

Joseph F. Smith Does Not Believe in High Priests

Edited by David M. Price

The following article was excerpted from an online report published July 23, 2018, by the Internet blogger “One Who Is Watching”—otherwise known as “The Watcher.” The Watcher is reportedly an ex-LDS member who believes in the prophetic calling of Joseph Smith Jr., yet who is critical of many LDS teachings. Preferring to remain anonymous, he maintains several Internet blogs with comments and criticisms on LDS Church topics.

PPC (Price Publishing Company) is not affiliated with The Watcher, and we do not endorse everything on his websites. Nevertheless, we find it compelling that non-RLDS persons, such as he, are coming to the same conclusions about the Brazil group and Joseph F. Smith as are we.

Several weeks ago, The Watcher personally spoke with Joseph F. Smith at Millrace Park, Taylorsville, Utah. He published the alarming results of that interview on one of his blogs, from which we reprinted excerpts below.

We combined some of his short paragraphs, deemphasized some of his text, and made other minor punctuation and grammar changes to comply with PPC publishing guidelines. To read his full posting about his interview with Joseph F. Smith, go to the following website:

<https://onewhoiswatching.wordpress.com/2018/07/23/wo-unto-those-who-deny-the-high-priesthood-and-office-of-high-priest/>

Wo Unto Those Who Deny the High Priesthood and Office of High Priest

By The One Who Watches

I [The Watcher] have blogged about the controversial claims of Mauricio Berger out of Brazil who says he was visited by the angels, Gabriel and Moroni. He says he has received the gold plates from which the Book of Mormon was translated. He now has eight witnesses from America that have seen and held the plates. His ever changing and fantastic story includes the fact that he smashed one of the interpreters in a fit of doubt and rage. He also claims that the Lord needed to use a Brazilian like him to begin the last great work because there is not one righteous gentile in America to do the work.

After his claims were rejected by the LDS Church and the Temple Lot Church, he has sat around doing virtually nothing for over a decade while waiting for someone to show some interest in his story. Finally, Bob Moore and Joseph F. Smith, two people from the RLDS tradition [*Editor’s Note: Joseph F. Smith has never been a member of the RLDS Church or the Restoration branches. Bob Moore has been an active participant in the JCRB for many years.*], took an interest and decided to visit Brazil and drink some Kool-Aid with Mauricio.

Inconsistent with the Prophetic Narrative in Scripture. I have demonstrated in past blog posts that the claims being made [by the Brazil group] are contrary to the prophetic narrative in scripture regarding the coming forth of the Marvelous Work and a Wonder. The great last work of the Lord will come forth through the Gentiles, from the heart of America, God’s covenant land where Christ visited the posterity of Lehi and where the LDS restoration through the Prophet Joseph Smith took place. The last great prophetic work of God does not begin in Brazil.

Bob Moore Has Been Setting the Stage for This Drama in His Books. In previous blog posts I have shown that the emerging storyline with regard to Mauricio’s American counterparts, Bob Moore and Joseph F. Smith, coincidentally fits the past prophetic surmisings of Bob Moore who has authored books on prophecy and previously attempted to start a new church. He has been saying for years that a descendant

of Joseph Smith like his contemporary, Joseph F. Smith, needs to be the prophet that finishes the work that Joseph Smith Jr. began. [*Editor's Note: While the next true Prophet of the Church will be of the father-to-son lineage of Joseph Smith Jr., such lineage does not guarantee this prophetic calling.*]

Using the Hofmann Forgery to Fabricate the Gold Plates. I have pointed people to the amazing research done by the Price Publishing in showing that an entire segment of the Hofmann forgery shows up in the fabricated plates that Mauricio has shown to the world.

While important spiritual things having to do with God's mysterious work should never ultimately be judged solely on *empirical evidence* [physical evidence you can test with your human senses], one should always be using a healthy dose of inspired logic and a reasonable degree of critical thinking in the light of scripture as they parse through the claims of those that claim to be God's chosen mouthpiece.

Judging Those Who Claim to Be Prophets According to the Doctrine They Teach. In this post, I want to focus on the *doctrinal beliefs and declarations* of the emerging prophet of the American arm of this new movement. His name is Joseph F. Smith—a direct descendant of Joseph Smith Jr. He recently conducted a missionary tour in Utah to proselytize the Mormons.

During his recent trip to Utah, I had occasion to personally speak with him at a park where he was sharing his story and answering questions. I was curious to see how well he was being received by the Utah Mormons, so I drove down from Idaho and was riding my ebike [a bicycle that not only has pedals, but an electric motor and rechargeable battery] around the park observing the very small group of people who came out to see him and hoping to hear additional information about his claims.

Towards the end of the day, I noticed that he was sitting by himself as the group began to disperse and separate into a few smaller groups. At this time I rode my ebike up to the table where he was sitting and initiated a conversation with him. Of course he did not know that I am the "Watcher" and the writer of this blog. We were both very cordial to each other.

I must say he is a delightful and very likable person who appears to be very sincere and transparent about the work he is involved in. During the conversation he revealed some things to me that really shocked me. He informed me that while in Brazil, he was commanded to return home to the Zarahemla Branch to see if he could find seven people in that congregation that would be willing to sustain him as a prophet of God. To his dismay, when he returned home, Pastor Brad Gault of the Zarahemla Branch refused to bring that nomination to a vote among the congregation.

I was a little bit surprised that Joseph was sharing this very personal information with me and I was even more surprised to hear that Pastor Gault was refusing to allow Joseph to obey the mandate that he had been given. I asked him why Pastor Gault was refusing to allow him to be sustained as a prophet by the Zarahemla Branch.

I told him that I had been under the impression that Pastor Gault was one of the eight witnesses that had been to Brazil and held the plates and testified that the work was true. Joseph F. Smith's response to me was astounding. This is what he said to the best of my memory (I am paraphrasing).

He said, "Yes Pastor Gault is a believer and one of the witnesses of the gold plates, but he and Bob Moore are scared of me and don't want to bring the vote before the Zarahemla Branch."

"Why are they scared of you?" I asked.

"Because," he said, "They know that my prophetic calling requires me to set the Church in order and they know that I do not believe in the office of high priest and that I will do away with it if the Lord tells me to. . . . When this happens they will be humiliated because some of their leaders have been claiming to be high priests!"

Pastor Gault and several other leaders of the Zarahemla Branch, as well as some of the leaders of some of the other Restoration branches claim that they have been ordained to be high priests. I was surprised at what I was hearing.

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“Oh!” I said, “So you agree with what David Whitmer said after he apostatized from the restored Church and became critical of Joseph Smith. You think Joseph Smith was deceived by Satan in 1834 when he restored the office of high priest!” He [Joseph F. Smith] just smiled at me with a twinkle in his eye.

“Why don’t you believe in the office of high priest?” I asked.

His reply was, “I believe that Jesus was the last great high priest and there were not supposed to be any high priests called after that.”

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He just smiled at me with a twinkle in his eye.

I was flabbergasted to realize that this literal descendant of Joseph Smith Jr. had accepted the teachings (or at least arrived at the same conclusions) [of] David Whitmer. After Whitmer apostatized from the restored Church, he became disenchanted with Joseph Smith and he claimed that Joseph Smith Jr. had been deceived by Satan into establishing the office of high priest. Here is what David Whitmer had to say about the restored Church ordaining high priests:

“The next grievous error” which crept into the church was in ordaining high priests in June, 1831. This error was introduced at the instigation of Sydney Rigdon. The office of high priest was never spoken of, and never thought of being established in the church until Rigdon came in.

As to the High Priesthood, Jesus Christ himself is the last Great High Priest, this too after the order of Melchisedec, as I understand the Holy Scriptures. (David Whitmer, *An Address to All Believers in Christ*)

David Whitmer eventually claimed that Joseph Smith was only called to translate the Book of Mormon and that he was not authorized to restore God’s Church nor was he authorized to bring forth the revelations that are contained in the Doctrine and Covenants.

Much of what motivated David Whitmer after the Spirit of the Lord began to depart from him was the humiliation that he experienced as the officiating high priest in the land of Zion when they failed in their attempt to redeem Zion. Another issue is that he was jealous of Sidney Rigdon who became a counselor to Joseph Smith in the First Presidency of the Church shortly after his conversion. I have previously blogged about these events and the doctrinal errors of David Whitmer. As you can see, it appears as if brother Joseph F. Smith has been highly influenced by the teachings of David Whitmer which is really unfortunate.¹

Getting Sustained by Seven People from the Zarahemla Branch. I asked Brother Smith how Bob Moore and Pastor Brad Gault were going to facilitate him in keeping the commandment of getting a sustaining vote of seven people from the Zarahemla Branch. He informed me that Bob and Pastor Gault said they could comply with the commandment by simply getting seven sustaining votes from the eight witnesses of the gold plates to sustain him.

I said to Brother Joseph, “But there are not seven members of the Zarahemla Branch among the eight witnesses of the gold plates, Do you think that is acceptable to the Lord?”

His reply was an emphatic “No!” He said he felt like that would be cutting corners and not being

1. Joseph F. Smith is a member of the Church of Christ (Temple Lot), also known as the Hedrickite Church.

Doctrines of the Church of Christ [Temple Lot] are heavily influenced by the writings of David Whitmer, a leading figure of early Mormonism who was expelled from Smith’s church in 1838. In 1887, Whitmer published a pamphlet deeply critical of Sidney Rigdon and Smith. This pamphlet, entitled “An Address to all Believers in Christ”, is widely read and promoted among membership of the Church of Christ today, and is on sale in the lobby of its headquarters building. In it, Whitmer repeatedly claims that Smith had “fallen”—or began to “fall”—from his divine calling almost as soon as the church was established in 1830, or perhaps even before then. Whitmer’s reasoning includes his charge that Smith was to have “pretended to no other gift” except the translation of the Book of Mormon, and was never to be more than a “first elder” among “fellow elders” in the fledgling church. (See [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Church_of_Christ_\(Temple_Lot\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Church_of_Christ_(Temple_Lot)))

strictly obedient and that would put them on the same path as the Saints that became condemned during the ministry of Joseph Smith Jr.

Shortly after Joseph F. Smith returned to Missouri he gave a talk at one of the Restoration branches and according to some testimonies, he publicly questioned the legitimacy of the office of high priest in that talk as well, which confirms what he told me!

Why am I sharing this conversation with you? Because we have a man in our midst who is a descendant of Joseph Smith Jr. who is claiming the role of prophet. He is planning on setting the Church in order. He is teaching that Joseph Smith was deceived in restoring the office of high priest. It therefore behooves us to evaluate the doctrine that he teaches to see if it is consistent with the Scriptures and with the true history of Mormonism.

Was Joseph Smith Jr. deceived when the office of high priest was restored? Here is the testimony of Joseph Smith himself about the event that took place in June of 1831 at the Morley Farm:

The authority of the Melchizedek Priesthood was manifested and conferred for the first time upon several of the Elders. It was clearly evident that the Lord gave us power in proportion to the work to be done, and strength according to the race set before us, and grace and help as our needs required.” ([LDS] *History of The Church* 1:175–177).²

So who is correct about the legitimacy of the restoration of the Melchizedek Priesthood and the office of high priest? Is it Joseph Smith Jr., the Prophet of the Restoration, or Joseph F. Smith, his descendant?

Joseph F. Smith Has Just Called for a Solemn Assembly.³ Joseph F. Smith has just called for a Solemn Assembly to take place in August [2018] wherein I suspect he plans on having himself sustained as the prophet of the new organization in America. Perhaps it will be at this assembly that he will attempt to set the Church in order and do away with the office of high priest. I suspect that during the sustaining vote, he plans on accumulating at least seven sustaining votes from people from the Zarahemla Branch so that he can complete the mandate that he was given when he was in Brazil. This is the announcement he has posted on his blog post:

Joseph F. Smith, Great Grandson of Joseph Smith Jr., calls all those who believe in Zion, and especially those who have an interest in the events transpiring out of Brazil, to a Solemn Assembly in Independence, Missouri. Date—August 18th 2pm–5pm & August 19th 2pm–5pm. Exact location to be announced shortly.⁴

The Restoration of the Melchizedek Priesthood and Office of High Priest. The irony in all of this

2. See RLDS *History of the Church* 1:192 for cited quotation, per RLDS. Also see p. 59 for introduction of Melchisedec priesthood, p. 60 for command to ordain to, and pp. 64 and 77 for first ordinations that occurred prior to full “authority” finally being “manifested and conferred for the first time” and 1:253–257 for additional information.

3. PPC notes that

“A solemn assembly is a formal and sacred procedure in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS Church) conducted to give added emphasis to the purpose of the occasion. Solemn assemblies are held at the dedications of temples and for specially-called meetings to provide instruction to church leaders. Solemn assemblies are also held for the purpose of sustaining a new church president, who members of the LDS Church consider to be a prophet, seer, and revelator. Such assemblies are held, in particular, to follow the law of common consent. In 1831, a year after Joseph Smith established the Church of Christ, he was instructed by revelation to “call your solemn assembly, that your fastings and your mourning might come up into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth.” Historically, solemn assemblies were held on special occasions of major religious importance in ancient Israel.” (See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Solemn_assembly; emphasis added).

4. See <https://thecauseofzion.org/josephs-speaking-engagements/solemn-assembly/>

We have a man in our midst who is a descendant of Joseph Smith Jr. who is claiming the role of prophet. He is planning on setting the church in order. He is teaching that Joseph Smith was deceived in restoring the office of high priest. It therefore behooves us to evaluate the doctrine that he teaches to see if it is consistent with the Scriptures and with the true history of Mormonism.

The Melchizedek priesthood and the office of high priest did not end with Jesus Christ in the New Testament. David Whitmer and Joseph F. Smith are wrong about that, which shows that they are not being led by the Spirit of the Lord. They are teaching a doctrine of devils.

is that Joseph F. Smith [at his website noted above and referenced in the footnote below] quotes from [RLDS Section 83 and Utah LDS] Section 84 of the Doctrine and Covenants in his recent blog post wherein he calls for a Solemn Assembly. Section 84 was received by Joseph Smith four months AFTER the Melchizedek priesthood and the office of high priesthood was restored through the instrumentality of the prophet Joseph Smith! If Joseph F. Smith is correct about Joseph Smith Jr. being deceived about the Melchizedek Priesthood and the office of high priest, then Joseph Smith would have been a fallen prophet at the time that Section 84 was written and Section 84 [RLDS Section 83] would be a false revelation or at least its credibility would be very questionable! Why is he authoritatively quoting from it? [Editor's Note: RLDS Section 83 also authenticates the office of high priest (see DC 83:10b, 22). How can J. F. Smith justify using Section 83 to lecture RLDS Restorationists to follow him, while at the same time belonging to a church that teaches that the mere mention of high priests in Section 83 is proof that Joseph Smith Jr. was a fallen prophet and that Section 83 should be rejected?]

Of course we know that the revelation [RLDS Section 83] is true and it is one of the most important revelations ever received. Section 77 of the [Utah LDS] D&C [see *Times and Seasons* 5:596] informs us that the 144,000 will all be high priests!⁵ As you can see, the Melchizedek Priesthood and the office of high priest did not end with Jesus Christ in the New Testament. David Whitmer and Joseph F. Smith are wrong about that, which shows that they are not being led by the Spirit of the Lord. They are teaching a doctrine of devils.

Very few people know very much about the true, secret history of Mormonism and about the true restoration of the Melchizedek priesthood. In fact most Mormons have erroneously been taught that [all of the offices of] the Melchizedek priesthood [were] restored [in a single event] by Peter, James and John in 1830. Without this knowledge [that there was more than one single event] it is difficult to have the proper context in reading the D&C.

If you don't understand what happened at the special conference at the Morley Farm that was held in June of 1834 and the impact that that priesthood restoration had upon the restored Church and will have on the entire world, you will be deceived by false prophets that don't even understand their own church history.

The restoration of the Melchizedek priesthood was not Sidney Rigdon's idea. It was divinely initiated by the Lord. In February of 1831 the Lord gave a revelation (see [LDS and RLDS] D&C 44) mandating that Joseph Smith and the leading elders of the Church should be "called together" from the east, west, north and south. In the revelation it was promised that if they exercised faith, the Lord would "pour out his Spirit" upon the assembly. That promise was fulfilled and three people saw the Father and the Son and the Melchizedek endowment and covenant was bestowed along with the office of high priest.

5. While both churches have a Section 77 in their Doctrine and Covenants, they are different documents. The Utah LDS Section 77 is a commentary by Joseph Smith on the biblical book of Revelation, which the RLDS did not consider to be a prophetic message to the entire Church, so elected to not add it in their Doctrine and Covenants. The RLDS Section 77 is the same prophetic message as the LDS Section 78.