

Pure in Heart, Wise, Noble, Virtuous...

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Denver C. Snuffer, Jr.

I've got this talk to give [placing a large pile of papers on the podium].

You've been sitting awhile. Why don't you stand up and stretch before I inflict another long-seated session on you? These are better chairs than some that have been used in talks I've given. And I assume if there's a chiropractor present, that they'll make themselves known as the afternoon wears on.

I don't care how long you stay standing; stretch until you feel able to sit again. I'm gonna go ahead and start.

I haven't come here to ask anything from you. I don't want any donation, nor for you to join anything. I just want to talk and hope to say something of interest to you.

For too long those who practice plural marriage have been looked upon as deceived enemies to be shunned. Shunning and excommunicating are how various church institutions prevent discourse and exchanging ideas. It's rooted in fear. And fear is the opposite of faith.

I have faith in Jesus Christ as Redeemer and Lord, and I don't fear having a dialogue with those who practice plural marriage. I've studied the subject that divides us from one another. I think I have reached a correct conclusion about it.

Whether you believe it was originally begun by Joseph Smith (perhaps as early as the 1830s) or was introduced by Brigham Young in 1852, it began in secret, protected from the expected opposition by **lying** to the public and denying the truth of it.

Like its beginning, it ended with lying to the public again. The 1890 "Manifesto" was a **lie**, intended to facilitate statehood for Utah. LDS plural marriages did not really end until April of 1904. The plan was to obtain statehood, become self-governing, and then adopt laws that permitted plural marriage. If pledges were made along the way to obtain statehood that were lies, it was worth the temporary difficulties and compromises. All would be fixed by statehood. The federal government, however, was aware of this intent and would not permit it. Before being granted statehood, the church would need to do more than compromise. They would need to utterly repudiate the practice, hence Official Declaration 1. They would need to "put it behind them." But it was a long time AFTER issuing Official Declaration #1 that the church (the LDS Church) came to the realization that it had to be abandoned.

There are libraries of material written about the beginning, spread, discontinuance, and opposition to this practice by the LDS Church. And there are libraries of material used to justify continuing the practice by various splinter groups after the LDS Church abandoned it. It requires a great deal of study—for me it took decades—to become informed enough to make what I think to be a correct decision about the events.

When I joined the LDS Church in 1973, the missionary who baptized me told me about the LDS General Conference that happened every October and April. I was baptized on September 10, 1973, and I was able to travel from New Hampshire and attend the October 1973 Semi-Annual General Conference of the Church a month after I was baptized. I stayed in Centerville [at] the home of the missionary who baptized me (because he managed to get his mother to invite me to come). Each morning during the conference, we got up for breakfast (which his mother prepared for the family), and when we entered the kitchen, the chairs were all turned away from the table so we could kneel, using the chair ~~for a seat~~ for our folded arms, to pray over both the meal and the coming day. The missionary had a lovely family, and I brought good tidings from them back to him when I returned following the conference.

Years later when I was a student at BYU and the returned missionary was working in Salt Lake City, we would go to lunch together. During one of those lunch discussions, I learned that his mother had become a plural wife while he was on his mission. He was opposed to her doing that but shared with me a selection of materials his mother had studied that led her to accept the principle of plural wives. This began my search into the subject.

At first, I **was** persuaded that it was a true teaching, restored through Joseph Smith, and would be part of our eternal families. Like many members of the LDS Church, I accepted section 132 as authentic, although the church and the law prohibited its practice. I thought it was important, and my study of it has continued ever since (now nearly five decades later). As recently as 2011, I still thought the practice originated with Joseph Smith and was authentic.

In the last few years, a great deal of new historical material has become publicly available. As a result, I've changed my mind. I no longer believe it to be attributable to Joseph Smith, nor to be an authentic part of the Restoration, nor approved by God. But I assure you, I do understand that Fundamentalists sincerely believe otherwise. I don't question that conviction, and I don't question that you believe it to have come from God through Joseph Smith. I just don't **share** that conviction. I think you've inherited a tradition from your misled fathers and have, no doubt, entered into the relationship relying on that tradition. But in the Book of Mormon, "traditions" were almost always "false" or wicked.

I doubt you'll change your mind without a great deal of study and effort. That, however, will be up to you. It would be foolish for me to think this talk will accomplish that, and I'm not attempting to do that today. I only hope you'll take advantage of the recently available historical documentation to investigate carefully this issue.

If you reach the same conclusion as I have, then I want to caution you about abandoning your current family. The Scriptures tell us: *...women have claim on their husbands until they are taken, ...All children have claim upon their parents until they are of age...* (T&C 79:1; see also D&C 83:2,4). And again, *But if any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, [he's] denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever* (1 Timothy 1:13 RE; see also 1 Timothy 5:8 LE). Therefore, **you** cannot abandon the obligation you have toward your wives, nor can you parents neglect your duty to your children.

If you become convinced the practice of plural wives is not of God, then keep your family intact, and teach your children against it. Do not let your posterity continue to believe in a false tradition. It was required for the believing Nephites to teach the Lamanites of the errors of their traditions and to bring them to understand the truth. If **you** awaken to the error of practicing plural marriage, teach your children against that false tradition while you stay loyal to the obligation you have to your family.

As I studied the issue, it was apparent the chronology of section 132 was not and is not known, other than it was purportedly put into a lost writing for the first time on July 12, 1843. Then, once written, the original was destroyed and only a copy in the handwriting of Joseph Kingsbury (who was not present when the revelation was received) survives as a copy of whatever was **first** revealed. The first portion of section 132 may have been written as early as 1829 (under the church's theory) and inspired by the material in Jacob chapter 2 in the Book of Mormon. That seems more likely than by the later translation of the Old Testament, as LDS tradition holds. Because the text is **very inconsistent** in places, I speculated there were potentially five separate portions from different dates, later consolidated into one final document. Based on that assumption, I tried to make sense of the document.

However, because of its internal inconsistencies, I suspected it had been altered between the July 1843 date and the 1852 date when it was published. I assumed the contradictions meant that one or the other—but not both—could be trusted. In an effort to sort out what **could** be trusted and what was an alteration, I published my attempt to salvage a corrected version. A copy of that failed attempt to edit the text of section 132 is going to be attached to this talk when it's published. (And by the way, I have printed about 25 copies of this talk with the Appendix that I refer to, and I'm gonna leave them here today for anyone that wants a copy. It'll also be made available as a downloadable PDF from my website after today.) Ultimately, it seemed to me that the document could not be fixed; at least not by me.

From 2014 to 2017, a committee worked on restoring the Restoration Scriptures and eliminating errors and improper additions that had crept in. As the effort to restore the Scriptures into the form Joseph Smith intended for them to read, God commanded us to discard section 132, and we received a replacement text by revelation. That replacement text is now in our Scriptures as part of the Teaching and Commandments [in] section 157. (T&C 157:34-43). (These are a copy of the Scriptures I brought with me today.) A copy of that section is in the Appendix of this talk.

I have not been casual about evaluating the marriage practice that the Fundamentalists have embraced. This is a subject I've treated with seriousness and respect. I don't condemn you for believing what I too once believed about this matter. To be clear, however, I do not believe it originated with either God or Joseph Smith. It was a later-introduced error.

Joseph Smith was comforted by the Lord in Liberty Jail by these words:

The ends of the earth shall inquire after your name, and fools shall [hold] you in derision, and hell shall rage against you, while the pure in heart, and the wise, and the

noble, and the virtuous shall seek counsel, and authority, and blessings constantly from under your hand. And your people shall never be turned against you by the testimony of traitors. (T&C 139:7; see also D&C 122:1-3)

I believe Joseph Smith was pure in heart, wise, noble, and virtuous, and that's why the Lord could commend his counsel and blessings to those who are similarly pure in heart, wise, noble, and virtuous. It is important, I think, to recognize that part of being wise, noble, and virtuous is to be truthful and honest.

The Book of Mormon warns us about a number of un-virtuous characteristics that define the damned:

*...woe unto the deaf that will not hear, for they shall perish. Woe unto the blind that will not see, for they shall perish also. Woe unto the uncircumcised of heart, for a knowledge of their iniquities shall smite them at the last day. **Woe unto the liar, for he shall be thrust down to hell.** (2 Nephi 6:10 RE, emphasis added; see also 2 Nephi 9:31-34 LE)*

Churches ask their members to not listen to anyone but them. This is the “deafness” of those who will not hear. Mormon factions ask their members to look away, and refuse to see anything that challenges their teachings. This is the “blindness” the Book of Mormon warns against. I ask you to hear, as I've been willing to hear. I ask you to see, as I've been willing to see. Hearing and seeing have cost me my membership in the LDS Church. If it costs you your membership in your chosen organization, then take comfort in knowing that you're in company with Lehi, Nephi, Abinadi, Alma, Mormon, and Moroni, among many others. You join company with those who acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah when He lived in Jerusalem.

Churches use fear to make you deaf, blind, and uncircumcised of heart. They claim to have authority from God, and if you depart from their umbrella of authority, you risk God's anger. They claim you cannot be saved apart from their authority. So, they say, “Be afraid! Be very afraid!” But as Christ taught in the Sermon on the Mount, “Fear not,” because what He offers is much greater than what churches and institutions offer. He intends to save those whose ears hear or, in other words, who are humble enough to allow Him to teach. He intends to save those who open their eyes to see or, in other words, those who are not blinded by the craftiness of religious pretenders. He will save those who can recognize when a witness has been sent by Him, as I have been.

Following Joseph Smith's death, Mormonism splintered into several groups, the most successful branch being led by Brigham Young. Brigham Young's branch is most distinguished from the others by their public adoption of plural wives in 1852. It was by abandoning that practice that resulted in further splintering Mormonism.

When Wilford Woodruff adopted Official Declaration 1, it was to mislead the public. It was not to actually end the practice. The LDS Church just moved plural marriages underground. After the Manifesto, marriages were performed clandestinely (or in Mexico—where they were legal—or on the water between California and Catalina Island, in one instance).

As a consequence of the Reed Smoot Senate Confirmation Hearings and President Joseph F. Smith being called to testify under oath in that proceeding, the underground practice finally **had** to end. Because he was cornered by questions from the Senators, Joseph F. Smith had to either admit the truth or end the practice. He chose to end it. In March of 1904, he denied under oath such marriages continued. Then in April, he ended it. His letter of April 6, 1904 states:

Inasmuch as there are numerous reports in circulation that plural marriages have been entered into contrary to the official declaration of President Woodruff, of September 26, 1890, commonly called the Manifesto, which was issued by President Woodruff and adopted by the Church at its general conference, October 6, 1890, which forbade any marriage violative of the law of the land; I, Joseph F. Smith, President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter day Saints, hereby affirm and declare that no such marriages have been solemnized with the sanction, consent or knowledge of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter day Saints, **and**...

That's very artful language. It's kind of true 'cuz he would send them off without permission stated verbally. It was artful.

...and I hereby announce that all such marriages are prohibited, and if any officer or member of the Church shall assume to solemnize or enter into any such marriage he will be deemed in transgression against the Church and will be liable to be dealt with, according to the rules and regulations thereof, and excommunicated therefrom.

Then Francis Lyman presented a resolution, and the resolution was adopted by unanimous vote of the conference, and so it ended.

It was this "Second Manifesto" that caused the resignation in 1905 of LDS apostle Matthias F. Cowley and the excommunication of apostle John W. Taylor in 1911. Between the first and second Manifestos, LDS authorities sealed plural marriages in secret, while church leaders lied about the continuation of the practice. The official version of LDS events, therefore, establishes that plural marriages began with **nine years of church leaders lying about the practice** and **ended with fourteen years of lying** by the church's leadership. It's no wonder that you, like me a few years ago, believe it should continue. So many years of LDS Church lying makes it difficult to find the truth.

The wording of a revelation from God often requires careful, ponderous, and solemn thought to discover its meaning. God's word should not be given only a perfunctory reading. Or as Joseph's letter from Liberty Jail explained it:

...because the things of God are of deep import, and time, and experience, and careful and ponderous and solemn thoughts can only find them out. Your mind, O man, if you will lead a soul unto salvation, must stretch as high as the utmost Heavens, and search into and contemplate the lowest considerations of the darkest abyss, and expand upon the broad considerations of eternal expanse. You must commune with God. How much

more dignified and noble are the thoughts of God than the vain imagination of the human heart? None but fools will trifle with the souls of men. (T&C 138:18)

From prison, Joseph wrote about how much more might have been accomplished if believers in the Restoration had taken salvation more seriously. He wrote about the Saints of that day (and composed words that are relevant if not altogether applicable to us today):

How vain and trifling have been our spirits, our conferences, our councils, our meetings, our private as well as public conversations: too low, too mean, too vulgar, too condescending for the dignified characters of the called and chosen of God, according to the purposes of his will from before the foundation of the world, to hold the keys of the mysteries of those things [which] have been kept hid from the foundation until now, of which some have tasted a little, and which many of them are to be poured down from Heaven upon the heads of babes, ...the weak, [the] obscure, [the] despis[ed] ones of this earth. (Ibid. ¶19)

I hope that you are willing to be careful, solemn, and ponderous about the truth. We've all wasted enough time already. I know I have. Please take seriously the words given to you today.

In the years Joseph Smith led the church, he established the offices of elder, priest, teacher, deacon, apostle, high priest, president, seventy, and patriarch. These were organizational offices and not priesthood. There were, in the church during Joseph Smith's lifetime, **two** forms of priesthood. As the LDS Scriptures explain: *There are, in the church, two priesthoods, namely, the Melchizedek and Aaronic, including the Levitical...* (D&C 107:1).

There are only two priesthoods in the LDS Church, or at least there were at the time that Joseph Smith stated that. What their condition may be today is another matter that I'm not gonna talk about. But there were only two priesthoods! There weren't 10 or 16! This is a list of church offices:

- elder
- priest
- teacher
- deacon
- apostle
- bishop
- high priest
- president
- seventy
- patriarch
- Relief Society President
- Sunday School President
- Elder's Quorum President
- Gospel Doctrine Teacher
- Young Men's President
- Young Women's President

- ...and so on.

The LDS Church, like your various Fundamentalist factions, are merely organizations and **not** the priesthood.

Joseph Smith organized offices and gave them authority to preside. However, church leaders in 1838 turned on Joseph. Their positions of authority gave them credibility. When they signed affidavits falsely claiming Joseph was a threat to Missouri non-Mormons, he was imprisoned on charges of treason. Before his imprisonment, Joseph insisted on the church authorities being obeyed. **But** after reflecting on the **abuse of church authority that led to his imprisonment**, Joseph removed all authority of the priesthood to control or impose upon others. Here's the new standard to keep in mind when someone **claiming** authority demands your submission:

Behold there are many called, but few are chosen, and why are they not chosen? Because their hearts are set so much upon the things of this world and aspire to the honors of men, that they do not learn this one lesson—that the rights of the Priesthood are inseparably connected with the Powers of Heaven and that the Powers of Heaven cannot be controlled nor handled, only upon the principles of righteousness. That they may be conferred upon us, it[’s] true, but when we undertake to cover our sins or...gratify our pride, our vain ambition, or to exercise control or dominion or compulsion upon the souls of the children of men, in any degree of unrighteousness, behold the heavens withdraw themselves, the Spirit of the Lord is grieved, and when it has withdrawn, Amen to the Priesthood or the authority of that man. Behold, ere he is aware he is left...to kick against the pricks, to persecute the Saints, and to fight against God. We[’ve] learned by sad experience that it[’s] the nature and disposition of almost all men, as soon as they get a little authority, as they suppose, they will immediately begin to exercise unrighteous dominion. Hence many are called, but few are chosen.

*No power or influence **can** or **ought** to be maintained by virtue of the Priesthood, **only** by persuasion, by long-suffering, by gentleness and meekness, ...by love unfeigned, by kindness, by pure knowledge which shall greatly enlarge the soul without hypocrisy and without guile. (T&C 139:5-6, emphasis added; see also D&C 121:34-42)*

I've given several talks about priesthood and authority claims made by others. Rather than make any claims myself, I only teach truths to allow you to decide the matter unencumbered by any demand that you respect authority or "keys." Gentiles are prone to following claims of authority. As the Lord explained to His apostles,

*You know that the princes of the gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. **But it shall not be so among you.** But who[so]ever will be great among you, let him be your minister. And who[so]ever will be chief among you, let him be your servant, even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life, a ransom for many. (Matthew 10:3 RE, emphasis added; Matthew 20:23-28 LE)*

If this was good enough for our Lord, then I cannot in good conscience claim more. I am here to be His servant and to minister teachings that come from Him. I do not demand your respect, but I hope to persuade you by the things I know and are able to say. Those who claim to have “keys” are largely ignorant of even the meaning of the term.

The word keys is horribly misunderstood. I have made it a practice to not use the word because of all the foolish and vain ideas that have accumulated around it. Joseph used the term in a variety of ways: for example, to mean authority, or opportunity, and in others it refers to a correct idea. This is the most important meaning [to have a correct idea, as a key concept]. The term in the context of priesthood is **completely absent** from the Book of Mormon, and that book is the keystone of our religion, containing the fullness of the gospel. The only time the word keys is referenced in the Book of Mormon, it refers to a physical set of keys to unlock a door to the treasury controlled by Laban (1 Nephi 1:18). Although Joseph used the term often and meant many things by it, the challenge is to understand priesthood without being distracted by a poorly defined, and often used term. Mormon institutions now use the term most often to connote their exclusive right, license or control. The LDS Handbook of Instructions states the following, “Priesthood keys are the authority God has given to priesthood leaders to direct, control, and govern the use of His priesthood on Earth.” This definition is the opposite of the way that scripture directs priesthood be used (see T&C 139:5–7). The LDS Handbook approach turns this scripture upside down and backwards: by virtue of priesthood keys they have the right to direct, control [or] exercise influence over others. Mormon institutions in general all use their preferred meaning of the term keys to denounce anything or anyone they view as a rival. That’s nonsense, and I avoid using the term because of [the] widespread abusive practice. (*The Holy Order*, Oct. 29, 2017, paper p. 1)

A “key” unlocks information or opens your understanding. It is tied to gaining an insight. Today men claiming to hold keys almost always take away light and truth and spread darkness.

The continuation of plural wives is related to claims about “keys” or “holding keys to seal” marriages. No matter which fundamentalist group is involved, the claim to have keys is tied to an incident that purportedly took place the night of September 26-27 of 1886. The incident was reported to Arnold Boss by Lorin C. Woolley 43 years later on September 22, 1929. An extended explanation of why I do not believe the incident happened was published on my website in a series of posts titled: “Sorting Things Out,” which has parts 1 through 5 (published from July 23rd through July 27th of 2012), which are all included in a chapter of the same name in Volume 5, *Remembering the Covenant* (pp. 1907-1927). I’ve also included those as an appendix to the talk that’s available, and you can read (if you download it or if you get a copy today).

As to the history of plural wives, the libraries of material I referred to earlier deserve very careful inspection. One key to understanding (and I use that word correctly in this context) is to look at what existed as proof on or before June 27th of 1844. If you do that, you have a

great deal of evidence that Joseph Smith did not practice, condone, or introduce plural wives. Instead, you have a great deal of public and private declarations that **denounce and oppose it**.

The only proof that ties Joseph Smith to the introduction of plural wives into the Restoration is a single document. That document was a copy, not an original; and that copy was hidden—if you trust the official story—for at least nine years, eight of those years after the murder of Joseph and Hyrum.

Brian C. Hales is the one who has most researched and written about the record in our day. He published a three-volume discussion of his findings. And he's sympathetic to plural wives and believes Joseph Smith introduced it. Here's what Brian Hales found from his extensive research into the subject, after identifying section 132:

Beyond this revelation, no other document exists in which Joseph Smith specifically discusses the principle.

...Establishing the Prophet's precise instructions is difficult due to a lack of contempora[neous] accounts recording Joseph Smith's specific teachings on these lofty topics. Furthermore, a challenge arises regarding what sources should be considered as authoritative for defining his theology...

And he says (in a lamentation):

...Unfortunately, no accounts of a public discourse discussing plural marriage have been found. (*Joseph Smith's Polygamy: Volume 3: Theology*, Brian C. Hales, Greg Koford Books, (Salt Lake City 2013) pp. 3, 69, 70)

That last statement by Hales is absolutely false! Joseph said a lot! **Numerous** firsthand accounts exist of letters, of publications in the *Times and Seasons*, of notes from discourses, of letters... **Numerous** documents exist! It is **extraordinarily** well-documented! **Except they ALL denounce plural wives!** And so Hales's blindspot in what he has written is because he's rooting for a certain outcome, that is, to vindicate what he believes to be true, namely, having plural wives. If he were being honest about it, he would say, "There's an **enormous** record of information dealing with the subject of plural wives coming out of the mouth of Joseph Smith, Hyrum Smith, and Emma Smith. **Unfortunately**, they all denounce it. They all repudiate it. They all look for who is practicing it." Joseph Smith brought case after case before the high council in Nauvoo to have tried for their membership those people who were practicing plural wives if he could discover their identities. And when they held a trial and when they found out who had been participating, then they brought in the **next** participant and so tried to root it out.

These are quotes from the *Joseph Smith Papers*:

October 5, 1843, Joseph Smith journal entry: "...eve[ning] at home walked up and down st. with scribe.—and gave inst[r]uction to try those who were preaching teaching or preaching

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.”

October 15th, Joseph Smith journal entry: Joseph preaching says, “...stop this spinning street yarn and talking about spiritual wives... I proclaim in the name of the Lord... that I will have nothing but virtue and integrity and uprightness...”

February 1st of 1844 in the *Times and Seasons*, Joseph and Hyrum Smith, designating themselves as “Presidents of [the] Church” put the following NOTICE in the paper:

As we lately have been credibly informed, that an Elder of the Church of Jesus Christ, of Latter-day Saints, by the name of Hiram Brown, has been preaching Polygamy, and other false and corrupt doctrines, in the county of La[n]peer, State of Michigan. This is to inform him and the Church in general, that [he’s] been cut off from the church, for his iniquity; and [he’s] further notified to appear at the Special Conference, on the 6th of April next, to make answer to these charges. (*Times & Seasons*, Photo Reprint of the Original, [Salt Lake City: 2008], Volume 5, p. 423)

February 15th of 1844 in an article “WHO SHALL BE OUR NEXT PRESIDENT”: After recommending Joseph Smith to be elected, the article states, “Joseph Smith will not ‘marry spiritual wives;’ nor commit any other outrageous act this election to help any party with, you must get some other persons to perform these kind of offences for you...” (ibid p. 441).

March 15th of 1844, *Times and Seasons*...

Joseph Smith... I’m skipping a bunch.

Joseph Smith advocated for and persuaded the Nauvoo City Council to adopt an ordinance on May 14, 1842, punishing adultery with six months imprisonment: “...for every Act of Adultery, or Fornication, which can be proved, the Parties shall be imprisoned Six Months, and fined, each, ...the Sum of five hundred to fifty thousand Dollars...” Three days after the ordinance passed, John Bennett resigned as Mayor of Nauvoo under the accusations of adultery and fornication.

When John Bennett resigned his membership in the church, he publicly testified,

I publicly avow that any one who has said that I have stated that... Joseph Smith has given me authority to hold illicit intercourse with women is a Liar in the face of God. Those who have said it are damned Liars: they are infernal Liars. He never (either) in public or private gave men any such authority or license, & any who states it is a scoundrel & a Liar. (*The Nauvoo City and High Council Minutes*, John S. Dinger, ed., Signature Books, [Salt Lake, 2001], p. 84)

Joseph Smith confronted John Bennett in front of the City Council and asked, “Will you please state definitely whether you know anything against my character either in public or private?” To which Bennett responded, “I do not; in all my intercourse with Gen. Smith, in public and in private, he has been entirely virtuous” (*Times and Seasons*, Vol. 3, p. 841).

In the aftermath of John Bennett's misconduct, Joseph pursued an effort to track down what had happened in Nauvoo. By May of 1842, the high council met, and:

[A] charge [was] [preferred] against Chauncey L. Higbee by George Miller for unchaste and un-virtuous conduct with the widow [Sarah] Miller, and others...

In the trial,

Three witness[es] testified that he had seduced [several women] and at different times [had] been guilty of unchaste and unvirtuous conduct with them and taught the doctrine that it was right to have free intercourse with women if it was kept secret &c and also taught that Joseph Smith authorised him to practice these things... (*The Nauvoo City and High Council Minutes*, pp. 414-415, all as in original)

On May 25th, the charge was preferred "against Ms. Catherine Warren by George Miller for unchaste and unvirtuous conduct with John C. Bennett and others."

(And it's... You can read this. It's gonna be in the talk.)

At the April 1844 General Conference, Hyrum Smith gave an anti-polygamy talk.

Joseph Smith (in May of 1844) gave a discourse. One of the things that he said in the discourse, which provides you **again** with a key to know what was going on, Joseph said:

For the last three years I have a record of all my acts and proceedings, for I have kept several good, faithful, and efficient clerks in constant employ: they have accompanied me everywhere, and carefully kept my history, ...they have written down what I have done, where I have been, and what I have said; therefore my enemies cannot charge me with any day, time, or place, but what I have written testimony to prove my actions; and my enemies cannot prove anything against me. ...Matters of fact are as profitable as the Gospel, ...which I can prove. You will then know who are liars, and who speak the truth I want to retain your friendship on holy grounds.

Another indictment has been got up against me. It appears a holy prophet has [risen] up, and [he's] testified against me: the reason is, he is so holy. The Lord knows I do not care how many churches are in the world. As many as believe me, may. If the doctrine that I preach is true, the tree must be good. I have prophesied things that have come to pass, and can still.

...I had not been married scarcely five minutes, and made one proclamation of the Gospel, before it was reported...I had seven wives. I mean to live and proclaim the truth as long as I can.

This new holy prophet has gone to Carthage and swore that I had told him that I was guilty of adultery. This spiritual wifeism! Why, a man dares not speak or wink, for fear of being accused of this.

William Law testified before forty policemen, and the assembly room full of witnesses, that he testified under oath that he never had heard or seen or knew anything immoral or criminal against me. He testified under oath that he was my friend, and not the 'Brutus.' (Taken from *The Words of Joseph Smith*, Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook editors, [BYU Press 1980])

And so on.

April 7, 1842.

April 10th of 1842 (This is from April 10th): "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" (taken from the journal of Wilford Woodruff).

On March 7th through the 20th of 1844 in successive meetings, Joseph Smith read *A Voice of Innocence from Nauvoo*, which was presented to/adopted by the Relief Society and then presented to and adopted by the conference. And I've got a copy in the Appendix to the talk of *A Voice of Innocence*.

Emma Smith denied plural wives was taught by Joseph:

At one time my husband [Joseph] came to me and asked me if I had heard certain rumors about spiritual marriages, or anything of the kind; and assured me that if I had, that they were without foundation; [and] there was no such doctrine, and never should be with his knowledge [and] consent. I know that he had no other wife or wives than myself, in any sense, either spiritual or otherwise. ("Last Testimony of Sister Emma," *The Saints Herald*, October 1, 1879)

Joseph Smith was asked on the 8th of May, 1838: "Do...Mormons believe in having more wives than one?" And his answer was, "No, not at the same time. But they believe, that if their companion dies, they have a right to marry again" (Joseph Smith, *TPJS* 119, 8 May 1838).

To the extent Joseph exposed his thoughts about sex, they were dominated by sexual purity and self-control. His public and private statements point to a man who prized chastity, fidelity, and condemned promiscuity. His letters are consistent with his statements.

And there's a series of scriptures that I quote in that.

If you search for a contemporaneous private document or public declaration from Joseph, Hyrum, or Emma Smith supporting plural wives, you'll find none. All of them were consistently publicly opposing the practice. And remember the Book of Mormon warns, *Woe unto the liar, for he shall be thrust down to hell. **Someone was lying. Therefore, someone will be thrust down to hell.***

So we face a decision: We must choose to condemn Joseph, Hyrum, and Emma to hell, or we must condemn those who denounced them as liars. As part of making that choice, recall the words earlier that I quoted, spoken to the imprisoned Joseph Smith:

...fools shall have you in derision, and hell shall rage against you, while the pure in heart, and the wise, and the noble, and the virtuous shall seek counsel, and authority, and blessings constantly from under your hand. And your people shall never be turned against you by the testimony of traitors...

None of us should want to attribute to Joseph Smith lying and serious sexual sins if it is not true. I do not want to call him a liar without sufficient reason. He should be entitled to only be convicted on the same standard we would convict a person of a serious crime. As a lawyer, I know to convict someone of criminality, the burden of proof is “beyond any reasonable doubt.” If you have any reasonable doubt, you must not convict. I think a prophet of God is entitled to the same standard of proof. Therefore, if there is reason to doubt, I say we ought to doubt. We should say, “I cannot in good conscience conclude Joseph Smith was an adulterer and a liar”—unless we have proof that removes all reasonable doubts on the subject. If the record is confused enough to tell two opposing stories, leaving **us** to write what is in our own heart, then I choose to write “innocence” for Joseph on my page.

Both the apologists and critics almost universally today agree with the anti-Mormons about Joseph Smith. They claim Joseph Smith was a liar and deceiver. This judgment has become nearly universal. But the contemporary accounts do not **require** that conclusion. Quite the contrary, the contemporary records vindicate Joseph as truthful, honest, and moral. One of the things that frustrates me the most are the many accounts from those who claim to be faithful, believing Latter-Day Saints who accept Joseph Smith as the prophet of the Restoration but **require** Joseph to be dishonest and immoral. They insist Joseph Smith said one thing in public and another thing in private. Because they believe that a prophet of God can do that and get away with it, it has created a malignancy on the LDS version of Mormonism. Even today the leaders of the LDS Church believe God allows them to practice deceit because their version of Joseph Smith justifies it. This hypocrisy is embedded within the Fundamentalist off-shoots from the LDS Church. As one who has come to know God, I do not believe it **possible** to be a hypocritical liar, deceiving even your own wife (as it is claimed about Joseph), and have God’s approval.

As we struggle with making the choice, it becomes clear that the reliability and authenticity of the single document that ties Joseph Smith to introducing plural marriage (Doctrine and Covenants 132) matters a great deal. We do **not** have an original. The first time the document was made public was in 1852. The text was made public in the handwriting of a practicing polygamist, Joseph Kingsbury. He was **never** a scribe of Joseph’s. He was **not** trusted to maintain Joseph’s journals or history. The original was lost or destroyed, and Kingsbury claimed that he copied it shortly after the original was written.

Kingsbury was one of the witnesses called to testify in the Temple Lot case. Upon taking the stand, he “refused to take the ordinary oath to ‘tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.’” When later questioned about why he wouldn’t take the oath:

I do not swear to that; I affirm to it. To my mind there is a difference between swearing to anything and affirming to it...I generally affirm, and I suppose it is because my understanding is that a man cannot be convicted of perjury on ...affirmation, and he can when he is sworn. (*Abstract of Evidence Temple Lot Case U.S.C.C.*, p. 333)

When asked if Joseph Smith practiced polygamy, he said: “I presume...he did.”

James Whitehead was one of Joseph Smith's scribes during the last 2 years of his life [and] was also required to testify under oath. His testimony includes this:

I had a good opportunity of knowing if any such a thing [plural marriage] had been taught by the prophet or anyone else because I was there in his office and with him continually. ...I was well acquainted with his family and with his wife Emma and I never saw anything or heard of any such a thing being taught there in Nauvoo. ...When I lived at Nauvoo, I resided maybe three hundred yards from where Joseph[‘s]...house was. I saw him there frequently, perhaps not every day but almost every day. ...Joseph Smith had one wife and her name was Emma; I do not know of any other woman who claimed to be the wife of the prophet, there at Nauvoo, nor at any other place. (*Abstract of Evidence Temple Lot Case U.S.C.C.*)

Wilford Woodruff testified in that same trial. He ~~said~~ testified:

I never saw a copy of it [section 132] or the original during the lifetime of Joseph Smith. I do not think [that] I saw the one that came here to Utah and purported to be a copy of the original.

I do not know whether the church of which I am the President has the purported copy or not. (*Abstract of Evidence Temple Lot Case U.S.C.C.*, p. 308)

Although it was written as part of a humorous account during his travels in the West, Mark Twain made this assertion after his visit to Salt Lake City: “Polygamy is a recent feature in the Mormon religion, and was added by Brigham Young after Joseph Smith’s death. Before that, it was regarded as an ‘abomination.’”

I assume that if Joseph Smith opposed and denounced plural wives and Brigham Young introduced it, that **that** would **matter** to you. It certainly matters to me. Joseph Smith was not merely a prophet, but a dispensation head who laid a foundation upon which the rest of God’s dealings with mankind will be predicated.

What you decide to be true about history is completely dependent upon the sources of information you trust. Almost all of the historical evidence for Joseph Smith introducing

plural wives are not only created following Joseph and Hyrum's death but **more than a decade** after they died.

The seven-volume set written by Arnold Boss, *The History of Plural Marriage Among the Mormon People*, is an attempt to gather comprehensive evidence to support the practice of plural wives. It relies, as it must, on sources that did not exist on or before June 27, 1844. His sources in his extensive investigation are years—sometimes decades—later reflections by those who had begun to practice plural marriage publicly in 1852. Many of those sources did so privately before the public announcement in 1852. Once the practice was publicly taught and defended under Brigham Young, LDS historians have interpreted a great deal about Joseph by relying on Brigham Young and other defenders of plural marriage. To be fair, Joseph should be isolated from this subsequent development when trying to understand what Joseph believed, said, and did.

Here is the problem in the clearest way that I can put it: IF you accept the proof that existed on or before June 27, 1844, there is a single document which **may have existed** (or may have been created between then and 1852) to tie Joseph Smith to plural wives, but there is an **overwhelming** number of documents, public talks, scriptures, newspaper articles, church disciplinary proceedings, affidavits, and public acts that clearly show Joseph Smith was opposed to and denounced plural wives. In this version, Joseph was virtuous and truthful.

BUT IF you accept the record of those who practiced plural wivery and accounts they wrote after Joseph and Hyrum's murder, then there is an overwhelming number of documents, talks, remembrances, affidavits, and books that attribute the practice of secretly having plural wives by Joseph Smith while misleading the public with false denials. In this version, Joseph was dishonest with his closest companions (including his wife), a public liar, a criminal under Illinois law, and therefore un-virtuous.

You get to choose. I suggest you choose carefully and consider the Lord's teaching: *Judge not unrighteously, that you be not judged, but judge righteous judgment; for with what judgment you judge, you shall be judged, and with what measure you mete, it shall be measured to you again* (Matthew 3:40 RE; see also Matthew 7:1-2 LE).

I assume from what I've learned about our Lord's plans, that there will be some living the practice of plural wives who are gathered to Zion. That presents a potential problem between those who are monogamous and those who are polygamous. It will be necessary for those who have plural wives to commit to:

- First, abandoning any effort to add another wife.
- Second, agree to teach your children that it must end with you and not be continued in the next generation.

I tell you this in advance so you have no doubts about our expectations of you.

Historically, when plural wives have been permitted, it is as if the women were married and the men were perpetually single. Because a man could add another wife, the men retained a

“roving eye” to look out for any other woman who aroused his interest. The best example of the unmarried polygamist man was Parley P. Pratt. He took Eleanor McLean as his twelfth plural wife, although she was already married to Hector McLean. Hector was a drunken wife-beater, and Parley was, well, willing to continue to add wives. Hector caught Parley riding alone, shot him, took a knife to him, and left him bleeding on a farm in ~~Kansas~~ [Arkansas]. The farmer reported that after two and a half hours following Hector’s handiwork, Parley died from loss of blood. Brigham Young believed Parley deserved to die for adultery.

There are always going to be tensions that will arise, and people will need to adapt across this barrier. I assume there will be some plural wives who envy women who are monogamous. I assume there will be some men who envy men who have multiple wives. I assume some children will envy those with fewer siblings, and others who envy those with many siblings. And I assume there will be tension between these very different kinds of families. Everyone will have to make some adjustments to peacefully coexist in a community.

I do not belong to any organized church. I am part of a community bound together only by beliefs. To this point, we only practice ordaining to priesthood, baptism by immersion, the sacrament of the Lord’s supper, and laying on hands for blessing and healing. Only men hold priesthood, however, we believe Gifts of the Spirit are not confined to those who are ordained, but that anyone—male and female—can have all the various gifts given to people of faith.

Men are not sustained by men to the priesthood, but instead must be sustained by seven women—and if married, one of those women must be his wife—in order to act as a priest outside his home. If a man holding the priesthood engages in inappropriate behavior, then it is a council of women who conduct discipline. The women’s council is empowered to remove a man’s certificate, which does not remove priesthood; it only prevents the man from ministering outside his home during a period of suspension. This is for the protection of the community of believers so that no harm is done to the community by trusting in a man’s status as priest to drop their guard and become vulnerable to mischief.

We collect tithes, but only on the amount remaining after all your family’s obligations have first been paid. Then what remains—following payment of your obligations—is tithed on 1/10 of what is left. However, tithes are then distributed among the various fellowships based on the needs of the individuals and the families for food, clothing, shelter, healthcare, transportation, and education. No one is paid; no one profits. Only the needs of the poor among us are addressed with tithes.

We plan to build a temple when the Lord commands. A fund for that purpose has been set up, and a group of women control that fund. Anyone can donate to that fund if they choose to do so.

We have an obligation to the descendants of Lehi and have called and set apart individuals for that purpose. We have an obligation to the remnant of the Jews and have been working

for more than two years to have the Book of Mormon translated into Old Testament Hebrew. Although there are at least two modern-Hebrew translations, they are not of a quality that reflects the seriousness of the obligation imposed on us. We have some of the best Old Testament Hebrew scholars in the world working with us on the translation, and the project is now entering the final editing stage. It will be expensive to complete and publish, and those who have been supervising the effort wanted me to mention that anyone who is willing to do so can contribute to that effort. Following publication of the Hebrew language version, we have those called by God and set apart to take the message to the remnant of the Jews. There's a website that just got active called hebrewbookofmormon.com that explains the project.

We are not waiting for someone else to do the work required by the Lord. We have and are working to accomplish the work the Lord's given us. As part of that, we've recovered and published a more correct version of the Book of Mormon than has been available before now. We have recovered and corrected revelations given to Joseph Smith. We've recovered and corrected the interpolations made in the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible, including both the Old and New Testaments. Additions made by the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints were removed, and many corrections Joseph made that had been omitted were added.

The Scripture project was presented to and accepted by the Lord. It was then presented to and accepted by a conference of believers in 2017. They are now available in a high quality, leather-bound version. I brought my copy with me today.

We invite all who are interested to labor alongside us. But we're more concerned with getting work accomplished than in building a hierarchy, or gaining authority over one another. Whatever influence I have in the group of believers I associate with is solely because of my efforts to persuade people. I claim no office and have made no claim to have authority. If what I teach is true, then it should stand on its own.

We're busy, and if you want to labor alongside us, you're welcome to do so. I do not have the time—with all the work left to accomplish—to engage in debate. I try to teach enough to let people decide. I claim to be the Lord's servant and to teach what He directs. **You** need to decide whether that's true or not.

I can also warn you that **all** the churches of Mormonism—from the LDS to the Community of Christ to the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints and **all the offshoots**, including the pretenders who now seek to get a following by their pretended enlightenment—**all** of them are working at cross purposes to what the Lord is doing. If they or you want to please the Lord, you'll assist the labor we're performing. None else—and no one else—are doing the Lord's work, vindicating His covenants, fulfilling His promises, and laboring alongside Him. We have a covenant given from Him in 2017 that promises us His protecting hand. If you follow Christ as Lord, then you will support our work: for it is His work.

I believe the Restoration has begun anew, and the heavens are open and communicating with us. There are resources available to investigate our claims. If you're interested and want to investigate this further, the following resources are available free online:

- restorationarchives.com
- scriptures.info
- thetemplefund.net
- denversnuffer.com
- bornofwater.org
- learnofchrist.org
- recordersclearinghouse.com
- Thetentalks.com and
- hebrewbookofmormon.com

There are books I've written available through Amazon.com, however, essentially all of the content is available for free through the website restorationarchives.com. Most of the talks I have given are or will be available on Youtube, including this one.

Following my ex-communication from the LDS Church, I delivered a series of ten talks across five states. Those were recorded and can be heard at the thetentalks.com, restorationarchives.com, or on YouTube.

We will build a temple when the Lord commands. We are and will continue to reach out to the remnant of the Lamanites. We will send authorized messengers to the remnant of the Jews. We hope to welcome the Lord at His return.

And I tell you these things in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Now, I have a few moments. They've set up a microphone. They said there'd be a Q&A. I'm actually changing their agenda. My father-in-law is in the hospital in Salt Lake, and my wife did not accompany me 'cuz she's up at the hospital. And I need to get back North. So, if anyone has any questions... (And they need to be good questions. I mean, don't ask something inane. We get a lot of that.) But if you've got a good question... Oh! There's a microphone over there! Hey, let's not make Bonnie walk. Just take the... It's a wireless microphone.

Question 1: Thanks. My question goes back to where the council of women...

Denver Snuffer: Yeah, yeah.

Q1: Do those have to be the same women that signed his certificate?

DS: No.

Q1: OK. Thank you.

DS: Don't have to be. They might WANT to be.

I know... “Do you always obey the speed limit?” Oh, no—I rarely do. It’s inadvertent. I will follow the speed limit going through and coming down from...

Question 2: I actually don’t have a question.

DS: Yeah?

Q2: I was prompted to say this: “In the beginning, the practice of plural wives came into existence by the seed of the disobedient Cain. Could we be under a gross darkness passed down from the beginning? Could we be in an awful state of blindness in many different ways? Who are we to the Lord? Could the adversary have led us all into strange paths, like Father Lehi’s vision in the Book of Mormon warned us about? Are these messengers sent to us today sent by the will and power of God to bring about His righteous purposes and lead a people to build his kingdom on Earth again? How are we to know if these things spoken to us today are true? Perhaps we are to do as Joseph did all those years ago. *If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God that giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him.*”

Question 3: Hello. I’ve always been curious why Joseph Smith didn’t have children from other wives that we can prove. And so your theory today would ~~support~~ answer that if your theory is correct. But how do you do... You know, like you said, there’s libraries about this. I mean, I read a book that was just testimony after testimony of Joseph Smith’s plural marriage. And ~~Brian C. Hales~~ [Todd Compton’s]... I read a book of his, *In Sacred Loneliness*, that each chapter is a history of each wife of Joseph Smith’s. Some of that is the wife’s own language. It just seems like there’s some really good proof that he lived plural marriage.

DS: Once the, umm...

Q3: Oh, there’s really good proof that Jesus Christ lived plural marriage, too.

DS: Yeah, that once the practice became public, understand that all of those people who migrated following Brigham Young from Nauvoo into the West were isolated from the main body of the United States in a place that became really quite dark. I mean, the idea (and part of the brag) that Satan announces in the LDS temple endowment is that he intended to reign with blood and horror on the Earth. If you study what happened during the period of the Mormon Reformation, they come out West, and things went *really* bad when they came out West. It is as if, once they got driven out of Nauvoo and a lush, well-watered countryside, that they were driven into a salt-flat cursed land, in which they suffered privation and, essentially, starvation. Lorenzo Snow writes a story about how he was out digging up Segoe lily bulbs to take them back to give to his starving family, and he was so hungry that the first bulb he dug up he ate himself, and it caused him shame that he’d taken care of his own hunger when he was out there digging this stuff up ~~for~~ to feed his family. They took the cattle herd that the church owned (which was the foodstuffs that they were lying up) up to winter in Cache valley, and the herd froze to death from an unusually harsh winter, which only made the problems even worse.

And Brigham Young, in response to all of the privation/all of the suffering/all of the terrible consequences that were going on, blamed the PEOPLE! The Mormon Reformation and all of

the re-baptisms that occurred during the Mormon Reformation were done because Brigham Young thought the people were insufficiently attentive and obedient to what the priesthood leaders were telling them to do. Well, it was the priesthood **leaders** that decided to send the cattle where they would all be killed. It wasn't the... The followers were doing what they were told. Brigham Young did a number of things, backfired, and then he blamed the people for their own errors. So they launched the Mormon Reformation. Everyone's gotta be baptized! And they initiated what's called the "Home Missionary Program." The Home Missionary Program had a list of questions that the Home Missionaries came to ask of the members to determine whether or not they had done something that was worthy of being "blood atoned," meaning you've committed a sin for which God can't forgive you through the atonement of Jesus Christ; your own blood had to be shed in order for you to make it into the kingdom of God. And Brigham Young taught this, as did ~~Jehediah~~ [Jedediah] Grant—the sermon about raining pitchforks' tines down upon the people in order to stir them up to repentance, and the Mormon Reformation included actual invoking of the blood atonement act: killing people to save their souls, according to the doctrine that Brigham Young was propounding.

Utah (Deseret) descended into a **very, very** dark state. When Johnson's Army came out to the valley and put an end to Brigham Young's control over the people and installed a new governor, more than 3,000 people fled from Utah headed East because they were now safe to leave. They wouldn't be hunted down by hitmen or by some of the others that were sent out by Brigham Young to kill. We don't have a good count on the numbers of those who fled to go West because by that time—with the forty-niners and the gold rush that happened, Sutter's Mill, and all of the California activity—it was safe to go West. And quite a number went West, but we don't have a count on that. How many people were **murdered** in the name of the religion between the period that they migrated out and the period when Johnson's Army arrived and people fled, we don't know. I mean, they disappeared, they... The stories weren't told. The situation at Mountain Meadows where people were slain for the oath's sake ~~to get~~ to avenge the blood of the martyrs was expanded so that the martyrs weren't Joseph and Hyrum, but it included Parley Pratt. There's irony in that because Brigham Young had denounced Parley as an adulterer who deserved to be killed! But Brigham wasn't one to let irony stop him from launching into a diatribe.

If you think you know Brigham Young, you really need to look at what rolled out about 2008 with the *Complete Discourses of Brigham Young* because about 3-5% of what Brigham Young said was available before then. And they were able to decipher the shorthand, and now we have a five-volume set, large (8 ½ x11 size) volumes, double columns... So when you open it up, it's like four columns across the open book of smaller print. They were prepared, primarily, for library use. I bought a copy. (I don't think there are any available. There might be; someone might be re-selling. But you can get 'em on a CD-ROM.) You should read the materials.

So, when you say there are libraries of material and affidavits and these sincere, you know, reminiscences by people that were in a position to know, they... The Temple Lot case didn't happen until the end of that century. These people had lived through the terrorism of the territorial Deseret years and Brigham Young's "raining pitchforks' tines down" preaching,

and the actual slaying of people, and the practice of plural marriage being announced from the pulpit. And while he doesn't identify who it was—he says it's a "U.S. Senator"—it's pretty obvious that the one who would've been in communication with him would've been Stephen Douglas, who became a U.S. Senator and who had been in the Illinois Legislature at the time that the Nauvoo Charter was passed and who was a friend to the Mormons who had actually presided over one of the trials back in Illinois, became a U.S. Senator. But an unnamed senator, probably Stephen Douglas, gave to Brigham Young the advice that "if plural wives is a fundamental part of your religion, then it will be constitutionally protected under the First Amendment to the Constitution as a religious practice that Congress can make no law respecting or curtailing that religious practice. And so, once it rolled out into the public, it was essential (in order to win the lawsuit) to protect it under the First Amendment that it **become** a fundamental part of the religion. And so the dialogue that goes on from the 1852 public time period until after the death of Brigham Young in 1877/78, all of that dialogue was ginned up in order to create a historical record that could be taken to and shown to the United States Supreme Court in order to justify the preservation as "constitutionally-protected plural wivery." That didn't work! The Supreme Court in their final decision on the question analogized that to the practice in India of the widow throwing herself onto the funeral-pyre-burning-of-her-dead-husband to kill herself! It... There's some acts of religion that can't be defended under the law, no matter how sincere your belief may be. And so, if it were a fundamental part of the religion, then, if it were truly, really, honestly, sincerely, devoutly a fundamental part of the religion, then there's an easy answer: Pack your crap up and go south to Mexico because it was NOT prohibited there! Or march up to Canada, "Eh, become a Canuck, eh? And so you'd all be talkin' a little strange now, eh?" You'd sound like you're from Fargo.

But look, they didn't do that! They turned on a dime, and then not only did they turn on a dime, but they excommunicated people—including members of the Quorum of the Twelve—for the practice. It's NOT a fundamental part of the religion. And when the chance for the courts to weigh in on the issue of whether it was originally part of what Joseph Smith taught, the court reached pretty much the same conclusion that ~~Brigham Young~~, (or excuse me) Mark Twain reached, which was that before Brigham Young did that, it was an abomination.

Look, you're going to face an absolutely contradictory story. One of them has to be true, and one of them has to be false. One of them has to be based upon a correct preservation of what was really going on, and one of them has to be based upon a host of lies and liars who had motivations that ranged anywhere from fear born out of the necessity to support the system because there are few people that are in a more vulnerable state, a more desperate state, than a plural wife of a Mormon polygamist in territorial Utah. You think they're going to contradict the official story when they know what's been going on, and they know that lives have been lost for apostasy? I mean, the behavior was extraordinarily analogous to what happens in Islam if you depart from the faith.

Anyway, do you have a question? Oh, you want me to stop?

Question 4: Nope. We want you to just answer... One came in online: "Do all the wives of a man with plural wives have to sign his certificate for him to use his priesthood publicly?"

DS: Since under the law there's only one wife, no—his WIFE, singular. Let's say a man today has plural wives. The law will recognize one (and only one) wife. That's the person who needs to sign the certificate. If the other's object... He has a wife, and the Lord will recognize **A** wife.

Yeah?

Question 5: I, too, was really taken by Todd Compton's book back in the day. There was 32 wives that came forward with their stories, etc. etc. And yet, I think it's important to talk about the fact that under oath, and when they were brought into court (not all of them), but when that time came (you talk about this fear), only one... Only one held up and actually claimed to have any connubial relations with Joseph, and that was Eliza Partridge—and there were many reasons that have been uncovered that she had that. Could you comment on that?

DS: Yeah, that... Her story fell apart. She told it... She told multiple versions of the story, and it not only fell apart... In an earlier account, she was far less graphic and dramatic. She became more graphic and dramatic as time went on. And much of the testimony she...

She's worthy of an individual study. She really is. Much of her story becomes less and less believable the more you know and the more you study about her.

Now, I've gotta get back up to Salt Lake, but I've brought—I don't know—maybe 25 copies of this. It has some typos in it that I will fix before I put it online, but I'm gonna leave it over there on the counter, and anyone that wants a copy right now can get one. It includes more than I covered today, but I didn't want to talk until six tonight.

Yeah?

Question 6: Just some observations about Sarah Pratt, wife of..

DS: Oh, yeah. She's another story.

Q6: Would you care to comment about her situation, because the way that I see Sarah Pratt's situation is that as the person who founded the Utah Anti-Polygamist Organization, she did not turn on Joseph, to my knowledge. Whereas, she went after Brigham and all of the rest.

DS: I think it... The question is about Sarah Pratt. I think a fair reading of the events is that while Orson was on a mission, she was seduced by John Bennett. When he returned and found out that his wife had been unfaithful to him, Joseph spent a lot of time counseling him, talking with him, dealing with him, and reconciling Sarah and him together. She DID in fact get seduced while her husband was on a mission, but the culprit wasn't Joseph; it was John Bennett. The reconciliation was facilitated by Joseph. That got flipped in the wake of the John Bennett revelations and John Bennett touring the country, giving anti-Mormon lectures and attacking Joseph Smith. The story flipped. And by the time you get to 1852 and the public acknowledgment, it was really convenient at that point and somewhat believable for Brigham Young and the people out in Utah to say, "Yeah, yeah, it DID originate with

Joseph Smith,” because John Bennett had already plowed that field, had already laid the ground for that.

Well, Sarah Pratt had always been treated well. She was the priority wife. He may have gone out and impregnated the other women, but he came home to her. But what tipped everything was the 18-year-old that he married and the announcement that now he was gonna spend evenings at home with her. She put up with a lot; she’d suffered a lot—all of the wives had; the private diaries of the wives, to the extent they’ve been made public, make it really clear that there was a public voice that said, “Yes, it’s good. We support.” And there were private journals that talk about the heartbreak and the heartache and the misery of the arrangement. And what tipped the scale for her was the decision that he made to go spend nights, when all was said and done, with the young wife.

Maybe I’ll write something about that at some point. But I think it’s a fair reading to conclude she was one of John Bennett’s...

Q5: The observation was that if anybody were to throw Joseph under the bus, in her position as the anti-polygamy crusader in Utah in the later part of the 1800's, she did not, to the best of my ability, [indecipherable] that Joseph didn't do it.

DS: Yeah.. At least not with her. I don’t think he did it with anyone but Emma. I think she was his singular wife.

Thank you.

[Transcript v1.2]