

## One Wife

A careful examination of scripture reveals that polygamy is most often not of God. Often times it is *sin* in the Bible and described as *wickedness*, *whoredom*, and an *abomination* in the Book of Mormon. God does not appear to require polygamy or command it to occur in scripture, though it appears it was allowed in Jacob's case in the Bible. Rarely was it ever a blessing. For most it led to trouble and curses. The destructive, on-going strife between Jews and Arabs, for example, leading to the Jewish Holocaust and terrorism today began with polygamy, the additional wife Sarai brought to Abram because she was barren. And sadly, the departure of many Saints today from the LDS church can also be traced to polygamy and the modified historical narrative that may have been later attributed to Joseph Smith. Satan appears to have put desire for this practice into the hearts of many men that he might destroy one of God's most important covenants relationships, that of marriage between one woman and one man. It is the foundation of the family and society. God's word provides direction What does it say?

### Scripture Speaks

*Patriarchs & Kings* Many men, especially those among Mormon fundamentalist sects use the Old Testament Patriarchs and Kings, their perceptions of early Latter-day practices in Nauvoo, and section 132 of the Doctrine and Covenants (added by Brigham Young in 1876) to justify polygamy today (D&C 101 which condemns it was removed that same year). Polygamy occurred in the Bible because of a tradition, unbelief, and sin not because God desired it. It exploded in Nauvoo after Joseph Smith's death because of sin. Brigham Young took 15 wives the year Joseph and Hyrum were killed and then 20 more the following year. Heber C. Kimball added 9 wives. It did not occur because God desired it, required it, or commanded it. The words of the Prophet Jacob in the Book of Mormon - "the most correct book on earth," reveal that the Lord called the taking of *many wives* by King David and Solomon a "**grosser crime**" (Jacob 2:22), "**wicked**" (Jacob 1:15), a "**whoredom**" (Jacob 2:23), and an "**abomination**" (Jacob 2:24). Immediately following God's descriptive words for polygamy, He said that He led Lehi and his family out of Jerusalem that He might "*raise up unto me a **righteous branch** from the fruit of the lions of Joseph.*" This is the **righteous seed** the Lord sought to "**raise up**" on this choice, Promised Land; a people free of the stain of polygamy and other wicked practices in Jerusalem, including *priestcraft* (see 2 Ne. 26:29). The Lord's definition of "*righteous seed*" is not *numerous "seed"* from the practice of additional wives! God brought Lehi and his posterity here that *the blessed seed of Joseph* would **not** be like those of old in Jerusalem (Jacob 2:26). He stated, "*For I, the Lord God, delight in the chastity of women. And **whoredoms** are an **abomination** before me; thus saith the Lord of Hosts.*"

Examining scripture carefully reveals evidence that God wasn't happy with the concubines or added wives of men in the Bible and the Book of Mormon (see 1 Tim. 3:2; 1 Cor. 7:2; Deut. 17:17; Jacob 2). God's command has consistently been that men have but one wife (Jacob 2:27; 3:5 D&C 49:15-17; Deut. 17:17). When imperfect men finally turned their hearts fully to God, the added wives they took in the Old Testament were typically sent away, put away, or God made changes in their marital situations. We begin with Abraham, father of the faithful.

*Abraham Sent Away Hagar* It was Sarai who gave Hagar to Abram (presenting him a great temptation) because she was both barren and aged and afraid that Abraham would have no posterity without it. Later (age 90) she was able to conceive by her husband miraculously, when she and Abram had advanced in not only age, but *in their faith and trust in God and His miraculous power*. Had they trusted in the Lord earlier, the miracle of Isaac's conception may have occurred earlier. Instead, *Sarai took matters into her own hands*. The millennia-old strife between Arabs and Jews was the result! It was brought on by polygamy and the resulting jealousy of Hagar over the one man Abraham. The Jews are the children of Sarah and Abraham, through Isaac, born later by a *miracle*, after their names were changed, reflecting their *greater faith* in God. The Arabs are the children of Ishmael through Hagar, Abraham's concubine (not a legitimate wife).

In Genesis 21:8-21 we read of Hagar's departure from Abram and Sarai. God ordered Abram to send away the concubine Hagar and her son, and he *obeyed*. He did so because his heart had turned to God, wholly. God then renamed him Abraham and Sarai - Sarah. Abraham saw that it was sin, leading to strife between the two women. In Genesis 25:6 we read that the *sons* of Abraham's *concubines* were also sent away. The Bible only tells us of

Ishmael. The ancient book known as “the Austrian Chronicle” reveals that Abraham’s additional concubine may have been named Susanna. She and the *sons* of both concubines were sent away. The damage had been done, however. Hagar and her posterity never forgot. The whole world has been affected by Abraham’s polygamy ever since.

*Jacob & Leah* Jacob’s name means “Supplanter.” Though it was God’s will that Jacob receive the birthright instead of his older brother Esau, there was some deception involving Isaac. And like Abraham in his earlier life, Jacob did not fully trust God yet (see Psalm 118:8; 2 Ne. 4:34). Leah was forced upon Jacob, and by fraud too. Laban supplanted Jacob’s *promised* and *loved* wife, Rachel, with his elder daughter Leah. According to God’s marriage laws, Jacob could have rejected Leah and put her away as soon he discovered the deception. He didn’t do so. Jacob lived in polygamy with both wives, and had children by their handmaids or concubines.

Later we read of Jacob’s full conversion to God in Genesis 32:24-30. He then put idolatry fully out of his household (Gen. 35:2-4). We know God appeared to him and changed his name to Israel at Pineal, reflecting his new heart (God also appeared unto him later on). At Pineal God made a special covenant with God. It was after this that God took Rachel, his beloved second wife from Jacob (Gen. 35:19). This left Jacob with his first wife Leah. Though he did not send away the children from his additional wife Rachel or his concubines, he may not have gone “in unto them” as he did before. Like David, he may have continued to care for them to avoid the trouble that came from the sending away of Hagar and Ishmael. Sadly, there is much we do not know from the current record.

*David & the Curse of the Sword* David’s experience with polygamy is much more clear, as is his turning away from it. Early on the popular warrior-king David had several wives. After his great sin in taking Bathsheba and having her husband put on the frontlines of battle, David repented, turning his heart fully unto the Lord. Thereafter, he did not repeat his sin. We read in II Samuel 12:9-12, “Now therefore, the sword shall never depart from thine house; *because thou hast despised ME*, and hast *taken the wife* of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife.” *David despised God by taking this woman as his additional wife.* Therefore the sword was never to depart from his house or family – *a curse*. At that time David’s house consisted of plural wives and children from them. In the next verse we read, “Thus saith the Eternal, Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of *thine own house*. . . .” God added, “. . . and I will *take thy wives* before thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbor, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun. For *thou didst it secretly*: but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun [openly].” David’s own son Absalom actually did this, lying with his father’s former wives (see II Samuel 16:21-22). It was a great sin, a whoredom.

Later David repented. “And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the Eternal” (I Samuel 12:13). We read his private prayer of repentance to God in Psalm 51, the prayer of a broken and contrite heart. David then *turned from* polygamy. We read in 2 Samuel 12, “And Nathan said unto David, The Eternal also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die.” There was a price to pay for his sin, not only war and sword in David’s house, but the son born of his adultery was also taken.

David then *put away* his ten concubines. “And David came to his house at Jerusalem; and the king took the ten women his concubines, *whom he had left to keep the house, and put them in ward, and fed them, but went not in unto them*. So they were shut up unto the day of their death, living in widowhood” (II Sam. 20:3). In his repentance, David practiced polygamy no more. In his later life he went “fully after the Eternal” (I Kings 11:6). He became “*a man after God’s own heart*.” David was then left with Bathsheba only. His first, legitimate wife, whereas Michal had probably died (II Sam. 6:23). God then cleared the way for Bathsheba to become David’s legal wife. Bathsheba may have also been his “soul-mate.” In these things we see that God was merciful *and* just.

David’s son, Solomon did the opposite of his father. He started out righteously, relying on God. Then, “when Solomon was old,” he acquired a record number of women in his harem. Solomon’s many wives turned away his heart from God, and sadly, to their idols. “Solomon did *evil* in the sight of the Eternal” (I Kings 11:6). There was polygamy in ancient Israel again. It led to the nation being broken up.

*The First Bible Example of Polygamy* The first record of *polygamy* in the Bible is tied to Cain. With him we also have the first examples of *homosexuality* and *murder* (Genesis 4:23-24; Moses 5:51). Note in the book of Moses, where we read that “they *knew* [homosexuality] every man his brother.” Cain’s son Lamech practiced the same three abominations (Genesis 4:23–24). All three of these *abominable* sins (*polygamy*, *homosexuality* and *murder*) are tied to serving Satan and being initiated into his secret combination in the book of Moses (see chap. 5, verses 44-47).

The opposite of these practices is the love of God and His power to create. They exemplify the very essence of God. Many of those who support polygamy are those who experience less love. Many who desire polygamy are not happily married. The very thought of it encourages men to not try as hard to make their marriages “work.” Such thinking can also lead to divorce. Love, patience, forgiveness, tolerance and long suffering are all required to establish a good marriage (see D&C 121:34-46).

### **Marriage Definition – Anti-Polygamy Scriptures**

God’s *definition of Marriage* in scripture features one wife, never more. God did not sanction or encourage families to include concubines or additional wives (see Gen. 2:24; Ex. 20:17; Moses 3:24; Mat. 19:5; Eph. 5:31; D&C 42:22, 49:15-17). Note the following evidence of this in scripture.

*Genesis 2:24* Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his **wife**: and they shall be one flesh. See also Gen. 1:27 and Moses 3:24.

*Exodus 20:17* **The 10<sup>th</sup> Commandment** states, “You shall not covet your neighbour’s wife [singular] ... ” It also presupposes the ideal that there is only one wife.

*Deuteronomy 17:17* God forbade the kings of Israel to have “many wives.”

*2 Samuel 13* Sibling rivalries resulted from the sons of David’s different wives (see also 1 Kings 2).

*1 Kings 11:1–3* Solomon’s excessive number of wives helped lead him to idolatry.

*Matthew 19:5* And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh?

*Mark 10:7* For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife.

*Ephesians 5:31* For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his **wife**, and they two shall be one flesh.

*1 Timothy 3:2* Polygamy is forbidden for church elders. And this is not just for elders, because Paul also wrote: “each man should have his own wife, and each woman her own husband” (1 Corinthians 7:2).

*Jacob 2* The Book of Mormon is **the founding document** of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The Prophet Jacob in Jacob chapter 2 denounces polygamy strongly, calling it a **whoredom** and an **abomination** (verses 23-24). He stated that God brought Lehi and his family to this choice, Promised Land *to raise up a righteous branch* of Israel through Joseph (sold into Egypt) here. This righteous “branch” (or seed or posterity) was to practice no polygamy, escaping the sins of David and Solomon and other wickedness in the old world (verses 25, 32; Jacob 3:4, 6). Jacob makes it clear (along with other scripture) that God preserved the Lamanites (though unbelievers) because there was love between husbands and wives and their children in non-polygamous relationships (Jacob 3:7). The corrupted Nephites were eventually wiped off this land, almost completely, partly because of their whoredoms (which is ranked with murder and secret combinations in the top three most wicked things in 3 Nephi 16:10).

D&C 42:22      Thou shalt love thy wife with **all thy heart**, and shalt cleave unto her and **none else**.

D&C 49:15-17      And again, verily I say unto you, that whoso forbiddeth to marry is not ordained of God, for marriage is ordained of God unto man. Wherefore, it is lawful that he should have **one wife**, and they twain shall be one flesh, and all this that the earth might answer the end of its creation. And that it might be filled with the measure of man, according to his creation before the world was made.

D&C 101 (1935 canonized edition, removed by Brigham Young in 1876)      "...as this church of Christ has been reproached with the crime of fornication, and polygamy: we declare that we believe, that **one man should have one wife; and one woman, but one husband**, except in case of death, when either is at liberty to marry again.

### ***Supposed Pro-Polygamy Scriptures***

The scriptures that speak against polygamy far outnumber those that are used to support it. Some Latter-day Saints believe a few of them *suggest* there are times when polygamy is necessary or tolerated. This appears to simple misinterpretation of four scriptures; 1 Kings 15:5, Isaiah 4:1, Jacob 2:30, and 4th Nephi 1:11. Of these Jacob 2:30, Isaiah 4:1, and D&C 132 are used the most to justify plural marriage among some Latter-day Saints.

#### ***Jacob 2:30 - Raising Up Righteous Seed***

A careful review of word usage in Jacob chapters 2 and 3 is revealing. Jacob is an important prophet in the Book of Mormon. Speaking of himself and his older brother Nephi, he said that they "had many revelations, and the spirit of much prophecy; wherefore, we knew of Christ and his kingdom . . ." Both men had been to heaven. Both were sure witnesses of Jesus Christ and His reality. Both "labored diligently" thereafter among their people that they "might persuade them to come unto Christ, and partake of the goodness of God, that they might enter into his *rest*" (Jacob 1:6-7). This is, in fact, the whole reason for the Book of Mormon.

Jacob makes it clear that the Lamanites, though they were unbelievers, were preserved of God on this land, and would be until our day, for one simple reason; *they had but one wife and loved them and their families*, whereas the Nephites, supposed believers in God, had turned their hearts from God *in favor of* additional wives and to material things. They were thus destroyed (see Jacob 3:4-9). Lehi and his family were brought to this land that a righteous branch of the house of Israel might be preserved without the stain of polygamy as practiced in Jerusalem and elsewhere (Jacob 2:24-26). Following these verses is the single misinterpreted scripture in the book of Jacob, providing unwarranted *justification* for many to take additional wives – "*to raise up seed unto me*" (see verse 30). This lone verse negates the rest of Jacob's words for those wishing to justify polygamy.

"For if I will, saith the Lord of Hosts, raise up seed unto me, I will **command** my people; otherwise they shall hearken unto these **things**" (Jacob 2:30)."

If we look at verses 23 and 24, we see that the word "**things**" in verse 30 above, are those things called a **whoredom** and an **abomination** by our Lord. These things are the additional wives of David and Solomon! God makes it clear in Jacob 2:27 and the whole chapter that men should have "**save it be one wife; and concubines he shall have none**." Then He stated, "Wherefore, this people shall keep my commandments . . . or *cursed* be the land for their sakes" (v. 28). This is why the Nephites were wiped off this land, whereas the unbelieving Lamanites remained. The Lord through Jacob stated that the Lamanites, "have not forgotten the **commandment** of the Lord, which was given unto our father [Lehi] – **that they should have save it were one wife, and concubines they should have not, and there should not be whoredoms committed among them**" (Jacob 3:5). Jacob goes on to say, "And now, this commandment they observe to keep; wherefore, because of this observance, in keeping this commandment, the Lord God will not destroy them, but will be merciful unto them [the Lamanites]; and one day they shall become a blessed people" (Jacob 3:6). Thus the meaning of Jacob 2:30, **the raising up of seed, is righteous seed, on a distant land, and by God through Lehi and his posterity, not additional children to increase population by way of polygamy!** Lehi and his family *were to be the righteous branch of Joseph* (v. 25) brought by God to this choice, Promised Land that a righteous people might dwell here - apart from the wickedness and abominations of the ancient world!

*The Reproach of Isaiah 4:1* For most people, Isaiah 4:1 is about meeting needs of women and children after war has depleted the male population (as addressed in the preceding chapter). The extreme circumstances appear to have caused the women there to except polygamy as a necessary alternative. A second interpretation of this same scripture provides an alternative. Married women of childbearing age that could not have children desired to remove this *reproach*. The ultimate *reproach* to take away, however, is not infertility, but that of our **sin**. Christ, the Bridegroom – the one Man in Isaiah 4:1 - can do that for each of us if we come to Him in love, and with broken hearts and contrite spirits. The seven women of Isaiah 4:1 are thought to be the seven churches of Revelation chapters 2 and 3. Each of them wanted to be called by the name of Christ, to be His bride, and could do so if their shame or “reproach” (because of sin) was removed. But they arrogantly wanted to do things their own way, keeping some sin. They want to feed themselves their own bread, instead of being fed on the bread of Christ. They want to clothe themselves in their own apparel, instead of being clothed in the righteousness of Christ. Isaiah 4:1 is thought to be a negative prophecy concerning arrogant churches in the last-days, not a sermon on the need for last-days polygamy after many men die in war. It is a foretelling of many brides or churches that want to marry Christ in the last-days, but do so with selfish motives - to seek to have His salvation (or be called “Christian,” or be called by His Name), while doing things their own way, to stay in the sins they enjoy. They wanted to have it both ways.

*D&C 132* This unique Section of the Doctrine and Covenants is more problematic. Early leader Pres. Brigham Young was the most outspoken in terms of support for polygamy. He added this potentially modified section in 1876, the same year he eliminated section 101, which was anti-polygamy. Note in endnote 1 the example of one portion of it that was changed or “revised” to reflect current practice at the time, rather than the anti-polygamy stance of Joseph Smith in his original statement. One anonymous author’s research reveals that Willard Richards, Joseph Smith’s personal secretary, most likely changed historical records under the direction of Brigham Young to reflect the pro-polygamy stance of both men, making Joseph Smith appear to be an avid polygamist.<sup>1</sup> The Joseph Smith Papers project reveals changes or “revisionist history” to section 132 after Joseph’s murder.

Numbers can also speak volumes. After Joseph Smith and his brother were killed, plural marriage exploded in Nauvoo. Brigham Young, for example added 15 wives the year Joseph and Hyrum were killed, and 20 wives the next year. He later claimed that *exaltation* depended upon living his version of the doctrine. These and other relevant things are explained in, “*Joseph Smith’s Monogamy*,” available at:

<http://anonymousbishop.com/2015/11/03/joseph-smiths-monogamy/>

This anonymous author provides good evidence there for Joseph Smith’s innocence, along with evidence of the changed history and documents to justify the practice after Joseph’s death. Few have considered the example of Abraham, Jacob, and David who practiced it for a time, then turned their hearts wholly to God and never looked back. Did this occur for Joseph Smith at Liberty Jail, or did he never participate in this practice, only a more limited type of “Sealing”? Evidence appears to exist for both, suggesting a potential about face like David of old.

***Justifying Polygamy*** In addition to these scriptures, a number of arguments are used to support a pro-polygamy stance among the Saints. Six of them are addressed hereafter.

1. *Sealings versus Marriages* Joseph Smith’s understanding and practice of *sealings* versus traditional *marriage* may have developed over time. It also may have been different than that of Brigham Young and others and our current understanding. His sealing of men to him, and women already married appear to point to a different relationship than traditional marriage. It would also account for the fact that no children have yet been found in Joseph’s “*sealings*.” Lost on us today may be the concept of being tied or sealed to a dispensation head like the Prophet Joseph Smith, or another “*father*” like Abraham, “father of the faithful.” Such men appear to be “saviors [with a small “s”] on Mount Zion” for the people they help lead to salvation.

2. *Charity & the Law of Consecration* The law of the celestial kingdom is the law of oneness and love, found in the law of consecration. It reveals unselfishness, charity, and the willingness to do all that God

commands. Some suggest God may tolerate polygamy in very limited situations, as an act of charity for those in great need, such as abandoned wives and children. How many men would take as an additional wife a homely, older women, and one with a physical or mental defect? Charity defines that behavior. Marriage is not necessary to care for one another, but charity is. That is real, charitable love.

**3. Population Imbalance & Removing Reproach** At various points in time there has been much war, leaving many women husbandless and their children fatherless. In addition to war, there is also a clear imbalance of women to men in church settings (approximately 2 to 1 in many LDS Sacrament meetings). Because the role of a husband is to care for the needs of his wife, some claim plural marriage allows for widows and orphans to be cared for, that they might survive in difficult circumstances. The law of consecration provides a way for the care of others without being married to them. There may be situations where polygamy is useful for those involved, such as the first of the two interpretations of Isaiah 4:1. One having a pure heart who adhering to the Lord's will in such a matter is paramount.

The desire to have posterity is real and a noble thing. In the Bible the ability and blessing to have children removed the cultural blemish of infertility or barrenness – a type of “*reproach*.” Some claim that after war, the imbalance of men to women demands plural marriage so that more women can have children and remove this reproach. This may be the best reason for plural marriage, if one exists at all.

**5. Kingdom Building** Some suggest that kingdom building provides two additional reasons for polygamy; (1) That of quick population growth, useful in agricultural societies where children are a source of labor for the family, especially with aging parents, as agriculture is very physical; And (2) Dissemination of righteous “seed” (like that of Christ), which spreads DNA that is loaded with special abilities, talents, intelligence, etc. Some suggest such blood also purifies cursed bloodlines.<sup>2</sup> Those who argue against kingdom building ask:

Why is there no record of Adam participating in Kingdom Building?

Why did Joseph only have seed with Emma?

If we gather intelligences to make spirits, then why the need for plurality of wives?

**6. Multiple Mortalities** The concept of multiple mortal probations suggests that most have had a number of wives or husbands over time (one at a time). Finding the best one, a “soul mate” or “bonded one” may be one of many reasons for multiple mortalities, the others being personal experience, growth, progression, etc. Some suggest that once this special individual is found, monogamy then results for the long term thereafter in the eternities. Others claim the additional wives are retained. If such a doctrine is true, the choice for a spouse must exist between both the man and the woman. They must be one in their decision.

**7. Apostasy** Fundamentalist Mormons claim the current LDS church is in apostasy for abandoning polygamy officially in 1890 with the Manifesto of Pres. Wilford Woodruff. Many of them believe God condemned the Mormon faith then, clearly going against the doctrine Brigham Young so vigorously espoused for political reasons and to save the Church financially. The fundamentalists claim to retain power to continue “sealing” more than one wife to a single man. Others believe the condemnation on the Saints apparent in 3 Nephi 16:10 and D&C 84 is for rejecting Christ and His “*fulness*,” not for abandoning polygamy. The *whoredoms* described in 3 Nephi 16:10 may thus reflect the explosion of whoredoms (polygamy) in Nauvoo after Joseph and Hyrum Smith were killed, as part of the rejection of “the fulness of the gospel”, in combination with pride, murder, priestcraft, and secret combinations. The “fulness” that is rejected is Christ, and the fulness of His glory – that present when entering His rest (see D&C 84:23-27). The invitation to do so was also rejected by the Israelites at Sinai, as addressed in D&C 84:24. See also JST Ex. 34:1-2 and D&C 39:6 & 11.

## **Summary**

The evidence provided in this paper favors one wife in most all situations. An important key in understanding and accepting truth is our ability to love God with all our hearts and thus be willing to conform to *His will* rather than our desires. It is part of overcoming the world and the natural man. Those who follow their own will must fall,

according to God. “For although a man may have many revelations, and have power to do many mighty works, yet if he boasts in his own strength, and sets at naught the counsels of God, and **follows after the dictates of his own will and carnal desires, he must fall and incur the vengeance of a just God upon him**” (D&C 3:4). Too many espouse a particular position for personal reasons. This is certainly the case with polygamy for many men. To really love God with all our hearts is to do as **He** desires in His great wisdom and His love for us. It is the first and great commandment to love Him with all our heart, might, mind and strength. It means *trusting* in Him completely, not ourselves or other fallible men (Psalm 118:8; 2 Ne. 4:34). As we keep all His commandments and seek His face, we can go to Him in prayer and receive revelation *from Him* on all things, including understanding the events in the time of Joseph Smith or King David. Our personal witness can then be added to the witnesses of those in scripture He called to spread His truth. My testimony is that they conform to one another.

## End Notes

<sup>1</sup> **Who to Believe?** Polygamy in early LDS practice comes down to whom to believe, the Prophet Joseph Smith or later President Brigham Young? Their beliefs and statements regarding polygamy are directly opposed to one another in most cases. The fruits exhibited by both men make the choice of belief straightforward for many. Joseph saw Christ, the Father, many angels, etc., and stated so. He was a gifted prophet, seer, and revelator, with obvious prophetic gifts in all three areas. He was chosen by God to lead out in this last dispensation and produced the Book of Mormon, most all of the revelations of Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price, as part of the inspired translation of the entire Bible.

### **Joseph Smith Statements Against Polygamy**

“I had not been married scarcely five minutes, and made one proclamation of the Gospel, before it was reported that I had seven wives” (History of the Church, 6:411, 26 May 1844)

“What a thing it is for a man to be accused of committing adultery, and having seven wives, when I can only find one. I am the same man, and as innocent as I was fourteen years ago; and I can prove them all perjurers” (HC 6:411, May 26, 1844).

“I preached in the grove and pronounced a curse upon all adulterers and fornicators, and unvirtuous persons and those who have made use of my name to carry on their iniquitous designs” (Sermon at the Grove; Apr 10, 1842).

“Gave inst[r]uction to try those who were preaching teaching or practicing the doctrine of plurality of wives. on this Law. Joseph forbids it. and the practice ther[e]of— No man shall have but one wife” (Journal 5 Oct 1843).

“Do the Mormons believe in having more wives than one? No, not at the same time. But they believe, that if their companion dies, they have a right to marry again” (The Elders' Journal 1 [November 1837]: 28).

“Some have reported that we not only dedicated our property, but likewise our families to the Lord, and Satan taking advantage of this has transfigured it into lasciviousness, a community of wives, which things are an abomination in the sight of God...if any person, has represented anything otherwise than what we now write they have willfully misrepresented us” (1838 letter from Liberty Jail).

“[John Bennett] reached out his hand to Br. Joseph and said, will you forgive me, weeping at the time; he said Br. Joseph, I am guilty, I acknowledge it, and I beg of you not to expose me, for it will ruin me; Joseph replied, Doctor! why are you using my name to carry on your hellish wickedness? Have I ever taught you that fornication and adultery was right, or polygamy or any such practices? He said you never did” (Hyrum Smith, Affidavit May 1842, Times and Seasons 3 [August 1, 1842]).

**Brigham Young** was a strong man who took control when leadership was needed. He did lead the Saints westward out from Nauvoo. Scripture clearly states, however, that if the Saints did as the Lord desired they would **not** be moved out of their place (see D&C 124:45). There is also the condemnation apparent in D&C 84:49-59 and 3 Nephi 16:10 (“whoredoms,” see Jacob 2:23-30). Brigham Young admitted that he never saw God and thus was not an apostle in the truest sense (a “special witness for Christ,” a definition clearly presented by both Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery. Elder Cowdery, speaking to the Twelve of his day, stated, “...it is necessary that you receive a testimony from heaven for yourselves...never cease striving until you have seen God face to face. Your ordination is not full and complete till God has laid His hand upon you. We require as much to qualify us as did those who have gone before us; God is the same. If the Savior in former days laid His hands upon His disciples, why not in latter days?” (Oliver Cowdery, History of the Church, vol. 2, pps. 195-96). The Prophet Joseph, in speaking to all Saints, added, “It is your privilege to purify yourselves and come up to the same glory, and see yourselves, and know for yourselves” (TJPS, p. 13). He added the potentially modified, pro-polygamy section 132 to the Doctrine and Covenants in 1876, while removing the anti-polygamy section 101 the same year. He also implemented the temple endowment, adding controversial portions that were removed after his death. He had nearly total control during his lifetime over the Church, as well as the state of Deseret.

Pres. Young had unquestioned authority that became problematic with the endowing and ordination of his 11-year old son John Willard Young privately to the Apostleship in 1855, and the adding of two other sons as Apostles and counselors in the First Presidency in 1864. He eventually told other leaders about his ordinations in the year his two other sons were made counselors to him. Pres. Young asked leaders not to reveal the sons to the general membership (it was not made public until

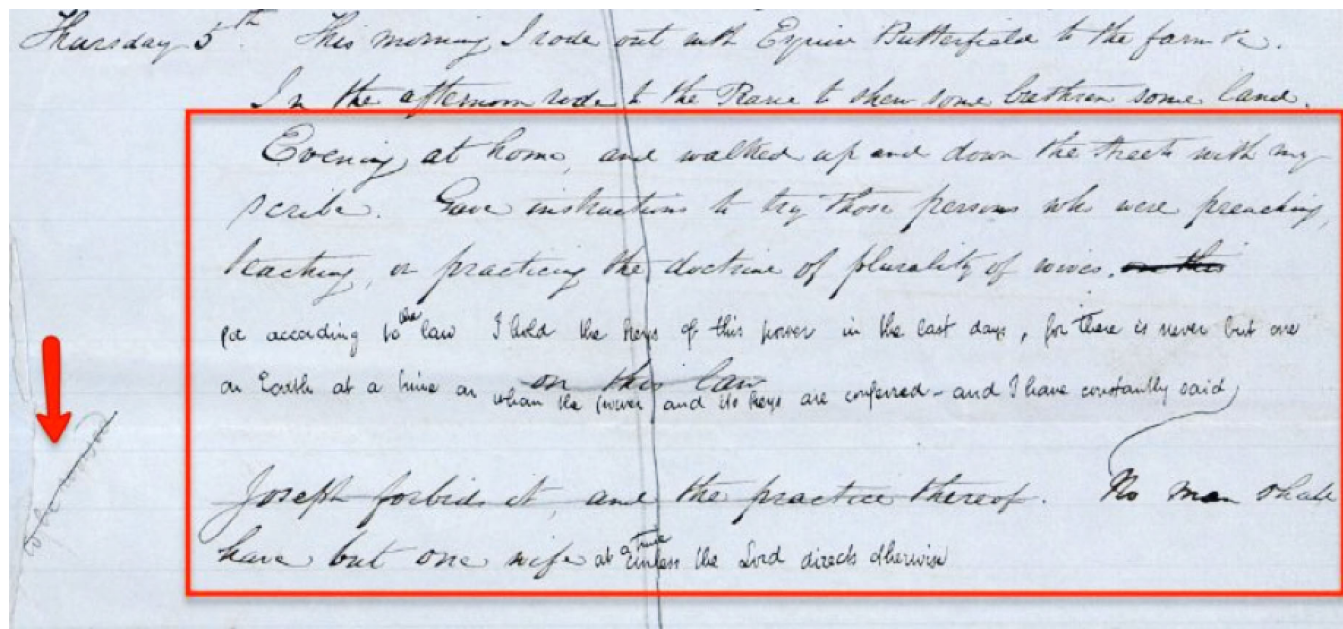


18 years later). Sadly, John Willard Young exhibited notable vices as an adult in New York City and San Francisco where he lived, with no desire to associate with the church. He was never removed from his church leadership position, however.

The ordination of Brigham Young's sons to the Apostleship was met with surprise and timid acceptance in 1864. According to Brad Hart, Apostle Wilford Woodruff recorded in his diary, "President Young said I am going to tell you something that I have never before mentioned to any other person. I have ordained my sons Joseph A., Brigham & John W. Apostles and my Counselors [in the First Presidency]. Have you any objections? J. Taylor & G.A. Smith said they had not, that it was his own affair & they considered it under his own direction" (The Journal of Wilford Woodruff (1858-78), cited in Todd Compton's *John Willard Young, Brigham Young, and the Development of Presidential Succession in the LDS Church*. Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought, vol. 35 (4) pps. 111-134). Brad Hart added, that, "And though some church leaders were aware of the ordination of Brigham Young's children as Apostles, the church in general was kept in the dark. President Young had instructed members of the Quorum of the Twelve to "make a record of it, but...not tell anyone not present about the event" (Compton, *John Willard Young*, Pp. 120). It wasn't until April of 1873, nearly eighteen years after being ordained by his father, that John Willard, along with his brothers, were publicly sustained as "Prophets, Seers and Revelators" and as Assistant Counselors in General Conference (Brigham, Jr. had been sustained to the Quorum of the Twelve in the October General Conference of 1868, see Compton, *John Willard Young*, pps. 120-21). See the doctoral (Ph.D) dissertation of Charles W. Watson, entitled *John Willard Young and the 1887 Movement for Utah Statehood*, Ph.D. Dissertation, Brigham Young University, Dept. of History, 1984 (WorldCat database, Denver Public Library), pps. 32-34. See Brad Hart's blog on this subject at <http://hartbrad.blogspot.com/2015/09/child-prophet-curious-case-of-john.html>

**Murder and Change** After the murder of Joseph and Hyrum Smith in June of 1844, there was an explosion of Polygamy. In the six months following Joseph and Hyrum's deaths in 1844, Brigham Young went from 4 wives to 14. Heber C Kimball went from 1 wife to 10. There were 56 new plural marriages in 1845 by church members, then **255** in 1846 (Nauvoo Roots of Mormon Polygamy, 1841-46: A Preliminary Demographic Report, p 32).

Outside of Emma Smith, no children resulted from Joseph's numerous "Sealings" (women and men), whereas Brigham had 56-59 children by sixteen women, as far as historical records can provide. Brigham Young took his first plural wife in 1842, when he was 41 years old. She was 20. At age 42 (1843) he married 3 more women, including a 19-year-old and 15-year-old. At age 43 (1844, the year Joseph and Hyrum were killed) he added **15** more wives, 3 of whom were teenagers. At age 44 (1845), he added 21 more wives, 2 of them teenagers. He married **20** more women during a single one-month period in 1846, 5 of them in a single day (Feb. 3), their ages being 55, 42, 41, 36, and 18. When he was 45, he married only one additional wife. She was 16. In his 60's, Brigham Young married 5 more wives, 3 of whom were in their early 20's. All told, Brigham Young had 55 wives, 9 of whom were teenagers on their wedding day, and 20 of whom were in their 20's. He divorced ten of these wives. It should be noted that not all of Brigham's marriages were conjugal.



**One Example of a Changed Document** The accuracy of history - has and always will be - at the mercy of those who are in charge! One good example is D&C 132, apparently a portion of it changed to reflect current practice at the time, not what Joseph Smith originally said! According to the anonymous author of *Joseph Smith's Monogamy*, "When Joseph died, the History of the Church had only been compiled up to Aug 1838 (Joseph Smith Papers project). In the ensuing chaos



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caused by his death, many of the church documents ended up going west with Brigham Young. But life in the untamed west took its toll and the effort to compile church history was touch and go for several years. Willard Richards and Thomas Bullock made it to Feb 1843 in the history but Richards fell ill and died in 1854. George A. Smith was appointed historian that same year and the work began again. By this time, plural marriage was becoming entrenched into LDS lifestyle. Two years prior, Section 132 had been published. The historians were tasked with compiling the church history. Part of that involved bolstering the accepted narrative that Joseph secretly taught and practiced polygamy. In some cases, church historians appear to have taken liberties with the record in order to avoid apparent contradictions. To wit, consider the following document from the Joseph Smith Papers project (a transcription of the relevant text appears below the images – note the “*to be revised statement*” left).<sup>2</sup>

“It appears one scribe copied a section from Joseph's journal recorded on Oct 5 1843 but left extra space, curiously, around the part where Joseph unequivocally forbids the practice of plural marriage. In the left margin the words ‘to be revised’ appear in a different scribe’s handwriting. The “to be revised” handwriting appears to match the handwriting of the revisions made. The revisions change the meaning of Joseph’s words completely. The definitive words “Joseph forbids it and the practice thereof” are crossed out and replaced with verbiage similar to what's found in D&C 132. Based on the timeline of this compilation, the page above would have been edited sometime between 1853-1855 after George A. Smith took over duties for the deceased Willard Richards.”

“One could claim that the original journal entry was simply an example of the contradictory public and private teachings of Joseph. However, this entry was not a public moment. This was a record made in Joseph’s private journal by his scribe after the two walked up and down the street having this conversation. The original entry reads as follows: ‘Evening at home and walked up and down the street with my scribe. gave inst[r]uction to try those who were preaching teaching or practicing the doctrin of plurality of wives. on this Law. Joseph forbids it. and the practice ther[e]of— No man shall have but one wife.’

“The edited version was changed to say (modifications in red): ‘Evening at home and walked up and down the street with my scribe. gave inst[r]uction to try those who were preaching teaching or practicing the doctrine of plurality of wives. on this law for according to the law i hold the keys of this power in the last days, for there is never but one on earth at a time on whom the power? and the keys are conferred - and I have continually said Joseph forbids it. and the practice ther[e]of No man shall have but one wife at a time unless the Lord directs otherwise.’

“The original entry is definitive with no exceptions provided and matches perfectly with what Joseph consistently taught: polygamy was not something to be practiced. If Joseph was secretly practicing polygamy, why would he continue this charade in a private conversation with his scribe? Why would he unequivocally forbid it? Why would he demand those practicing it be tried in a church court?” See *Joseph Smith’s Monogamy*.

*Choose* The ancient prophets of the Bible and the Book of Mormon (the founding document of the LDS faith) state that *all flesh is fallible* and that we should *not* put our trust in the arm of flesh, but *only in God* (Psalm 118:8; 2 Ne. 4:34), whereas modern leaders state that we cannot be led astray by leaders (Elder M. Russell Ballard stated, “We will not and cannot lead you astray,” Oct. 2014 address). Something has to give in the opposing statements of ancient versus modern leaders, and those of Joseph Smith and Brigham Young. Possibilities for the later two leaders include:

Joseph Smith was never a polygamist, but did have a number of women and men sealed to him.

Joseph Smith was once a polygamist, but never had children, then repented of this action before his murder.

Joseph Smith was a polygamist and lied about it.

Brigham Young changed history and scripture to meet his own agenda after Joseph and Hyrum Smith were killed.

Brigham Young interpreted Joseph Smith’s “Sealings” differently and acted upon upon this as President of the Church.

<sup>2</sup> Scriptures dealing with dark skin being a curse tied to rebellion are found in 2 Ne. 5:21-23, 30:6; Alma 3:6; 3 Ne. 2:15; Abr. 1:21-24, 27. This can be the result of rebellion of their fathers, not their own rebellion. Other scriptures reveal that salvation is available to all, regardless of race, and include 2 Ne. 26:24, 33; 27:14-15. After 1981, 2 Ne. 30:6 was changed from “white and delightsome” to “pure and delightsome.” One supposed or changed revelation (unpublished) to Joseph Smith, dated July 17, 1831, encouraged men on an early Lamanite mission in 1832, to take Lamanite wives, that white “delightsome” skin might result from their union over time.