doctrines, introducing his own in their place.

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- As a part of their new scriptural “spin,” both prophets saw themselves as prophesied in scripture, and both saw themselves as a continuation of a long line of Biblical prophets. Mohammed saw himself as a continuation of the ministry of Moses and Jesus. Joseph Smith saw himself as a successor to Enoch, Melchizedek, Joseph and Moses. Joseph Smith actually wrote himself into his own version of the Bible — by name.
- Both prophets held up their own scripture as superior to the Bible. Mohammed claimed that the Koran was a perfect copy of the original which was in heaven. The Koran is therefore held to be absolutely perfect, far superior to the Bible and superceding it. In like manner, Joseph Smith also made the following claim. “I told the Brethren that the Book of Mormon was the most correct of any book on earth, and the keystone of our religion, and a man would get nearer to God by abiding its precepts, than by any other book.”³
- Despite their claim that the Bible was corrupt, both prophets admonished their followers to adhere to its teachings. An obvious contradiction, this led to selective acceptance of some portions and wholesale rejection of others. As a result, the Bible is accepted by both groups of followers only to the extent that it agrees with their prophet’s own superior revelation.
- Both Mohammed and Joseph Smith taught that true salvation was to be found only in their respective religions. Those who would not accept their message were considered “infidels,” pagans or Gentiles. In so doing, both prophets became the enemy of genuine Christianity, and have led many people away from the Christ of the Bible.
- Both prophets encountered fierce opposition to their new religions and had to flee from town to town because of threats on their lives. Both retaliated to this opposition by forming their own militias. Both ultimately set up their own towns as model societies.
- Both Mohammed and Joseph Smith left unclear instructions about their successors. The majority of Mohammed’s followers, Sunni Muslims, believe they were to elect their new leader, whereas the minority, Shiite Muslims, believe Mohammed’s son was to be their next leader. Similarly, the majority of Joseph Smith’s followers, Mormons, believed their next prophet should have been the existing leader of their quorum of twelve apostles, whereas the minority, RLDS, believed Joseph Smith’s own son should have been their next prophet. Differences on this issue, and many others, have created substantial tension between these rival groups of each prophet.

- Mohammed taught that Jesus was just another of a long line of human prophets, of which he was the last. He taught that he was superior to Christ and superseded Him. In comparison, Joseph Smith also made the following claim.

“I have more to boast of than any ever any man had. I am the only man that has ever been able to keep a whole church together since the days of Adam. A large majority of the whole have stood by me. Neither Paul, John, Peter, nor Jesus ever did it. I boast that no man ever did such a work as I. The followers of Jesus ran away from Him, but the Latter-day Saints never ran away from me yet.”⁴

In light of these parallels, perhaps Joseph Smith’s claim to be a second Mohammed unwittingly became his most genuine prophecy of all. 🌟

Paul Trask

NOTE: The foregoing is an updated version of the article which has been on our website since 2002. In 2007 this article was plagiarized by another author and placed in a *book* and on his own website without any attribution whatsoever. This author has since been notified of his infringement, and he has posted corrections and proper attributions both on his website, and as an Errata to his book.

¹ **Background** – This statement by Joseph Smith is from the sworn affidavit of Thomas B. Marsh on October 24, 1838, who was a first hand witness of the prophet’s remarks shortly before. Up until this time, Marsh had been President of the Quorum of Twelve Apostles. On February 10, 1838, Thomas Marsh and David Patten together, had also been elected Presidents ‘pro tempore’ of the Church in Missouri (*RHC*, vol. 2, p. 142). Marsh’s testimony is confirmed in the sworn affidavit of Orson Hyde, who had formerly been a member of the Quorum of Twelve Apostles as well.

Joseph Smith’s Mohammed statement is also verified in the sworn affidavit of another first hand witness, John Corrill. Up to this time John Corrill (High Priest and Bishop’s assistant) also had a long and distinguished career in the church; he had been placed in charge of Kirtland Temple, appointed member of the committee to appraise and sell lots in Far West, appointed Keeper of the Lord’s Storehouse and as recently as April 6, 1838 had been appointed a historian of the church (*RHC*, vol. 2, pp. 9, 113, 120, 149).

The sworn affidavits referred to above come from *Correspondence, Orders, &C., in relation to the disturbances with the Mormons; and the evidence given before the Hon. Austin A. King, Judge of the Fifth Judicial Circuit of the State of Missouri, at the Court-house in Richmond, in a*

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criminal court of inquiry, begun November 12, 1838, on the trial of Joseph Smith, Jr., and others, for high treason and other crimes against the state. (Fayette, MO: Published by the order of the General Assembly, 1841), Thomas B. Marsh, pp.57–59; Orson Hyde, p. 59; John Corrill, pp.110–113. This book may also be viewed online on the website of the Missouri Secretary of State at <http://www.sos.mo.gov/archives/resources/findingaids/miscMormonRecords.asp?rec=doc> (accessed March 22, 2013)

RHC above refers to *The History of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints* (Independence, MO: Herald House, 1967).

² John Ankerberg & John Weldon, *The Facts on Islam*, (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1998), pp.8–9. Eric Johnson, *Joseph Smith & Muhammed*, (El Cajon, CA: Mormonism Research Ministry, 1998), pp. 6–7.

³ *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 2nd revised edition, 1978) vol. 4, p. 461.

⁴ *Ibid*, vol. 6, pp. 408–409.