

30 Characteristics of Secret Combinations

Thirty scripture-supported points concerning the nature, purpose and methods of secret combinations.

1. Cain founded the first secret combination and became known as Master Mahan.* This title and the oaths and covenants were passed down to subsequent leaders of the secret combination (Moses 5: 31, 49; Helaman 6:30).
2. Secret combinations are “most abominable and wicked above all” in the sight of God (see Ether 8:18).
3. Secret combinations are Satanic in nature, receiving revelation from, and being founded and held up by, the devil (Moses 5:29-30; 2 Nephi 26:22; Helaman 6:26; 3 Nephi 6:28; Ether 8:16, 25) who transforms himself into an angel of light and stirs up men to contention whereby wickedness and secret combinations increase (2 Nephi 9:9; Helaman 6:21; 3 Nephi 7:7).
4. Secret combinations administer secret ancient oaths handed down from Cain (Ether 8:15-16), taken by swearing by the God of heaven, the heavens, the earth, the throat and the head (Moses 5:29-30; Ether 8:13-14).
5. The manner of their oaths and combinations are had among all people (Ether 8:20).
6. Secret combinations have secret signs and words (Helaman 6:22), protect one another (Helaman 6:21, 23), and mingle into society in a manner whereby they cannot be found (Helaman 1:12).
7. Members of secret combinations are punished by the combination if they reveal the wickedness of their co-conspirators (Helaman 6:24; Ether 8:14).
8. One of the purposes of secret combinations is to murder (Moses 5:31; Helaman 2:8); they also seek to murder the prophets of God (Alma 37:30). These combinations cause slaughter (3 Nephi 1:27, 2:11), war and millions of deaths; the Jaredites and Nephites being destroyed because of them (Helaman 2:13-14; Ether 8:21).
9. Secret combinations are established to rob and get gain (Moses 5:31; Helaman 2:8). They store up gold and silver in abundance and traffic in all manner of traffic (4 Nephi 1:46). The Book of Mormon refers to them as “robbers” over fifty times, which suggest that theft was their chief activity or the activity for which they were most notorious.
10. Gadianton Robbers prefer to plunder rather than working for themselves (3 Nephi 4:1-5).
11. Members of secret combinations regard each other as brethren and have a communal attitude toward property (3 Nephi 3:6-7).
12. The teachings and practices of the robbers are tempting and corrupt the hearts of the people as they spread, eventually even seducing most of the righteous into believing in their works, partaking of their spoils, and even becoming involved in their secret murders and combinations (Helaman 6:38; Ether 9:6).
13. Pride, the desire for money, and seeking the praise of man make people susceptible to uniting with secret combinations; such go on to murder, plunder, and bear false witness against their neighbor (Helaman 7:21, 25-26).
14. Secret combinations help those who seek for power to gain power as well as to murder, plunder, lie and commit wickedness and whoredoms (Ether 8:16).
15. Secret combinations keep the people in darkness (Ether 8:16) and use fair promises to lead people away (Ether 8:17).
16. Secret combinations flourished first in the more settled parts of the land (Helaman 3:23) and among the wicked (Helaman 6:38; 4 Nephi 1:42).

17. One of the purposes of secret combinations is to gain power (Helaman 2:8; Ether 8:23, 11:15) by usurping power and authority over the people (Helaman 7:4). They seek to gain sole power over the government and, in the Book of Mormon, were successful in doing so (Helaman 6:39).
18. Secret combinations retain power so that they and their supporters may get gain and glory, and so that they may more easily steal, commit adultery, kill and do according to their own will (Helaman 7:5).
19. Secret combinations break the laws of God and the laws of their country (Helaman 6:23).
20. Secret combinations stir up rebellion (Ether 11:15) and dissent, and use lies and flattery to lead people to join with them (3 Nephi 1:28-29), targeting the rising generation (3 Nephi 1:29-30).
21. The members of secret combinations believe their secret works and society to be good (3 Nephi 3:9).
22. Secret combinations pretend to act on behalf of their people in reclaiming their rights (3 Nephi 3:10), believing they have been wronged and hating the righteous (3 Nephi 3:4).
23. Secret combinations seek to overthrow government (3 Nephi 7:6), establish kings - or oligarchies (Mosiah 29:21-22) - and destroy the liberty of a republic (3 Nephi 6:30, 7:10); the king-men believe they have the blood of nobility (Alma 51:21).
24. Secret combinations, once in government, lay aside the commandments of God, corrupt righteous laws, and administer no justice to the people (Mosiah 29:22; Helaman 7:4), condemning the righteous for their righteousness, allowing the guilty to go free because of their money (Helaman 7:5).
25. Secret combinations shed the blood of the saints and oppress them (Helaman 6:39; 3 Nephi 6:29; Ether 8:22), threatening not only the rights and liberty of the people but also the Church (3 Nephi 2:12).
26. When any society has suffered such combinations to spread over them they will be destroyed (Ether 8:22).
27. One of the purposes of the Book of Mormon is to show us the work of ancient secret combination so that we may repent and suffer not that these same murderous combinations should get above us (Ether 8:23), and that we should awake to a sense of our awful situation when we see these things among us (Ether 8:24).
28. Speaking of a secret combination built up by the devil, the master of lies, in our day, the Book of Mormon tells us that those who build it up do so to overthrow the freedom of all lands, nations and countries (Ether 8:25).
29. In the last days the gentiles shall build up secret combinations which shall spill the blood of the saints and seek to destroy the people (2 Nephi 26:22; Ether 8:25; Mormon 8:27).
30. Preaching the word of God destroys secret combinations (Helaman 6:37).

* The word Mahan is of uncertain origin but the footnotes to Moses 5:31 suggest that the root of the word ("maha") can be rendered as "mind", "destroyer", or "great one". Matthew M. Brown favours the "destroyer" meaning (see Girded about with a Lambskin, *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*: Volume - 6, Issue - 2, Pages: 124-151, Provo, Utah: Maxwell Institute, 1997). Depopulation, through various means, seems to be a strong theme in conspiratorial agendas. Joseph Smith, commenting on government and tyrants, once said that "the greatest acts of the mighty men have been to depopulate nations and to overthrow kingdoms; and whilst they have exalted themselves and become glorious, it has been at the expense of the lives of the innocent, the blood of the oppressed, the moans of the widow, and the tears of the orphan." (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, Section Five, 1842-43, p.248). This gives even more weight to the meaning of Mahan as "destroyer".

--Article is an extract from *Waking Up To Secret Combinations: An LDS Perspective on Conspiracy* by Darren Andrews