



Abomination Joseph Smith History 1.¹⁹⁻²⁰

Introduction

Abomination. Such an ugly word. So politically incorrect. However impolite the word, it is a useful word when one really wishes to up the ante, crank up the heat, put the hammer down, tighten the screws—you get the point. The word is more than useful for expressing the depth and magnitude of offensive sin, guilt, wickedness, etc. found in wicked, most often idolatrous thoughts, words, attitudes, deeds, actions, policies, procedures, etc.

This insensitive word is a thoroughly biblical, nay, scriptural word. In his two most “lawyerly” books, Leviticus and Deuteronomy, Moses, the great Jewish lawgiver, uses it some 20 times each.¹ Not to be outdone, Ol’ grandpa Proverbs shows his affection for the word by utilizing it over 20 times. But the award for abomination exposition goes to the Hebrew prophet, Ezekiel, who more than matches Moses’ legalistic uses and doubles grandpa Proverbs’ use of the word.

The exilic prophet, Daniel, may win the prize for the most memorable mention when he utilizes the word to describe the devastating impact of idolatry located in God’s own temple.

“...they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily sacrifice, and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate.”²

¹ These calculations and those that follow are based on the King James Version of the Bible and its translation of the two Hebrew words, *šeqeš* and *tô ‘ēbâ*.

² Daniel 11.³¹

In his desire to describe the vile and destructive nature of idolatry, Jesus picks up on Daniel's theme.

“When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place...”³

Taking his lead from Daniel and Jesus, Joseph Smith explains that the portrayal of and warning about “the desolation of abomination” is one of the great and holy missions of God's latter-day ministers. Through the latter-day prophet, God instructs his elders to go

“unto the great and notable cities and villages, reprovng the world in righteousness of all their unrighteous and ungodly deeds, *setting forth clearly and understandingly the desolation of abomination* in the last days.”⁴

Indeed, the word, “abomination,” holds an interesting place in the restoration and in the history and theology of the people formerly known as Mormon. One might be forgiven for thinking of the word as foundational to the faith. In fact, to say that it is foundational may be an understatement. The faith might not, probably would not exist without it.

But the word holds more than a significant place in Church history. It also holds an important place in the Church and the greater world in which it exists today. Before examining the word's place in the restoration and the world as we have it today, we should pause to define.

definition of biblical “abomination”

It is the usual academic practice to begin with “definitions.” While I am not, here, engaged in academia, but in spiritual warfare against the powers of darkness, it seems wise to adopt the practice and begin with definitions to be sure that we are all on the same page.

³ Matthew 24.¹⁵

⁴ DC 84.¹¹⁷

As noted in an earlier footnote, the two Hebrew words most commonly rendered into English as “abomination” by the King James translators are *šeqeš* and *tô ‘ēbâ*. The former “has been associated etymologically with Akk. *šaqāšu*, ‘give someone the evil eye.’”⁵ It is indicative of that which is “detestable,” “contemptible,” “abhorrent,” loathsome,” and “revolting.” It carries within it the idea of that which is “forbidden.” Hebrew *tô ‘ēbâ* possesses the same characteristics as *šeqeš*. It too means “detestable,” “contemptible,” “abhorrent,” loathsome,” and “revolting.” It indicates that which is “offensive” or “repugnant.” It is indicative of thoughts, words, attitudes, and actions that are “ethically or culturally beyond the pale.”⁶ In the Hebrew Bible, *tô ‘ēbâ* is indicative of willful departure from God, most often taking the form of idolatry. In fact, the word, *tô ‘ēbâ*, can often be a stand in for “idol.”

In the Greek New Testament, the Greek word, *bdélygma* produces our English, “abomination.” “The basic stem means ‘to cause abhorrence’ and the group is often used for an improper or shameless attitude.” It can possess the meaning of “to censure” or “to reject.”⁷

Finally, our English, “abomination,” comes from Latin “*ab-omen*,” and means “shun as an evil omen.”

In the Bible, “abomination” includes many attitudes and actions. “Abomination” includes such things as illegitimate sacrifices of all kinds, including human sacrifice, a non-kosher diet, divination, cult prostitution, cross dressing, same gender sex, remarrying a spouse after having divorced them, lying, bearing false witness, legal and economic fraud of various kinds, including lending money at interest, wage theft, and many others. Abomination includes such behaviors as theft, murder, adultery, and a whole host of others. The writer of Proverbs stipulates:

“These six things doth the LORD hate:
yea, seven are an abomination unto him:

⁵ *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, Vol. XV, p. 465

⁶ See *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, Vol. XV, p. 591ff.

⁷ See *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament (Abridged-Little Kittle)*.

A proud look,
a lying tongue,
and hands that shed innocent blood,
An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations,
feet that be swift in running to mischief,
A false witness that speaketh lies,
and he that soweth discord among brethren.”⁸

As you can see from this brief survey, “abomination” carries within its eleven letters an intensity seldom matched by other negative words indicative of sin and error. It seems to justify our initial assertion that the word is most useful “when one really wishes to up the ante, crank up the heat, put the hammer down, tighten the screws” on sin and error.

It is the intensity of the word, I suppose, that goes some way toward explaining its political incorrectness. But, however impolite the word, it seems that abomination’s devastating effects simply must be described in all their gory detail if those devastating effects are to be avoided. It was Enos who passed the following judgement concerning the nature of mankind.

“And there was nothing save it was exceeding harshness, preaching and prophesying of wars, and contentions, and destructions, and continually reminding them of death, and the duration of eternity, and the judgments and the power of God, and all these things—stirring them up continually to keep them in the fear of the Lord. I say there was nothing short of these things, and exceedingly great plainness of speech, would keep them from going down speedily to destruction. And after this manner do I write concerning them.”⁹

So it is that “after this manner” do we estimate the modern Church, American Christianity, the nation, and the world. The word is necessary to the avoidance of destruction—this time, likely, global. It is necessary to individual salvation. It is necessary to the latter-day restoration. It is to the latter-day restoration and its relation to the word, “abomination,” that we now turn our attention.

⁸ Proverbs 6.¹⁶⁻¹⁹

⁹ Enos 1.²³

I doubt that many would object to the assertion that Joseph Smith's 1820 religious experience that has come to be formally titled, "The First Vision," rests at the very foundation of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. There are several accounts of this religious experience. Some accounts—that of 1832, for example—are somewhat more "personal" than others.¹⁰ The "official" 1838 account found in the Pearl of Great Price, is more "institutional" as is reflected in Joseph's introductory comments to the account.

"I have been induced to write this history... in relation both to myself and the Church, so far as I have such facts in my possession. In this history *I shall present the various events in relation to this Church*, in truth and righteousness, as they have transpired, or as they at present exist, being now [1838] the eighth year since the organization of the said Church."¹¹

In this "official" account, Joseph reports seeing "a pillar of light exactly over [his] head." This light "descended gradually until it fell upon [him]." In this light, Joseph saw "two Personages, whose brightness and glory defy all description, standing above [him] in the air." Immediately, one of them, God the Father, spoke, and, "pointing to the other," said, "This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!"

This "Beloved Son" had much to say. In fact, he said so much that even eighteen years later, there were many things spoken in this first vision which Joseph "[could]not write at this time."¹² There's no good use in speculating on what other things might have been said or why they were not recorded or revealed. On the other hand, an awareness that "many other things" were spoken and left unrecorded, might serve to focus the mind on Joseph's 83-word summary of what was said and *was* recorded.

¹⁰ In the 1832 account, Joseph reports that "my mind become exceedingly (sic) distressed for I become convicted of my Sins." Jesus allays Joseph's feelings of personal unworthiness with these comforting words, "Joseph my Son thy Sins are forgiven thee." There is nothing in the "official" 1838 account to suggest that Joseph possessed such thoughts of personal unworthiness or that his first vision entailed such a redemptive "born again" experience.

¹¹ JSH 1.¹⁻²

¹² JSH 1.²⁰

“I was answered that I must join none of them, for they were all wrong; and the Personage who addressed me said that all their creeds were an abomination in his sight; that those professors were all corrupt; that: ‘they draw near to me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me, they teach for doctrines the commandments of men, having a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof.’ He again forbade me to join with any of them...”¹³

These well-known words were consistent both with Joseph’s “objective in going to inquire of the Lord... to know which of all the sects was right, that [he] might know which to join,”¹⁴ and with the 1838 version’s interest in presenting “the facts” as they existed “in relation both to [himself] *and the Church*.”

All of this brings us back around to that most impolite, insensitive, and politically incorrect word: “abomination.”

With our modern sensibilities and in our desire to be politically correct, we are fond of hedging. “All churches possess truth and are populated with good people.” Very nice. Fair enough. All of that can be true. But it doesn’t change “the facts.” In his very first latter-day revelation, God does not hedge, but begins with a bang; “ups the ante, cranks up the heat, puts the hammer down, tightens the screws.”

“...all their creeds were an abomination in his sight; that those professors were all corrupt; that: ‘they draw near to me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me, they teach for doctrines the commandments of men, having a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof.’”

This, then, is God’s verdict concerning American “Christianity.” Whatever truth individual Christians may possess is drowned in a sea of institutional “abomination.” Whatever goodness may exist among its individual members, its religious leaders are “*all* corrupt.”

¹³ JSH 1.¹⁹⁻²⁰

¹⁴ JSH 1.¹⁸

They are *all* deniers. And what is it that they “deny”? Our knee jerk reaction is to say that they “deny the power of God.” But this seems not to be exactly accurate. What they deny is “the power of godliness.” They deny the power of goodness and godly behavior. And if they deny the power of godliness, what is it that they empower? They empower *ungodliness*.

And what form does that ungodly power take? What are its sources?

This brings us to the punchline of this homily. Visitors to this site will not be surprised at the turn this homily now takes. By now, they have probably come to expect it.

Modern American “Christianity’s” abomination

American “Christianity’s” abomination, corruption, and empowerment of ungodliness has led our country to... wait for it... the election of Caligula. There is no way on God’s green earth that Caligula would have been elected without overwhelming support among Americans who call themselves Christians, especially those who are called evangelical. Worse, even in the face of (predictable) corruption, immoral conduct, language, and policy, “Christians” remain Caligula’s staunchest supporters. Without them, it is highly doubtful that he would still be in office, denying the power of godliness, or goodness, and exercising the power of ungodliness. It is certain that without them, he could not remain in office in light of the revelations flowing from the current impeachment inquiry taking place in the U.S. House of Representatives.

By electing, sustaining, and thus empowering Caligula’s exercise of ungodliness, the abomination that is American “Christianity” has lived up to—or down to, if you prefer—the divine estimation that God himself first articulated to an uneducated, uncultured, apolitical boy two hundred years ago. Too bad that neither they nor the people who concluded that the boy was indeed a true prophet have given heed to the unmistakable and unambiguous warning about the reality and nature of American “Christianity’s” abomination.

But, you don’t have to take my word for it. To be fair and accurate, we’ll let one of their

own, Pastor Jeffress—one of modern American “Christianity’s” most successful purveyors of abomination and corruption—speak, spew forth really, his latter-day abomination, his theological pornography for them. Now, examples of American “Christianity’s” abomination abound. Any foolish attempt to catalogue them all would have us here for a month of Sundays, a month of Sabbath rests, with our labor still far from complete. We’ll mention just one, as it is fresh in our mind. I apologize for the length of the following quotation, but as the man seems to be everywhere these days, including in Caligula’s head, and is a bit of a windbag and blowhard, it seems unavoidable.

“In an interview in 2016 with Mike Gallagher, a conservative radio talk show host, Jeffress described how he reacted to the question of whether he would prefer a president who governed according to the principles Jesus spoke of at the Sermon on the Mount.

“‘Heck no,’ Jeffress said. ‘I would run from that candidate as far as possible, because the Sermon on the Mount was not given as a governing principle for this nation.’
“He went on to say that governments are exempt from such biblical principles as forgiveness, or the willingness to turn the other cheek. ‘Government is to be a strongman to protect its citizens against evildoers,’ he claimed. ‘I don’t care about that candidate’s tone or vocabulary, I want the meanest, toughest, son of a you-know-what I can find, and I believe that’s Biblical’

“In a phone interview with the Washington Post in August 2017, Jeffress said of Trump’s remarks (which critics described as saber rattling) that ‘God has endowed rulers full power to use whatever means necessary,’ adding that this gives government ‘the authority to do whatever, whether it’s assassination, capital punishment or evil punishment to quell the actions of evildoers like Kim Jong Un.’

“He went on to contend that Romans 12, which commands we ‘do not repay evil for evil,’ does not apply in the context of foreign policy, referencing again his belief that presidential decision making is biblically exempt from the principles laid out at the Sermon on the Mount. As he told the Post, ‘A Christian writer asked me, ‘Don’t you want the president to embody the Sermon on the Mount?’ I said absolutely not.’ The Sermon on the Mount, which Jeffress is so quick to brush aside, is Jesus’s most famous and cited sermon in the Gospels. It included guiding principles such as these: caution your tongue and the manner in which you present yourself (Matt. 5: 33–37), do not seek

vengeance (Matt. 5: 38–42), don't be braggadocian (Matt. 6: 1–18), don't follow the crowd (Matt. 7: 13–14), and, importantly, be cautious about who you trust as your teachers (Matt. 7: 15–23).

“These, among others, are the principles that a major influential Christian evangelical leader who sits on the president's Evangelical Advisory Board says should be run from ‘as far as possible’ when choosing a president.

“And Jeffress wasn't simply saying he could look past someone not holding to the specific principles spoken at the Sermon on the Mount. Similar principles are not hard to find in good people of other faiths or of no religious faith at all. No, Jeffress was saying he prefers the opposite. He's saying that it is good in this context to be bad.

“In essence, Jeffress was making the case that Donald Trump's sinful nature is a virtue.

“This is actually much more antithetical to Christian teachings than focus group member Mark Lee's claim that he would check with Trump before believing Jesus about world affairs. Jeffress is essentially saying he wouldn't even ask because Jesus, apparently, wouldn't get it.”¹⁵

Ladies and gentlemen, I give you modern American “Christianity.” An abomination if ever there was one. A blasphemy and affront to God. If it was an abomination two hundred years ago, it is surely doubly so now. It is abhorrent and loathsome and repugnant. It is an offense against Jesus Christ, whose name it blasphemously uses in vain. Its doctrines are no more than a series of “evil utterances.” It is under divine censure. It is, as Joseph Smith was warned, to be rejected. It is to be shunned as is a deadly infectious disease.

Yes, I give you the people who put their “Dear Leader,” their anti-Messiah, Caligula—an abomination if ever there was one—in a position to wield ungodly power. I give you the people who, denying the power of godliness, continue to support Caligula in his exercise of the power of ungodliness. In his enthusiasm for “Christian” abomination, it seems that he has chosen to exercise ALL the powers of ungodliness.

¹⁵ Ben Howe, “The Immoral Majority,” p. 46-47

Are there individuals within American “Christianity’s” institutions that are good and approved of God? Yes. At the same time, we should point out that, given the list of actions that the Bible defines as “abomination,” all of us, the author included, are guilty of one “abomination” or another. If one accepts the Bible’s categorization of same sex activities as an “abomination,” one cannot relax or engage in any degree of self-righteousness because he or she is not so inclined or active; for that same he or she is certainly involved in another form of “abomination”—lying, for example, or denying the poor of our abundant resources. Being “Christian” means that we resist and battle against these abominations common to all of us.

So, while we try—with either more or less success—to not “personalize” the charge of “abomination,” we cannot escape the fact that far too many of America’s “Christian” institutions, their doctrines, their leaders, and their ethics are perverted “beyond the pale.” They see, clearly, the abomination that is Caligula. They speak of it, in fact, openly. Yet, they do not resist the abomination. Rather, they embrace it. Love it. Pledge allegiance to it. They have “institutionalized” their support for Caligula’s exercise of “the power of ungodliness.”

Unfortunately, In all of this abominable compromise, acceptance, and allegiance, those good people who join and remain in the ranks of American “Christianity” are in danger of becoming “twofold more the child[of hell]”¹⁶ than they would be outside the influence of American “Christianity’s” abomination; it corrupt professors; it peddlers of theological porn.

Conclusion

It should not escape our notice that “abomination” is often a stand in for an “idol.” Idolatry is about placing one’s confidence, security, and sense of “self” in “wealth,” “power,” and “prestige,” and the accumulation of such lies, rather than in one’s relationship with the God of Heaven. Christians have, they vainly imagine, found true power in their allegiance with Caligula. He has become an idol. This idol will, like all anti-Christ throughout human

¹⁶ See Matthew 23.¹⁵

history, speedily drag their souls down to hell.¹⁷

Far too many “Christians” have accepted one of the abominable creeds that their corrupt professors have foisted upon them to justify the idolization, the cult deification of Caligula. It goes something like this.

“Nobody’s perfect. God uses imperfect vessels. One such imperfect vessel was Cyrus, King of Persia. God used him to restore the Jews to their homeland. Another is David, who brought Israel victory against long-time enemies. Caligula is a modern version of these ancient “servants.” Caligula is freeing God’s people from the clutches of an evil American culture.”¹⁸

By this sophistry they have the gull to call Caligula a “chosen one,” refuse to hold him accountable, but seek to absolve him of the clear and present evils, abominations, that he daily commits against individuals, American institutions, and, indeed, God, Himself.

But, let’s be clear. Even if one accepts the absurdity that Caligula is “God’s vessel,” which I, obviously, do not, this does not justify absolving him of the abominations he commits on an hourly—nay, a minute by minute—basis. No. God holds those who do evil accountable, however much they may “do God’s work.”

Anyone remember Nathan? You know, the man of God who would not be a toady, a sycophant to the exercise of the power of ungodliness; contenance David’s abomination of adultery and murder? Apparently not.

“Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the LORD, to do evil in his sight? Thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife to be thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon. Now therefore the sword

¹⁷ See Alma 30.⁶⁰

¹⁸ The reader will be excused if this sounds, to their ears, like the Muslim “creed” of the caliphate and the claim that the caliphate will free Muslims from the evils of this world—best exemplified by American culture. As I have often said, there is not a hair’s breadth distance between American fundamentalist “Christians” and “radical” Muslim fundamentalists.

shall never depart from thine house; because thou hast despised me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife.”

The punishment would fit the crime.

“Thus saith the LORD, ‘Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbour, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun.’”¹⁹

Hundreds of years after King David’s unjust reign, an Assyrian King, it was thought, did God’s work in punishing a wicked Israelite nation. Isaiah maintained that God “hired” the Assyrian King to serve as a “razor” to “shave” “the head, the hair of the feet [read, “pubic hair”]” and also “the beard.”²⁰

”O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger,
and the staff in their hand is mine indignation.
I will send him against an hypocritical nation,
and against the people of my wrath will I give him a charge,
to take the spoil, and to take the prey,
and to tread them down like the mire of the streets.”²¹

Assyria was most effective in this divine call. However, God held it accountable for its evils.

“Howbeit he [Assyria’s king] meaneth not so,
neither doth his heart think so;
but it is in his heart to destroy...
I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria,
and the glory of his high looks.

¹⁹ 2 Samuel 12.⁹⁻¹¹

²⁰ See Isaiah 7.¹⁷⁻²⁰

²¹ Isaiah 10.⁵⁻⁶

For he saith,

‘By the strength of my hand I have done it,
and by my wisdom; for I am prudent...’²²

Hearing Assyria’s mindless boasting, as an axe against the one who wields it, God pronounces:

“Therefore shall the Lord, the Lord of hosts,
send among his fat ones leanness;
and under his glory he shall kindle a burning
like the burning of a fire.
And the light of Israel shall be for a fire,
and his Holy One for a flame:
and it shall burn and devour his thorns
and his briers in one day;
And shall consume the glory of his forest, and of his fruitful field,
both soul and body...”²³

God held Assyrian accountable, just as he would, later, hold Cyrus accountable.

In the end, though, all this scripture dueling is foolishness. We need no Bible to discern Caligula’s corruption, immorality, and ungodliness. It requires no spiritual discernment to see that he doesn’t give a fig about God or his purposes. It only takes a bit of common sense and intellectual honesty. Just a modicum of morality. He is a sociopathic narcissist interested in nothing but fulfilling his own perverted lusts. Of this there can be not the slightest doubt. Call it my testimony, if you want.

Unlike a Moses, or Nephi, or Mormon, who all sought a delay in their society’s final “desolation of abomination,” I am, rather, more in line with Isaiah’s longing for accountability. I want accountability. I await, I guess, God’s vengeance upon this vilest of

²² Isaiah 10.7, 12-13

²³ Isaiah 10.16-18

men, the electorate that empowered him to exercise “the power of ungodliness,” and “Christian” institutions that hypocritically and blasphemously support him. I feel more kinship with the angels who “are waiting the great command to reap down the earth, to gather the tares that they may be burned.”²⁴

“Behold, vengeance cometh speedily upon the inhabitants of the earth,
a day of wrath, a day of burning,
a day of desolation, of weeping, of mourning, and of lamentation;
and as a whirlwind it shall come upon all the face of the earth,
saith the Lord.

And upon my house shall it begin,
and from my house shall it go forth,
saith the Lord;

First among those among you, saith the Lord,
who have professed to know my name and have not known me,
and have blasphemed against me in the midst of my house,
saith the Lord.”²⁵

For me, it can’t be too “speedy” or come soon enough.

“How long, O Lord, holy and true,
Dost thou not judge and avenge...
them that dwell on the earth?”²⁶

Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

²⁴ Dc 38.¹²

²⁵ DC 112.²⁴⁻²⁶

²⁶ See Revelation 6.¹⁰