

## Joseph Smith's statement about Polygamy to William Marks (Nauvoo Stake President) three weeks before his murder

According to William Marks, Nauvoo Stake President from 1839-44, "I always believed the work was of Divine origin, and that Joseph Smith was called of God to establish the church among the Gentiles. During my administration in the church I saw and heard of many things that was practiced, and taught that I did not believe to be of God; but I continued to do and teach such principles as we plainly revealed, as the law of the church, for I thought that pure and holy principles only would have a tendency to benefit mankind. Therefore when the doctrine of polygamy was introduced into the church as a principle of exaltation, I took a decided stand against it; which stand rendered me quite unpopular, with many of the leading ones of the church. I was also witness of the introduction (secretly) of a kingly form of government in which Joseph suffered himself to be ordained a king, to reign over the house of Israel forever; which I could not conceive to be in accordance with the laws of the church, but I did not oppose this move, thinking it none of my business. Joseph, however, became convinced before his death that he had done wrong; for about three weeks before his death, I met him one morning in the street, and he said to me, Brother Marks, I have something to communicate to you, we retired to a by-place, and set down together, when he said: **'We are a ruined people.'** I asked, how so? He said: **'This doctrine of polygamy of Spiritual wife system, that has been taught and practiced among us, will prove our destruction and overthrow. I have been deceived,'** said he, **'in reference to its practice; it is wrong; it is a curse to mankind, and we shall have to leave the United States soon, unless it can be put down, and its practice stopped in the church. Now'** said he, **'Brother Marks, you have not received this doctrine, and how glad I am. I want you to go into the high council, and I will have charges preferred against all who practice this doctrine, and I want you to try them by the laws of the church, and cut them off, if they will not repent, and cease the practice of this doctrine; and'** said he, **'I will go into the stand, and preach against it, with all my might, and in this way we may rid the church of this damnable heresy.'**

But before this plan could be put into execution, the mob [part of "the Secret Chamber", see D&C 38] began to gather, and our attention, necessarily, was directed to them. I again met Joseph when he was about to start for Carthage. He said to me, **'Brother Marks, I have become convinced since I last saw you, that it is my duty to go to Carthage and deliver myself up as a lamb to the slaughter.'** I mentioned the circumstances of these conversations with Joseph, to many of the brethren, immediately after his death; but the only effect it had was to raise a report that Brother Marks, was about to apostatize: and my statement of the conversation in reference to the practice of polygamy, **was pronounced false by the Twelve**, and disbelieved; but I now testify that the above statements are verily true, and correct. When I found that there was no chance to rid the church of that abominable sin, as I viewed it, I made my arrangements to leave Nauvoo, and I did so firmly believing that the plans and designs of the great Jehovah, in inspiring Joseph to bring forth the book of Mormon, would yet be carried out in his own time, and in his own way." (See William Marks, quote from *Zion's Harbinger and Baneemy's Organ*, 7 July 1853, p. 53.

See also Richard S. Van Wagoner, *Mormon Polygamy: A History*, Chapter Seven, [Salt Lake City, Utah: Signature Books, 1986], p. 77. A free PDF copy of the July 7th, 1853 publication of *Zion's Harbinger and Baneemy's Organ*, is available at the following address: <http://latterdaytruth.org/pdf/100170.pdf> )

**Personal note** I do not believe Joseph Smith practiced polygamy. He did have sins like all men and women, but his error and his "deception" (as Marks puts it) may have been trusting in too many around him and allowing them to do things under his nose without greater oversight. He may have not put down polygamy with great strength early enough. Prayer is the only way we can now some truths, and with so many lies and deceptions among us, I suggest each of us learn HOW to receive **PURE revelation** from the source of all truth - the Living God. Go to Him for it.