

Confusion Among the Prophets

Attempting to keep up with changing and contradictory Mormon doctrine is a challenge. Mormonism demonstrates that a faith built on something less than an immutable God will necessarily exhibit changing doctrine to match changing practice. Nothing in Mormonism is changeless. Major doctrines rise and fall as needed. A few interesting contradictions follow.

Polygamy. Mormonism taught polygamy until Utah was threatened with losing admittance to the Union. Then they got a “revelation” banning plural marriage. It is interesting that all the years they were polygamous, the Book of Mormon taught (in Jacob 2:24) that polygamy was abominable to God. Emma Smith, Joseph's wife, was told by “revelation” that if she did not submit to the polygamy teaching she would be “destroyed” (*Doctrine and Covenants*, Section 132). Apostle Orson Hyde claimed that Jesus married both Mary and Martha (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 4, pp. 259-260; *Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 2, p. 210).

Eternal Progression. Joseph Smith that taught that God “is an exalted Man” (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 6, p. 3), and President Wilford Woodruff agreed: “God himself is progressing in knowledge, power and dominion, and would do so worlds without end” (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 6. p. 120). Mormon president Joseph Fielding Smith disagreed. “It seems strange to me,” he wrote, “that members of the church will hold to the doctrine, ‘God increases in knowledge.’... I think this kind of doctrine is very dangerous” (*Doctrines of Salvation*, Vol. 1, pp. 7-8).

Creation. Brigham Young said, “Adam was made from the dust of an earth, but not the dust of this earth.” Joseph Fielding Smith disagreed: “The Book of Mormon, the Bible, the *Doctrine and Covenants* and *The Pearl of Great Price* all declare that Adam's body was created from the dust of the ground—that is, from the dust of this ground, this earth.”

(Beyond Mormonism: An Elder’s Story by James R. Spencer, Boise, Idaho: Through the Maze, 1984, 168-169, Text Modified; From Appendix B: Confusion Among the Prophets)