

Chapter 9

Utah LDS Church Continues to Charge Joseph with Marrying Other Men’s Wives Despite DNA Tests Showing He Did Not Father Their Children

In 1887 Andrew Jenson (who later became the LDS Church’s Assistant Historian) published the names of twenty-seven women he declared had been Joseph’s plural wives. Although other persons have published other lists,¹ his is perhaps considered the most official. Eight of the women Jenson named were provably married and living with their legal husbands on the dates they allegedly also wed Joseph.

Historian Jenson’s claim that Joseph married and cohabited with the wives of other men is bereft of verifiable proof and is filled with troubling inconsistencies—all of which are in direct opposition to Joseph’s insistences. Yet, Jenson’s list has never been rescinded by the Utah LDS Church.

Jenson’s charge that Joseph married other men’s wives was not new. After being excommunicated for adultery and committing abortions, Dr. John C. Bennett published similar falsehoods in 1842 as he sought ways to damage Joseph Smith for expelling him (see John C. Bennett, *The History of the Saints; or, An Exposé of Joe Smith and Mormonism*, 220–223, 256–257). As described in *Joseph Smith Fought Polygamy* 1:36–38, it was Brigham Young, and not Joseph, who was marrying other men’s wives at Nauvoo.

1. Author Fawn M. Brodie published the names of forty-nine alleged wives of Joseph Smith (see Fawn M. Brodie, *No Man Knows My History*, 335–336). Todd Compton, in a more recent publication, lists Joseph’s wives as thirty-three, with an additional eight “Possible Wives,” increasing the number of alleged wives to forty-one (see Todd Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness: The Plural wives of Joseph Smith*, 4, 6, 8).

Utah LDS President Grant's Disturbing Fiction

Polygamy supporters have long believed that Joseph fathered children born to women who were married to other men. In the families of those women, stories that Joseph had fathered certain children have been told for so many years that they have become widely believed. Some may have even pondered if the descendants of the subjects of those old fables may have transformed their supposed prophetic birthright into special honors over the centuries.

When historian Jenson published his famous list in 1887, he was expanding on what had then been taught among the followers of Brigham Young for well over thirty years. According to Utah LDS Bishop John D. Lee (Brigham Young's adopted son), Young himself alluded to Joseph seeking other men's wives. Lee asserted, "After the death of Joseph, Brigham Young told me that Joseph's time on earth was short, and that the Lord allowed him privileges that we could not have (John D. Lee, *Mormonism Unveiled: or The Life and Confessions of the Late Mormon Bishop, John D. Lee*, 137). That statement has always been understood as pertaining to the privilege of polygamy.

Also, Jedediah M. Grant, who served in the Utah LDS Church first presidency under Brigham Young from 1854 to 1856, preached a sermon on February 19, 1854, at Salt Lake City, Utah, in which he asserted:

When the family organization was revealed from heaven—the patriarchal order of God, and Joseph began, on the right and on the left, to add to his family, what a quaking there was in Israel. Says one brother to another, "Joseph says all covenants are done away, and none are binding but the new covenants; now suppose Joseph should come and say he wanted your wife, what would you say to that?" "I would tell him to go to hell." This was the spirit of many in the early days of this Church. . . .

Did the Prophet Joseph want every man's wife he asked for? He did not, but in that thing was the grand thread of the Priesthood developed. (*Journal of Discourses* 2 [1855]: 13, 14)

This assertion by Utah LDS Church President Grant—that “Joseph began, on the right and on the left, to add to his family”—refers specifically to the type of polygamy where wives are shared amongst men. Grant here also infers that if LDS men wish to experience the full power of the priesthood, they must do likewise!

Clearly, Grant’s accusations and assertions are immoral and out of harmony with Christianity and the Scriptures. His accusations against Joseph were made eleven years after Joseph was murdered. During his lifetime, Joseph excommunicated men who made such accusations. However, after Joseph’s assassination, designing men such as Grant were freed to libel Joseph at will and to use his good name to excuse their evil deeds.

As for Grant’s statement that Joseph caused a quaking in Nauvoo as he added wives and children to his household, there was surely a quaking in Nauvoo over the issue—but that quaking was not caused by Joseph. It was not Joseph, but it was apostles (Brigham Young, Willard Richards, Orson Hyde, Heber C. Kimball, John Taylor, and Parley P. Pratt), along with Joseph Noble, William Clayton, and others who added plural wives while in Nauvoo and who caused upheavals which resulted in Joseph being murdered and the members fleeing from the beautiful city!

However, Joseph was the greatest threat to *their* schemes. He never ceased to publicly condemn plural marriage and to prosecute those who practiced it at Nauvoo. Unlike the polygamists who shrouded their words with subtleties and whose actions were in secret, Joseph was frank and open in both word and deed in denouncing the polygamists. In one public sermon, Joseph even expressed a wish that the grand jury (then in session) would reveal the names of his alleged other wives so that he could commence legal redress against such accusers. He made that wish on May 26, 1844, one month before his death, while preaching a powerful sermon in which he reasserted that he had only one wife.

While he wished the women *would* be named, some of those who accused Joseph of marrying additional women *were* known. Joseph condemned those accusers who had testified before the grand jury in order to ruin his character and wrest control of the Church. Joseph stated:

I wish the grand jury would tell me who they [the alleged plural wives] are—whether it will be a curse or blessing to me. I am quite tired of the fools asking me. . . . What a thing it is for a man [Joseph] to be accused of committing adultery, and having seven wives, when I can only find one.
(LDS *History of the Church* 6:411)

If Joseph had been guilty of the felony of plural marriage, he would not have publicly challenged the grand jury convened against him to reveal the names of his plural wives.

After Joseph's death, many writers and reporters looked to Young and his followers for documentation on how polygamy came into the Church. In order to make their case, Utah LDS Church leaders rewrote much of Church history, and Joseph's personal history was also changed (see chapter 3 of this book). The alterations and falsehoods they injected eventually came to be viewed as facts by millions. As the years passed, the truth became less and less known and untruths prevailed. Those untruths have been spread throughout the world, while the testimonies by Joseph, Emma, Hyrum, and many Church members who did not follow Young have too often been ignored.

Polygamists (such as Presidents Young and Grant), by their false testimonies, were able to convince the masses that Joseph stooped so low as to test the apostles' loyalty to him by asking them to give him their legal wives—the wives of their youth, the mothers of their children. It was a detestable fraud and Joseph Smith, being dead, could not deny it.

Especially after the plural marriage document introduced by Brigham Young became scripture for the Utah LDS Church (Section 132), it was increasingly rumored that certain individuals were the children of Joseph Smith through alleged plural wives. Until recently there was no scientific way to test such claims. Now there is DNA. Naturally, the first tests conducted were on persons thought most likely to be Joseph's descendants. So far those tests have ruled out Joseph's paternity of them and support that he fathered no children with any woman other than Emma!

**DNA Tests Reveal Joseph Smith Did Not
Father Any Children of the Eight Married Women**

According to pages 233–234 of Andrew Jenson’s *The Historical Record* 6 (May 1887), Joseph secretly wed eight women who were already married to other men. Through the years, many claimed that certain of their children were fathered by Joseph. For nearly two centuries, the supporters of polygamy have clung to the claims of those who said Joseph fathered certain children as evidence of his polygamy. However, recent DNA testing has now dashed such false claims on the rock of scientific reality. DNA tests are continuing to show that Joseph Smith did not father any of the children they claimed were his! The listing below of these eight women includes annotations whether or not they claimed children by Joseph and if DNA tests have disproved those claims.

Prescindia Huntington Buell (DNA Disproves Claim).

Prescindia was the wife of Norman Buell. They were husband and wife during the Church’s sojourn at Far West and during the Church’s entire stay at Nauvoo. She and Norman were still a married couple at the time of Joseph’s death. She was a sister to Zina D. Huntington Jacobs. Prescindia later left Norman and became one of Apostle Heber C. Kimball’s plural wives.

It has been widely proclaimed that Joseph fathered one of Prescindia’s sons, Oliver (see Fawn M. Brodie, *No Man Knows My History: The Life of Joseph Smith, the Mormon Prophet*, 301–302, 307). However, DNA tests have now determined that Oliver was not Joseph’s child, but the offspring of Prescindia’s original husband, Norman Buell (see *Deseret News*, November 10, 2007, article by Carrie A. Moore; also *Deseret News*, June 13, 2016, “Joseph Smith Apparently Was Not Josephine Lyon’s Father, Mormon History Association Speaker Says,” by R. Scott Lloyd).

Lucinda Pendleton Morgan Harris (DNA Disproves Claim). Lucinda was the wife of George W. Harris. They were a married couple at Far West, Missouri, and at Nauvoo. They were still married and living together at the time of Joseph’s death. DNA testing shows that her son, Don Alonzo “Smith,” was not related to Joseph Smith (see *Deseret News*, June 13, 2016, “Joseph Smith

Apparently Was Not Josephine Lyon’s Father, Mormon History Association Speaker Says,” by R. Scott Lloyd).

Zina D. Huntington Jacobs (DNA Disproves Claim). She was known at Nauvoo as Mrs. Henry B. Jacobs. Her maiden name was Huntington. During the Nauvoo period, when it is said by Jenson that Joseph married her, she and Henry were living together as husband and wife and she was bearing his children. Their marriage continued until after Joseph’s death. After the exodus from Nauvoo, she left Henry and became one of Brigham Young’s plural wives.

For nearly 200 years, the Utah LDS Church has rumored that Joseph was the father of one of Zina’s sons, Zebulon. DNA tests have now proven that Joseph was not the child’s father, but that Zebulon was fathered by Zina’s original husband, Henry (see *Journal of Mormon History* 31 (3) [Fall 2005]: 42–60; also *Deseret News*, June 13, 2016, “Joseph Smith Apparently Was Not Josephine Lyon’s Father, Mormon History Association Speaker Says,” by R. Scott Lloyd).

Sylvia Sessions Lyon (DNA Disproves Claim). Sylvia was the wife of Windsor P. Lyon. They came to Nauvoo as husband and wife and were still married at the time of Joseph’s death. However, she later became one of Apostle Heber C. Kimball’s wives. Sylvia insisted she had also been secretly married to Joseph Smith, and that her daughter, Josephine, had been fathered by him. DNA testing has revealed that Joseph was not Josephine’s father, but that Sylvia’s legal husband, Windsor Lyon, was the girl’s father (see *Deseret News*, June 13, 2016, “Joseph Smith Apparently Was Not Josephine Lyon’s Father, Mormon History Association Speaker Says,” by R. Scott Lloyd).

Sarah M. Cleveland (No Children Claimed). Sarah was the wife of Judge John Cleveland of Quincy, Illinois (a nonmember). Judge Cleveland and his wife were noted for their charitable deeds. It was in their home that Emma Smith and her four children, and Mrs. Sidney Rigdon and her children, found a sanctuary after

fleeing from the state of Missouri. The Clevelands were still a respected married couple at the time of Joseph's death. Unlike the other women named above, Sarah (a member of the Church), did not go west with Brigham's followers. She remained with her nonmember husband. She had no children who were ever claimed to be Joseph's.

Elvira Cowles (No Children Claimed). Elvira was the wife of Jonathan Holmes. Joseph performed their wedding ceremony December 1, 1842, at Nauvoo (see Lyndon W. Cook, *Nauvoo Deaths and Marriages, 1839–1845*, 102). From their wedding day until Joseph's death, Jonathan and Elvira lived together as husband and wife. She had no children who were ever claimed to be Joseph's.

Mary Elizabeth Rollins Lightner (No Children Claimed by Mary). Mary was the wife of Adam Lightner, whom she married in 1835. She and Adam lived together as husband and wife for fifty years—until Adam died in 1885. They were the parents of ten children. Although she was living with her husband, Adam, Mary was “sealed” to Brigham Young “for time” (while on earth but not for eternity) on January 17, 1846 (see John J. Stewart, *Brigham Young and His Wives: And The True Story of Plural marriage*, 89). When Mary penned her original autobiography, she failed to mention ever having been a plural wife of Joseph Smith. It was not until sixty years after their supposed marriage date (when she was eighty-four and the Utah LDS Church was gathering “proof” of polygamy) that she allegedly recalled that most significant event in her life. At that time, she signed an affidavit that she and Joseph had married.

Ruth Vose (No Children Claimed). Ruth was the wife of Edward Sayers. They were married before moving to Nauvoo, and they were living together as husband and wife in Nauvoo at the time of Joseph's assassination. She had no children who were ever claimed to be Joseph's.

DNA Tests Rule Out Children of Three Other Women

Fanny Alger (DNA Disproves Claim). Fanny was married to Solomon Custer in 1836. Before Fanny married Solomon, she was allegedly the plural wife of Joseph. Nearly two centuries later, a man surfaced claiming to be a descendant of Orrison “Smith,” who he believed might be a son of Joseph and Fanny. However, DNA tests “confidently excluded” Joseph Smith’s paternity of Orrison (see *Journal of Mormon History* 31 (3) [Fall 2005]: 42–60).

Mary Ann Frost Pratt (DNA Disproves Claim). Mary Ann was married to Apostle Parley P. Pratt. DNA tests reveal her son, Moroni Llewellyn Pratt, was not the son of Joseph Smith, but the son of Mary Ann’s husband, Parley P. Pratt (see *Journal of Mormon History* 31 (3) [Fall 2005]: 42–60; also *Deseret News*, June 13, 2016, “Joseph Smith Apparently Was Not Josephine Lyon’s Father, Mormon History Association Speaker Says,” by R. Scott Lloyd).

Clarissa Reed Hancock (DNA Disproves Claim). Clarissa was married to Levi Hancock. Descendants of two of her sons, Mosiah Hancock and John Reed Hancock, were DNA tested and shown not to be related to Joseph Smith, but to be the sons of Clarissa’s husband, Levi Hancock (see *Deseret Morning News*, November 10, 2007, “DNA tests rule out 2 as Smith’s descendants,” by Carrie A. Moore; also *Deseret News*, July 9, 2011, “DNA solves a Joseph Smith mystery”; also *Deseret News*, June 13, 2016, “Joseph Smith Apparently Was Not Josephine Lyon’s Father, Mormon History Association Speaker Says,” by R. Scott Lloyd).

Throughout the years, from the publication of Dr. John Bennett’s book in 1842 until the present era, many women, both single and married, were alleged to be Joseph’s wives, in addition to those on Jenson’s list. Others have compiled additional lists, some with more women and some with less women than those on Jenson’s list. As of this writing, DNA test results have not proven that Joseph was the father of even one child from any woman on these

lists. Yet Emma, his legal and only wife, bore him nine children.

These failures to prove Joseph Smith was a polygamist by using DNA testing have astounded many Utah LDS Church members and have shaken many in that Church. The negative DNA results have proven disheartening to those who had hoped they were Joseph's descendants. So far, a total of eight family branches (from eight children of seven alleged wives who falsely ascribed offspring to Joseph Smith) have been disproved by DNA testing to be Joseph's descendants!

It is important to realize that the first persons tested were considered by Utah LDS Church leaders, historians, and polygamy defenders to be the most likely descendants of Joseph. Yet *none* have been affirmed by such testing! Instead of rejoicing that they are related to the Prophet through the doctrine of polygamy, many descendants have instead been visited with the dread pronouncement that the fables of prophetic pedigree that their families have enjoyed for so many years are utterly false!

As previously discussed (see *Joseph Smith Fought Polygamy*, Volume 1, chapter 18), one of the proclaimed purposes of polygamy was to raise up righteous seed. Since DNA testing is proving Joseph had no children from alleged polygamous unions, it is also proving Joseph was not a polygamist.

As Joseph Smith, with much foresight, stated, "I am innocent of all these charges. . . . 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 can prove them all perjurers" (*LDS History of the Church* 6:411).

**Of the Nineteen Additional Single
Women Jenson Says Joseph Secretly
Married, None Bore Any Children—At All!**

While this chapter is primarily about the eight married women just featured whom Joseph also allegedly married, we shall consider the *other* nineteen women Jenson and the Utah LDS Church maintain Joseph was married to—nineteen single women who were *not* married to other men at the time. No DNA testing was conducted related to these women, for none of the nineteen bore any children during Joseph's lifetime nor within nine months of his death!

While many factors may raise or lower the odds, some medical experts have concluded that without modern birth control the average couple has about a one-in-twenty chance of pregnancy with each encounter; and in any given year, the average couple has an eighty-six percent chance of conceiving a child. Given these statistics, the fact that none of these nineteen women bore any children to Joseph indicates they were not Joseph's plural wives. Some say that Joseph used abortion to prevent his children from being born to his plural wives. However, since a purpose of polygamy was to raise up "righteous seed," abortion (which Church members considered murder) would have been counter to this purpose and not an option for the Prophet who allegedly revealed polygamy as the will of Heaven.

Testimony of Joseph III Affirms Joseph Smith's Innocence

Joseph Smith III, eldest son of Joseph, was acquainted with the women whom historian Jenson alleged were his father's additional wives. Joseph III knew that none of the single women named had given birth to a child at Nauvoo during his father's lifetime nor in the year following. Elder Charles Derry, an RLDS missionary, reported a conversation he had with Joseph Smith III on the subject of the plural marriage charges against his father. Elder Derry wrote:

Bro. Joseph [III] is taking me out to Colchester [Illinois] in his wagon, the distance of thirty miles. We have some interesting conversation. He does not believe his father ever practiced polygamy, and he gives good reasons for it. He says there were several young women lived at his father's house, but they were destitute of homes. They were not his father's wives. If they had been it is probable some evidence [pregnancies] would have been visible, especially as we are told that polygamy was instituted to bring forth a holy seed, and surely no means [of birth control] would have been taken to have prevented this result. But he [Joseph III] knows that none of these females had children until 1846, which was nearly two years after Joseph's death. As for Eliza Snow, it is reported that she had a child by Joseph; but he [Joseph III]

knows that she never bore children while she was in Nauvoo, which also was about two years after Joseph's death. The Brighamites claim that Joseph has a son in Utah, but this is equally false. (*Journal of History* 2 [April 1909]: 168–169); Charles Derry, *Autobiography of Elder Charles Derry*, 91)

Andrew Jenson not only published a list of Joseph's alleged wives, but he also published affidavits and statements signed by well-known polygamists who supported the notion that Joseph was a polygamist. However, his list is riddled with intricate problems—one of which is that none of the unmarried women bore any of Joseph's children. In addition, the DNA tests of the descendants of the married women who did bear children show that none of those children were Joseph's. Thus, because of the “righteous seed” purpose of polygamy, the veracity of Jenson's work is highly suspect.

Nevertheless, the Utah LDS Church developed an entire internal culture and theology based on the premise that Joseph Smith was a polygamist. One such official declaration on the matter was made by Utah LDS Church President Joseph F. Smith (son of Hyrum Smith), who tried to explain away Joseph and Hyrum's public statements against polygamy. He declared:

Let all the Latter-day Saints *know* that Joseph Smith, the martyred Prophet, is responsible to God and the world for this doctrine, and let every soul know that he and his brother Hyrum did practice the doctrine in their lifetime, and until their death, notwithstanding their *seeming* denials as published in the *Times and Seasons*, and which are so fervently relied upon as evidence against the fact by a certain class of anti-polygamists. Those denials can be explained, and have been, and while they are true in the sense, and for the purpose for which they were designed, they are not denials of plural or celestial marriage as taught by Joseph and Hyrum Smith and practiced at the time by both of them, and many others in prominent standing in the Church. These seeming denials themselves are specific proofs of the existence of the *true coin*, the counterfeit of which they

denounced. (Andrew Jenson, *The Historical Record* 6 [May 1887]: 219–220)

Historian Jenson added this statement:

We could produce hundreds of other testimonies of a similar nature to these given above, were it necessary, but what we have already given must be deemed fully sufficient to prove, beyond a shadow of doubt, that Joseph Smith, the Prophet, did teach and practice the principle of plural marriage in his lifetime. (ibid., 233)

Even if Jenson could have produced “hundreds of other testimonies of a similar nature,” those testimonies would still contradict the testimonies of Joseph Smith and provably conflict with each other and other official documents.

Clearly, whatever actually happened is quite different than the official version promulgated by the Utah LDS Church! If their affidavits and other official documents of Joseph fathering so many polygamous children are provably wrong, then how many other related assertions by them are also untrue?

Section 132 Falsely Prophecies Concerning Joseph’s Children with Other Women

Section 132 in the Utah LDS Doctrine and Covenants contains a false prophecy concerning the promise that Joseph will be the father of numerous children, “an hundred-fold.” It declares:

I will bless him [Joseph] and multiply him and give unto him an hundred-fold in this world, of fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters, houses and lands, wives and *children*.
(LDS DC 132:55; italics added)

The descendants of Joseph and Emma Hale Smith could now number over 2,000.² But, where are the tens of thousands of

2. See “Smiths’ descendant on family quest” by Carrie A. Moore, *Deseret News*: October 5, 2007; also <http://www.deseretnews.com/article/695215934/Smiths-descendant-on-family-quest.html>.

offspring who would have likely been descended from the hundred-fold children of the many plural wives that the Utah LDS Church has charged to Joseph? To date, not a single child from an alleged polygamous union has been proven to be Joseph's!

The preponderance of reliable evidence indicates Joseph Smith had only one wife, and it is historically provable he fathered nine children with her. Yet Section 132 promised that Joseph would have a hundred extra wives and children! The fact that this did not come to pass is one more evidence that Section 132 is false.

Joseph Brought Forth Scriptures That Forbid Coveting Other Men's Wives

If Joseph Smith were as intent on establishing polygamy as the Utah LDS Church maintains, one would think he would not have spent so much time prophesying and writing inspired scripture against that practice.

The coveting of another man's wife (which precedes the marrying of another man's wife) is strictly forbidden in the Bible, the Book of Mormon, and the Doctrine and Covenants. Joseph Smith was instrumental in bringing forth those governing laws of the Church.

The Book of Mormon, which Joseph brought forth by the gift and power of God, states:

Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife. (Mosiah 13:24 [LDS]; Mosiah 7:124 [RLDS])

The Inspired Version of the Holy Scriptures and the King James Version (which was used by the Church during Joseph's lifetime) both contain these words:

Neither shalt thou desire thy neighbor's wife, neither shalt thou covet thy neighbor's house . . . or any thing that is thy neighbor's. (Deuteronomy 5:21)

The Doctrine and Covenants, which was divinely given to Joseph to be a law unto the Church in these last days, has these two commandments:

And again, I command thee that thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife; nor seek thy neighbor's life. (RLDS DC 18:3a; LDS DC 19:25)

It is very significant that in this commandment given through Joseph it is presented together that a man should not covet his neighbor's wife nor seek to murder one's neighbor. Indeed, one man who coveted other men's wives in Nauvoo was evidently quite delighted when Joseph, who was the strongest opponent of polygamy, was murdered. Soon after Brigham Young was informed of Joseph's death he reportedly exclaimed, "This is the happiest day of my life!" (Edmund C. Briggs, *Early History of the Reorganization*, 194).

In the Church's newspaper, Joseph republished the Doctrine and Covenants scripture (quoted above) less than two years before his death. He was in the process of writing and publishing serially his autobiography titled "History of Joseph Smith." He published the revelation with the heading, "A commandment of God and not of man . . . by him who is eternal." Included in the body of the revelation were these words:

And again: I command thee, that thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife. Nor seek thy neighbor's life. (*Times and Seasons* 3 [October 15, 1842]: 944)

Surely Joseph was setting forth his own beliefs when he republished the commandments in 1842 that a man should not covet his neighbor's wife nor seek his neighbor's life.

Emma Smith Explained Joseph's Belief on the Dangers of Polygamy

According to Apostle Edmund C. Briggs of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Joseph's widow, Emma Smith Bidamon, told him in 1856 that she had heard Joseph declare that polygamy and murder go together.

Elder Briggs was a primary witness, who was well acquainted with Emma. No one else had a closer association with the Smith family after Joseph's death than he. For almost a year, Briggs

boarded at the Mansion House, which at that time was a hotel kept by Emma and her second husband, Lewis C. Bidamon.

During those months Briggs had the opportunity to observe Emma and her sons, Joseph III, Alexander, Frederick, and David. At times Briggs had the privilege of having Emma share with him Joseph's thoughts and opinions on important events in the life of the Church just prior to his martyrdom. At the time Briggs boarded at the Mansion House, he was an elder and only twenty-one years of age. Another elder, twenty-five-year-old Samuel Gurley, had accompanied him to Nauvoo. The two men went to Nauvoo after being prophetically spoken to and told to go there and meet with Joseph Smith III, who was Joseph's eldest son (Edmund C. Briggs, *Early History of the Reorganization*, 68).

Briggs and Gurley arrived at Nauvoo Friday, December 5, 1856. A few days later, Samuel Gurley returned to his home and family. Briggs boarded at the Mansion House from December 5, 1856, until the fall of 1857. He worked for Joseph III on the Smith farm east of Nauvoo and had much opportunity to get to know Emma and converse with her about the Church. One evening Emma informed him that her deceased husband, Joseph, had declared that the crimes of polygamy and murder always go together:

I was very watchful all the time to gather any expression from Sister Emma, in which she reflected any feeling concerning the latter-day work. One evening, she said, "If anyone will follow the instructions as laid down in the Proverbs of Solomon and the Psalms of David, they will come out all right." But Joseph said, "David was not raised from the dead when the righteous came forth at the time of Christ's resurrection, because he put Uriah to death; and the crimes of polygamy and murder always go together." (ibid., 102)

Joseph's interpretation that King David was not among those Saints who arose following the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ agrees with the scripture. The Bible reveals concerning that resurrection:

And the graves were opened; and the bodies of the saints which slept, arose, who were many, and came out of the graves after his resurrection, went into the holy city, and appeared unto many. (Matthew 27:56–57)

According to Joseph Smith, at Christ’s resurrection King David was not among those resurrected Saints who came forth from their graves and went into Jerusalem and appeared to many. Apostle Peter also stated on the day of Pentecost (which was after Christ’s resurrection) that King David had not yet ascended into the heavens. Peter declared:

Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulcher is with us unto this day. . . . For David is not ascended into the heavens. (Acts 2:29, 34)

Did not polygamy and murder go together in King David’s day? And did not polygamy and murder—under the new, vicious doctrine of blood atonement—go together in the Utah LDS Church in the years immediately following the introduction of Section 132?

As previously discussed in *Joseph Smith Fought Polygamy* (Volume 1, chapter 18), the Book of Mormon also condemns polygamy and indicates that David’s actions regarding such were abominable to the Lord. The Book of Mormon states:

David and Solomon truly had many wives and concubines, which thing was abominable before me, saith the Lord. . . .

Wherefore, my brethren, hear me, and hearken to the word of the Lord: For there shall not any man among you have save it be one wife; and concubines he shall have none; For I the Lord God, delighteth in the chastity of women. And whoredoms are an abomination before me; thus saith the Lord of hosts. (LDS Jacob 2:24, 27–28; RLDS Jacob 2:33, 36–37)

From the above scriptures, Joseph knew that polygamy was an evil practice and thus an abomination to the Lord. Considering

his own statement, he also knew that if this evil were practiced, it could lead to murder. These understandings alone would have kept Joseph—a righteous man—from practicing it. And he certainly would not have brought forth a “revelation” (which glorified polygamy by teaching it was the way to salvation) in opposition to the above scriptures.

The First Child Born of a Polygamous Union in the Church

Historian Andrew Jenson published, along with the list of Joseph’s alleged wives, a statement which gives the date of the birth of the first child born of plural marriage in the Church. The father of the child was not Joseph Smith, but was Joseph Bates Noble, who figured prominently in placing the blame for plural marriage upon the dead Prophet. Obviously, Noble needed to excuse his own behavior, so no doubt was very willing to implicate Joseph as the cause of it. Jenson published:

Brother [Joseph] Noble also obeyed this higher law on April 5, 1843, when Sarah B. Alley was sealed to him for time and all eternity. . . . The first issue [first child born] of this marriage was George Omner Noble (now an Elder in the Church), who was born in Nauvoo Feb. 2, 1844. He is supposed to have been the first polygamous child born in this dispensation. (Andrew Jenson, *The Historical Record* 6 [May 1887]: 239)

Hazel Noble Boyack, one of Joseph Noble’s descendants, wrote in 1962 of the birth of that same first child “born of a polygamous union in the Church.” She stated:

On April 5th, 1843, Elder Noble took as his first plural wife, Sarah B. Alley . . . of Nauvoo. A year later this good woman bore to her husband a son, named George Omner. This little babe had the distinction of being the first child born of a polygamous union in the Church. (Hazel Noble Boyack, *A Nobleman in Israel: A Biographical Sketch of Joseph Bates Noble, Pioneer To Utah In 1847*, 31)

Note that the date of Noble’s marriage to Sarah B. Alley was April 5, 1843, and that Sarah gave birth to George Omner Noble on February 2, 1844, not quite ten months later. Historian Jenson’s frank statement that George Omner Noble was supposed to be the first child in the Church born of a polygamous union, reveals that as of that date there was no claim that a child had been fathered by Joseph of a plural marriage union. Thus, any child born of Joseph and a plural wife would have had to have been born between February 2, 1844, and March 1845 (nine months after Joseph was slain). However, there were none.

Those who declare Joseph was a polygamist should begin to question the claims when it is seen that a child was born, after less than ten months of marriage, to Elder Noble and his first plural wife, and not one child was born to Joseph and any of his twenty-seven (or thirty-three or forty-one) supposed plural marriage wives during the same juncture. In contrast, Emma was pregnant when Joseph Smith was killed. In total, she gave birth to three children at Nauvoo in a period of four and a half years—Don Carlos in 1840, a stillborn son in 1842, and David Hyrum in 1844 (see Scot Facer Proctor and Maurine Jensen Proctor, *The Revised and Enhanced History of Joseph Smith By His Mother*, 475, 479, 485, 486).

False Allegations That Joseph Was a Polygamist Fulfill True Angelic Prophecy

Joseph Smith was visited by a heavenly messenger on September 21, 1823. He recorded that the angel told him:

That God had a work for me to do, and that my name should be had for *good and evil*, among all nations, kindreds, and tongues; or that it [Joseph’s name] should be both *good and evil* spoken of among all people. (*Times and Seasons* 3:753; RLDS *History of the Church* 1:12–13; italics added)

When leading men and women in the Utah LDS Church publicly proclaimed that Joseph had married plural wives (including other men’s wives), they partially fulfilled the above angelic prophecy—that Joseph’s name would be known for evil among all nations, kindreds, and tongues.

For nearly two centuries, from before Nauvoo days to the present, falsehoods have been repeated by those who have sought to make Joseph responsible for introducing polygamy into the Church. False claims that Joseph fathered this or that child by the wife of a certain apostle or elder were readily accepted as truth by Young's followers. Today those falsehoods are still accepted as historical facts by millions—even though DNA tests so far prove otherwise. Meanwhile, Joseph's documented testimonies and the accounts of his heroic fight against polygamy have been largely ignored.

Edmund C. Briggs wrote that, during the time he boarded at the Mansion House in 1856–1857, he heard Emma repeat one statement several times. Briggs asserted:

Again, she [Emma] said several times in conversation with me that the Utah Mormons had by their acts, since the death of her husband, made true all the slanders and vile things charged against the Church. (Edmund Briggs, *Early History of the Reorganization*, 95)

Emma Smith understood that a conspiracy existed against Joseph—both during his lifetime and after his death—because of his opposition to the doctrine of polygamy. However, comparatively few individuals listened to what she and other Church members (who did not go west with Brigham) had to say in defense of Joseph. The world wanted to believe that he was an immoral man. The reporters and writers, who sought information on his life, found the accounts given by Utah LDS Church leaders and their plural wives far more sensational and more easily believed than the assertions by Emma and others who declared that Joseph had only one wife.

One RLDS missionary to Utah, Apostle William H. Kelley, correctly stated in 1876:

Joseph's public record can not, in justice, be set aside in this investigation. His private life must be held to have been consistent with his public teachings, unless some substantial evidence can be produced to prove that his private life and teachings were the reverse of what he did in public. . . . Now

which is the most sensible, to believe that Joseph was what he represented himself publicly, when there is no evidence to the contrary, save the echoes of the “may bes” and “perhaps” drawn from the bare statements of the “private few,” (Brigham and Miss E. R. Snow constitute the principal part of “private few,”) all of whom are polygamist advocates, and who acknowledge that they lied about it for a time. . . . I am firm in the belief, after hearing all that come in the way, that Joseph Smith the Seer had but one wife. (The Messenger Of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints 2 [Salt Lake City, Utah, August 1876]: 39; italics added)

The heavenly messenger who visited Joseph in 1823 promised him that his name would be “had for good” also. May time soon vindicate the goodness of his name, including the truthfulness of his testimony that he was not a polygamist!

Joseph Received a Promise Regarding His Seed

In January 1841 Joseph received a wonderful promise from the Lord in the form of a revelation concerning his posterity—his children by Emma. The promise stated:

for this anointing have I put upon his head, that his blessing shall also be put upon the head of his posterity after him; and as I said unto Abraham, concerning the kindreds of the earth, even so I say unto my servant Joseph, In thee, and in thy seed, shall the kindred of the earth be blessed. (RLDS DC 107:18b–c; LDS DC 124:57–58)

Emma Smith was pregnant when she made the trip by steamboat to St. Louis in April 1844 to purchase provisions for her and Joseph’s hotel. Yet not one of Joseph’s nineteen (otherwise unmarried) *alleged* plural wives was pregnant at any time until at least a year after his death! And of the additional eight women married to other men at the time whom the Utah LDS Church *also* claims were married to Joseph, several of them gained fame and status by intimating that they had borne Joseph’s child. Yet DNA testing has

now concluded that their stories were falsehoods—for it has been proven that their special children came not from Joseph Smith, but from the actual husbands they were married to at the time!

Emma gave birth to a son after Joseph’s death and named him David Hyrum. As the above true revelation foretells, the kindreds of the earth have indeed been blessed by Joseph’s posterity, and there is every reason to believe those blessings will continue.

Joseph and Emma’s sons—Joseph III, Alexander Hale, and David Hyrum—gave to the peoples of the earth the Book of Mormon without interpreting it to support polygamy. They also provided the kindreds of the earth with a Doctrine and Covenants containing the “Marriage” article. (This was adopted by a unanimous vote of a General Assembly of the Church on August 17, 1835, and printed in all editions thereafter in Joseph’s lifetime.) No polygamous Section 132 is found therein, nor is there any such passage upholding plural marriage of any form. In addition, they prepared the manuscript and printed the Inspired Version of the Bible in 1867, which their father corrected by inspiration and left in the care of his only wife, Emma.

No children born to any alleged plural wives of Joseph Smith, who have claimed to be Joseph’s posterity, have rendered deeds which could be compared to the deeds of Joseph III, Alexander, and David. The deeds of these three are the fulfillment of the above prophecy that was given concerning Joseph Smith’s *true* posterity.

Summary

The plural marriage charges and problems within the Church escalated in 1844, but Joseph continued his constant battle against that doctrine. According to the Utah LDS Church, Joseph publicly denied practicing polygamy out of fear of persecution, while living with many plural wives in secret. Historian Andrew Jenson wrote that Joseph had at least twenty-seven wives in 1844. Other published authors indicate he may have had as many as forty-one plural wives. Utah LDS Church President Grant indicated that Joseph also practiced the type of polygamy where he shared wives with other men. The LDS Church today still agrees with President Grant, as well as they estimate that Joseph had between thirty and forty plural wives. Section 132

of the LDS Doctrine and Covenants (still considered a revelation by their church today) promised Joseph that he would have many descendants from his plural wives. Yet the facts do not support these allegations.

Joseph III, a primary witness, stated to Charles Derry that he saw no evidence of polygamy in his home. His father had no other wives than his mother, Emma. Also, he saw no evidence of pregnancies (including Eliza Snow) which certainly would have resulted from trying to raise up righteous seed. Emma Smith, also a primary witness, told Edmund C. Briggs in 1856 that she had heard Joseph declare against polygamy because it and murder go together. Less than two years prior to his death, Joseph printed in the *Times and Seasons* a revelation admonishing men to not covet their neighbor's wife or to take their neighbor's life. Joseph Bates Noble's statement to Andrew Jenson indicated that Joseph fathered no child by a polygamist union prior to February 2, 1844—about four and one-half months prior to his death. Thus, any child born of Joseph and a plural wife would have had to have been born between February 2, 1844, and March 1845 (nine months after Joseph was slain). However, there were none. Yet, allegedly Joseph had anywhere from twenty-seven to forty-one supposed plural marriage wives. In contrast, Emma bore him three children from 1840 to 1844.

In addition, DNA testing is proving Joseph fathered no children by polygamist unions, thus supporting that he was not a polygamist. As the primary researcher for this DNA testing, Dr. Ugo A. Perego stated:

Through DNA we will not be able to test 100 percent of the cases. But if we test 70 percent of them and they are all negative [not Joseph's children], does that provide some insight on the topic that we did not consider before [that Joseph was not a polygamist]? (See "DNA solves a Joseph Smith mystery," *Deseret News*, July 9, 2011.)

When they grew to adulthood, Emma's children fondly recalled many abundant memories of Joseph as their adoring and attendant father, but the scores of other women that the Utah LDS

Church claims cohabited with Joseph for up to eleven years did not produce even one child by Joseph! If many dozens of women had actually endeavored for over a decade to “raise righteous seed” with Joseph, there should have been *flocks* of children in Nauvoo and Utah with genuine memories of Joseph as their father. But there are none!

Indeed, as the angel promised, Joseph’s name has been had for evil through the untruthful allegations by the LDS Church and various authors—and thus the world—that he was a polygamist. Nevertheless, Joseph so fittingly wrote to J. C. Calhoun:

While I have powers of body and mind; while water runs and grass grows; while virtue is lovely, and vice hateful; and while a stone points out a sacred spot where a fragment of American liberty once was; I or my posterity will plead the cause of injured innocence. (*Times and Seasons* 5 [January 1, 1844]: 395)