

Polygamy

Kyle Eggleston

Saturday, March 28, 2026

Joseph Smith tried to teach the doctrine of polygamy to early saints. They rejected it. Joseph then said basically let's forget I ever said anything about it.

When the prophet "went to his dinner," [Joseph Lee] Robinson wrote, "as it might be expected several of the first women of the church collected at the Prophet's house with his wife [and] said thus to the prophet Joseph O mister Smith you have done it now it will never do it is all but Blassphemy you must take back what you have said to day is it is outrageous it would ruin us as a people." So in the afternoon session Smith again took the stand, according to Robinson, and said "Brethren and Sisters I take back what we said this morning and leave it as though there had been nothing said."¹

After that, he taught the doctrine privately to those who would obey it and not question it. He kept polygamy even from his wife who did not know that he married other women. She wouldn't find out until later, and even later in life she would deny it ever happened.

I'm not sure why Emma would deny polygamy. She gave permission for Joseph to marry some of the women. Two of which he had already married the week before, then he asked for her permission. Which is kinda shady if you ask me.

Doctrine and Covenants Section 132 tells Emma that she must live the law of plural marriage or she will be destroyed.

An interesting exchange happened between Joseph and his personal secretary William Clayton. Clayton asked Joseph if he could marry another gal from the same family. Joseph came back saying that he had new revelation that you couldn't marry more than two from the same family. He then told Clayton that he wanted to take one of the gals for himself.²

The Book of Mormon says that polygamy is against God's law.³ The only exception is for God to rise up seed. That is to populate the Earth. But there

¹Richard S. Van Wagoner, *Mormon Polygamy: A History* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1986), 48; citing Robinson, *Journal*, 23–24.

²*Intimate Chronicle*, The journals of William Clayton, 120

³Jacob 2:24-30

are no children from the polygamous relationships of Joseph Smith. So it wasn't practiced to raise up seed. Why was it practiced? They say it was brought back to restore that which once was.

William Marks, who was the Nauvoo stake president and a trusted confidant, stated in an 1853 letter (and later in 1865) that Joseph Smith told him, "I have been deceived in this thing [polygamy] and it must be put down. I thought it would be an advantage to mankind, but I find it proves a curse".⁴

If William Marks' comments are true, then Joseph Smith led the saints in the wrong direction when it came to polygamy. Why did he do this if it wasn't meant to be something restored? Then there's the revelation given to John Taylor in 1886. But there's some controversy regarding that revelation. That it was talking about the everlasting covenant of marriage and not polygamy. I don't really know what that's about to be honest, if it is about polygamy, then it indeed never should have been taken away.

Either way, it was finally deemed that one man should have one wife. End of discussion.

Or is it the end of the discussion? If a man gets sealed in the temple and that wife dies, he has the opportunity to get sealed to another woman. Or if he divorces the first wife he can get sealed to a second wife. Thus polygamy is still around eternally speaking.

⁴Zion's Harbinger and Baneemy's Organ, Vol 3, 52-54