

The Bible and Joseph Smith

We have to choose either the real Bible, or Joseph Smith and his scriptures — because the two are completely incompatible

The Christian's Relationship to the Bible

True Christians believe the Bible. In addition to His Son Jesus Christ, it is God's special revelation of Himself to mankind. In the Bible God announces His goodwill toward us and explains how we can come back into relationship with Him through faith in Jesus, manifested in loving obedience to Him. Apostle Paul says to young Timothy: "...continue in what you have learned and become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus" (2 Timothy 3:14-15).

Jesus believed the Bible. He quoted it authoritatively to Satan when tempted in the wilderness. He quoted it on many other occasions. "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets ... I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the slightest letter, not the least stroke of the pen, will by any means disappear from it until everything is accomplished." (Matthew 5:17-18). We could not ask for a better testimony for the accuracy and reliability of Scripture. God gave us His own Word on it. [2000-year-old Dead Sea scrolls also confirm the reliability of today's Old Testament. And more than 5000 manuscripts, some dating to the second century, testify to the accuracy of our New Testament.]

The same Spirit of God who gave birth to the Scriptures has continued to speak through them in living power to all generations who would seek the Way of Salvation. In countries today where Christian witness is severely restricted or even outlawed—the Bible often remains God's only missionary to His lost sheep, and with amazing results. Christian workers in those countries recount an endless stream of converts whose only contact with Christianity was—the Bible.

Joseph Smith's Relationship to the Bible

If Joseph Smith had ever had a genuine relationship with the Lord, he too would have believed the Bible. Instead, he held a "low view" of the Bible, maintaining that it was an inferior document and very unreliable. This low view is reflected in an official church newspaper article entitled "Errors of the Bible."

"As to the errors in the Bible, any man possessed of common understanding, knows, that both the old and new testaments are filled with errors, obscurities, italics and contradictions, which must be the work of men... the church of Christ [Latter Day Saints] will soon have the scriptures, in their original purity [Joseph's "Inspired Version"] ...It must be admitted by all who have any knowledge of the general state of society, at the present time, that it is very corrupt... and yet the bible, instead of the hearts of men, must be PURIFIED! (capitalized as in the original) It has been translated and sent to almost all nations, and now, the whole work is full of

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errors and indecent expressions!" (Evening and Morning Star, v.2, no.14, [Independence, Missouri, July 1833], p. 106, italics added)

Convincing his followers that the Bible was corrupt enabled Joseph to introduce new "scriptures," which seriously contradict the Bible and establish his own doctrine. He would not be judged *by* the Bible; instead, he stood in judgment *upon* the Bible.

Today Joseph's followers unknowingly discard the Bible as an inferior document in favor of Joseph's own "revelations" which they feel are superior. In the words of an early conference statement over which he presided,

"The conference prized the revelations to be worth to the church the riches of the whole earth, speaking temporally. The great benefits to the world, which result from the Book of Mormon and the revelations, which the Lord has seen fit, in his infinite wisdom to grant unto us for our salvation, and for the salvation of all that will believe, were duly appreciated" (RLDS Church History 1:229–230, emphasis added).

According to church belief, one's salvation hinges on accepting the scriptures Joseph generated. But the huge disparity between the message of the Bible and Joseph Smith's scriptures is a subject which very few Latter Day Saints are willing to explore.

Joseph Smith produced four books of scripture which are accepted by his followers: The Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, the Inspired Version of the Bible, and the Pearl of Great Price. RLDS accept all of these as scripture except a part of the Pearl of Great Price, the remainder being found in the other scriptures or in church history. Utah Mormons accept all four books, but lacking copyright to Joseph's Inspired Version of the Bible, instead choose to include his alterations as footnotes or appendices in their King James Version. ❖

Paul Trask

For a more thorough and detailed analysis, see Paul Trask's book, **Part Way to Utah: the Forgotten Mormons** at www.help4rlds.com.