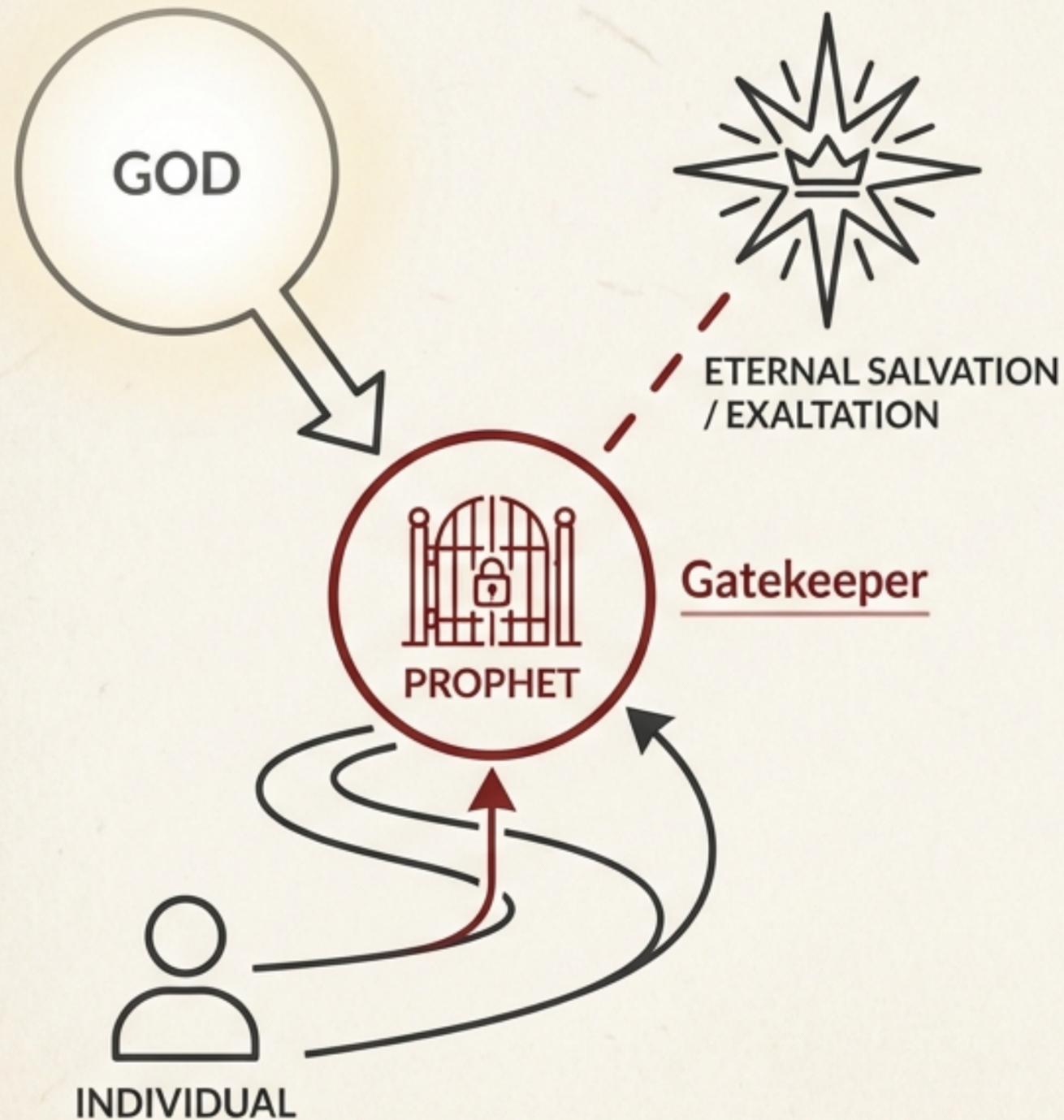


Coercion or Consent?

An Examination of Joseph Smith's
Plural Marriage Proposals

The Prophet as the Gatekeeper of Salvation



Indoctrination Framework

Believers are taught that this life is a temporary test, their eternal fate hangs in the balance, and the Prophet is the **sole lifeline** and **conduit** to God.

Circumventing Morality

The command to '*follow the prophet*' is designed to override an individual's personal moral compass. Obedience becomes the primary virtue, even when the command feels wrong.

Invalidated Consent

True consent is impossible under conditions of:

- Vast power imbalances (prophet vs. follower).
- Threats to eternal salvation for oneself and family.
- Proposals made to minors.

Five Recurring Patterns in Joseph Smith's Proposals

1  **Vulnerable Subjects**
Targeting young women who were orphaned, grieving, or living in his home as dependents.

2  **Proxy Recruitment**
Using existing, older plural wives to "soften up," groom, and recruit younger candidates.

3  **Promises & Threats**
Offering exaltation for the entire family for acceptance, while **threatening damnation** and a "closed gate" for refusal.

3  **Promises & Threats**
Offering exaltation for entire family for accept., while threatening damnation and "a "closed gate" for refusal.

4  **The Angel with a Drawn Sword**
After an initial rejection, invoking a divine threat to his own life to coerce acceptance.

5  **Secrecy & Deception**
Hiding the marriages from his first wife, Emma, and the public, often by pitting individuals against each other with secret knowledge.

Case Study: Lucy Walker, The Orphan's "Sacrifice"



- **Age:** Proposed to at 16 by Joseph Smith, then 36.
- **Family Status:** Mother recently deceased, leaving ten motherless children.
- **Father's Removal:** Joseph Smith sent her grieving father, John Walker, away on a mission, stating, *"If you remain here... you will soon follow your wife."* (Cormorant Garamond Italic, #4A3F35)
- **Living Situation:** Joseph Smith 'adopted' the four eldest Walker children, including Lucy, into his own home, where she lived as his foster daughter.

“This Announcement Was Indeed a Thunderbolt to Me”

Lucy Walker

He said... I have been commanded of God to take another wife, and you are the woman... He fully explained to me the principle of plural or Celestial marriage... I will give you until tomorrow to decide this matter. If you reject this message the gate will be closed forever against you.”

*I was only a child in years and experience no mother to counsel...
no father near to tell me what to do in this trying hour.*

“It Was Not a Love Matter” in Playfair Display

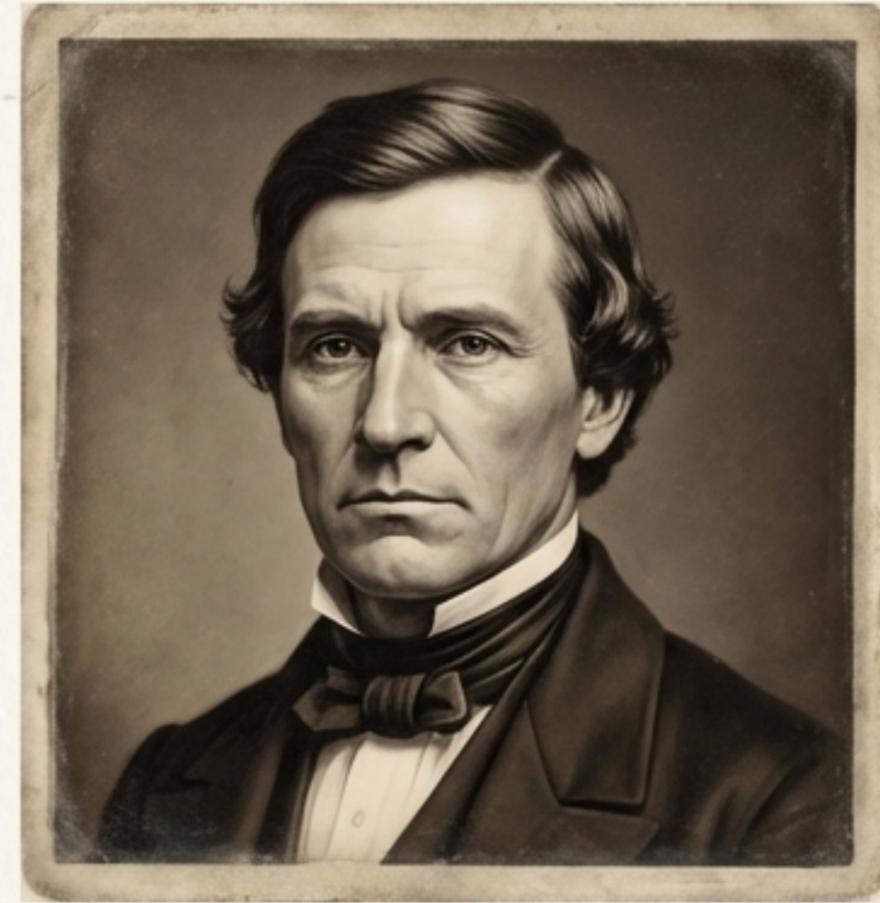
“I was called upon I stepped forward and gave myself up as a sacrifice to establish that principle... it was not a love matter so to speak in our Affairs at least on my par't it was not, but simply the giving up of myself as a sacrifice to establish that... principle that God had revealed to the world.”

Lucy's own words, given under oath, confirm the union was based on religious duty and coerced sacrifice, not consent or affection.

Case Study: Zina Huntington Jacobs, The Polyandrous Marriage



Zina Huntington



Henry Jacobs

Summary of Circumstances:

- **Existing Marriage:** Happily married to Henry Jacobs and seven months pregnant with his child.
- **Prior Rejection:** She had previously rebuffed Joseph Smith's advances by marrying Henry.
- **Prophetic Claim:** Smith refused to officiate her wedding to Henry, stating that Zina had been "given to him by the Lord."



The Angel's Ultimatum

*“Tell Zina I put it off and put it off till an angel with a drawn sword stood by me and told me if I did not establish that principle upon the earth I would **lose my position and my life.**”*

The Outcome

Zina was sealed to Joseph Smith. Her legal husband, Henry Jacobs, was made to stand as a witness to the ceremony.



A Legacy Erased

*Henry was he not in
you that me not doring
him in the family. I
home*

**“Zina have not forgotten
you my love is as ever the
same.”**

*I remember
separating in your
loving to the family
with married times
slow
late
and
honor
my
also
I know
a what
children it loving of an*

Henry was repeatedly sent on missions, separating him from his family. He wrote loving, unanswered letters home while Zina was eventually taken as a wife by Brigham Young.

The Official Narrative

Official Church sources today claim Henry ‘abandoned’ his family.

A modern Church source asserts he ‘deserted his family.’”



Case Study: The Partridge Sisters, Deception in the Prophet's Home



Summary of Circumstances

- **Emily (19) and Eliza Partridge**, daughters of Edward Partridge, the first Bishop of the Church.
- **Orphaned:** Their father died, leaving them without parental protection.
- **Dependents:** Both sisters were living in the Smith household under the care of Joseph and Emma.

A Calculated Recruitment



1. Initial Rejection

Emily's first reaction was a firm refusal. She recalled:

"I shut Joseph up so quick that he didn't bring up the subject again for several months."



2. Proxy Grooming

Joseph then sent an older plural wife, Elizabeth Durfee, to "test the waters" and condition Emily to the principle of plural marriage.



3. The "Revelation"

Joseph proposed again on Emily's 19th birthday, claiming that:

"the Lord told him my mind was now prepared and would receive the principle."

A Sham Wedding to Deceive Emma

Secret Marriages

Joseph married both sisters secretly. Emily later stated,

"Neither of us knew about the other at the time."

Emma's Choice

A reconciled Emma agreed to polygamy, but only if she could choose the wives.

She chose the Partridge sisters, unaware they were already secretly married to her husband.

The Mock Ceremony

To maintain the lie, Joseph staged a fake wedding ceremony. This forced the girls to actively deceive Emma.

The relationship soured, and Emma soon kicked them out of the house.

The Evidence Reveals a Consistent Methodology



Vulnerable Subjects

The orphaned Lucy Walker and Partridge sisters, living as dependents in his home.



Proxy Recruitment

Using Elizabeth Durfee to groom Emily Partridge after her initial firm rejection.



Promises & Threats

Promising Lucy Walker's family exaltation for her consent, while threatening a "gate closed forever" for refusal.



The Angel with a Drawn Sword

Telling the married and pregnant Zina Huntington Jacobs he would be killed if she did not become his wife.



Secrecy & Deception

Staging a mock wedding with the Partridge sisters to deceive his first wife, Emma.

Where is the Ethical Line?

“The faithful perspective is that Joseph was a prophet, and prophets are human and make mistakes. But at what point do we stop seeing his behavior as mistakes and start seeing it as a **consistent pattern of predation**? Is there an ethical line for you, and if so, where is it?”

— Adapted from commentary by Alicia Lee (via Dr. Erin Rackham) on the Mormon Stories Podcast

Sources & Further Inquiry

Primary Source for this Presentation

- *Mormon Stories* Podcast, Episode 1679: “Joseph Smith’s Plural Marriage Proposals Pt. 1 | LDS Discussions Ep. 26”

Key Research & Essays

- LDSDiscussions.com: “Essay: Joseph Smith’s Plural Marriage Proposals”

Recommended Foundational Texts

- *In Sacred Loneliness: The Plural Wives of Joseph Smith* by Todd Compton
- *Year of Polygamy* Podcast by Lindsay Hansen Park