

50 Questions that Mormons Can't Answer.
Answered by a Mormon.
BY STEVEN SMILANICH

In this essay, I look over Pastor Ed Taylor's "50 Questions to Ask Mormons" and attempt to answer his questions: <https://www.oneplace.com/ministries/abounding-grace/read/articles/50-questions-to-ask-mormons-13705.html>

According to Tower to Truth Ministries, "Questions are a great way to witness to Mormons. Most cultists will turn you off if you begin to preach to them, however, asking questions gives them hope that you are genuinely interested in learning more about their religion. It also is a great way to get them thinking about things they may have never thought about and researching into the false teachings of their church."

Elder Legrand Richards would frequently say, "My testimony and witness to you here today is that there is not an honest man or an honest woman in this world who really loves the Lord, and would like to serve him as he would like to be served, who would not join this church if they would just take time to find out the marvelous things the Lord has done in restoring his work to the earth in this day and time."

Let's put Elder Richards theory to the test.

Section 1: How I Interpret Scripture

When it comes to interpreting scripture, it seems many people just look at one verse of scripture and say, “This scripture says ... therefore ...” without actually looking at the whole picture or the surrounding scripture. I am not one of these people, I do not think like this.

I tend to have a bad habit of not taking things at face value when first presented. I must follow Thomas Jefferson’s advice and “question with boldness even the existence of a God.” And so I question the very existence of God, not because I don’t believe in Him, but because I know that He will pour out His spirit upon me that I might know Him most intimately. As a result, I must question everything that I come across, I must cross-examine everything, and experiment upon everything.

I follow strongly the Book of Mormon scripture from Alma 34:

4 Yea, even that ye would have so much faith as even to plant the word in your hearts, that ye may try the experiment of its goodness.

5 And we have beheld that the great question which is in your minds is whether the word be in the Son of God, or whether there shall be no Christ.

6 And ye also beheld that my brother has proved unto you, in many instances, that the word is in Christ unto salvation.

Many things are not easy on me but I question them boldly anyways, many experiments may seem daunting but I perform them anyways. I fully believe that God will not just bless us with the peace that we might know scripture to be good but that we might also gain a logical, psychological, scientific, historical and philosophical understanding into these things. God will tell us in our minds and in our hearts which things are true by way of all of these categories, meticulously, with each idea of yours, otherwise, you will be in the wrong. Testimonies may be mostly about faith but a true testimony is predicated on both hard facts and feelings. This I have of the Church. The Holy Ghost testifies of truth to the heart which conjures up undeniable facts when it comes to the scriptures and doctrine alike.

And so from Philipians 4 I likewise follow this council:

7 And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

8 Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

9 Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.

What is the spirit and how do we know that we are feeling the spirit? From these things in Galatians 5:

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

I don't see anything wrong with believing in something just because it is beautiful. And many doctrines which I have learned about over the years are anything but, particularly the things which are to be learned in the Temple, for they are the most beautiful.

When interpreting scripture I keep in mind always this scripture from 1 John 4:

6 We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.

7 Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.

8 He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.

9 In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.

10 Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

If I desire truth then I must be with the Truth which is God. I do this by being in Love which is God for God is love. Why would God not be love? He sent His only begotten son to us to perform the atonement in which he suffered in Gethsemane and on the cross. Therefore, anything that does not declare that God is love I deny quickly, this includes philosophies, ideas, doctrines,

and interpretations of the scripture of all kinds.

To correctly identify the correct interpretation of scripture: I experiment upon the scripture, I gain an understanding of the context under which certain scriptures were written, I wonder who it was written to and why it was written, I question its purpose and why it says what it says. If I obtain an interpretation that does not declare God to be a God of love then I reject it immediately.



Let me give you of an example of an experiment, see here is a picture of a spotted dog:

Most who first look at this picture don't see the dog at first, they just see a bunch of dots. To properly point out the dog, one cannot just point to one dot and say, "look-see,

that's the dog." You have to be able to connect the dots, only then can you say that the dog is right there.

I believe the same thing when it comes to scripture. I would say that one individual verse is comparable to one dot in the above picture. If I point to one verse and say to you, "look right here, this scripture says ... therefore ..." you might not see what I am talking about. You would be correct in saying that I may have the wrong interpretation.

It is my understanding of scripture that we can't just point to one verse for an interpretation of all scripture and be done with it. For a doctrine to be fully understood, we must take into account all other verses throughout all scripture and weave a tapestry. We must be able to connect the dots of many verses, which are similar in thought but differ slightly, to convey a single idea.

For an example of misinterpretation of scriptures from what we have discussed above: Jehovah's Witness' have a plethora of strange ideas, as I am sure you well know. Many of their ideas are not only strange but are also based on single scriptures with very few made attempts to weave many scriptures together to form that idea. Many of their ideas come from a single look at one scripture without an attempt to understand the context of the scripture. Many of their ideas are, quite plainly, untested.

One of their strange ideas is the idea that there is no such thing as the spirit of man, that we are empty shells that God just one day decided to randomly create with no rime or reason and is just making things up as he goes along, he apparently only uses foresight on some occasions. Now already we see a red flag as it makes no sense that God would use foresight only sometimes, not only does this diminish the might and majesty of God, but it also conveys a god who is not love. Surely a god of love would want to use foresight all the time so that he could be properly prepared for anything that might happen to us. It makes God out to be just like a child playing with legos, how blasphemous.

Their claim that there is no such thing as the spirit of man comes from a couple of single scriptures without looking at all the scriptures as a whole; Ecclesiastes 9:5-6 & 10, Ecclesiastes 3:20, [Psalm 146:4](#), and [Psalm 115:17](#). Their interpretation of these scriptures is also lighting a red flag, their claim that there is no spirit of your dead relatives to come and comfort you also denotes a god who is not love. I have heard countless stories of dead relatives coming to comfort their loved ones, how could this be the workings of the devil, he would only be destroying his own kingdom by comforting these people.

The Ecclesiastes scriptures can all be well understood when one takes into account the very context in which the book was written:

“The book of Ecclesiastes seems permeated with a pessimistic flavor, but must be read in the light of one of its key phrases: ‘under the sun’ (1:9), meaning ‘from a worldly point of view.’ The term *vanity* also needs clarification, since as used in Ecclesiastes it means transitory, or fleeting. Thus the Preacher laments that as things appear from the point of view of the world, everything is temporary and soon gone—nothing is permanent. It is in this light also that the reader must understand 9:5 and 9:10, which declare that the dead ‘know not any thing,’ and there is no knowledge ‘in the grave.’ These should not be construed as theological pronouncements on the condition of the soul after death; rather, they are observations by the Preacher about how things appear to men on the earth ‘under the sun.’ The most spiritual part of the book appears in

chapters 11 and 12, where it is concluded that the only activity of lasting and permanent value comes from obedience to God's commandments, since all things will be examined in the judgment that God will render on man." ([Bible Dictionary](#), s.v. "Ecclesiastes.")

For Psalms 146:4, one need only look back on the previous verse to know that David is referring to those "in whom there is no help" who we should not put our trust in. Psalms 115:17 is, in a similar fashion as 146:4, referring to those that you would likewise not want to put your trust in, the heathen, as shown in verse 2. So we see that context and who the scripture is specifically referring to is very important.

But that's enough about the JW's for now, we are here to talk about Mormonism instead and so we shall. I love the JW's as I met a lot on my LDS mission, so I'm not going to go out on a limb and dedicate my entire life to disproving them, or any religion for that matter. I think it is far more important to try to prove/disprove my own religion.

One last point I follow highly when it comes to the interpretation of scripture is I will do my best to avoid any logical fallacies, including straw-man and appeal to authority. One logical fallacy that I see come up a lot in many things is the Texas Sharpshooter Fallacy. This fallacy got its name from the story of a sharpshooter who shoots many holes in the wall of a barn, he then took a bucket of paint and painted targets over the holes in an attempt to prove to everyone that he was a great shot. Likewise, in arguments, the fallacy is concluding first only to then work backward tracing all things that point to the conclusion and ignoring anything that might point in the opposite direction. It is, therefore, best to have a hypothesis first, look at all the data, miss nothing, cherry-pick nothing, only then come up with a conclusion whatever it might be. It would, therefore, be best to avoid the Texas Sharpshooter fallacy along with all other fallacies.

So onto the questions that I can't answer but will try to do so anyway. I enjoy doing any homework concerning the gospel that is given to me.

Section 2: Those Unanswerable Questions

Alright, let's see how I do, although something tells me that my answers to these questions will not be acceptable despite the information that I provide. I hope that even the most hard-hearted person will be willing to take something away from this which they did not know before. If any man or woman can go through and discredit each point I make in accordance per the questions, then more power to that person.

Mormon Prophets

1. Why does the Mormon Church still teach that Joseph Smith was a true prophet of God after he made a false prophecy about a temple being built in Missouri in his generation (Doctrine and Covenants 84:1-5)?

J. Warner of Cold-Case Christianity wrote an article about Joseph's prophecies and asks the question if they can be trusted. His conclusion is, although he attempted to leave all bias' behind and give Joseph a fair treatment, that Joseph fails the prophetic test as laid out by the scriptures. Of course there could be more to it than that. But before we get into the Temple prophecy I think I want to look at Mr. Warner's first few paragraphs as I find them very relevant to the conversation on prophecies and how they are important for both Latter-Day Saint and non-Latter-Day Saint alike:

“... there appears to be some confusion surrounding Joseph's prophecies, and neither Mormons nor non-Mormons seem to examine the claims of prophecy fairly. Non-Mormons point to every prophecy of Joseph in an effort to demonstrate he is a liar, and Mormons try to justify Joseph's unfulfilled predictions by twisting the laws of prophecy. Let's take an honest look at the different types of prophesy as they relate to Joseph Smith. Before we begin, we'll need to examine the different categories of prophecy as they apply to the founder of Mormonism:



“Open-dated Prophecies
Let’s begin with the easiest predictions a prophet can make. Open-dated prophecies are given without a specific time frame for their fulfillment:

“ Example: Joseph Smith predicts in 1835 that, “The coming of the Lord, which was nigh – even fifty-six years should wind up the scene” (History of the Church, Vol. 2 p. 182).

“Although the Lord did not return by 1891, Joseph Smith only said fifty-six years “should” wind up the scene. The word “should” provides Joseph with an escape clause; it allows for the possibility something could happen to upset the original time schedule. Therefore, even though the prediction did not come true,

this prophecy alone does not necessarily make Joseph Smith a false prophet. Christians cannot look at open-dated prophecies and judge the prophetic status of Joseph Smith.

“Self-fulfilling Prophecies

These are prophecies the prophet can fulfill on his own. They require no outside action or event outside the control of the prophet.

“Example: The Lord instructs Joseph not to translate any more until he goes to Ohio. (D&C 37:1).

“To make this prophecy come true, Joseph Smith simply had to stop translating for a few months. When a prophet has the ability to control the outcome of the prophecy, there is no way to judge whether or not the prophet is true or trustworthy. Just as it is unfair for Non-Mormons to try to use open-dated prophecies against Joseph, Mormons cannot use these types of self-fulfilling prophecies to prove Joseph Smith is a prophet of God.

“Conditional Prophecies

These types of prophecies only come true if a certain condition exists. In other words, if a situation changes, the prophecy may also change.

“Example: Joseph Smith states that if the people of Ohio repent, they will not be severely judged of the Lord (D&C 40:16-18).

“The outcome of this prophecy is conditioned upon the repentance of the people in question. If the people of Ohio were not severely judged, it could be fairly argued they must have sufficiently repented. So this type of prophecy cannot be used by either side to prove anything at all.

“Most of Joseph Smith’s prophecies are of the first three types, and while these forms of prophecy are often cited by one side or the other to falsify (or verify) the prophetic stature of Joseph Smith, none are legitimately applicable. There is a fourth kind of prophecy, however, uttered by Joseph Smith. This last form of prophecy can be examined to validate (or invalidate) Joseph’s status as a true prophet:

“Close-dated and Unconditional Prophecies

Some prophecies are offered with specificity and must come true within a particular time frame without any mitigating conditions. Although relatively few of Joseph Smith’s prophecies are of this type, they are extremely important because they allow us to test Joseph Smith as a prophet.”

(<https://coldcasechristianity.com/writings/can-we-trust-the-prophecies-of-joseph-smith/>)

I propose a fifth type of prophecy that we could call “Commandment Prophecy” (or a commandment mistaken as a prophecy). Similar to the conditional prophecy, commandment prophecy is dependent on the agency of the individual or individuals involved. God commands us to do something by a certain due date, if the people do not proceed to achieve the commandment by the due date then it is man's responsibility and not God’s. As expressed by Jeremiah 18:7-10, man's agency is a huge factor in whether or not the prophecy comes to pass. I think that there could be an argument made that the Independence, Missouri temple prophecy would fall under this category.

“It may be reasonable to assume that in giving this revelation to the prophet the Lord did have in mind the generation of people who would still be living with the one hundred years

from the time of announcement of the revelation, and that they would enjoy the blessings of the temple, and a glorious cloud would rest upon it. It is also reasonable to believe that no soul living in 1832 is still living in mortality on the earth.” (Joseph Fielding Smith, Answers to Gospel Questions, Vol. 4. p. 112)

So, whose fault was it that the prophecy was not fully realized within the generation? God’s or man’s? Certainly it was man’s fault.

Nevertheless, even if it is a commandment prophecy, we still need to take into account the fact that many early leaders of the church interpreted the word “generation” to mean exactly what it says. Though FairMormon argues that the word “generation” here could be referring to something else:

“There is a double standard of interpretation that critics use against Joseph Smith, since Jesus Christ used the very same terminology. Matthew 24:34 quotes Christ as saying, "Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled." Luke 21:32 repeats this prophecy. The term "these things" refers to wars, famines, the sun being darkened, and even the "stars falling from heaven." Some of "these things" occurred during Christ's time period. Some have continued since then. Some have escalated into our time. Some have not occurred yet.

“So we must ask, since Joseph Smith is charged with false prophecy concerning "this generation," did Jesus Christ utter a false prophecy? Absolutely not! So, if Joseph Smith uttered a false prophecy about "this generation," then so did Christ. It has been many centuries longer from the time of Christ until now, than it has been from the 1830's till today.

"The word "generation" has different meanings. According to scripture, the word "generation" can have reference to a time frame, a people, or even a dispensation. Without specific wording which would indicate exactly what the word "generation" means, it is dishonest to accuse one (Joseph Smith) of false prophecy, while accepting another (Jesus Christ) when both use it in a general form.

"Joseph Smith's revelation in D&C 84 may appear on the surface to be a failed prophecy, but a more informed reading reveals that its fulfillment is still in the future.

...

“Let's look at what Jesus himself said to the people of his day concerning prophecies of His second coming. Matthew 24:34 quotes Christ as saying, "Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled." Luke 21:32 repeats this prophecy. “What are "all these things," and have they come to pass?

- 1. Many shall come in Christ's name, deceiving many (Matthew 24:5, Luke 21:8)**
- 2. Wars and rumours of wars (Matthew 24:6, Luke 21:9-10)**
- 3. Famines (Matthew 24:7, Luke 21:11)**
- 4. Pestilences (Mathew 24:7, Luke 21:11)**
- 5. Earthquakes (Matthew 24:7, Luke 21:11)**
- 6. Apostles killed (Matthew 24:9, Luke 21:16)**
- 7. Many shall be offended (Matthew 24:10)**
- 8. Many shall be betrayed (Matthew 24:10)**
- 9. Men will hate one another (Matthew 24:10)**
- 10. False prophets will deceive many (Matthew 24:11)**
- 11. Iniquity shall abound (Matthew 24:12)**
- 12. Love of many shall wax cold (Matthew 24:12)**
- 13. Gospel shall be preached in all the world (Matthew 24:14)**
- 14. Distress of nations (Luke 21:25)**
- 15. Men's hearts will fail them because of fear (Luke 21:11)**
- 16. Sun shall be darkened (Matthew 24:29, Luke 21:25)**
- 17. Moon shall not give her light (Matthew 24:29, Luke 21:25)**
- 18. Stars shall fall from heaven (Matthew 24:29, Luke 21:25)**
- 19. Sign of the Son of man shall appear (Matthew 24:30, Luke 21:27)**

"Some of "these things" occurred during Christ's time period. Some have continued since then. Some have escalated into our time. Some have not occurred yet. So we must ask, since Joseph Smith is charged with false prophecy concerning "this generation," did Jesus Christ utter a false prophecy? Absolutely not! ...”

([https://www.fairmormon.org/answers/Countercult_ministries/Tower to Truth Ministries/50 Questions to Ask Mormons/Questions About LDS Prophets#Response to claim: .](https://www.fairmormon.org/answers/Countercult_ministries/Tower_to_Truth_Ministries/50_Questions_to_Ask_Mormons/Questions_About_LDS_Prophets#Response_to_claim:.))
221. Why does the Mormon church still teach that Joseph Smith was a true prophete

t of God after he made a false prophecy about a temple built in Missouri in his generation.22)

Even today it seems, that even though they may have missed the due date, the Church still seems committed to fulfill this commandment as it continues to buy up land in Independence, Missouri so they can finally build a temple there. It is only a matter of time when it is announced over the pulpit.

“The temple lot is in the western portion of the city of Independence. It is one of the highest points in the area, overlooking the metropolis of Kansas City, Missouri, about 9 miles (14 kilometers) to the west. People who visit the Independence Visitors’ Center can see the lot when they exit through the front doors. It lies immediately to the northwest.

“On January 2, 1831, several months before revealing the location for the temple, the Lord said that He would give His people “a land of promise.” He declared, “I will give it unto you for the land of your inheritance, if you seek it with all your hearts. And this shall be my covenant with you” (D&C 38:18–20). On June 6, 1831, the Lord commanded Joseph Smith and others to preach the gospel in the state of Missouri and to prepare for a conference there. He promised that if they would be faithful, “the land of [their] inheritance” would “be made known unto them” (D&C 52:5).

“As Joseph and his fellow servants journeyed in Missouri, they were anxious to learn of this promised land. Joseph expressed their hope: “When will the wilderness blossom as the rose; when will Zion be built up in her glory, and where will thy Temple stand unto which all nations shall come in the last days?”¹

“On July 20, 1831, the Lord revealed His answer to Joseph:

“Hearken, O ye elders of my church, saith the Lord your God, who have assembled yourselves together, according to my commandments, in this land, which is the land of Missouri, which is the land which I have appointed and consecrated for the gathering of the saints.

“Wherefore, this is the land of promise, and the place for the city of Zion.

“And thus saith the Lord your God, if you will receive wisdom here is wisdom. Behold, the place which is now called Independence is the center place; and a spot for the temple is lying westward, upon a lot which is not far from the courthouse” (D&C 57:1–3).

<https://history.churchofjesuschrist.org/article/historic-sites/missouri/questions-and-answers-about-the-temple-lot-in-independence-missouri?lang=eng>

It is important to remember that just because a prophecy stands “unfulfilled” that does not mean that it is a false prophecy. The prophecy is still a prophecy which has yet to come to pass. It is also important to not misinterpret a prophecy and be sure that we are reading it the way the Lord intended us to read it.

2. Since the time when Brigham Young taught that both the moon and the sun were inhabited by people, has the Mormon Church ever found scientific evidence of that to be true (Journal of Discourses, 1870, v.13, p.271)?



Nope, probably because we've never even considered looking for scientific evidence for this. We don't have a Mormon NASA. We don't accept this as pure doctrine; neither will we ever take this. We also don't know if Brigham Young had the chance to correct what was written as the Journal of Discourses was never an official

publication of the Church.

This was not a prophecy but a man's personal opinion based the science of the day. The Church has wholly embraced the scientific evidence that shows that the moon and sun are not inhabited:

1856

Desert News noted:

“Proof that the Moon is not Inhabited.

“Dr. Scoresby, in an account that he has given of some recent observations made with the Earl of Rosse's telescope, says: ‘With respect to the moon, every object on its surface of 100

feet was distinctly to be seen; and he had no doubt that, under very favorable circumstances, it would be so with objects 60 feet in height.... But no vestiges of architecture remain to show that the moon, is, or ever was, inhabited by a race of mortals similar to ourselves..... There was no water visible....”

1880

“As there is no air nor water on the moon, but very few changes can take place upon its surface. There can be no vegetation and no animals, and although many astronomers have brought their imaginations to bear upon this subject, and have given us descriptions of the beautiful scenery upon its surface, and have even peopled it with inhabitants, we have every reason to believe that it is as barren and lifeless as an arid rock.”

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints is one of the most scientifically inclined churches out there. We embrace all truth, be it from science or the scriptures. Some Apostles, like David O. McKay, have been very open to such ideas like the theory of evolution. Even despite many Apostles, like Bruce R. McConkie, being very much against such theories. Ultimately, the Church has no official stance on anything that comes out of the scientific community and encourages its members to have their own opinions on these matters.

“The idea that the religion of Christ is one thing, and science is another, is a mistaken idea, for there is no true religion without true science, and consequently there is no true science without true religion.” - BRIGHAM YOUNG, 1874

“In these respects we differ from the Christian world, for our religion will not clash with or contradict the facts of science in any particular. ... [W] hether the Lord found the earth empty and void, whether he made it out of nothing or out of the rude elements; or whether he made it in six days or in as many millions of years, is and will remain a matter of speculation in the minds of men unless he give revelation on the subject.” - BRIGHAM YOUNG, 1971

“Whether the mortal bodies of man evolved in natural processes to present perfection, through the direction and power of God; whether the first parents of our generations, Adam and Eve, were transplanted from another sphere, with immortal tabernacles, which became corrupted through sin and the partaking of natural foods, in the process of time; whether they were born here in mortality, as other mortals have been, are questions not fully answered in the revealed word of God.” (Improvement Era, August, 1908, 778.)

The Church is more concerned with the “Why” of things and allows science to explain the “How” of things. We do not accept the conspiracy theory that Stanley Kubrick directed the moon landing in a Hollywood studio. Neither do we conform with flat-earthers or other societies which posit crazy untested ideas which have not been verified by the mainstream scientific community. If Neal DeGrasse Tyson says something about science, then we most likely will agree with him or won’t bother to argue with him.

It very much seems that the science of Brigham Young’s time was very much interested in the idea that the sun and moon were inhabited. So I guess Brigham Young may have just accepted it as the science of the day.

William Herschel—the preeminent astronomer of his generation and the man to discover Uranus—was also firmly of the belief that the sun was inhabited. One author wrote: “Herschel was not a raving amateur. A gifted astronomer, he discovered Uranus, and was the first to realize that sunlight included infrared light as well as visible light. His sister, Caroline, became famous in her own right for discovering comets, so he did not lack for intelligent conversation. He just had his own theories. Herschel believed that life existed on every celestial body in the universe. He was aware that the sun people saw was too hot to support life. He just assumed there was something underneath that burning atmosphere. When he observed sunspots, he believed that they were openings in the atmosphere, or perhaps mountains, and that if people could get a close look at the planet beneath, they would be able to spot signs of life. Herschel was not alone in his beliefs - as more information on the sun turned up, astronomers speculated on how it would affect life on the surface of the sun, and what kind of life might survive in those environments.” Even old movies, like "A Trip to the Moon", were once very interested in the idea of there being life on the moon.

FairMormon wrote:

“Brigham Young taught that the moon and sun were inhabited,

“So it is with regard to the inhabitants of the sun. Do you think it is inhabited? I rather think it is. Do you think there is any life there? No question of it; it was not made in vain.

“Brigham is clearly expressing an opinion, and there is no evidence that he is making a prophetic declaration concerning extraterrestrials. He even goes out of his way to indicate

that this is what he "rather think[s]," and asks his congregation to consider what they think. He also says that he would want to know if an idea he has is false—even including his religion. These are not the sentiments of a man convinced he must be right by divine gift of prophetic omniscience.

“It is particularly ironic that Brigham's remarks were focused on the fact that no one knows much about anything, and so humility is appropriate on most questions. Critics have taken this wise stance, and have tried to invert Brigham's intent—changing him from an advocate of humility before the unknown into a doctrinaire know-nothing who is certain of absurdities. The critics might do well do follow Brigham's example.”

[\(https://www.fairmormon.org/answers/](https://www.fairmormon.org/answers/)

Question: Did Brigham Young actually teach that the sun and the moon were inhabited %3F)

Now you might suggest that he, being a prophet, should know his astronomy. You might point to how Abraham learned astronomy from God (Abraham 3), and Moses was shown many galaxies and every person who should live upon the earth (Moses 1). But some Bible verses make me doubt that prophets knew everything there is to know about astronomy. Some, it seems, believed in an earth-centered solar system as expressed by Joshua when he says the sun stood still instead of saying the earth stood still (Joshua 10:12-13), 1 Chronicles 16:30 and Psalms 93:1 seem to suggest something similar. Fortunately, we have the Book of Mormon to correct this astronomy problem (Helaman 12:14-15).

You can also take some Bible passages to say that the Earth is flat (Isaiah 40:22, Proverbs 8:27, Job 38:13-14, Job 38:4-5). And many more Bible passages can be shown to be scientifically inaccurate as they represent the science of the time that they were written in a way that the people of the time could better understand the gospel and power of God.

[\(https://www.flatearthdoctrine.com/flat-earth-scriptures/\)](https://www.flatearthdoctrine.com/flat-earth-scriptures/)

It is not healthy to look at the Bible for science, only for faith and religion. At the end of the day, I don't care if Brigham Young taught that the moon and sun were inhabited or not. Joseph Smith, likewise, showed great interest in the idea that the moon and sun were inhabited by people like us. Though despite this, in his official revelations as found in the Doctrine and Covenants, Joseph somehow showed ideas which can be directly correlated

with true scientific principles which were largely unfamiliar at the time. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B6c1jqi4Rw4>) Well done thou poor, uneducated farm boy.

3. Why did Brigham Young teach that Adam is “our Father and our God” when both the Bible and the Book of Mormon (Mormon 9:12) say that Adam is a creation of God (Journal of Discourses, Apr. 9, 1852, vol.1, p.50)?

Oh Journal of Discourses, what are we going to do with thee?



Here is what we do know about the theory. Actually it's not really a theory, it's more of a hypothesis. The hypothesis only came from Brigham Young and was not taught by anyone else. It never became an official doctrine of the church and is expressed solely as Brigham's opinion as mere speculation. Despite Brigham supposedly teaching it at the temple veil, the theory didn't become a mainstream point of doctrine. Brigham Young did not attempt to develop his theory into something compatible with the already existing doctrine of the church. None of the apostles of the time

adopted this theory, and so it remains a theory and is an anomaly.

In his book, *Are Mormons Christians?*, BYU professor Stephen Robinson gives this response:

“Yet another way in which anti-Mormon critics often misrepresent LDS doctrine is in the presentation of anomalies as though they were the doctrine of the Church. Anomalies occur in every field of human endeavor, even in science. An anomaly is something unexpected that cannot be explained by the existing laws or theories, but which does not constitute evidence for changing the laws and theories. An anomaly is a glitch.

“For example, if a chemist combines two parts hydrogen and one part oxygen a hundred times in a row, and ninety-nine times she gets water but on the hundredth time she gets alcohol, this does not mean that one percent of the time the laws of chemistry are different. It simply means that something was wrong with the hundredth experiment, even though the experimenter may not know what it was. Beakers may have been mislabelled; grad students may have been playing a practical joke; instruments might have given incorrect readings; secretaries might have typed the wrong information. If the anomaly could be reproduced experimentally, then it would be significant and would demand a change in the theories. But if it can’t be reproduced, it is simply ignored—as an anomaly. It is assumed that some unknown factor was different in the case of the anomalous results, and the experiment yielding those results is therefore invalid. Moreover, to ignore such anomalies is not considered dishonesty, but represents sound scientific method...

"A classic example of an anomaly in the LDS tradition is the so-called “Adam-God theory.” During the latter half of the nineteenth century Brigham Young made some remarks about the relationship between Adam and God that the Latter-day Saints have never been able to understand. The reported statements conflict with LDS teachings before and after Brigham Young, as well as with statements of President Young himself during the same period of time. So how do Latter-day Saints deal with the phenomenon? We don’t; we simply set it aside. It is an anomaly. On occasion my colleagues and I at Brigham Young University have tried to figure out what Brigham Young might have actually said and what it might have meant, but the attempts have always failed. The reported statements simply do not compute –we cannot make sense out of them. This is not a matter of believing it or disbelieving it; we simply don’t know what “it” is. If Brigham Young were here we could ask him what he actually said and what he meant by it, but he is not here, and even expert students of his thought are left to wonder whether he was misquoted, whether he meant to say one thing and actually said another, whether he was somehow joking with or testing the Saints, or whether some vital element that would make sense out of the reports has been omitted.

“For the Latter-day Saints, however, the point is moot, since whatever Brigham Young said, true or false, was never presented to the Church for a sustaining vote. It was not then and is not now a doctrine of the Church, and—like the chemist who can neither explain nor reproduce her results—the Church has merely set the phenomenon aside as an anomaly.”

FairMormon gives this response:

"The problem with "Adam-God" is that we don't understand what Brigham meant. All of his statements cannot be reconciled with each other. In any case, Latter-day Saints are not inerrantists—they believe prophets can have their own opinions. Only the united voice of the First Presidency and the Twelve can establish official LDS doctrine. That never happened with any variety of "Adam-God" doctrine. Since Brigham seemed to also agree with statements like Mormon 9:12, and the Biblical record, it seems likely that we do not entirely understand how he fit all of these ideas together."

Brigham Young also taught in a 1870 sermon:

"The world may in vain ask the question: "Who are we?" But the Gospel tells us that we are the sons and daughters of that God who we serve. Some say, "We are the children of Adam and Eve." So we are, and they are the children of our Heavenly Father. We are all the children of Adam and Eve, and they and we are the offspring of Him who dwells in the heavens, the highest Intelligence that dwells anywhere that we have any knowledge of (JD 13:311).

"Yes, President Young did teach that Adam was the father of our spirits. This, however, is not true. He expressed views that are out of harmony with the gospel. But, be it known, Brigham Young also taught accurately and correctly, the status and position of Adam in the eternal scheme of things. What I am saying is that Brigham Young, contradicted Brigham Young, and the issue becomes one of which Brigham Young we will believe. The answer is we will believe the expressions that accord with the teachings in the Standard Works."
(Elder Bruce R. McConkie, letter to Eugene England, Feb 19, 1981)

We also need to consider the following before accusing Latter-Day Saints of believing in this false doctrine:

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HWYQVwzEGm8>)

- When taken in context, the whole point of Young's 1852 sermon seems to be to contrast views of the Holy Ghost fathering Jesus vs. God the Father. In the sermon he indicates Eloheim is God the Father.**
- In numerous places, Young states that Adam is Michael, not Eloheim.**

- The statement that Adam is our god is consistent when viewed in a “chain of command” context. There are numerous statements by both Young and Smith to the effect that Adam presides over the spirits of all men.
- In numerous places Young refers to the Father as a separate being from Michael.
- In numerous places, Adam is referred to as having “sinned”.
- In many places, Young says that Jesus was begotten by his Father in Heaven
- In many places Young refers to Adam as being distinct from the Lord (having received commandments from the Lord, etc.), and in many places Young equates the Lord with our Father in heaven.
- In the hundreds and hundreds of pages of Young’s sermons, only a handful of them have reference to his supposed view of Adam as God the Father; conversely there are plenty of references to the traditional view of Adam.
- In at least one case, Young is crystal clear about distinguishing between the Father of Jesus and Adam: (JD vol.1, p.238, Brigham Young. July 24, 1853) “I believe the Father came down in his tabernacle and begat Jesus Christ. ... the Bible declares He [the Father] has a corporeal body; that in His likeness, precisely, He created Adam.”
- In another case, Young says Adam “walked and talked with and knew the God of heaven.”
- In many other cases, Michael is called an “archangel”, and is clearly distinguished from the Father and the Son.
- Young calls Eloheim, “God our heavenly father.”
- Adam is included in lists of the prophets (i. e., along with Enoch, Noah, etc.) clearly equating Adam’s role in history

I think overall; we really have no idea what Brigham meant by this teaching. We call it an anomaly and move along. Some suggest that Brigham was using the name “Adam” as a title for God the Father similar to how Paul called Jesus the last Adam (1 Corinthians 15:45). I am in favor of this theory.

Elder Bruce R. McConkie taught:

“There are those who believe or say they believe that Adam is our father and our god, that he is the father of our spirits and our bodies, and that he is the one we worship.

“The devil keeps this heresy alive as a means of obtaining converts to cultism. It is contrary to the whole plan of salvation set forth in the scriptures, anyone who has read the Book of Moses, and anyone who has received the temple endowment, and yet believes the Adam/God theory does not deserve to be saved. Those ensnared by it reject the living prophet and close their ears to the apostles of their day. “We will follow those who went before,” they say. And having so determined, they soon are ready to enter polygamous relationships which destroy their souls.

“We worship the Father, in the name of the Son, by the power of the Holy Ghost; and Adam is their foremost servant, by whom the peopling of our planet commenced.”

(<https://speeches.byu.edu/talks/bruce-r-mcconkie/seven-deadly-heresies/>)

4. If Brigham Young was a true prophet, how come one of your later prophets overturned his declaration which stated that the black man could never hold the priesthood in the LDS Church until after the resurrection of all other races (Journal of Discourses, Dec. 12, 1854, 2:142-143)? LaJean Carruth translated hundreds of sermons from the original shorthand used for the Journal of Discourses and other early sermons. This is what she had to say concerning the character of Brigham Young and the priesthood ban while being interviewed by Laura Hales:

Laura Hales: ... I think Brigham has been an enigma, and someone who’s been hard to grasp and understand for a lot of members, but that has intensified in recent years, especially with the release of the Gospel Topics essay on race and the priesthood and temple ban. There’s been a lot of confusion about when the ban started. Was it conference? Was it having something to do with the legislature? Were they related? You and Paul Reeve and Christopher Rich gave a presentation at that San Antonio MHA conference about this topic, where you revealed some incredible research. I love what you’ve done with the Journal of Discourses, but I think most listeners would be extremely interested in what you are doing with this research.

LaJean Carruth: We don't know when the priesthood ban began. The first recorded public statement of the priesthood ban was in the 1852 Utah Territorial legislature. From the comments that came right afterwards, it's very apparent that people knew about this. This wasn't new at the time. This is a complex situation that Paul Reeve discusses very well in his book *Religion of a Different Color*, but University of Utah history professor Paul Reeve and attorney Christopher Rich and I are working on a book on this priesthood ban and the territorial legislature.

Utah was admitted as a territory as part of the 1850 Compromise. It was admitted as a slave territory. That means that slavery was allowed in the territory of Utah. Some Southern Mormons came into the territory with a few slaves, and it became necessary for



the legislature to enact legislation to control slavery. This is a very lengthy, complex situation that the attorney and the historian can give the background better than I.

Where I come in is the shorthand.

George Watt recorded much of these debates on slavery in shorthand.

Brigham Young gave a speech in the legislature on February 5, 1852, on slavery and on the priesthood ban.

There was one other statement regarding the priesthood ban a few days earlier in the legislature. Somehow in history, this speech was misdated as January 5, 1852. It is the most requested item I had over the years. "Do you have Brigham Young's speech of January 5, 1852?" I would examine my notes, get out the originals again, go through

everything I had. I had no notes for Brigham Young for January 5, 1852.

Then Paul Reeve asked me, “Do you have notes for February 5, 1852?” Yes. I transcribed all of the shorthand for the debate on slavery. This was Indian and African slavery. Paul Reeve and Christopher Rich are bringing a legal and historical background to this. Two items are of great importance here. The first is Watt’s longhand transcript, inaccurate though it may be is extant, but because the speech was incorrectly dated as January 5, historians hadn’t found it. The shorthand was unknown and untranscribed besides Watt’s longhand transcript of Brigham Young’s speech.

Wilford Woodruff recorded Brigham Young’s speech in his journal at the beginning of 1852, notes only, partial notes. They are undated and in my opinion copied from elsewhere. Wilford Woodruff recorded Brigham Young as saying that any man with one drop of African blood could not hold the priesthood. This document was known. It was the cited document. It was used in ecclesiastical judgments. This document was the one known source for what Brigham Young had actually said. Unfortunately, Wilford Woodruff took the social construct of one drop that was used to legally determine who was African in the Southern states. If you had one drop of African blood, as long as it came through the maternal line, you were considered an African. Somehow, his memory put this into Brigham Young’s sermon.

George D. Watt’s notes of Brigham Young’s speech do not contain the words “one drop.” I have searched my shorthand records and Van Wagoner’s compilation of all published manuscript accounts of Brigham Young’s speeches. This phrase is not there. Brigham Young did not say it, but the record we had included it. The clarification of Brigham Young’s words are of vast importance to us.

Also, when this speech was dated as January 5, people understood that Brigham Young was telling the legislature what to do. Actually, the legislation was passed and signed by Brigham Young on the 4th of January. Then he came into the legislature on the 5th, the day after. The legislature asked him to give his views on slavery, and he did.

Laura Hales: What was most impressive to me from your presentation ... You gave both Brigham Young’s speech and Orson Pratt’s speech. Orson Pratt was an original sort of guy himself, prone to speculation, but of everything that I’ve read of Orson Pratt, this is the most eloquent thing I had ever heard. As I was sitting in the audience listening to you read the speech by Orson Pratt, I wished I knew shorthand. I had taken a semester in high school and I think I got up to 15 words a minute. I was horrible, but luckily a copy of your

speech is available online for free at the MHA website. I will put a link to that in our show notes. Could you share just some highlights from what Orson Pratt said?

LaJean Carruth: Orson Pratt gave a vehement anti-slavery speech. This speech is one of my favorite finds in all my shorthand transcription work. He said, and I quote, “Shall we assume the right without the voice of the Lord speaking to us and commanding us to allow slavery into our territory?” One of my favorite passages, again quote, “For us to bind the African because he is different from us in color is enough to cause the angels in heaven to blush.”

Laura Hales: I also liked the line, “The Almighty cursed Cain,” Pratt said, “but did not authorize man to carry out His curse; neither did He authorize the buying and selling of the African race.” That just goes again to how much he abhorred slavery. This was a real debate. This wasn’t a show that they put on where they just sat there and listened to whatever Brigham Young said. It was back and forth. That’s what they did in those days. They sometimes did it over the pulpit, too.

LaJean Carruth: Again, Brigham Young’s comments on slavery on February 5, 1852, were given after the passage of this legislature. There was heated debate in the legislature about what should be and what should not be in the bill. The actual bill is a bill of gradual emancipation. Orson Pratt said, “If the almighty curses a race or a people, but does not authorize someone to carry out the curse, and they carry out the curse, they will be under condemnation by the almighty. The almighty did not authorize enslaving the African race.” He was vehemently opposed to it.

Laura Hales: LaJean, you’ve told me that Brigham made repeated comments about the ban.

LaJean Carruth: Brigham Young repeatedly said that any man of African heritage cannot hold the priesthood. He said it would be changed, but he always said, “I cannot change it.” He never explained why. He did not give a source for it. We don’t know the source for it, but he repeatedly said ... The word he always used is can. “I cannot change it.” Yet, he made it clear that the time would come when those of African descent would receive all the blessings.

Laura Hales: There’s a lot more we could talk about Brigham Young. There’s a lot more we need to learn about Brigham Young. We don’t have all of his words and sermons do we, LaJean?

LaJean Carruth: I have George Watt's shorthand for 235 Brigham Young sermons that are not in the Journal of Discourses. I have shorthand from other writers of Brigham Young's sermons. There is a tremendous amount said by Brigham Young that we do not have.

Laura Hales: In five sentences or less, sum up what you would like the listeners to take from your research that you have done on Brigham Young and shared with us today and in your other writings.

LaJean Carruth: Five long sentences.

Laura Hales: Okay.

LaJean Carruth: Brigham Young was absolutely, totally loyal to Joseph Smith. When asked about Joseph Smith, did he make a mistake? Did he ever disagree with him?

Brigham Young always said, "It was none of my business what he did. It was my business to obey him. Brigham Young was years ahead of himself, decades ahead of himself on how he handled children. He would preach against whipping children, which is very, very common in that time. He related once how he went down to family prayer and one of his children was in the chair where he was going to sit. The child expected a tussle, but he just quietly ignored the child and pulled up a different chair and sat down.

He spoke with great respect of his wives. He said that only twice had he gotten into his wives' personal belongings without permission when he needed something, and they were away. He showed respect for their personal property. Once he told an account of a wife that came to him asking advice on how to deal with a problem with a very young child, but before he said what he told her, he said, "Now, she is one of the best mothers in Israel." He made sure to praise her and approve her before he related what he told her to do with the problem with the child. Brigham Young taught on the same themes repeatedly. I think if a theme stood out, it would be, "If you were not one, you were not mine."

From day to day, day in, day out, year in, year out, Brigham Young taught to build Zion. Obey God. Keep the Commandments. Repent, forgive. Study the gospel. Pray individually and in your families. Be united. Be of one heart and one mind. Keep the Sabbath day. Pay your tithing. Store wheat. Be one. Pray. Be honest in all your dealings. Work. Take care of your families. Teach your children. Provide for your wives and children. Be one. Keep the commandments. Gather the poor. Help the poor. Live your religion. Stay out of debt. Don't swear. Don't steal. Teach your children correct principles. Take care of what

you have. Store wheat. Pray. Be one. Live your religion for this life as well as for the life to come. Build the temple. Follow council. Keep the covenants you have made. Care for your animals. Keep the Word of Wisdom. Forgive. Understand our humanness. Be kind. Be honest. Obey. Be faithful. Be one.

We're taught many of these things today. These are the doctrines that he taught day in and day out. What has been lost in the changes of Brigham Young's sermons is Brigham Young himself. By changing his words, George Watt changed the man as he was represented.

Brigham Young would make many statements about himself, saying, "I." George Watt would change the subject to "he, she, you, or they." We don't know much of what Brigham Young said about himself. He would act out while he preached. If he talked about weeping, he'd rub his eyes like he was weeping. Once he was talking about searching for something, and he was searching all of his pockets.

He was human. He had a temper. He hurt. He didn't understand why everybody didn't work as hard as he did to build Zion and for the common good. He didn't understand why the people didn't take care of themselves. He was very, very much interested in their living conditions. He said, "Other religions teach people how to die. We teach people how to live this life and then prepare for the life to come." We don't know Brigham Young. The man Brigham Young has been lost to us. As more of my transcriptions of what he actually said are released, people will come to know Brigham Young as he was. Human, yes, but a very, very, very good, caring, loving human being and totally dedicated to the Lord and to his service as a prophet of God and leader of the church.

[\(https://ldsperspectives.com/2017/02/15/in-brighams-words/\)](https://ldsperspectives.com/2017/02/15/in-brighams-words/)

According to LaJean Carruth (who is more intimate with the early sermons of the church than you or I) Brigham Young never said that the blacks would never get the priesthood. He said they would get the priesthood eventually when LaJean said of him: "Yet, he made it clear that the time would come when those of African descent would receive all the blessings."

We also get confirmation from LaJean that the Journal of Discourses is indeed unreliable in some places: "What has been lost in the changes of Brigham Young's sermons is Brigham Young himself. By changing his words, George Watt changed the man as he was represented. Brigham Young would make many statements about himself, saying, "I."

George Watt would change the subject to “he, she, you, or they.” We don’t know much of what Brigham Young said about himself.”

If you want a black man’s perspective on racism in the Church, then I encourage you to check out this video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NEnPSDTYJ_s

It has been said that the prophet would never be able to lead the church astray. If a prophet does lead the church astray then he would be struck down before he could do so. This implies that if the prophet decided that God was a lie then he would be struck down before he could open his mouth about it. If a prophet suddenly decided that the law of chastity was only optional and we could fornicate, commit adultery, and look at pornography all we wanted then he would surly be struck down before he could do or say any of that.

**“The Lord will never permit me or any other man who stands as President of this Church to lead you astray. It is not in the program. It is not in the mind of God. If I were to attempt that, the Lord would remove me out of my place, and so He will any other man who attempts to lead the children of men astray from the oracles of God and from their duty.”
– Pres. Wilford Woodruff, October 1890**

However that quote by Woodruff does not mean that God will be correcting the prophet on every single little detail. Just because a prophet says a false doctrine, if it is inconsequential then God will not strike him down. If God were to correct every error of a prophet then He would make the prophet to look like just a robot with out free will. Free will means having the capacity to make mistakes and then learn from those mistakes. That is what the Church has done. From that quote by Wilford Woodruff we learn that it was in the mind of God to place the priesthood ban and then remove it at a later time.

Members of the Church are NOT required to believe anything that the prophets have taught or do every single thing that the prophet says to do. Though it is wise to consider the counsel of the prophets especially when they promise certain blessings. We fully believe in a persons free will to make choices for themselves. It should be even as Joseph Smith taught: “I teach them correct principles, and they govern themselves.”

The issue of blacks and the priesthood really needs to be put to rest at this point.

We live in a time when all worthy men of all races can hold the priesthood and can perform the ordinances which were once denied to their ancestors in the temple, that's all that should matter. The fact is that the prophets have learned from their mistakes from the past and are now teaching the correct doctrine on the topic.

There are quotes that came from Joseph Smith concerning race which can be viewed as racist but these came from an earlier time in the Church when Joseph was still learning. Concerning one quote, it is likely that Joseph said this out of a desire to be a law abiding citizen and possibly feared that allowing blacks to enter the church may cause many to severely persecute the church.

Sure enough, on 29 June 1836 a mass meeting was held in the Clay County courthouse in Liberty to discuss objections to the Mormons remaining in the area. Some were concerned that the "crisis" would erupt into a civil war. Opponents gave five reasons for their objection to the Saints, one of them being that the Saints opposed slavery. (James B. Allen and Glen M. Leonard, *The Story of the Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1976), p. 105.)

The Book of Mormon is itself very clear on what the church's stance on slavery ought to be:

And the king said unto him: Yea, if the Lord saith unto us go, we will go down unto our brethren, and we will be their slaves until we repair unto them the many murders and sins which we have committed against them.

But Ammon said unto him: It is against the law of our brethren, which was established by my father, that there should be any slaves among them; therefore let us go down and rely upon the mercies of our brethren.

(Alma 27:8-9)

Here are latter accounts depicting Joseph Smith's attitude towards blacks:

March 1842, Joseph Smith writes the following in a letter on the subject of slavery, “I have just been perusing your correspondence with Doctor Dyer, on the subject of American slavery, and the students of the Quincy Mission Institute, and it makes my blood boil within me to reflect upon the injustice, cruelty, and oppression of the rulers of the people. When will these things cease to be, and the Constitution and the laws again bear rule? I fear for my beloved country mob violence, injustice and cruelty appear to be the darling attributes of Missouri, and no man taketh it to heart! O tempora! O mores! What think you should be done?”

Your friend,

JOSEPH SMITH

[History of the Church, 4:544]

Once, as the Mayor of Nauvoo, Illinois Joseph was told of a black man in Nauvoo named Anthony who had sold liquor on Sunday; which was a violation of the Nauvoo City Code. Mormon writer Mary Frost Adams tells us what happened:

“While he was acting as mayor of the city, a colored man named Anthony was arrested for selling liquor on Sunday, contrary to law. He pleaded that the reason he had done so was that he might raise the money to purchase the liberty of a dear child held as a slave in a Southern State. He had been able to purchase the liberty of himself and his wife and now wished to bring his little child to their new home. Joseph said, ‘I am sorry, Anthony, but the law must be observed and we will have to impose a fine.’ The next day Brother Joseph presented Anthony with a fine horse, directing him to sell it, and use the money obtained for the purchase of the child.” (Young Woman’s Journal, p.538)

(THE FOLLOWING IS NOT DOCUMENTED AND IS ONLY A RUMOR) The horse was Joseph’s prized white stallion, and was worth about \$500; a huge sum at the time. With the money from the sale, Anthony was able to purchase his child out of slavery.

There is the claim that Brigham Young said, “Had I anything to do with the negro, I would confine them by strict law to their own species, and put them on a national equalization.” However not only did Brigham Young not say this but many have taken this quote out of

context for it is as stated that Joseph Smith wanted the blacks to be on a “national equalization”.

Following up to this quote Joseph said on January 1843:

“At five went to Mr. Sollars’ with Elders Hyde and Richards. Elder Hyde inquired the situation of the negro. I replied, they came into the world slaves mentally and physically. Change their situation with the whites, and they would be like them. They have souls, and are subjects of salvation. Go into Cincinnati or any city, and find an educated negro, who rides in his carriage, and you will see a man who has risen by the powers of his own mind to his exalted state of respectability. The slaves in Washington are more refined than many in high places, and the black boys will take the shine of many of those they brush and wait on. “Elder Hyde remarked, ‘Put them on the level, and they will rise above me.’ I replied, if I raised you to be my equal, and then attempted to oppress you, would you not be indignant and try to rise above me, as did Oliver Cowdery, Peter Whitmer, and many others, who said I was a fallen Prophet, and they were capable of leading the people, although I never attempted to oppress them, but had always been lifting them up?”

[History of the Church, 5:217-218]

Whether the trial given to the black man was slavery or not, it was a trial that God knew they were strong enough to handle. It is in Africa where the Church is growing the most so there must be some very strong black men and women who can handle harsher conditions than the white man. It is almost like black people were sent by God to purify the seed of Cain so that his seed would not be seen as a simply evil family.

The Curse put upon the Lamanites and the seed of Cain is often seen as “the curse of the dark skin”. However it is not the skin color that was the curse but the curse was the loss of the spirit of God. When a person seeks God and finds Him then the curse is lifted and that person receives His spirit, the dark skin is then no more associated with being a curse. All though there are records of Lamanites becoming white after the curse was lifted it does not mean that dark skin is a terrible thing. The central purpose of the mark was to help the Nephites differentiate who was under the curse and who was not. Some Nephites did indeed receive the dark skin when they dishonored their priesthood and the spirit of God left them.

The mark is not always something that God places on people to show who is keeping covenants and who is not. Often times individuals will put the mark on themselves such as with the Amlicites (Alma Chapter 3) who put a mark upon themselves by smearing red on their foreheads. Likewise today we in the church are commanded to not get tattoos for the same reason but we do not discriminate against anyone who would and allow into the Church any person who desires to be united with God.

As to why Joseph Smith taught that we should breed the dark skin out of the Lamanites is beyond me but it is a practice that is not taught in the church today. So I won't get any further into the manner.

As for Brigham Young, the man has said many things that many have screwed out of context and they ended up leading themselves astray from the Church, such was the case with the supposed Adam-God theory.

He did say some seemingly pretty racy things at times, especially compared to today's standards. But his posterity thinks differently:

“Her ancestor was not “a racist or a bigot,” says Mary Ellen Elggren, chairwoman of the Brigham Young Family Association and a great-great-granddaughter of the famed Mormon leader.

There were practical reasons for the restrictions, says Elggren and other descendants, who point with pride to their ancestor's leadership, vision and vitality.

In the era of slavery, many churches split over the race issue, she says, which may have pushed Young to create racial distinctions to avoid schism and bloodshed.

“It is important for us to realize the [social and political] climate,” says Truman Clawson, a great-grandson of Young, “and what was taking place in the country.”

The successor to Mormon founder Joseph Smith had seen his people driven out of their homes in Missouri and Illinois, had faced U.S. government assaults and endured persecution on every side.”

(<https://www.sltrib.com/religion/2018/06/10/brigham-young-may-have-started-the-priesthood-ban-on-blacks-but-he-was-no-racist-say-his-descendants-his-mission-was-to-save-the-church/>)

I think that this would go along with what Boyd K. Packer once taught:

“As a young seminary teacher, I learned a valuable lesson from our principal, Able S. Rich. He told me, “If you really want to know what a man is, and what he believes, do not go to his enemies. Go to the man himself or to his friends. He does not confide the thoughts of his heart to his enemies. His friends know him best; they know his strengths and his weaknesses. They will represent him fairly. His enemies will misrepresent him.”

The doctrine I wish to discuss concerns the nature of man and of God.”

(<https://www.lds.org/general-conference/1984/10/the-pattern-of-our-parentage?lang=eng>)

I did on one occasion find Brigham Young as saying, as recorded by Wilford Woodruff:

“Lorenzo Young asked if the Spirits of Negroes were Nutral in Heaven. He said someone said Joseph Smith said they were. President Young said No they were not. There was No Nutral spirits in Heaven at the time of the Rebellion. All took sides. He said if any one said that He Herd the Prophet Joseph Say that the spirits of the Blacks were Nutral in Heaven He would not Believe them for He herd Joseph Say to the Contrary. All spirits are pure that Come from the presence of God. The posterity of Cane are Black Because He Commit Murder. He killed Abel & God set a Mark upon his posterity But the spirits are pure that Enter their tabernacles & there will be a Chance for the redemption of all the Children of Adam Except the Sons of perdition. “ (Wilford Woodruff, Wilford Woodruff’s Journal, 9 vols., ed., Scott G. Kenny (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1985), 6:511 (journal entry dated 25 December 1869). ISBN 0941214133.)

Sons of Perdition being those who see God’s face and then still say that He doesn’t exist, such was the case with Cain. So Joseph Smith could have easily become one of those if he wasn’t careful.

“I believe in the example that was set by the illustrious father of our country. On one occasion, it is told of him, as he was passing along with some of his aides, dressed in his uniform as general of the armies of the United States, that he met a colored man. The colored man, most reverently and courteously took off his hat and made a low bow to the general. The general took off his hat and bowed as courteously to the colored man. His associate generals remonstrated with him. They said, “General, it is beneath Your dignity

to bow to a negro.” General Washington turned to them and said, “Gentlemen, I cannot afford to have a negro outdo me in courtesy,” So it would be well for us as Latter-day Saints, and as the children of the Latter-day Saints, and as the teachers of the children of this people, to teach courtesy and respect toward all mankind, and implant kindness in the hearts of our children towards the unfortunate especially.”

[President Joseph F. Smith, Conference Report, April 1905, Deseret Sunday School Union, pg. 97.)

In the Millennial Star, February 15, 1851, Elder Orson Hyde taught:

“We feel it to be our duty to define our position in relation to the subject of slavery. There are several in the Valley of the Salt Lake from the Southern States, who have their slaves with them. There is no law in Utah to authorize slavery, neither any to prohibit it. If the slave is disposed to leave his master, no power exist there, either legal or moral, that will prevent him. But if the slave chooses to remain with his master, none are allowed to interfere between the master and the slave. All the slaves that are there appear to be perfectly contented and satisfied.

“When a man in the Southern states embraces our faith, the Church says to him, if your slaves wish to remain with you, and to go with you, put them not away; but if they choose to leave you, or are not satisfied to remain with you, it is for you to sell them, or let them go free, as your own conscience may direct you. The Church, on this point, assumes not the responsibility to direct. The laws of the land recognize slavery, we do not wish to oppose the laws of the country. If there is sin in selling a slave, let the individual who sells him bear that sin, and not the Church. Wisdom and prudence dictate to us, this position, and we trust our position will henceforth be understood.

“Our counsel to all our ministers in the North and South is; to avoid contention upon the subject, and to oppose no institution which the laws of the country authorize; but to labor to bring men into the Church and Kingdom of God, and and teach them to do right, and honor their God in His creatures.”

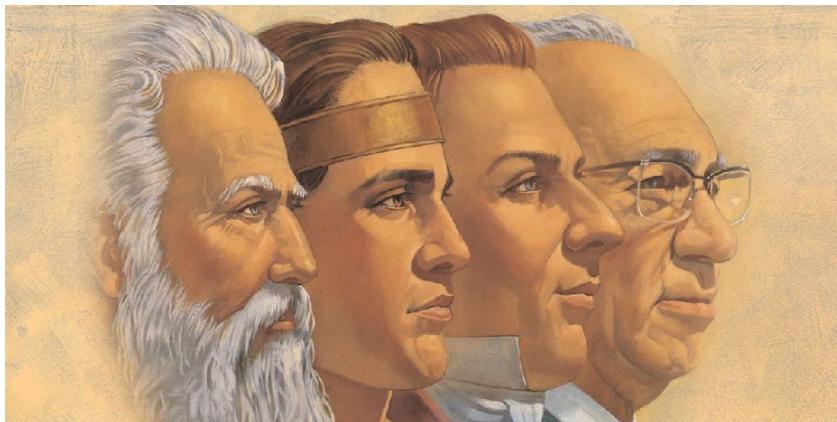
Basically, if the slaves wanted to stay with the masters then that was their choice and no one would hold it against them. It is all about free will, if a slave did not want to stay with

his master then he was free to go. Ultimately it was the slave's decision whether he wanted to stay or go.

In any case it is most important to remember this declaration by the Book of Mormon:

“... for he doeth that which is good among the children of men; and he doeth nothing save it be plain unto the children of men; and he ^ainviteth them ^ball to ^ccome unto him and partake of his goodness; and he ^ddenieth none that come unto him, black and white, ^ebond and free, male and female; and he remembereth the ^fheathen; and all are alike unto God, both Jew and Gentile.” (2 Nephi 26:33)

5. Since the Bible's test to determine whether someone is a true prophet of God is 100% accuracy in all his prophecies (Deuteronomy 18:20-22), has the LDS Church ever reconsidered its teaching that Joseph Smith and Brigham Young were true prophets?



You seem to be under the impression that a prophet must be completely perfect in every way. The impression that he must know all things and be all good without any opinions or biases of his own. Even Peter and Paul had opinions and biases of

their own. It is Jesus Christ alone who lived a 100% perfect life without any opinions or biases. He remained true to the truth through and through going about doing the will of his Father. God is all-knowing and hence is all-powerful, not his apostles and prophets. Prophets and apostles are human and so are subject to human error.

FairMormon gives this response:

“Deuteronomy doesn't exactly say that one mistake makes a false prophet. James L. Mays, editor of *Harper's Bible Commentary* writes:

“Prophecy in the names of other gods is easily rejected, but false prophecy in God's name is a more serious matter. This dilemma requires the application of a pragmatic criterion that, although clearly useless for judgments on individual oracles, is certainly a way to evaluate a prophet's overall performance.

“The problem with applying Deut. 18:22 to a single, individual prophecy is that some prophecies can be fulfilled in complex ways or at times much later than anticipated by the hearers. As one conservative Bible commentator noted:

*"As far as external considerations were involved, therefore, there would appear to have been [in Old Testament times] virtually no means of differentiating the true from the false prophet....While the popular view current in the seventh century B.C. distinguished a true prophet from a false one on the basis of whether their predictions were fulfilled or not, this attitude merely constituted an inversion of the situation as it ultimately emerged, and not an absolute criterion of truth or falsity as such. As Albright has pointed out, the fulfilment of prophecies was only one important element in the validation of a genuine prophet, and in some instances was not even considered to be an essential ingredient, as illustrated by the apparent failure of the utterances of Haggai [Haggai 2:21] against the Persian empire.R.K. Harrision, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1969); reprint edition by (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 2004), 755–756.*

...

“Many Bible prophets would not survive the critics' hostile application of Deuteronomy 18 as Jewish and Christian commentators have long realized. The reading which the critics wish to apply to modern day prophets does not match how scholars of Judaism have understood Deuteronomy in its Old Testament context.

“Wrote one author:

"The true prophet, as intercessor, was ready to risk a confrontation with God, in contrast to his counterpart, the false prophet. The problem of distinguishing between them was indeed perplexing, as shown by two separate passages in Deuteronomy...The answer given is that if the 'oracle does not come true, that oracle was not spoken by the Lord; the prophet uttered it presumptuously.' This, however, cannot serve as an infallible criterion, because there are several occasions when an oracle delivered by a true prophet did not materialize even in his own lifetime. Such unfulfilled prophecies include Jeremiah's prediction of the ignominious fate of Jehoiakim (Jeremiah 22:19), which was belied by 2 Kings 24:6, and Ezekiel's foretelling the

destruction of Tyre by Nebuchadnezzar (Ezekiel 26:7-21), which was later admitted to have failed but was to be compensated by the Babylonian king's attack on Egypt (Ezekiel 29:17-20)"

"We will see examples in the next section of biblical prophets who would be labeled as "false prophets" if the critics were consistent in their application of Deuteronomy.

"The Jewish Study Bible observed:

"Having established an Israelite model of prophecy, the law provides two criteria to distinguish true from false prophets. The first is that the prophet should speak exclusively on behalf of God, and report only God's words. Breach of that rule is a capital offense (Jeremiah 28:12-17.) The second criterion makes the fulfillment of a prophet's oracle the measure of its truth. That approach attempts to solve a critical problem: If two prophets each claim to speak on behalf of God yet make mutually exclusive claims- (1 Kings 22:6 versus 1 King 22:17; Jeremiah 27:8 versus Jeremiah 28:2)- how may one decide which prophet speaks the truth?

The solution offered is not free of difficulty. If a false prophet is distinguished by the failure of his oracle to come true, then making a decision in the present about which prophet to obey is impossible. Nor can this criterion easily be reconciled with Deuteronomy 13:3, which concedes that the oracles of false prophets might come true. Finally, the prophets frequently threatened judgment, hoping to bring about repentance (Jeremiah 7:, Jeremiah 26:1-6). If the prophet succeeds and the people repent and thereby avert doom (Jonah 3-4:), one would assume the prophet to be authentic, since he has accomplished God's goal of repentance. Yet according to thee criteria here (but contrast Jeremiah 28:9), the prophet who accomplished repentance is nonetheless a false prophet, since the judgment oracle that was proclaimed remains unfulfilled. These texts, with their questions and differences of opinion on such issues, reflect the vigorous debate that took place in Israel about prophecy."

...

Be careful in how you apply Deut. 18:22, for you threaten to reject some true prophets in the Bible! There are several examples in the Bible where a true prophet prophesied something which did not happen as he stated.

Jonah

Perhaps the clearest example is found in the story of Jonah, who was told by God to prophecy to the people of Nineveh. Jonah eventually did what he was told and prophesied the simple clear prophecy that the people would be destroyed in 40 days (Jonah 3:4). The time frame was clear and no loopholes were offered, just imminent doom. The scriptures

state explicitly, however, that the people repented of their sins and that God changed his mind, sparing the city.

Jonah was "displeased ... exceedingly" and "very angry" (Jonah 4:1) about God's decision, perhaps because it made Jonah look bad. In spite of what might look like an "incorrect" prophecy, and in spite of Jonah's obvious shortcomings, he was clearly a prophet of God, delivering the precise message that God had given him, but it was ultimately the conditional nature of prophecy that determined the outcome.

Ezekiel

The prophet Ezekiel provides another example of how true prophets may prophesy things that do not happen exactly as one might expect. In Ezekiel chapters 26, 27, and 28, we read that Tyre (a fortified island city) would be conquered, destroyed, and plundered by King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. The riches of Tyre, it was stated, would go to Babylon (Ezekiel 26:12). Nebuchadnezzar's army did lay siege to Tyre, and its inhabitants were afflicted, apparently so much that they shaved their heads bald, exactly as prophesied in Ezekiel 27:31. However, the 13-year Babylonian siege apparently was not quite as successful as Ezekiel had predicted, perhaps because the land-based tactics of Babylonian sieges were less effective against a fortified island city with significant maritime power. The result of the siege may have been a compromise or treaty rather than total destruction and plunder, for (Ezekiel 29:17-20) reports that the predicted plundering did not take place. Almost as if in compensation, the Lord now announces that He will give Egypt to the Babylonians, which is the theme of chapter 29 (Ezekiel 29:17-20):

17 And it came to pass in the seven and twentieth year, in the first month, in the first day of the month, the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

18 Son of man, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon caused his army to serve a great service against Tyrus: every head was made bald, and every shoulder was peeled: yet had he no wages, nor his army, for Tyrus, for the service that he had served against it:

19 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will give the land of Egypt unto Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon; and he shall take her multitude, and take her spoil, and take her prey; and it shall be the wages for his army.

20 I have given him the land of Egypt for his labour wherewith he served against it, because they wrought for me, saith the Lord GOD. (emphasis added)

Tyre is no more, but its complete destruction did not occur during the Babylonian siege, and the Babylonian army did not get the riches of Tyre as has been prophesied. It is Ezekiel himself who reports this "prophetic failure."[\[13\]](#)

The purpose in raising this example is not to question the wisdom of the Lord, nor the truthfulness of the Bible, but to point out that an overly critical attitude and a black-and-white application of Deut. 18:22 may reject even true, Biblical prophets. If we try hard enough to find reasons to reject a prophet, we will surely succeed, but we must beware lest we judge unwisely and reject those whom God has sent and anointed.

Jeremiah

Another example to consider is the prophet Jeremiah—a great and inspired prophet—who prophesied that king Zedekiah would "die in peace" ([Jeremiah 34:4-5](#)). Critics could argue that this prophecy did not prove to be true, for Zedekiah saw his sons killed by the conquering Babylonians and was himself blinded and put in prison, where he died in captivity—not in peace ([Jeremiah 52:10-11](#)). Of course, the point is that he would not be killed by the sword, but die of natural causes—albeit in prison—yet to the critics, it may look like a case of a false prophecy. This case is certainly less clear-cut than the prophecy of Ezekiel discussed above, yet also serves to warn us against harsh judgments.

Eli the Priest

In [1 Samuel 2:27-30](#) there is an extraordinary reversal of prophecy by the Lord himself. God had previously prophesied that Eli's family "should walk before me for ever" as his designated priests in Israel. There apparently were no explicitly stated conditions or stipulations for this prophecy. However, due to the wickedness of Eli and his sons that prophecy became void:

30 Wherefore the Lord God of Israel saith, "I said indeed that thy house, and the house of thy father, should walk before me for ever": but now the Lord saith, "Be it far from me; for them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed."

Nathan

Other examples include Nathan:

In [2 Samuel 7:5-17](#), we read that the prophet Nathan unequivocally prophesied to David that through his son Solomon the Davidic empire would be established "forever," that the children of Israel would dwell in the promised land "and move no more," and that the

"children of wickedness" would no longer afflict them. These things are quite clearly stated. No conditions are attached to these promises, none whatsoever.[14]

Yet this prophecy, interpreted literally, clearly did not prove successful. Again human sin or choice will affect whether God will choose to bless or punish a people. This is implicit in all such prophecies.

Samson

Finally, there are the words of the angel who spoke to Samson's mother:

In Judges 13:5, it is recounted that an angel promised Samson's mother that Samson would "begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines." No matter how liberal or expansive one wants to be with the facts of Israelite history (as recorded in the Bible or elsewhere), and while it is true that Samson at the end of his life did do some damage to the rulers of the Philistines, there is no way it can reasonably be concluded that Samson fulfilled this prophecy.

Not only did Samson fail to even "begin" to free Israel from the Philistines, but (1) there were times when he consorted with Philistine women, (2) he married a Philistine, (3) he himself never even led any Israelite troops against the Philistines, and (4) the Philistines eventually humiliated him.

Moreover, and most importantly, Israel actually lost ground to the Philistines during Samson's tenure. Judges 13-16 illustrates Philistine encroachment into Hebrew territory. The Samson narrative documents the eastward expansion of the Philistines by mentioning the Philistine presence in Timnah and Lehi, both in the strategic valley of Sorek (Achtemeier 1985:787-791). This Philistine expansion worsened the land shortage that eventually forced the Danites to migrate northward.

Of course, the nonfulfillment of Judges 13:5 can be attributed to Samson's failure to live according to his Nazarite calling. In addition to his sexual liaisons, he married a Philistine, ate unclean food, drank wine, and allowed his hair to be cut. Therefore, it could be said that the angel's prophecy was nullified by Samson's behavior. However, the angel placed absolutely no conditions on his promise that Samson would begin to deliver Israel from the Philistines. He simply declared that Samson would do so."

Ultimately, I prefer to stick to Jesus' simple and easy test of a true prophet, that by their fruits ye shall know them.

“The next page of the blueprint might read: “Fruits of Christ’s Church.” The Savior gave this test for truth: “By their fruits ye shall know them” (Matthew 7:20). What were the fruits of Christ’s Church as evidenced in the blueprint?

“One, those early Saints strove to be a healthy people. Paul taught that our physical bodies are “temples” that house our spirits and, therefore, are to be treated as holy: “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?” (1 Corinthians 3:16; see also 1 Corinthians 6:19). Because of this, the members of Christ’s Church had certain health laws they obeyed, such as certain restrictions on drinking wine, found in Ephesians 5 and 1 Timothy 3. In accordance with this divine law of treating our bodies like temples, Joseph Smith received a health law from the Lord for the members of Christ’s restored Church, known as the Word of Wisdom. As a result of living this health law, repeated studies have confirmed that members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are among the healthiest people in the world. This is one of the fruits of living Christ’s health law.

"A second fruit of Christ’s Church was its miracles and gifts of the Spirit. They are recorded on page after page in the New Testament. They were an evidence that the power of God existed in Christ’s Church (see Hebrews 2:4). But unfortunately, with the advent of the Apostasy, the miracles waned—historians readily acknowledged it, and reformers admitted it. Paul Johnson, a noted historian, observed, “It had been acknowledged at least since imperial times [meaning the time of Constantine] that ‘the age of miracles’ was over, in the sense that Christian leaders could no longer spread the gospel, like the apostles, with the aid of supernatural power.”5

“Why did the time come when there were no more miracles and gifts of the Spirit? Because the tree that bore the fruit, namely Christ’s Church, was no longer on the earth and the faith of the people diminished. John Wesley noted this absence of the gifts of the Spirit from the church in his day: “It does not appear that these extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost were common in the Church for more than two or three centuries.”6

“Suffice it to say, I can testify, like many of you, that this is a day of miracles and gifts of the Spirit in Christ’s restored Church, just as it was in His original Church.

“There is a third fruit—the blueprint of Christ’s Church records many accounts of angels and visions. Some people look with skepticism today at a church that claims angels and visions, but in so doing forget that angels and visions were a critical part of Christ’s

original Church: the angel announcing the birth of Christ to Mary; the angels coming to Peter, James, and John on the Mount of Transfiguration; the angel releasing Peter and John from prison; the angel speaking to Cornelius; the angel warning Paul of the impending shipwreck; the angel coming to John the Revelator; Stephen's vision of the Father and the Son; John's vision of the last days; and many more. The question should not be "How can The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints be the true Church with its alleged angels and visions?" Rather, the question should be "How can any church today claim to be Christ's true Church unless it has angels and visions—just as was the case in Christ's original Church, just as it is revealed in His blueprint?"

"There are many other fruits consistent with Christ's original Church:

"It was a missionary church—the Apostles being commanded to "go ye therefore, and teach all nations" (Matthew 28:19). Today we have over 80,000 missionaries fulfilling that command and bearing the fruit of doing so.

It was a moral church—the blueprint teaches us that the early Saints in Christ's Church were commanded to dress modestly and to refrain from premarital relations. How many churches not only teach those moral standards but also live them?

"Christ's original Church was a family-centered church. Husbands were commanded to love and be true to their wives (see Ephesians 5:23–25), children were commanded to obey their parents (see Ephesians 6:1), and bishops were commanded to rule well their own houses (see 1 Timothy 3:4–5). Today our Church, like Christ's original Church, is recognized as a family-centered church. The fruits of Christ's Church are carefully recorded in the Bible and match with Christ's restored Church today.

"Christ established His Church on earth, but the final page of the blueprint reveals it had a link to heaven—namely, "Divine Revelation." Without this link the Church would be no more than a man-driven organization governed by the powers of reason. The prophet Amos declared, "Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets" (Amos 3:7). Paul confirmed that revelation was an integral part of the Church and was meant to be ongoing, for he declared, "I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord" (2 Corinthians 12:1; see also Acts 1:2)."

(<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/broadcasts/article/ces-devotionals/2014/01/what-is-the-blueprint-of-christs-church?lang=eng>)

Yale Professor, Harold Bloom, considered by many as America's most distinguished literary critic, said:

“I do not find it possible to doubt that Joseph Smith was an authentic prophet. Where in all of American history can we find his match? ... I can only attribute his genius or daemon his uncanny recovery of elements in ancient Jewish theurgy that had ceased to be available either to normative Judaism or to Christianity, and that survived only in esoteric traditions unlikely to have touched Smith directly.... As an unbeliever, I marvel at his intuitive understanding of the permanent religious dilemmas of our country.” (The American Religion: The Emergence of the Post-Christian Nation (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992)

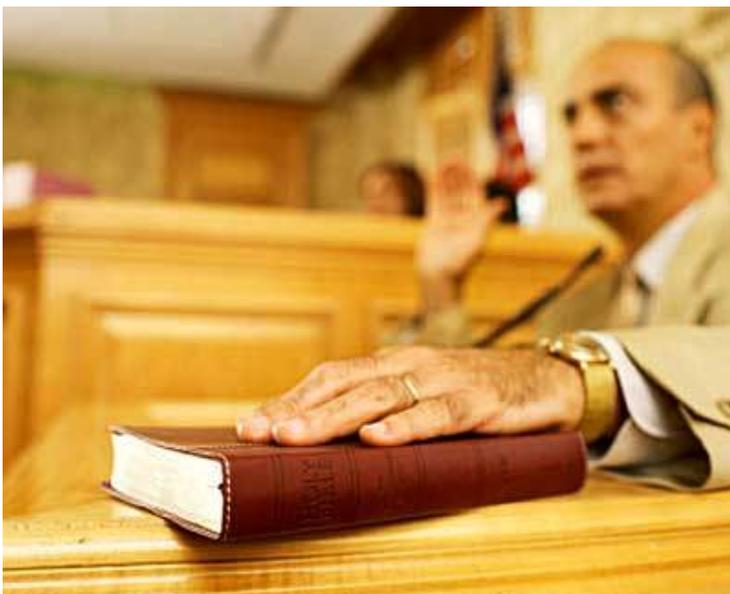
W. D. Davies, Professor of Theology at Duke University (and Congregationalist Minister) said:

“Mormonism is the Jewish-Christian tradition in American key. What it did was to re-Judaize a Christianity that had been too much Hellenized.” (W.D. Davies, “Israel, the Mormons and the Land)

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KwxO0TKP0tw&t=154s>)

Short answer: yeah I don't see the Church denouncing Joseph Smith or Brigham Young as prophets, seers, and revelators any time soon for the above reasons, sorry.

6. Since the current LDS prophets sometimes contradict the former ones, how do you decide which one is correct?



We decide the way it was been since biblical times, “ ... in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.” (Matthew 18:16) If one prophet teaches one thing, but no other apostle alongside him teaches the same then that teaching is subject to being his opinion only. The instructions and

decisions made by a prophet must come with the sustaining vote of the prophets councilors and the twelve apostles. For these reasons do we reject the Adam-God theory because Brigham only taught it without any sustaining vote by the other apostles. Neither was the theory presented as a revelation, no one carried on this teaching, and so we regard it as Brigham's theory and opinion only.

FairMormon wrote:

"Most "contradictions" are actually misunderstandings or misrepresentations of LDS doctrine and teachings by critics. The LDS standard for doctrine is the scriptures, and united statements of the First Presidency and the Twelve.

"The Saints believe they must be led by revelation, adapted to the circumstances in which they now find themselves. Noah was told to build an ark, but not all people required that message. Moses told them to put the Passover lamb's blood on their door; that was changed with the coming of Christ, etc.

"No member is expected to follow prophetic advice "just because the prophet said so." Each member is to receive his or her own revelatory witness from the Holy Ghost. We cannot be led astray in matters of importance if we always appeal to God for His direction.

...

"Some people hold inerrantist beliefs about scriptures or prophets, and assume that the LDS have similar views. This leads some to assume that prophets are infallible.

"Joseph Smith himself taught that 'a prophet was a prophet only when he was acting as such'. The Church has always taught that its leaders are human and subject to failings as are all mortals. Only Jesus was perfect, as explained in this statement from the First Presidency:

"The position is not assumed that the men of the New Dispensation —its prophets, apostles, presidencies, and other leaders—are without faults or infallible, rather they are treated as men of like passions with their fellow men."

"Lu Dalton, writing in the Church's periodical for women, explained:

"We consider God, and him alone, infallible; therefore his revealed word to us cannot be doubted, though we may be in doubt some times about the knowledge which we obtain from human sources, and occasionally be obliged to admit that something which we had considered to be a fact, was really only a theory."

Neil L. Andersen:

“A few question their faith when they find a statement made by a Church leader decades ago that seems incongruent with our doctrine. There is an important principle that governs the doctrine of the Church. The doctrine is taught by all 15 members of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve. It is not hidden in an obscure paragraph of one talk. True principles are taught frequently and by many. Our doctrine is not difficult to find.

"The leaders of the Church are honest but imperfect men. Remember the words of Moroni: “Condemn me not because of mine imperfection, neither my father ... ; but rather give thanks unto God that he hath made manifest unto you our imperfections, that ye may learn to be more wise than we have been” (Ether 12:6)."

(<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2012/10/trial-of-your-faith?lang=eng>)

“Elder John Taylor overheard someone ask the Prophet Joseph Smith how he could govern so many people so well. The Prophet replied, "I teach them correct principles and they govern themselves." “

(In "The Organization of the Church," Millennial Star, 15 Nov. 1851, p. 339)

7. Since there are several different contradictory accounts of Joseph Smith’s first vision, how did the LDS Church choose the correct one?

Brigham Young, Joseph Smith, and Solomon Spalding gathered around a table with the many first vision accounts and played Eeny, meeny, miny, moe. JK

I’m actually not sure what kind of answer you expect from me. I struggle to see what contradictions there are between the first vision accounts. So what if one account mentions angels and another does not, that’s not a contradiction that’s just missing details. It could have all still happened. A real contradiction is if one account said that Joseph was forgiven of his sins while another read that he was not. The only real contradiction that you can point out is Joseph’s age, which is different in the earliest account compared to the later



accounts. I see the earliest account of the first vision as evidence of Joseph's poor writing skills during the time of the Book of Mormon publication. Joseph Smith had never written anything before the Book of Mormon. To then suddenly produce the Book of Mormon, with all of its complex Hebrew and literary techniques, is just remarkable. Yet all you can do is complain about how the First Vision accounts aren't exactly word for word the same.

The online dictionary defines contradictions as: "a combination of statements, ideas, or features of a situation that are opposed to one another." There is nothing here that states that missing details is apart of contradictions.

President Gordon B. Hinkley said:

"I am not worried that the Prophet Joseph Smith gave a number of versions of the first vision anymore than I am worried that there are four different writers of the gospels in the New Testament, each with his own perceptions, each telling the events to meet his own purpose for writing at the time. I am more concerned with the fact that God has revealed in this dispensation a great and marvelous and beautiful plan that motivates men and women to love their Creator and their Redeemer, to appreciate and serve one another, to walk in faith on the road that leads to immortality and eternal life."

Jim Bennett, in his response to the CES Letter, made this observation:

“A contradiction would require two irreconcilable facts in two different accounts. This account [the 1832 account], for instance, says Joseph was 15, and the 1838 account says he was 14. That’s a contradiction. (Joseph’s incorrect age was later written in by Frederick G. Williams as a marginal note above Joseph’s handwriting in the 1832 account. There’s no reason to assume it’s anything other than an honest mistake. If you’re expecting infallibility in the 1832 account, you’re in serious trouble. The grammar alone in that thing is truly awful.)

“A person who visits his parents and later tells a friend, “I saw Mom yesterday” would not be contradicting themselves if they later told someone else, “I saw Dad yesterday.” Both things are true. Mom’s presence does not preclude Dad’s, and the Son’s presence does not preclude the presence of the Father.”

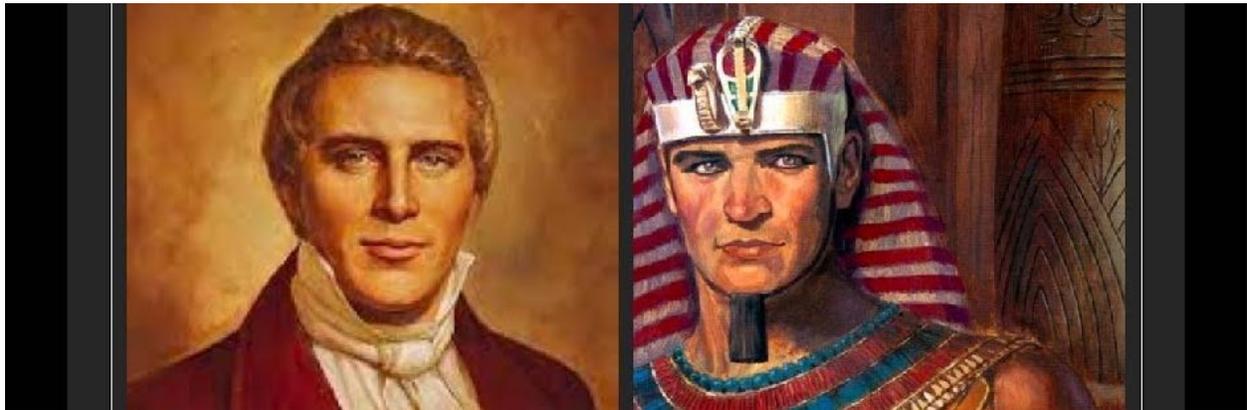
(<https://canonizer.com/files/reply.pdf>)

FairMormon gives this response:

“The First Vision accounts are not contradictory. No early member of the Church claimed that Joseph changed his story, or contradicted himself. Critics of the Church have not been familiar with the data on this point.”

([https://www.fairmormon.org/answers/Countercult_ministries/Tower to Truth Ministries/50 Questions to Ask Mormons/Questions About LDS Prophets#Response to claim: . 228. Can you show me in the Bible the LDS teaching that we must all stand before Joseph Smith on the Day of Judgment.3F.22](https://www.fairmormon.org/answers/Countercult_ministries/Tower_to_Truth_Ministries/50_Questions_to_Ask_Mormons/Questions_About_LDS_Prophets#Response_to_claim:_228._Can_you_show_me_in_the_Bible_the_LDS_teaching_that_we_must_all_stand_before_Joseph_Smith_on_the_Day_of_Judgment.3F.22))

8. Can you show me in the Bible the LDS teaching that we must all stand before Joseph Smith on the Day of Judgment?



I ... I ... I can't. Can you show me in LDS teachings that we must all stand before Joseph Smith on the Day of Judgement?

I probably can't show you this Bible scripture because of it not being official teaching in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. Seriously, what's your source for this? You can't even show me a source that claims we worship Joseph Smith in place of Christ, or that it was Joseph, not Christ, who died for our sins. We did not name our church "the Church of Joseph Smith", we named it "the Church of Jesus Christ".

Paul taught in 1 Corinthians chapter 1:

10 Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

11 For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you.

12 Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ.

13 Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?

Or for a modern audience, Paul would surely say:

"Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of [Martin Luther]; and I of [the baptist]; and I of Christ.

"Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?"

Likewise we say that we were not baptized in the name of Joseph Smith, neither was Joseph crucified for us, but we say that we were baptized in the name of Christ for he was crucified for us. Christ is not divided, so we do not name our church after Joseph but after Christ.

We are not of Joseph Smith but are of Christ. It is by Christ that we receive commandments and by none else.

And so Christ made this bold claim:

8 ... how be it ^amy ^bchurch save it be called in my name? For if a church be called in Moses' name then it be Moses' church; or if it be called in the name of a man then it be the church of a man; but if it be called in my name then it is my church, if it so be that they are built upon my gospel.

9 Verily I say unto you, that ye are built upon my gospel; therefore ye shall call whatsoever things ye do call, in my name; therefore if ye call upon the Father, for the church, if it be in my name the Father will hear you;

10 And if it so be that the church is built upon my gospel then will the Father show forth his own works in it.

11 But if it be not built upon my gospel, and is built upon the works of men, or upon the works of the devil, verily I say unto you they have joy in their works for a season, and by and by the end cometh, and they are ^ahewn down and cast into the ^bfire, from whence there is no return. (3 Nephi 27)

We did not choose to be called after an ordinance, or after a church office, or after a fallible human being. We chose to name ourselves after Christ, and this was the final decision by the early leaders of the Church and it shall never change.

FairMormon gives this response:

“This is a misunderstanding and caricature of LDS doctrine. There is, however, the Biblical doctrine that the apostles will help judge Israel:

"Ye [the apostles] are they which have continued with me in my temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. (Luke 22:28-30; see also Matthew 19:28)

“Since the saints believe in modern apostles, they believe that those modern apostles (including Joseph) will have a role in judgment appointed to them by Jesus.

“Those who condemn Joseph on these grounds must also condemn Peter and the rest of the Twelve.”

Wait, maybe you could be referring to Messiah ben Joseph: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mcvNwUVq4bE&t=21s>

Mormon Scripture

9. Can you show me archeological and historical proof from non-Mormon sources that prove that the peoples and places named in the Book of Mormon are true?



In order to disprove or prove the Book of Mormon, you can't merely look at it from an archeological point of view, it is all completely dependent on faith. From Wikipedia we read:

“Throughout this region, many hundreds of Maya sites have been documented in at least some form by archaeological surveys and

investigations, while the numbers of

smaller/uninvestigated (or unknown) sites are so numerous (one study has documented over 4,400 Maya sites) that no complete archaeological list has yet been made.”(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Maya_sites)

Non-Latter-Day Saint Archeologist Edwin Barnhart commented saying: “Less than one percent of Mesoamerica has been professionally surveyed.” (Barnhart and Liulevicius, Maya to Aztec, 325) So the odds that there are undiscovered steel or chariots or other things in Meso-America is about 98%. Keep in mind that a famous quote reads, "Absence

of evidence is not evidence of absence.” You need to find evidence that speaks contradictions to what is in the Book of Mormon.

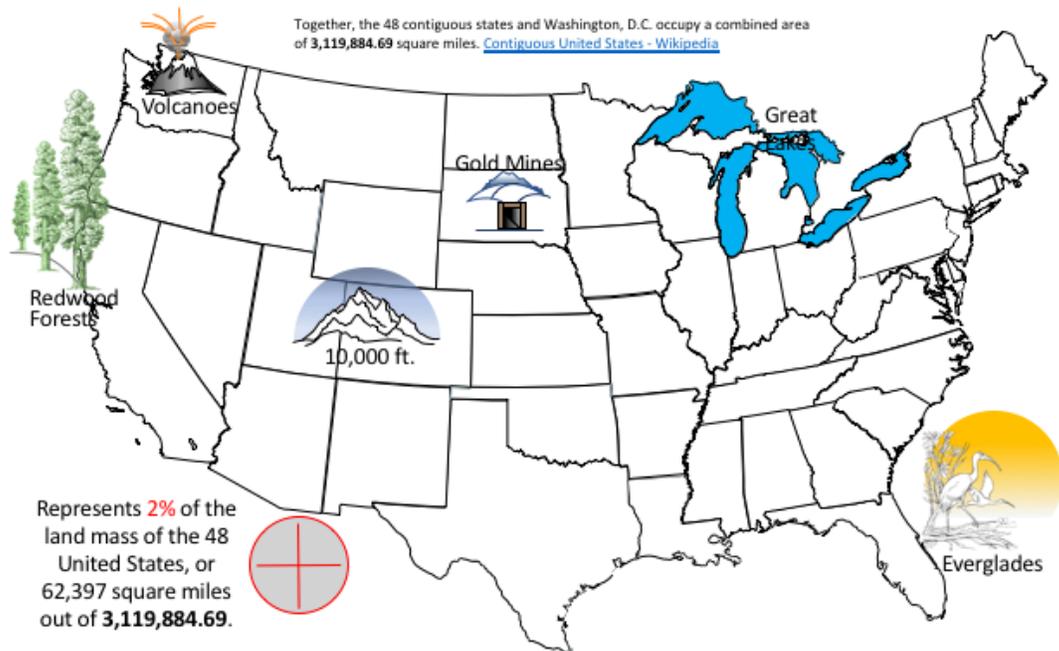
If we did ever find a rock which reads “Nephi was here” then that wouldn’t be evidence that the Book of Mormon is true. We only would have shown that someone did indeed once hold the name Nephi. If we also found a city with a sign which read “Welcome to Zarahemla” we still would not have proven the Book of Mormon to be true, only that there was a city called Zarahemla. We would not be able to tell if the events as told in the Book of Mormon really did happen there or not. Likewise, with the Title of Liberty. Although, it would be a cause for further investigation if we did find the Title of Liberty only to have it read something contrary to how it is in the Book of Mormon.

We don’t even know what we are looking for. What are you expecting us to find? We don’t know what Nephite and Lamanite weapons or pottery look like. We don’t know how they spelled their names; we don’t even know where in the Americas, the Book of Mormon took place. For all we know, we’ve already discovered these things, and we didn’t realize it.

Archeology doesn’t work unless you are willing to make like Indiana Jones and investigate the rest of the 98% of undiscovered ancient American sites. Some still suggest that with a civilization as big as the Nephites, surely we would have found something by now. However these people do not fully understand just how small 2% really is. Tad R. Callister, at the 2019 FairMormon conference gives the following example to show us just how small 2% really is:

“What the critics have failed to mention is that archaeology scholars have opined that only 2% or less—probably much less—of ancient American ruins have been excavated.

“George Stuart, a leading Maya scholar who worked for National Geographic for almost 40 years, did an interview in 2011 on National Geographic Live. In the course of his interview, he made the following revealing comment: “And we hardly know anything, really about the Maya [believed to have existed during a portion of Book of Mormon times]. You know, there’s almost 6000 archaeological sites and we’ve dug at forty of them.” That is less than 1%.



“Suppose I were to tell you that a man surveyed 2% of the geography of the United States (represented by the circle on the screen) and then he made the unequivocal assertion that there are no large lakes in the U.S., no everglades, no mountains above 10,000 feet, no redwood forests, no volcanoes, and no gold mines, because in his 2% survey he did not see any such things. You would likely respond: How foolhardy for him to categorically state there were no such things when 98% of the U.S. had never even been seen by him. Likewise, how foolhardy to unequivocally claim there were no horses, cattle, steel, and Nephite names in Book of Mormon lands and times when at least 98% of archaeological remains in ancient America have not been unearthed.

"Time and science are great allies of the Book of Mormon—in fact, they are best friends. Like President Grant, we can trust the impressions of the Spirit we have received confirming the truth of that book. In due course, the Earth will produce its archaeological evidences and the truth will be confirmed.”

<https://www.fairmormon.org/conference/august-2019/a-case-for-the-book-of-mormon>

Book of Mormon Central writes:

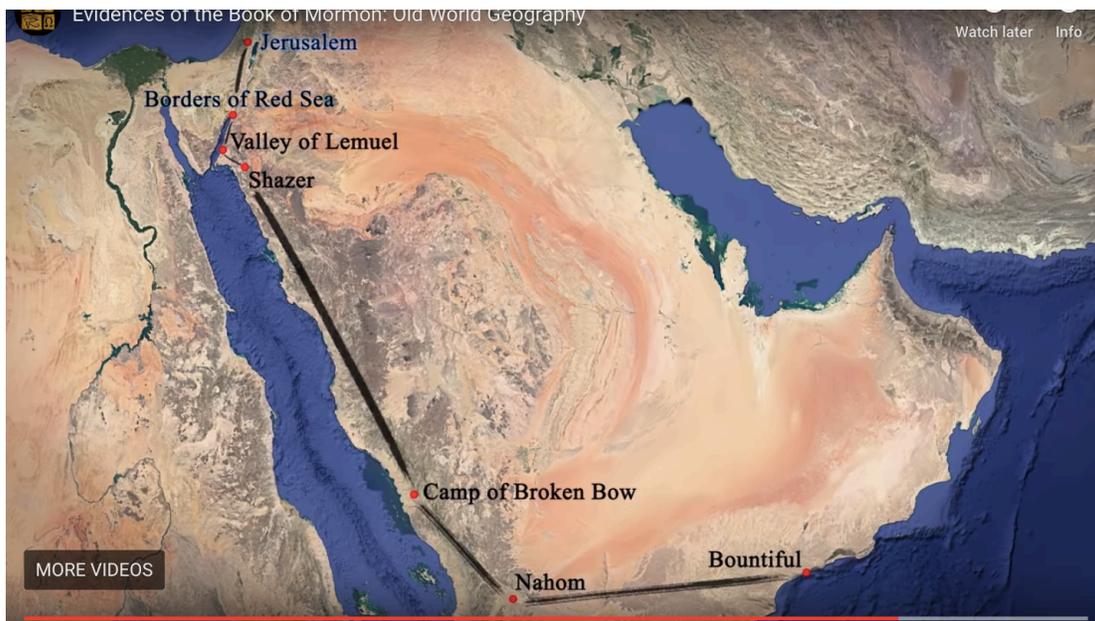
“The Book of Mormon’s authors made it clear the record was *spiritual*, and that it would touch on historical matters but lightly (1 Nephi 9:2; 2 Nephi 5:33; Jacob 1:2–3). Its compilers minimized cultural references to maximize its universality, particularly for folks in the last days (Alma 37:14, 18–19; Mormon 3:17–22; 8:25–41). Too many historical and cultural references might’ve undermined or watered down its spiritual objectives. In this

regard, the Book of Mormon’s authors and abridgers seem admirably farsighted. Nevertheless, to effectively communicate many enlightening doctrines, incorporating *some* history and culture was necessary, unavoidable.” (<https://bookofmormoncentral.org/blog/five-compelling-archeological-evidences-for-the-book-of-mormon>)

I’m sure you still want me to give you some stuff to work with, so let’s get into some stuff. So let’s talk about some names:

There are three alters found in Southwestern Arabia which bare the name Nahom. All three alters are at the right spot and date to the right time as found in the Book of Mormon. In 1 Nephi 16:34 we read how this is the place where Ishmael was buried. The alters read “NHM” as vowels were never written back then so one can indeed assume that Nahom is a proper name for it.

Not only the place of Nahom can be directly identified but also the land of bountiful and many other places mentioned and described in the Lehites journey from Jerusalem in the right order as described in the Book of Mormon. This is an impressive feat all on its own as there is no evidence of Joseph ever having access to a map of Arabia.



(<https://bookofmormoncentral.org/blog/watch-compelling-book-of-mormon-evidence-for-lehi-s-journey-through-arabia>)

Another interesting artifact that was found concerns Mulek. In the 1980s, archeologists found a small stamp seal which belonged to a certain *Malkiyahu ben hamelek*. Book of Mormon central writes:

“Jeremiah 38 tells how the prophet Jeremiah was cast “into the dungeon [Hebrew: “the pit”] of Malchiah the son of Hammelech” (KJV Jeremiah 38:6). While the King James Bible improperly rendered it as a proper name, Hammelech (*ha-melech*) in Hebrew is "the king." This is reflected in modern Bible translations: “So they took Jeremiah and threw him into the cistern of Malchiah, the king’s son” (NRSV).



" The name rendered Malchiah in the Hebrew of this passage is Malkiyahu, exactly as the name of the stamp seal, meaning “Yahweh is king.” (This name is composed of the Hebrew elements *mlk*, “king,” and *yhw*, an abbreviation of

the divine name Yahweh). Accordingly, it is highly likely that the Malkiyahu on the stamp seal is none other than Malchiah in Jeremiah 38.

“Turning to the Book of Mormon, Mulek (or Muloch²), the son of Zedekiah (Helaman 6:10; 8:21; cf. 1 Nephi 1:4), makes his first appearance in Mosiah 25. According to the Nephite record, Mulek escaped the massacre of his family at the hands of the Babylonians (cf. 2 Kings 25:1–7) and established a colony in the New World in a region later named Zarahemla, after one of Mulek’s descendants (Mosiah 25:1–5). Upon their discovery, the so-called Mulekites joined with the Nephites and accepted Mosiah as their king (Omni 1:12–19).

“The name *Mulek* is not found in the King James Version of the Bible. Still, some Latter-day Saint scholars have proposed that Mulek is a hypocoristic (abbreviated or shortened) form of Malchiah/Malkiyahu, or a form of this name that dropped the divine name (*yhw*) element, leaving only *mlk* (meaning "king").³ (Hebrew during the time of Nephi and Lehi was written without vowels.) If the Bible's Malchiah is the same person as the Book of

Mormon's Mulek, then the stamp seal belonging to Malkiyahu would lend independent credibility to the historical existence of Mulek.”

This has lead one non-mormon biblical scholar, David Noel Freedman, to conclude, “If Joseph Smith came up with that one, he did pretty good!”

(<https://knowhy.bookofmormoncentral.org/knowhy/has-an-artifact-that-relates-to-the-book-of-mormon-been-found>)

Michael R. Ash, from his book “Of Faith and Reason: 80 Evidences Supporting the Prophet Joseph Smith”, writes:

“As light is shed on all areas of the Book of Mormon studies ... we gain new support for the names found in the Nephite scripture. Many Book of Mormon names, we find, have Near Eastern parallels, several of which are Egyptian. ‘It should be noted,’ writes Nibley, ‘that archeology has fully demonstrated that the Israelites, then as now, had not the slightest aversion to giving their children non-Jewish names, even when those names smacked of a pagan background.’ Recently discovered ancient manuscripts show that many Jews, in the days of Lehi, named their children after Egyptian hero kings of the past.”

For the most part, Alma has been a controversial topic as most see it as a female name of Latin origin. I also thought that Alice was a female name until I heard about Alice Cooper. Latin Alma refers to a nourishing mother, however Alma in the Hebrew comes from the word “*elem*” which means youth. In the letters from Bar Kokhba and clay tablets from Elba we find that Hebrew Alma is indeed a male name.

But moving on from names let us talk about some other stuff. Reformed Egyptian is a hotly debated topic. Many are inclined to say that it does not exist, they say that it is a language made up by Joseph Smith using various “fancified” letters and numbers disguised as a new language.

(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eoy_n_wwupA&t=85s)

“Yea, I make a record in the language of my father, which consists of the learning of the Jews and the language of the Egyptians” (1 Nephi 1:2)

This is Reformed Egyptian as described by Nephi, but does it actually exist. Is there something tangible which speaks of the ancient Israelites actually using Egyptian in their Jewish writing? Strangely enough, there just may be such a thing.

Book of Mormon Central gives us seven clues that could lead one to Reformed Egyptian in the middle east:

“First, Israelite texts at the time of Lehi employed numbers and signs from an ancient Egyptian script called hieratic. There are over 200 samples of hieratic found in the regions of Israel and Judah.



“Second, LDS scholars John A. Tvedtnes and Stephen D. Ricks collected examples of texts written in a Hebrew-related language being transcribed in hieratic Egyptian dating to 600 years before Lehi. They also shared an example of Psalms 20:2–6 written in Aramaic translation using Egyptian characters. This example dates to about 400 years after Lehi’s time.

“Third, archaeologists have also found Egyptian hieratic writing on broken pieces of pots from an Israelite city dating to Lehi’s time. As scholars explain, “the text ... is written in a combination of Egyptian hieratic and Hebrew characters but can be read entirely as Egyptian.”

“Fourth, “evidence for the commingling of Hebrew and Egyptian scripts was discovered ... in the Sinai Peninsula ... [dating to] the sixth and seventh centuries B.C.”

“Fifth, a 2012 study by Dr. David Calabro suggests that the use of Egyptian hieratic in ancient Israel “point[s] to the development within Judah of a unified, extensive hieratic tradition,” a tradition which “appears to have been independent of those attested in Egypt during that time.”

“Sixth, Calabro also notes that, “the use of hieratic signs [in some inscriptions] extends beyond simply inserting them as symbols to substitute for Hebrew words,” but rather

retain their Egyptian meanings. This is true, even as the order of hieratic signs is “contrary to common Egyptian practice ... but in accordance with expected Hebrew word order as well as the probable word order in spoken Egyptian.”

“Finally, and most significantly, Calabro explains that one inscription from the Sinai is “the first example of hieratic unilateral signs in [eighth and seventh century BC]

Judah.”¹¹ Taken together, the evidence “indicates a widespread presence of scribes educated in this Judahite variety of Egyptian script.” Perhaps this is the “learning of the Jews and the language of the Egyptians” referred to by Nephi the scribe/prophet.”

(<https://knowhy.bookofmormoncentral.org/knowhy/did-ancient-israelites-write-in-egyptian>)

When Nephi cut off the head of Laban, blood would surely have run out and stained the clothes. But this isn't Hollywood in which the victor is sprayed with blood after the decapitation, so let's not think that Nephi should be completely covered in blood. A Japanese veteran of World War II described it like this:

"I stabbed her. On television, you see a lot of blood flow out, but that's not the reality. I've cut people with swords, and you're not covered in blood. It doesn't splash like you see in movies. If you cut the neck, you see a bit of blood, but it's not like the films. I don't know how many people I've killed, but I've never experienced anything like that. When I killed that woman, I wasn't covered in blood. There was just a little blood flowing out from her heart.”(James Bradley, *Flyboys* (Little, Brown and Company, 2003), 88. [This book documents Japanese atrocities during World War II, and is pretty grim and sickening reading.])

Dr. Hugh Nibley noted: "Those who are familiar with night patrolling in wartime, however, will see in Nephi's tale a convincing and realistic account” (Hugh W. Nibley, *An Approach to the Book of Mormon*, 3rd edition, (Vol. 6 of the Collected Works of Hugh Nibley), edited by John W. Welch, (Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret Book Company; Provo, Utah: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1988), [Chapter 9](#))

However, the main point of criticism here is questioning why Nephi would be commanded to kill an unarmed man to begin with. Many it seems are not satisfied with the answer the Book of Mormon gives saying that it is “better that one man should perish than that a

nation should dwindle and perish in unbelief.” (1 Nephi 4:11) Of course one could liken this to the time that Moses killed an Egyptian in Exodus 2:11-12.

This is very unusual to us modern westerners but in the middle east — and especially back then — such a thing is common place. It is important to remember that Laban was no innocent man, he stole the property of Nephi and his brothers and sought to kill them. We can reasonably assume that Nephi’s killing of Laban was justified. When Nibley was teaching a class full of Arab students and he told the story of Nephi cutting off Laban’s head, the response was not a gasp of “why did this Nephi do that?”, but rather a gasp of “Why did this Nephi wait so long to cut off Laban’s head?” (Nibley, *An Approach to the Book of Mormon*, viii.)

How did Joseph Smith get this right, to get a point which was so contrary to his own upbringing but right at home in the middle east? Being an uneducated farm boy, he sure seemed to know a lot about customs in the Middle East.

When it comes to records like the Book of Mormon, an ancient record preserved in a cave and other writings on gold plates delivered by angels, there are many to be found. Book of Mormon Central writes:

“Many ancient documents were also found or reportedly hidden in mountains or caves. For instance, the *The Cologne Mani Codex* indicates that “an angel brought Enosh to a mountain and instructed him to write on bronze tablets and hide his record.” In Russia, “twelve small gold plates” were reportedly found “in a hill.” In the Masonic tradition, the prophet Enoch “inscribed his revelation on a gold plate that he concealed in a temple he constructed inside a mountain.” And in a number of ancient texts, buried or hidden records or relics were guarded by an angel or some sort of divine power.”

<https://knowwhy.bookofmormoncentral.org/knowwhy/are-there-other-ancient-records-like-the-book-of-mormon>)

Again, how did Joseph Smith know that writing on metal plates was even a thing? I’m telling you, if Joseph Smith is a fraud then he should be looked at as the greatest and smartest fraud in the whole history of the world. I would consider Smith to be even smarter than Einstein himself.

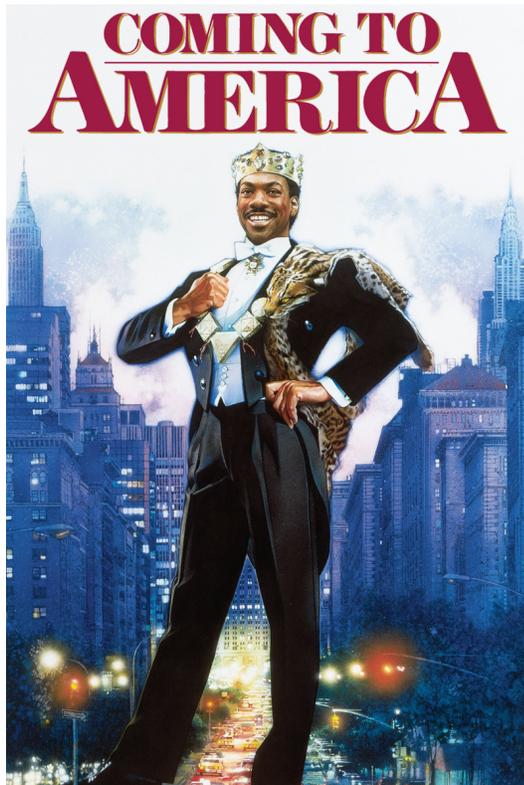
And so, Micheal R. Ash noted:

“How easy would it have been for a young man in 1830 to write a novel about the ancient Old World and have it stand up to scrutiny nearly two hundred years later? When Joseph translated the Book of Mormon—with a tale of Lehites departing the Old World on a journey through southern Arabia—the best scholars of his day knew little about the ancient world in which the Lehites traveled. The few bits of information available were generally wrong and almost consistently described Arabia as a barren wasteland.

According to some authors, Arabia was so hot that animals were roasted on the plains and birds in the midair. The southern coast of Arabia was thought to be dismal and barren—nothing but rocky wall. It was said that not even a blade of grass could be grown along the coastline. Very few books mentioned any fertile regions in Arabia, and those that did, got the information wrong as well—describing fertile regions as producing rice, maize, and tropical fruits.

“If Joseph had written the Book of Mormon with the information sponged from his environment, he would have turned to the so-called experts of his day. So inaccurate were the experts of 1830 America, however, that if Joseph had sponged their information he would have produced a book full of errors.”

(Micheal R. Ash, *Of Faith and Reason: 80 Evidences Supporting the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 53.)



And so, coming to America:

In the Americas, I think that the best Archeological find has to do with temples. In 2 Nephi 5:16, Nephi writes:

“And I, Nephi, did ^abuild a ^btemple; and I did construct it after the manner of the temple of ^cSolomon save it were not built of so many ^dprecious things; for they were not to be found upon the land, wherefore, it could not be built like unto Solomon’s ^etemple. But the manner of the construction was like unto the temple of ^fSolomon; and the workmanship thereof was

exceedingly fine.”

Here we have the only structure that is unique to all others in the Book of Mormon and is directly mentioned. There should be much to uncover here. Based on Nephi’s account, somewhere in the Americas there should be found a temple which we can compare to Solomon’s temple. Unfortunately for the critics there just may be such a structure, or several.

Anthropologist Dr. Sorenson wrote:

“The temple of Solomon was built on a platform, so people literally went “up” to it. Inside were distinct rooms of differing sacredness. Outside the building itself was a courtyard or plaza surrounded by a wall. Sacrifices were made in that space, atop altars of stepped or terraced form. The levels of the altar structure represented the layered universe as Israelites and other Near Eastern peoples conceived of it. The temple building was oriented so that the rising of the sun on solstice day (either March 21st or September 21st) sent the earliest rays—considered “the glory of the Lord”—to shine through the temple doors, which were opened for the occasion, directly into the holiest part. The same features generally characterized Mesoamerican temple [pyramid] complexes. ... Torquemada, an early Spanish priest in the New World, compared the plan of Mexican temples with that of the temple of Solomon, and a [non-LDS] modern scholar agrees.”

(Sorenson, *An Ancient American Setting for the Book of Mormon*, 260.)

There most defiantly would have been other peoples when the Lehites arrived in America (like the Maya and Aztec people), when a small group mixes with a larger group then they will begin to adopt the larger groups customs and language. But sometimes the smaller groups language gets mixed into the larger language. There is some evidence that some Hebrew did indeed mix into the larger language, it is called Uto-Aztecan Language. Dr. Brian Stubbs is a professional linguist who argues for a connection between Hebrew and Aztec languages, having uncovered thousands of Uto-Aztecan (UA)/Hebrew word pairs. Many non-LDS linguists seem to have agreed with Dr. Stubbs, in particular a certain Dr. Roger Westcott. (Brian Darrel Stubbs, “Looking Over vs. Overlooking Native American Languages: Let’s Void the Void,” *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 5, no. 1 (1996): 1-49.)

Apart from all this archeology, there is still so much to uncover. John Clark noted:

"... about 95 percent of what has been said and written about archaeology and The Book of Mormon is nonsense. Most of it comes from missionaries, evangelists, and tour guides. Overall, however, critics of Mormonism have done more to establish the authenticity of The Book of Mormon than have their Mormon brethren. In recognition of their past efforts, we dedicate our remarks this morning to Jerald and Sandra Tanner of Lighthouse Ministries; they have helped establish the truth of The Book of Mormon more than they know. In 1830 the book was a 23 pound weakling, now thanks to 175 years of criticism, it is a 900 pound colossus. ... the whole quarrel over evidence is based on a fallacy of proof. No quantity of archaeological evidence will ever suffice to prove beyond reasonable doubt that either the Bible or The Book of Mormon is true — or false. Evidence is interesting and has its uses, but only as a means of better understanding the book, not of proving it to atheists and wayward saints. ... we believe The Book of Mormon is an authentic ancient text written by New World prophets. Seventh, and finally, we harbor no doubts that Joseph Smith translated the book by the power of God.

"Had circumstances permitted him a marked grave, a fitting headstone could have read, "BY JOSEPH SMITH, JUNIOR, AUTHOR AND PROPRIETOR." Such an epitaph, taken from the title page of The Book of Mormon, captures the enduring bond between the man and the book, and also the controversy which coalesced around both with the book's publication and the organization of the Church in 1830. In the ensuing and continuing war of words and prejudice, redemption may hang on the preposition "by"—as in "by" Joseph Smith.

"Joseph Smith claimed he translated by the power of God an ancient record inscribed on golden plates entrusted to him by an American angel. His account of the origins of The Book of Mormon is, to understate the obvious, outrageously preposterous. When confronted with the book, most people reject it because, as they say, "you don't get books from angels and translate them by miracles." Others excommunicate the angels and pull the book back down to earth. Joseph Smith, they argue, wrote the book from his galloping imagination, aided and abetted by scraps of truth and speculation rifled from others. From this view, the book is a fiction and a hoax. There are other explanations, but the main quarrel is between the book as Hoax and as History. Born of a miracle or of a hoax, and father to another, the book commands serious attention from believers and skeptics alike.

At this two-hundredth anniversary of his birth, it is clear that any fair understanding of Joseph Smith must derive from a plausible explanation of The Book of Mormon. It is equally clear that science and reason can be involved in the evaluation. Because the book makes claims about American prehistory, archaeology has long been implicated in assessments of its credentials as ancient history, and by direct implication, of the honesty of Joseph Smith. Since 1829, critics have attempted to discredit the book by claiming that it has no grounding in the ancient world. Because of what is at stake, let us agree that their charges are serious and require response. The critical question concerns authorship. Did Joseph Smith write the book, or was it revealed through divine means?

“Let us consider the anti-Mormon position first. If Joseph Smith made the book up, then its peoples did not exist, its events did not happen, and there should be no trace of them anywhere on the planet, not even a whisker. If, after a reasonable period of diligent searching, material evidence is not found, then The Book of Mormon would be shown to be imaginary, and by incontrovertible implication Joseph Smith would be exposed as a liar and the Mormon church unveiled as a hoax.

“The Mormon position is the near opposite. Confirmation of historic details of The Book of Mormon would substantiate Joseph Smith’s account of how it came to be, and thus validate his seership and the divine origin of both the book and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. This brings us to the astonishing possibility of being able to test Joseph Smith’s claims through science, a possibility that critics have long tried to exploit. The Book of Mormon is the keystone of Mormonism; destroy this stone and all that it supports will come crashing down. Given the stakes involved, the very possibility of testing the book’s historicity and authenticity becomes a moral obligation to do so. It is also an invitation to err on the side of caution and not reject it without due cause.”

(<https://www.fairmormon.org/conference/august-2005/debating-the-foundations-of-mormonism-the-book-of-mormon-and-archaeology>)

Above all we need to not forget the Book of Mormon’s true purpose. That purpose being to testify of Christ. Non-LDS John Turner quotes Stephen Webb as stating that whereas many mainline Protestant theologians "have backed away from strong claims about the divinity of Jesus Christ," he says the Book of Mormon "is utterly obsessed with Jesus Christ ... everything it teaches is meant to awaken, encourage, and deepen faith in him." He

encourages Catholics and Protestants to take Mormon thought seriously. (<https://www.booksandculture.com/articles/webexclusives/2014/january/mormon-envy.html>)

From the article we read:

“I am not a Mormon,” Webb writes at the outset of his book, “but sometimes I wish I were.” Webb is not alone; I have also felt pangs of what he calls “Mormon envy.” After talking with Latter-day Saints about their current church “callings,” I wondered why my congregation didn’t ask *everyone* to pitch in a bit more. After researching the travails and triumphs of countless Mormon pioneers, I have wished I had such ready access to the details of my own ancestors. I certainly would love any additional assurance that I will be with my family (at least most members thereof) for eternity. And if the church offered short-term membership passes, I would certainly sign up whenever moving into or out of a home. Mormonism offers obvious attractions, cultivating—in Webb’s words— “a sense of belonging, purpose, and focus that is not easy to find in many churches today.” With the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (hereafter LDS Church) having surpassed fifteen million members worldwide, many Protestant communions might look upon their Mormon counterparts with envy.

“Webb quickly dispenses with the question of whether or not Mormons are Christians. “If any follower of Christ,” he writes, “had to choose between a Jesus who began his ministry long before he was born in Bethlehem and a Jesus whose ministry was hardly different from any other great moral teacher, I hope it would be a very easy decision.” Whereas many mainline Protestant theologians “have backed away from strong claims about the divinity of Jesus Christ,” he contends, the Book of Mormon “is utterly obsessed with Jesus Christ ... everything it teaches is meant to awaken, encourage, and deepen faith in him.” Webb dismisses other objections to the Christianness of Mormonism. Many outsiders view the LDS Church’s dietary code, emphasis on tithing, and ecclesiastical discipline as cultish. For Webb, Mormonism brings back a sense of discipline and social cohesion integral to the fundamentalism of his youth and often missing from the evangelicalism that Webb has now left behind. Webb also sympathetically interprets distinctive Mormon beliefs and practices (from baptism for the dead to *theosis*) in the context of early Christian history.

“The above points are quite reasonable, though Webb skirts some material non-Mormons often find objectionable. While the Book of Mormon and Joseph Smith’s early revelations are overwhelmingly christocentric, Webb might have mentioned that Joseph Smith’s

subsequent theological and ritual innovations (such as the church's endowment ceremony) were decidedly less so. Still, the LDS Church has become steadily *more* christocentric over the past several decades.”

How rare a possession:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ElhAsifEMFs>

There seem to be a good amount of testimonies of the Book of Mormon that not only come from feeling that it is good but also are accompanied by unexplained miracles. From “the Conversion Story of Bill Carpenter” we learn about a time that Bill was on his two year LDS mission when he met a woman who went through the entire Book of Mormon and loved every moment of it. Soon after she was baptized she learned about patriarchal blessings and wanted one. When a physical copy of the blessing arrived she called Bill and his companion over to read to her her patriarchal blessing. When Bill said that she should read it herself she mentioned that her eyesight wasn’t good enough to read and that the Book of Mormon was the first thing she had read in a long time. God had allowed her to read the Book of Mormon but then once she finished the Book of Mormon her bad eyesight returned. From the blessing we learn that if a certain boy had left on his mission when he had, then the woman would have been converted at a much earlier date.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1f-kE9YQrg>

10. If the words “familiar spirit” in Isaiah 29:4 refer to the Book of Mormon, why do familiar spirits always refer to occult practices such as channeling and necromancy everywhere else in the Old Testament?

Saying that “familiar spirits” always refers to the occult and necromancy doesn’t seem to

explain why Isaiah would compare Jerusalem (Ariel) to a familiar spirit in this verse. The term may have gotten a bad reputation from English medieval folklore. (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/>



Familiar spirit)

Without question, I think that one could appropriately say that the Book of Mormon is firmly against necromancy (2 Nephi 18:19). Why, then, is Nephi comparing the Book of Mormon to a familiar spirit? It's possible that he is not calling the book a familiar spirit but that it is comparable to one. Like one which is not evil but ordained of God. Similar to how magic is the devil's counterfeit to the priesthood, it would make sense to me that the familiar spirit is the devil's counterfeit to something similar which is of God.

FairMormon gives this response:

"Nephi (a lover of Isaiah) uses the Isaiah passage to explain or illustrate his own prophecy:
14 But behold, I prophesy unto you concerning the last days; concerning the days when the Lord God shall bring these things forth unto the children of men.

15 After my seed and the seed of my brethren shall have dwindled in unbelief, and shall have been smitten by the Gentiles; yea, after the Lord God shall have camped against them round about, and shall have laid siege against them with a mount, and raised forts against them; and after they shall have been brought down low in the dust, even that they are not, yet the words of the righteous shall be written, and the prayers of the faithful shall be heard, and all those who have dwindled in unbelief shall not be forgotten.

16 For those who shall be destroyed shall speak unto them out of the ground, and their speech shall be low out of the dust, and their voice shall be as one that hath a familiar spirit; for the Lord God will give unto him power, that he may whisper concerning them, even as it were out of the ground; and their speech shall whisper out of the dust.

17 For thus saith the Lord God: They shall write the things which shall be done among them, and they shall be written and sealed up in a book, and those who have dwindled in unbelief shall not have them, for they seek to destroy the things of God. (2 Nephi 26:14-17)

“This passage is a peshet, applying the Isaianic imagery to the appearance of the BoM in the last days, with speech low out of the dust. If you read this BoM passage with a proper understanding of the familiar spirit reference, it actually makes excellent sense. The words of the Book will speak low out of the dust as a ghost called up from the netherworld.

(All writing from another time does this—it allows the dead to speak to us. Matthew and Paul speak to us "as if" from the dead in the Bible, Shakespeare speaks to us through his plays, etc.)

"Thus, the Book of Mormon, being a record from a fallen Christian civilization, would be "as if" the dead spoke, since those who are now dead can speak to us. The comparison to Isaiah's Jerusalem probably seems appropriate to Nephi, since:

- **Isaiah prophesied of Jerusalem's destruction, and the Nephites were witnesses of that destruction (e.g. 2 Nephi 1:3-4).**
- **The Nephites had fled Jerusalem to avoid destruction.**
- **Jerusalem was destroyed for wickedness, as Nephi knew his own people would eventually be destroyed (see 1 Nephi 15:5).**
- **Like the wicked at Jerusalem, only the tale (the witness or record) of the wicked Nephite civilization would persist**

“The symbol used by Isaiah is thus both appropriate for Nephi's situation, and ironic, since the Nephites have ended up also "speaking from the dust" just like the people at Jerusalem from whom the Nephites fled to avoid destruction!

“Remember also that the Book of Mormon was "To come forth by the gift and power of God unto the interpretation thereof" as the title page to the book states. The interpreters, or Urim and Thummim, as well as the seer stone, are what are being referred to here.

These are sacred implements. Implements are also used in the context of divination. So it is not surprising that the gift and power of God manifest through use of sacred implements would be described in this manner in Isaiah. The tools such as seer stones and so forth are abused by those who misuse them in occult contexts. But in the context of their correct use under priesthood authority and revelation from God, they are still spiritual implements that manifest things from the unseen world, but in that case, being acted upon by the power of God, not by false spirits.”

11. Why did Joseph Smith condone polygamy as an ordinance from God (Doctrine and Covenants 132) when the Book of Mormon had already condemned the practice (Jacob 1:15, 2:24)?

Yeah, David and Solomon went to ridiculous extremes when it came to polygamy. No man should have as many wives as King Solomon had, having had around 700 wives and 300 concubines (1 Kings 11:3), that’s just madness. How does one even keep track of that many wives? Or how does one remember all of their names?



Jacob 1:15 talks about how David and Solomon desired many wives; another interpretation is that they lusted after many women and so desired them for wives. For David, he lusted after Bathsheba. For Solomon, he lusted after women of other nations and religions. D&C 132 gives this commentary on their actions:

“38 David also received many wives and concubines, and also Solomon and

Moses my servants, as also many others of my servants, from the beginning of creation until this time; and in nothing did they sin save in those things which they received not of me. 39 David’s wives and concubines were given unto him of me, by the hand of Nathan, my servant, and others of the prophets who had the keys of this power; and in none of these things did he sin against me save in the case of Uriah and his wife; and, therefore he hath fallen from his exaltation, and received his portion; and he shall not inherit them out of the world, for I gave them unto another, saith the Lord.”

Poor David lost his chance of exaltation because he lusted after Bathsheba and got her husband killed. So from D&C 132:38-39, it is made very clear that David and Solomon’s sins were that they took wives which God had not given them or allowed them to take. While practicing polygamy, it is good not to lust after other women and desire them as wives. It is good to keep only to those wives which the Lord God had given to these men. In these things did David and Solomon sin, but Moses and Abraham did not sin.

Jacob 2:24 does condemn polygamy, and it is further reinforced with verse 27. But if you look further down at verse 30 we read this: “For if I will, saith the Lord of Hosts, raise up seed unto me, I will command my people; otherwise they shall hearken unto these things.” So monogamy is the standard and polygamy is the exception when the Lord needs to raise up seed. Polygamy has been shown to be a great way to multiply rapidly.

Another way of looking at this is all of Jacob 2 centers around one theme, pride. From verse 12, we learn Jacob is speaking to men who “...have begun to search for gold, and for silver, and for all manner of precious ores ...” So we see that men are being lifted up in the

pride of their hearts and are seeking after precious things which would make them rich. It is possible that these precious things also include wives, so the men are treating their women as property to be owned instead of actual human beings. In this case are they sinning.

12. Why were the words “white and delightsome” in 2 Nephi 30:6 changed to “pure and delightsome” right on the heels of the Civil Rights campaign for blacks?

FairMormon gives this response:

“This change was originally made in the 1840 edition but because subsequent editions were based off the European editions (which followed the 1837 edition), the change did not get perpetuated until the preparation of the 1981 edition. The change is not (as the critics want to portray it) a "recent" change designed to remove a "racist" original.

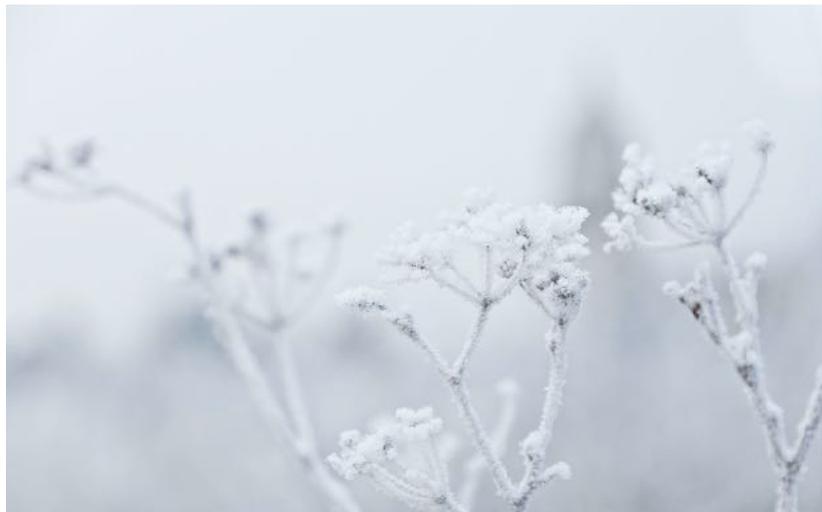
“The idea that the Church has somehow "hidden" the original text or manuscripts of the Book of Mormon in order to hide this is simply unbelievable. Replicas of the 1830 Book of Mormon are easily obtained on Amazon.com, and the text is freely available online. In addition, Royal Skousen has extensively studied the original Book of Mormon manuscripts and published a critical text

edition of the Book of Mormon. The claim by the critics that the Church has somehow hidden these items is seriously outdated.”

"This particular correction is part of the changes referred to in the note "About this Edition" printed in the introductory

pages:

‘ ”Some minor errors in the text have been perpetuated in past editions of the Book of Mormon. This edition contains corrections that seem appropriate to bring the material into



conformity with prepublication manuscripts and early editions edited by the Prophet Joseph Smith.”

“It’s doubtful that Joseph Smith had racism in mind when the change was done in 1840 or other similar verses would have been changed as well.

“Furthermore, "white" was a synonym for "pure" at the time Joseph translated the Book of Mormon:

“3. Having the color of purity; pure; clean; free from spot; as white robed innocence....5.

Pure; unblemished....6. In a scriptural sense, purified from sin; sanctified. Psalm 51.

“Thus, the "pure" meaning likely reflected the original intent of the passage and translator.”

13. If God is an exalted man with a body of flesh and bones, why does Alma 18:26-28 and John 4:24 say that God is a spirit?



This seems like a good and honest question. Let’s look at these scriptures individually and then come up with a conclusion: Alma 18:26-28 features Ammon as attempting to teach King Lamoni about the God who created the universe. But the only problem is King Lamoni has never heard of God as indicated when he says, “I do not know what that meaneth.” He had probably never heard of this word “God” before. So Ammon is stuck between a rock and a hard place here. If King Lamoni has never heard anything about God, let alone the word “God,” then how is Ammon supposed to teach him

about God? The solution is to compare God to the closest thing that King Lamoni knows about, the Great Spirit. When teaching about the gospel, or anything for that matter, it is best to use words known by your student so as not to confuse them with words that they have never heard before. This is why Ammon refers to God as the Great Spirit, he using language which is best understood by King Lamoni.

Another possible interpretation of Alma 18:26-28 is that Ammon merely is referring to Jesus Christ as God, who at the time was still in spirit premortal form. He who is the creator of the universe under the direction of his Father. It was Jesus as God who showed himself unto Mahonri Moriancumer, the brother of Jared, using the name of the Father to act as the Father. After he saw the finger of God he was frightened because it was as the finger of a man with flesh and bones, and so Jesus revealed himself unto Moriancumer saying: “ ...Because thou knowest these things ye are redeemed from the fall; therefore ye are brought back into my presence; therefore I show myself unto you. 14 Behold, I am he who was prepared from the foundation of the world to redeem my people. Behold, I am Jesus Christ. I am the Father and the Son. In me shall all mankind have life, and that eternally, even they who shall believe on my name; and they shall become my sons and my daughters. 15 And never have I showed myself unto man whom I have created, for never has man believed in me as thou hast. Seest thou that ye are created after mine own image? Yea, even all men were created in the beginning after mine own image. 16 Behold, this body, which ye now behold, is the body of my spirit; and man have I created after the body of my spirit; and even as I appear unto thee to be in the spirit will I appear unto my people in the flesh.” (Ether 3:13-14)

John 4:23-24 reads: “23 But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. 24 God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth.” It looks to me here like Jesus is talking about the manner of worship; we worship the Father in spirit and truth. So what does Jesus mean by saying, “God is a Spirit”? He is referring to the Spirit as God by whom we worship the Father. Notice how when he says, “in spirit and in truth” spirit has a lowercase “s.” But when he says, “God is a Spirit” Spirit has an uppercase “S,” referencing God the Spirit, hence the phrase, “God is a Spirit.” For it is by God the Spirit that we worship God the Father.

The phrase “God is a Spirit” truly can be a confusing one. This is why Joseph Smith felt the need to clear it up for us and translate it as, “For unto such hath God promised his Spirit.” Spirit again being capitalized.

FairMormon gives this telling response:

“Some Christians object to the LDS position that God has a physical body by quoting John 4:24:

“God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. (Italics in KJV original).

"Adopting a critical reading of this verse leads to some strange conclusions if we are consistent. Deuteronomy 4:28 says that our God can see, eat and smell. Can an unembodied spirit do that? Deuteronomy 4:24 and Hebrews 12:29 say that God is a consuming fire, 1 Jn 1:5 says God is light, and 1 Jn 4:4,16 says that God is love. Is He just those things? Clearly not, and the LDS conclude that neither is He just a spirit.

“Note that in the KJV cited above, the word “is” is italicized. This is because the King James translators have inserted it on their own—it is not present in the Greek text from which the translation was made.

“Secondly, the reader should be aware that the indefinite article (“a”, as in "a dog" or "a spirit") does not exist in Greek. Thus, the addition of the word "a" in English occurs at the discretion of the translators.[3]

“This leaves two Greek words: theos pneuma [θεος πνευμα]—“God spirit”. The JST resolves this translational issue by saying “for unto such hath God promised his spirit”. The word pneuma, which is translated spirit, also means ‘life’ or ‘breath’. The King James Version of Revelation 13:15 renders ‘pneuma’ as life. Thus "God is life," or "God is the breath of life" are potential alternative translations of this verse.

"Also, if God is a spirit and we have to worship him in spirit, do mortals have to leave our bodies to worship him?

“Latter-day Saints believe that man is also spirit and is, like God, housed in a physical body

“Thus, the Latter-day Saints believe that man is also spirit (DC 93:33-34; Numbers 16:22; Romans 8:16) and is, like God, housed in a physical body. We were, after all, created in the "image" of God (Genesis 1:26-27).

“It is interesting that in 1 Corinthians 2:11, Paul wrote about "the spirit of man and the Spirit of God." Elsewhere he spoke of the resurrection of the body and then noted that it is

a "spiritual" body (1 Corinthians 15:44-46), though, rising from the grave, it is obviously composed of flesh and bones, as Jesus made clear when he appeared to the apostles after his resurrection (Luke 24:37-39).

“Paul also told the saints in Rome, "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you" (Romans 8:9).

“One Commentary insists:

“That God is spirit is not meant as a definition of God's being—though this is how the Stoics [a branch of Greek philosophy] would have understood it. It is a metaphor of his mode of operation, as life-giving power, and it is no more to be taken literally than 1 Jn 1:5, "God is light," or Deuteronomy 4:24, "Your God is a devouring fire." It is only those who have received this power through Christ who can offer God a real worship.”

14. Why did God encourage Abraham & Sarah to lie in Abraham 2:24? Isn't lying a sin according to the 10 commandments? Why did God tell Abraham and Sarah to lie when 2 Nephi 9:34 condemns liars to hell?

Other examples of God instructing others to hide the truth include:

- Moses regarding "borrowing treasure from the Egyptians" (Exodus 12:35-36)
- Egyptian midwives lying about Hebrew children (Exodus 1:15-22)
- God told Samuel to avoid Saul (1 Samuel 16:1-2):

“1 And the Lord said unto Samuel, How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? fill thine horn with oil, and go, I will send thee to Jesse the Beth-lehemite: for I have provided me a king among his sons. 2 And Samuel said, How can I go? if Saul hear it, he will kill me. And the Lord said, Take an heifer with thee, and say, I am come to sacrifice to the Lord.”



FairMormon gives this response:

“The Bible tells us that Moses did what God told him to do. Is it so surprising that Abraham might have been told something similar to prevent death to the righteous? The Pharaoh would sometimes kill a husband then take their wives for themselves. The Bible record tells us that God blessed Abraham despite his action. The Book of Abraham simply makes it clear that Abraham did not choose this path on his own, but like Moses was obeying a direct command from God, who may grant exceptions to His Laws if He pleases. “The Bible records Abraham's lie to Pharaoh, and then God rewards the lie (see Genesis 12:17). This seems a strange action if God disapproved their action.”

If a wicked biker gang was out to kill your spouse in your house, wouldn't you also want to lie and say that your spouse was not there?

15. Why does the Book of Mormon state that Jesus was born in Jerusalem (Alma 7:10) when history and the Bible state that he was born outside of Jerusalem, in Bethlehem?



If history has taught me anything, it is that it is on the side of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints.

The phrase from Alma 7:10 is “born of Mary, at Jerusalem” not “in Jerusalem.” The question should have been concerning the “at” not “in.” There is no phrase in the Book of Mormon which you can point to that states Jesus was born “in” Jerusalem, only verses that

state Jesus was born “at” Jerusalem. This is very important as the two words do not mean the same thing.

The online dictionary defines “at” as - “expressing location or arrival in a particular place or position.” “In” is defined as - “expressing the situation of something that is or appears to be enclosed or surrounded by something else.”

Actually, funny enough, the phrase “at Jerusalem” is a Hebraism. (https://www.fairmormon.org/answers/Book_of_Mormon/Evidences/Hebraisms#Question: Do Hebraisms exist in the Book of Mormon.3F)

Daniel C. Peterson:

“[The prophecy in [Alma 7:10](#)] has occasioned considerable amusement among uninformed critics of the book,...predicting that Jesus "shall be born of Mary, at Jerusalem, which is the land of our forefathers." As everybody who knows anything at all about Christianity also knows, Jesus was born in the little town of Bethlehem. However, although identifying a "land of Jerusalem" as the birthplace of Jesus would have seemed an obvious mistake for at least a century after the publication of the Book of Mormon, it is now plain that Bethlehem could be, and indeed anciently was, regarded as a town in the "land of Jerusalem." A recently released text from the Dead Sea Scrolls, for example—a text claiming to have originated in the days of Jeremiah (and, therefore, in Lehi's time)—says that the Jews of that period were "taken captive from the land of Jerusalem."⁴⁹ Texts discovered earlier in the twentieth century seem to include Bethlehem within that "land." Joseph Smith could not have learned this from the Bible, though, for no such language appears in it.”

Jeffrey R. Chadwick:

"These observations are demonstrated by a three-step examination of Nephi's text: Nephi and his brothers returned from the valley of Lemuel up to the land of Jerusalem (1 Nephi 3:9). They then went down to the land of inheritance to collect Lehi's gold and silver (1 Nephi 3:16, 22). Finally, Nephi and his brothers returned back up again to Jerusalem (1 Nephi 3:23). It is important to remember that in the idiom of Nephi one always went up to come to the Jerusalem region, and one always went down when exiting the Jerusalem region. This is also the Hebrew idiom employed in the Bible, where persons in both the Old

and New Testaments typically are said to go down to leave Jerusalem (see, for example, 2 Samuel 5:17; Luke 10:30; and Acts 8:15) and go up to come to Jerusalem (see, for example, 2 Chronicles 2:16 and Matthew 20:18). Nephi adhered to this Hebrew idiom throughout his account—whenever his party is reported to have gone to Jerusalem, they went up (see 1 Nephi 3:9; 4:4; 5:6; 7:3–4), and whenever the reference is to leaving the Jerusalem region, they went down (see 1 Nephi 2:5; 3:4, 16, 22; 4:35; 5:1; 7:2, 5).”

(https://www.fairmormon.org/evidences/Category:Book_of_Mormon/Anthropology/Language/Hebraisms/Land_of_Jerusalem)

BYU professor Daniel C. Peterson pointed out the absurdity of this argument:

“To suggest that Joseph Smith knew the precise location of Jesus' baptism by John ("in Bethabara, beyond Jordan" (1 Ne. 10:9) but hadn't a clue about the famous town of Christ's birth is so improbable as to be ludicrous. Do the skeptics seriously mean to suggest that the Book of Mormon's Bible-drenched author (or authors) missed one of the most obvious facts about the most popular story in the Bible — something known to every child and Christmas caroler? Do they intend to say that a clever fraud who could write a book displaying so wide an array of subtly authentic Near Eastern and biblical cultural and literary traits as the Book of Mormon does was nonetheless so stupid as to claim, before a Bible-reading public, that Jesus was born in the city of Jerusalem? As one anti-Mormon author has pointed out, "Every schoolboy and schoolgirl knows Christ was born in Bethlehem." [Langfield, 53.] Exactly! It is virtually certain, therefore, that Alma 7:10 was foreign to Joseph Smith's preconceptions. "The land of Jerusalem" is not the sort of thing the Prophet would likely have invented, precisely for the same reason it bothers uninformed critics of the Book of Mormon.”

16. If the Book of Mormon is the most correct of any book on earth, as Joseph Smith said, why does it contain over 4000 changes from the original 1830 edition?



**23 And I said unto him:
Lord, the Gentiles
will mock at these things,
because of our weakness in
writing; for Lord thou hast
made us mighty in word by
faith, but thou hast not
made us mighty in writing;
for thou hast made all this
people that they could speak**

much, because of the Holy Ghost which thou hast given them;

24 And thou hast made us that we could write but little, because of the awkwardness of our hands. Behold, thou hast not made us mighty in writing like unto the brother of Jared, for thou madest him that the things which he wrote were mighty even as thou art, unto the overpowering of man to read them.

25 Thou hast also made our words powerful and great, even that we cannot write them; wherefore, when we write we behold our weakness, and stumble because of the placing of our words; and I fear lest the Gentiles shall mock at our words.

26 And when I had said this, the Lord spake unto me, saying: Fools mock, but they shall mourn; and my grace is sufficient for the meek, that they shall take no advantage of your weakness;

27 And if men come unto me I will show unto them their weakness. I give unto men weakness that they may be humble; and my grace is sufficient for all men that humble themselves before me; for if they humble themselves before me, and have faith in me, then will I make weak things become strong unto them.

28 Behold, I will show unto the Gentiles their weakness, and I will show unto them that faith, hope and charity bringeth unto me—the fountain of all righteousness.

29 And I, Moroni, having heard these words, was comforted, and said: O Lord, thy righteous will be done, for I know that thou workest unto the children of men according to their faith;

30 For the brother of Jared said unto the mountain Zerin, Remove—and it was removed. And if he had not had faith it would not have moved; wherefore thou workest after men have faith.

31 For thus didst thou manifest thyself unto thy disciples; for after they had faith, and did speak in thy name, thou didst show thyself unto them in great power.

32 And I also remember that thou hast said that thou hast prepared a house for man, yea, even among the mansions of thy Father, in which man might have a more excellent hope; wherefore man must hope, or he cannot receive an inheritance in the place which thou hast prepared.

33 And again, I remember that thou hast said that thou hast loved the world, even unto the laying down of thy life for the world, that thou mightest take it again to prepare a place for the children of men.

34 And now I know that this love which thou hast had for the children of men is charity; wherefore, except men shall have charity they cannot inherit that place which thou hast prepared in the mansions of thy Father.

35 Wherefore, I know by this thing which thou hast said, that if the Gentiles have not charity, because of our weakness, that thou wilt prove them, and take away their talent, yea, even that which they have received, and give unto them who shall have more abundantly.

36 And it came to pass that I prayed unto the Lord that he would give unto the Gentiles grace, that they might have charity.

37 And it came to pass that the Lord said unto me: If they have not charity it mattereth not unto thee, thou hast been faithful; wherefore, thy garments shall be made clean. And because thou hast seen thy weakness thou shalt be made strong, even unto the sitting down in the place which I have prepared in the mansions of my Father.

38 And now I, Moroni, bid farewell unto the Gentiles, yea, and also unto my brethren whom I love, until we shall meet before the judgment-seat of Christ, where all men shall know that my garments are not spotted with your blood.

39 And then shall ye know that I have seen Jesus, and that he hath talked with me face to face, and that he told me in plain humility, even as a man telleth another in mine own language, concerning these things;

40 And only a few have I written, because of my weakness in writing.

41 And now, I would commend you to seek this Jesus of whom the prophets and apostles have written, that the grace of God the Father, and also the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost, which beareth record of them, may be and abide in you forever. Amen.
(Ether 12)

All of the book of Mormon's errors are due to the weakness of men and not of God. The majority of them strictly have to do with grammar only. None of the changes deal with characters, geography, story, structure, events, teachings, or doctrine. Hence why the book is the "most" correct book on earth and not the 100% perfect book on earth.

The Webster's 1828 dictionary defines correct as being, "literally, set right, or made straight. Hence, right: conformable to truth, rectitude or propriety, or conformable to a just standard." And surely the Book of Mormon does conform to a just standard.

Changes in Book of Mormon Text: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Qn9W3J_9bY

Rev. J. R, Dummelow stated:

"We must not regard the Bible as an absolutely perfect book in which God is Himself the author using human hands and brains only as a man might use a typewriter. God used men, not machines - men with like weakness and prejudice and passion as ourselves ... in the Bible we do not expect the actors to be real and natural. Because of our false theory of Verbal Inspiration we are puzzled when the divine is mingled with the human. We must learn that the divine is mingled with the human ... It is a mine of precious ore where the gold is mingled with the rock and clay - the ore is richer in one part than another, but all parts in some degree are glittering with gold (p. cxxxv)"

There is a curious philosophy held among the Japanese called *wabi-sabi*. *Wabi-sabi* is a philosophy closely associated with Buddhism and has been a big part of the culture and history. For Leonard Koren, *wabi-sabi* can be described as "the most conspicuous and characteristic feature of traditional Japanese beauty and it occupies roughly the same position in the



Japanese pantheon of aesthetic values as do the Greek ideals of beauty and perfection in the far West." Andrew Juniper notes, "If an object or expression can bring about, within us, a sense of serene melancholy and a spiritual longing, then that object could be said to be wabi-sabi." Richard Powell, "*Wabi-sabi* nurtures all that is authentic by acknowledging three simple realities: nothing lasts, nothing is finished, and nothing is perfect." (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wabi-sabi>) *Wabi-sabi* is essentially finding beauty in the imperfect, things that are impure or fragile can have a sense of wonder. Like a sick child in bed who you can't help but love despite their illness. It is the factor which drives us to hope for the best and love those who are anything but perfect. We westerners are so proud of ourselves and so always seek perfection in people and things. If something or someone doesn't live up to our extremely high expectations then we dismiss them immediately. For the one who embraces *wabi-sabi*, the one seeks out the imperfect and loves that person, comforts that person, sustains that person.

A practice that they have over in the east is to take a bowl, break it and then mend it using powder gold, there after calling it art. This practice is called *kintsugi*, they say that this practice makes the bowl more beautiful than before. One could adequately call this practice a symbol for the atonement of Christ as shed in Gethsemane and on the cross. We are the bowl, but in order for us to become more beautiful then we must allow ourselves to be broken so that the Master can fill us with his blood (the gold powder) and make us more beautiful. It is veritably an act of humility on our part as we allow Christ to mold us into something greater. (see Jeremiah 18:6)

Through out the Bible we see examples of God taking broken men and women, whom we might call weak, ignorant, humble, and even sinful, and making them great instruments in His hands. "For *the Lord* ^aseeth not as *b*man seeth; for man looketh on the outward ^cappearance, but the ^dLord looketh on the ^eheart." (1 Samuel 16:7) Something that Jesus seems to say often to the Pharisees is that the publicans and the harlots will go into the kingdom of heaven before them. (Matthew 21:31) Indeed it was not the Pharisees or the high Romans, who were always striving to be perfect, that Jesus went to; but he did visit the harlot and the publican and the adulterer and the leper and the lame and the dumb and the blind, and he made them whole. He made of them like *kintsugi*.

When the woman taken in adultery was brought unto him, and the Pharisees demanded she be stoned, Jesus stooped down to write on the ground as if he did not hear them, as if

he was giving them a chance to leave the woman alone. But the crowd persisted so Jesus raised himself and said, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." When they could not answer they left the woman alone. And Jesus, wondering, said to her "Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee?" She said, "No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I ^acondemn thee: go, and ^bsin no ^cmore." (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w5GXnM_TxSQ)

The harlot, especially, has an interesting possession in the Bible. Sometimes the church of the devil is compared to a harlot and a whore (Revelation 17:5), we are told not to join ourselves to a harlot (1 Corinthians 6:15-16), and yet whenever Jesus comes across a harlot or an adulterer he is constantly forgiving them and teaching them to "go and sin no more." We also see Rahab the harlot being praised for her works and her faith (James 2:25, Hebrews 11:31), for it hath been said of her, "And the city shall be accursed, *even* it, and all that *are* therein, to the Lord: only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all that *are* with her in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent." (Joshua 6:17)

Consider the woman who anointed Jesus's head with ointment.

36 ¶ And one of the Pharisees desired him that he would eat with him. And he went into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat.

37 And, behold, a ^awoman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that *Jesus* sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster ^bbox of ointment,

38 And stood at his feet behind *him* weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe *them* with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and ^aanointed *them* with the ointment.

39 Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw *it*, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman *this is* that toucheth him: for she is a sinner.

40 And Jesus answering said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Master, say on.

41 There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred ^apence, and the other fifty.

42 And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly ^aforgave them both. ^bTell me therefore, which of them will love him most?

43 Simon answered and said, I suppose that *he*, to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged.

44 And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped *them* with the hairs of her head.

45 Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet.

46 My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment.

47 Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are *a*forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, *the same* loveth little.

48 And he said unto her, Thy sins are *a*forgiven.

49 And they that sat at meat with him began to say within themselves, Who is this that *a*forgiveth sins also?

50 And he said to the woman, Thy *a*faith hath saved thee; go in *b*peace.
(Luke 7)

<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/media-library/video/1996-06-09-lesson-10-come-unto-me?lang=eng>

I think that it can be appropriately said that Jesus loves imperfect people, and our church is full of them. As it is written that Jesus is called “a friend of publicans and sinners.” (Matthew 11:19) And the more imperfect a person is, the more that person is capable of loving God because of the the forgiveness He shall give that person. It seems logical to me then that God would want to zero in on these particular people as the perfect people would not love Him as much. And so it is that through out history, God does indeed focus in on these imperfect people. Something that needs to be asked is, why does God focus His efforts on the children of Abraham (the Israelites)?

When Moses came down with the ten commandments to give to the Israelites, what does he find? A golden calf is being worshiped instead of the Lord. So Moses broke the tablets, threw the calf into the fire, melted it down and made everyone drink it. He had to stand up and shout, “Who is on the Lord’s side? let him come unto me.” Just the sons of Levi went to him. And so it was that Moses was established as the mediator between God and

rebellious Israel. “And the Lord said unto Moses, Go, get thee down; for thy people, which thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt, have *“corrupted themselves:”* (Exodus 32)

Through out the Bible, we see many more instances of these things where people of Israel are constantly going astray, leaving God to worship idols. (see Deuteronomy 4:28)

From the Book of Mormon we learn that Christ “should come among the Jews, among those who are the more wicked part of the world; and they shall crucify him—for thus it behooveth our God, and there is none other nation on earth (or in the whole universe) that would crucify their God. For should the mighty miracles be wrought among other nations they would repent, and know that he be their God.” (2 Nephi 10:3-4)



Jesus Christ himself taught, “I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” (Matthew 15:24) And likewise he instructed his apostles to not go to the gentiles, or the Samaritans, but unto the house of Israel. (Matthew 10:5-6) Why?

Because they needed the gospel of Jesus Christ the most, more than anyone else, at the time. A certain

Charles L. Allen once said, “the

hardest people to reach with the love of God are not the bad people. They know they are bad. They have no defense. The hardest ones to win for God are the self-righteous people.”

Black men and women were denied priesthood and temple blessings for a time because, during their lifetime, it was not necessary for them to receive those blessings. But do not fear, for they who did not receive those blessings in their lifetimes are now currently receiving those very blessings in the afterlife. In fact, all who ever lived shall receive those blessings in the afterlife if their desires so align with it.

For now, in this life, God wants to focus on those bad people that Mr. Allen mentioned. For we know that we are bad, we have no defense. But because we are weak people who have done bad things we are humbled and are readily willing to accept the gospel of Jesus Christ. We are liars and cheaters, some are porn addicts and some few are drug addicts, but we are a humble people and that is all that matters. Surely God loves imperfect people, surely He

is a true believer in the philosophy of *wabi-sabi*. We are broken and he would mend us with his blood as shed on the cross and in the garden. “For all have ^asinned, and come short of the glory of God;

^aBeing ^bjustified freely by his ^cgrace through the ^dredemption that is in Christ Jesus:” (Romans 3:23-24)

I am sure that any Christian outside of my church, who is a critic of us, must accept that no proposed Christians needs the gospel of Jesus Christ more than

those of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. We don't deserve the love of God and yet He still gives it to us anyway freely. We are as the prodigal son who did waste his father's inheritance with riotous living and did spend many nights with harlots. But when we said we would return unto our house as a servant, our Father instead embraced us as a son (or a daughter). He put a ring on our hand, shoes on our feet, and a fine robe on our bodies, and then did celebrate our return with a party and did kill the fatted calf for us. Enviest thou because of this? Thou art alike unto the second and oldest son. (Luke 15:11-32)

Elder Deter F. Uchtdorf taught:

“So if you feel small and weak, please simply come unto Christ, who makes weak things strong. The weakest among us, through God's grace, can become spiritually strong, because God “is no respecter of persons.” He is our “faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments.”

“It is my conviction that if God can reach out and sustain a poor German refugee from a modest family in a war-torn country half a world away from the headquarters of the Church, then He can reach out to you.

“My beloved brothers in Christ, the God of Creation, who breathed life into the universe, surely has the power to breathe life into you. Surely He can make of you the genuine, spiritual being of light and truth you desire to be.

“God's promises are sure and certain. We can be forgiven of our sins and cleansed from all unrighteousness. And if we continue to embrace and live true principles in our personal



circumstances and in our families, we will ultimately arrive at a point where we “hunger no more, neither thirst any more. ... For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed [us], and shall lead [us] unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from [our] eyes.”

“But this cannot happen if we hide behind personal, dogmatic, or organizational facades. Such artificial discipleship not only keeps us from seeing ourselves as who we really are, but it also prevents us from truly changing through the miracle of the Savior’s Atonement. The Church is not an automobile showroom—a place to put ourselves on display so that others can admire our spirituality, capacity, or prosperity. It is more like a service center, where vehicles in need of repair come for maintenance and rehabilitation.

“And are we not, all of us, in need of repair, maintenance, and rehabilitation?”

“We come to church not to hide our problems but to heal them.”

<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2015/04/on-being-genuine?lang=eng>)

5 Now, behold, I say unto you, if I had not been ^aborn of God I should ^bnot have known these things; but God has, by the mouth of his holy ^cangel, made these things known unto me, not of any ^dworthiness of myself;

6 For I went about with the sons of Mosiah, seeking to ^adestroy the church of God; but behold, God sent his holy angel to stop us by the way.

7 And behold, he spake unto us, as it were the voice of thunder, and the whole earth did ^atremble beneath our feet; and we all fell to the earth, for the ^bfear of the Lord came upon us.

8 But behold, the voice said unto me: Arise. And I arose and stood up, and beheld the angel.

9 And he said unto me: If thou wilt of thyself be destroyed, seek no more to destroy the church of God.

10 And it came to pass that I fell to the earth; and it was for the space of ^athree days and three nights that I could not open my mouth, neither had I the use of my limbs.

11 And the angel spake more things unto me, which were heard by my brethren, but I did ^anot hear them; for when I heard the words—If thou wilt be destroyed of thyself, seek no more to destroy the church of God—I was struck with such great fear and amazement lest perhaps I should be destroyed, that I fell to the earth and I did hear no more.

12 But I was racked with ^aeternal ^btorment, for my soul was ^charrowed up to the greatest degree and racked with all my sins.

13 Yea, I did remember all my sins and iniquities, for which I was ^atormented with the ^bpains of hell; yea, I saw that I had ^crebelled against my God, and that I had not kept his holy commandments.

14 Yea, and I had ^amurdered many of his children, or rather led them away unto destruction; yea, and in fine so great had been my iniquities, that the very thought of coming into the presence of my God did rack my soul with inexpressible horror.

15 Oh, thought I, that I ^acould be banished and become extinct both soul and body, that I might not be brought to stand in the presence of my God, to be judged of my ^bdeeds.

16 And now, for three days and for three nights was I racked, even with the ^apains of a ^bdamned soul.

17 And it came to pass that as I was thus ^aracked with torment, while I was ^bharrowed up by the ^cmemory of my many sins, behold, I ^dremembered also to have heard my father prophesy unto the people concerning the coming of one Jesus Christ, a Son of God, to atone for the sins of the world.

18 Now, as my mind caught hold upon this thought, I cried within my heart: O Jesus, thou Son of God, ^ahave mercy on me, who am ^bin the ^cgall of bitterness, and am encircled about by the everlasting ^dchains of ^edeath.

19 And now, behold, when I thought this, I could remember my ^apains ^bno more; yea, I was harrowed up by the memory of my sins no more.

20 And oh, what ^ajoy, and what marvelous light I did behold; yea, my soul was filled with joy as exceeding as was my pain!

21 Yea, I say unto you, my son, that there could be nothing so exquisite and so bitter as were my pains. Yea, and again I say unto you, my son, that on the other hand, there can be nothing so exquisite and sweet as was my joy.

22 Yea, methought I saw, even as our father ^aLehi saw, God sitting upon his throne, surrounded with numberless concourses of angels, in the attitude of singing and ^bpraising their God; yea, and my soul did long to be there.

23 But behold, my limbs did receive their ^astrength again, and I stood upon my feet, and did manifest unto the people that I had been ^bborn of God.

24 Yea, and from that time even until now, I have labored without ceasing, that I might bring souls unto ^arepentance; that I might bring them to ^btaste of the exceeding joy of which I did taste; that they might also be ^cborn of God, and be ^dfilled with the Holy Ghost.

25 Yea, and now behold, O my son, the Lord doth ^agive me exceedingly great joy in the fruit of my ^blabors;

26 For because of the ^aword which he has imparted unto me, behold, many have been born of God, and have ^btasted as I have tasted, and have seen eye to eye as I have seen; therefore they do know of these things of which I have spoken, as I do know; and the knowledge which I have is of God.

27 And I have been supported under trials and troubles of every kind, yea, and in all manner of afflictions; yea, God has ^adelivered me from prison, and from bonds, and from death; yea, and I do put my trust in him, and he will still ^bdeliver me.

(Alma 36)

John Lynch taught:

“What are your assumptions? This is going back to the starting point. Let’s think about Joseph Smith. What is our assumption about Joseph? Is he good or bad? Did he do some things wrong? Yeah, I’m sure he did. He obviously did. So what is our assumption? Can God use a damaged tool? I’ll tell you what, I sure hope so, because if he doesn’t, I’m useless to him. I am completely useless. Yes, the Lord can use broken tools. In fact, that’s all he’s got to work with. My young daughter who’s 12 years old, came to me one day and she says, “Daddy, I’m broken.” I said, “Sweetie, we’re all broken” and we are, okay, but the Lord can use us anyway. Maybe he’s just got a shorter wrench. He puts needs to put more pressure on us because we’re a shorter wrench because he doesn’t have the length of leverage that he would otherwise have. Something along those lines. The same is true of Joseph Smith or any of our leaders.

"Joseph came down with typhoid fever, known as nervous fever, when he was seven years old in 1812, and I apologize what I’m going to show you, but I trust that you’re far enough away from lunch, that it won’t matter. Okay? Because I want to actually impact you with the character of Joseph Smith, by what I’m going to show you. Joseph Smith with the typhoid fever, had a blister on his shoulder between the shoulder and his chest that lasted for several weeks, and when they finally pierced it, they estimate that they drained a quart

of fluid from his shoulder. That lancing caused the infection to get into his blood. Now he ran the risk of actually going septic. It went down and got in his bones in the tibia, in his left leg. These pictures here show what osteomyelitis does and that's exactly what happened. It got into the bone marrow and what actually happens. I'm not going to go through too much of an explanation here. I will spare you a little bit, but what happens is the infection causes pus. It actually ruptures the bone. The pus then can seep out seeking an escape. New bone comes in and goes over the top of it because bones don't like to be broken. So the new bone starts to grow back. It causes immense pressure on the leg. They wanted to relieve that pressure, so they came in with a scalpel and they put a seven inch incision in Joseph's leg. Now he's seven years old. I'm guessing his tibia is about that long. The incision was about that long. Okay, so what essentially happened was they put an incision down his leg to relieve the pain and pressure, that was most of the length of his tibia.

“Those are the tools that were available to doctors during the Civil War. This is a few years before the Civil War. I imagine those tools. I've got a number of those, I think, in my garage. Those were the surgical tools that they had. Now, by the time that Dr. Nathan Smith was called in (he was one of the foremost experts in surgery in the area) so they've really brought in the best of the best for young Joseph. He came in and examined the boy and he said, “We need to amputate.” And Joseph refused. He absolutely refused to have his leg amputated and he knew that he was in risk of his life. About 40 percent of people who don't get antibiotics die from this within a short period of time. They didn't have antibiotics, so what they would do is they'd remove the leg in order to get rid of the infection.

“The only other thing that could be done (Dr. Nathan Smith had done this about 10 years before) was to actually open the wound and remove that old bone and then hope that light and air would cleanse the infection and they could then close up the wound. So he decided to do that and he wanted to get Joseph drunk, mainly so he would relax. Then they wanted to tie him down so he wouldn't move and wiggle because you can imagine a seven year old, how much he's going to try and move, how difficult that's going to make the procedure for the doctor. Of course, Joseph didn't want any of that. He had three requests. One, no alcohol. He wanted to be present when it was happening. Two, he wanted his mother out of the house. He was conscious of her and he wanted her far enough away that she could not

hear his screams because he knew what it was going to be, what he was going to go through. He did not want her to hear the screams, so they sent her out and then all he wanted was his dad to hold him, and we know what happened, right? This was a violent surgery. They removed nine large pieces of bone that were removed by probably one of those devices that looks like a pair of snips down at the bottom. They had to grab it and they had to break it off. They removed nine pieces of bone. Now how do I know that it was a violent event? Not just because it was bone, because afterwards 14 smaller pieces of bone festered up out of the wound in the days that followed, meaning this was not a clean process. They didn't have lights; they didn't have anesthesia; they didn't have a mask and gloves. This was just a brutal butchery that had to happen.

“We all know that Joseph was remarkable, but what's more remarkable to me is that the surgeon saw something in that seven year old boy that made him say, ok]”Oay, no alcohol, not going to tie you down. Your dad just to hold you. I will do this.” What did that doctor see in a seven year old that gave them confidence to do that? I think that says volumes about the Prophet Joseph Smith. I'll just remind you that that leg was used when he was running from the crowds. It carried him on Zion's March of a thousand miles or more. He even was known to wrestle. He did the stick pole and there's rumor that I've heard that he actually broke the tibia of one of the men that he wrestled against with his bum leg.

“This is one more that I want to share about Joseph's character. Many of you are familiar with the Missouri War of 1838. Joseph had sent W.W. Phelps and other men there to buy land. There's speculation. They had an area, a county that was specifically assigned that they could buy land and develop in. They went out there and they were buying land, and W.W. Phelps and some of the other brethren started saying, “Wow, you know what? A lot of people are going to be moving here. Let's get some of this land for ourselves as prices go up.” So when Joseph arrived and he found out that they'd been doing this, that they'd been doing some land speculation on their own, he chewed them out and it caused a rift and I would say rightfully so, that Joseph was angry. He was caring about the poor and the needy and all the people who are going to have to move there, displaced. And so he chewed them out and they actually turned against Joseph. They went to some of the local newspapers and with some of their testimony and comments, that riled the crowd against him, and that led to the to the Missouri War of 1838 that caused the death of some individuals caused Joseph Smith and other leading brethren to be incarcerated for a number of months. You

can go and read some of the letters that Joseph wrote to his wife during that period. It is tender. He's more worried about her in many ways than he is himself, which again reflects more on his character.

“But because of that W.W. Phelps basically left the Church. He wrote to Joseph sometime later. He says, “Brother Joseph, I’m alive, and with the help of God, I mean to live well still. I am as the prodigal son; though I never doubted or disbelieved the fulness of the gospel, I have been greatly abased and humbled, and I blessed the God of Israel when I lately read your prophetic blessing on my head as follows, ‘The Lord will chasten him because he taketh honor to himself. And when his soul is greatly humbled, he will forsake the evil. Then shall the light of the Lord break forth upon him as the noon day, and in him shall be no darkness.’” Joseph responded, “Had it been an enemy, we could have borne it... ‘In the day that thou stoodest on the other side, in the day when strangers carried away captive his forces, and foreigners entered into his gates, and cast lots upon Far West, even thou wast as one of them; but thou shouldest not have looked on the day of thy brother, in the day that he became a stranger, neither shouldest thou have spoken proudly in the day of distress.’ [See Obadiah 1:11–12.]” He had requested readmission to the Church and they had a vote and they agreed. He closed his epistle to him, “Come on dear brother, since the war is past, for friends at first are friends again at last.” Something you may not know is it before the Kirtland Temple was completed, Joseph called W.W. Phelps and his wife into the John Johnson store and sealed upon them their exaltation. Is that really the way [of] somebody who wants all the attention on himself? What does that say about the character of Joseph? He spent years in jail. He saw friends die. He saw his efforts thwarted. They got driven again out of Missouri, had to start over in Illinois, in Nauvoo. What does that tell you about the character of Joseph Smith? That right there, that’s documented. It’s undeniable. So brothers and sisters, I encourage you to think about these things.”

(<https://www.fairmormon.org/conference/august-2018/strengthen-thy-brethren-bolstering-those-in-faith-crisis>)

17. If the Book of Mormon contains the “fulness of the everlasting gospel”, why does the LDS Church need additional works?



We are not like you. We do not believe in a closed canon of scriptural works. For we believe “all that God has revealed, all that He does now reveal, and we believe that He will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God.” (articles of faith 1:9)

The scriptural works that we have here on earth are only a quark compared to the massive universe of knowledge, which is with God. Surely God would be loving enough to be continually pouring down knowledge and revelations upon us. For “...it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophecy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophecy:" (Acts 2:17-18)

John, while on the isle of Patmos, decreed that, “the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.”(Revelation 19:10) If there is no one to prophecy then there is no one who has “the testimony of Jesus.” Something that Moses declared was,“Enviest thou for my sake? would God that all the Lord’s people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his spirit upon them!”(Numbers 11:29)

When it comes to Revelation 22:18, if the interpretation of this scripture is what I think you think it is (that it means that we should not add more scripture to the Bible passed this verse or we shall have plagues added to us) then we have a huge problem. For one thing, John wrote those words before he wrote his epistles or his gospel, so I guess we should tear those scriptures out of the Bible. (<https://www.biblestudytools.com/resources/guide-to-bible-study/order-books-new-testament.html>)

Oh, wait, except Moses also wrote something similar in Deuteronomy 12:32 and Deuteronomy 4:2. It looks like we should tear out every book passed Deuteronomy then and leave in the five books of Moses. Now your faith is in vain for you have put faith into scripture which exceeds past Deuteronomy. These verses are not referring to the scriptural canon itself but to the individual book in which they were written.

Oh but you also might say that when Jesus said on the cross, “It is finished”(John 19:30), that he was talking about how the scriptural canon is finished. There should be no more revelations after Christ’s death. Sure, of course he wasn’t talking about his long-suffering atonement finally being finished. So then why did the apostles continue to preach and prophesy of prophecies long after Christ’s death? Why did Christ appear to Paul on the road to Damascus? Why did Stephen see Christ standing on the right hand of the Father? “Then, my Lord—that is the way we address judges in the British Commonwealth—I am submitting to you in all seriousness that it was standard procedure in Bible times for God to talk to man.”

“I think I will admit that, but it stopped shortly after the first century of the Christian era.”

“Why do you think it stopped?”

“I can’t say.”

“You think that God hasn’t spoken since then?”

“I am sure He hasn’t.”

“There must be a reason. Can you give me a reason?”

“I do not know.”

“May I suggest some possible reasons? Perhaps God does not speak to man anymore because He cannot. He has lost the power.”

He said, “Of course that would be blasphemous.”

“Well, then, if you don’t accept that, perhaps He doesn’t speak to men because He doesn’t love us anymore and He is no longer interested in the affairs of men.”

“No,” he said, “God loves all men, and He is no respecter of persons.”

“Well, then, if He could speak, and if He loves us, then the only other possible answer, as I see it, is that we don’t need Him. We have made such rapid strides in science and we are so well educated that we don’t need God anymore.”

And then he said—and his voice trembled as he thought of impending war—“Mr. Brown, there never was a time in the history of the world when the voice of God was needed as it is needed now. Perhaps you can tell me why He doesn’t speak.”

My answer was: “He does speak, He has spoken; but men need faith to hear Him.”

(<https://speeches.byu.edu/talks/hugh-b-brown/profile-of-a-prophet/>)

Also, consider the explosion of light since 1830. Man has never made greater progress than we have since that time:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3W4ma2nm_A8

I once asked my history teacher why there was such an explosion of progress and he responded that he really didn’t know.

For these very reasons do we say as written in Doctrine and Covenants that this is, “...the only true and living ^dchurch upon the face of the whole earth, ...” I have come to know this of myself, not because it had been “whispered” in my ear since “literal infancy”, but because of personal study and prayer. I was not brainwashed into it, if I had been I would have noticed by now. My parents allowed me to grow precept upon precept on my own until I could say that my testimony was my own. I can say that we are the only true and living church, not because all other churches are evil and teach no truth, but because we are the only Church that is lead by prophets and apostles.

Prophets and apostles are found in the New Testament so why would they cease to be in our day?

“If one desired to discover Christ’s Church today, he would want to match the spiritual blueprint found in the New Testament against every Christian church in the world until he discovered a church that matched the blueprint—organization for organization, teaching for teaching, ordinance for ordinance, fruit for fruit, and revelation for revelation. In doing so, he might find some churches that had some similarities—a teaching or two that

overlapped, an ordinance that is the same, some offices that bear common names—but he will only find one church, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, that matches the blueprint in every material respect. Now I would like to put that assertion to the test. Let us turn to the first page of the blueprint and discover what was the “Organization” of Christ’s Church as revealed therein.

“First, Christ’s Church was founded on apostles and prophets. When Paul was writing to some new members of the Church, he said that they were now “built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone” (Ephesians 2:20; italics added).

“The Apostles understood the imperative need to keep the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles intact. When one Apostle, such as Judas, died and a portion of the foundation was “chipped away,” the other 11 Apostles gathered together and chose a successor so that the foundation would be whole again (see Acts 1:22–25).

"This pattern evidenced the importance of maintaining a quorum of twelve Apostles. So important were these Apostles to the well-being of the Church that Paul declared how long we needed them: “Till we all come in the unity of the faith” (Ephesians 4:13). And then he explained why: So we would not be “carried about with every wind of doctrine” (Ephesians 4:14). Accordingly, the Apostles were critical to keeping the doctrine pure.

“Suppose for a moment I were to tell a story to someone on one end of the row in front of me, and then he were to share it with the person next to him, and so on until it were to work its way down the rows to the end of the section. What would happen to that story? It would change. It always changes; that is human nature. So it was with the doctrine taught by the Apostles as they went out to the various towns and villages. As the doctrine went from one person to another, it started to change. As long as the Apostles were available, they could correct the doctrine by way of epistles or personal sermons. But when the Apostles were gone, there was no longer any check-and-balance system, no longer any correcting hand, and soon the doctrines became distorted or lost.

"For this and other reasons, the blueprint reveals that the apostles and prophets constituted the foundation of Christ’s Church. Do you know of any change order in the New Testament, any revelation that revised the blueprint and states that apostles are no longer needed? I don’t. If that is the case, then Christ’s true Church today should have apostles and prophets as its foundation.

“In order to assist the Savior and His Apostles in preaching the gospel to the world, the Savior chose other men, called Seventy, to prepare the way. We read of these Seventy in Luke, chapter 10. Do you know of a church today that matches this blueprint—that has the office of Seventy?”

“The blueprint of the New Testament reveals other officers that constituted part of the organization of Christ’s Church: bishops (see 1 Timothy 3; Titus 1:7); elders (see Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5); deacons (see Philippians 1:1); evangelists (see Ephesians 4:11), meaning patriarchs¹; and pastors (see Ephesians 4:11), meaning such men as bishops and stake presidents who preside over a flock.

“The sixth article of faith of the Church makes reference to this blueprint: “We believe in the same organization that existed in the Primitive Church, namely, apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers, evangelists, and so forth” (Articles of Faith 1:6; italics added). In other words, we believe the current Church of Jesus Christ should have the same organization as existed in Christ’s original Church, subject only to revelatory changes. Therefore, each of these offices is present in our Church today.”

(<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/broadcasts/article/ces-devotionals/2014/01/what-is-the-blueprint-of-christs-church?lang=eng>)

Dr. Nibley mentions two Bible scholars who agree with these teachings, saying, “For the earliest Christians, the apostolic office, the gift of revelation, and the bringing forth of scripture were always regarded as going hand in hand; and ... at least as late as AD 200 it was held to be perfectly legitimate ‘for someone to add something to the word of the Gospel.’” (Hugh Nibley, “the Prophets and the Scriptures,” *The World and the Prophets*, 202.)

18. If the Book of Mormon contains the “fulness of the everlasting gospel”, why doesn’t it say anything about so many important teachings such as eternal progression, celestial marriage, the Word of Wisdom, the plurality of Gods, the pre-existence of man, our mother in heaven, baptism for the dead, etc?



It would appear you don’t seem to understand what the word “gospel” means. Otherwise, you would not be asking such a question. The online dictionary’s definition of the gospel is “the teaching or revelation of Christ.” The gospel doesn’t refer to every doctrine and teaching ever of all time and eternity; it relates to simply and plainly “the teaching or revelation of Christ.”

So, what is the teaching and revelation of Christ? “The word gospel originates from the meaning of the New Testament Greek word evangelion meaning "good news". This meaning was transmitted literally into Old English as godspell, eventually becoming gospel.” (<https://www.theopedia.com/gospel>) The good news of Christ is that he suffered, died on the cross, and was resurrected so that we may all be resurrected and exalted.

And this is the gospel which the Book of Mormon came to proclaim; surely it is the same as in the New Testament:

“Behold I have given unto you my gospel, and this is the gospel which I have given unto you —that I came into the world to do the will of my Father, because my Father sent me.

“And my Father sent me that I might be lifted up upon the cross; and after that I had been lifted up upon the cross, that I might draw all men unto me, that as I have been lifted up by

men even so should men be lifted up by the Father, to stand before me, to be judged of their works, whether they be good or whether they be evil—

"And for this cause have I been lifted up; therefore, according to the power of the Father I will draw all men unto me, that they may be judged according to their works.

“And it shall come to pass, that whoso repenteth and is baptized in my name shall be filled; and if he endureth to the end, behold, him will I hold guiltless before my Father at that day when I shall stand to judge the world.

"And he that endureth not unto the end, the same is he that is also hewn down and cast into the fire, from whence they can no more return, because of the justice of the Father.

“And this is the word which he hath given unto the children of men. And for this cause he fulfilleth the words which he hath given, and he lieth not, but fulfilleth all his words.

“And no unclean thing can enter into his kingdom; therefore nothing entereth into his rest save it be those who have washed their garments in my blood, because of their faith, and the repentance of all their sins, and their faithfulness unto the end.”

(3 Nephi 27:13-19)

From Wikipedia we read:

"A gospel is an account describing the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. The most widely known examples are the four canonical gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John which are included in the New Testament, ..."

Many within the church have taken to calling 3 Nephi "the fifth gospel" for these reasons.

“35 Verily, verily, I say unto you, that this is my doctrine, and I bear record of it from the Father; and whoso believeth in me believeth in the Father also; and unto him will the Father bear record of me, for he will visit him with fire and with the Holy Ghost.

“36 And thus will the Father bear record of me, and the Holy Ghost will bear record unto him of the Father and me; for the Father, and I, and the Holy Ghost are one.

“37 And again I say unto you, ye must repent, and become as a little child, and be baptized in my name, or ye can in nowise receive these things.

“38 And again I say unto you, ye must repent, and be baptized in my name, and become as a little child, or ye can in nowise inherit the kingdom of God.

“39 Verily, verily, I say unto you, that this is my doctrine, and whoso buildeth upon this buildeth upon my rock, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against them.

“40 And whoso shall declare more or less than this, and establish it for my doctrine, the same cometh of evil, and is not built upon my rock; but he buildeth upon a sandy foundation, and the gates of hell stand open to receive such when the floods come and the winds beat upon them.” (3 Nephi 11:35-40)

While you are correct in saying that many of those doctrines you brought up are not found in the Book of Mormon. The Book of Mormon doesn't seek to concern itself with those things as it seeks only to testify of Christ and his gospel; that he lived, died for us, and rose from the dead that we might all be resurrected.

Actually, the Book of Mormon does teach the pre-existence of man, look here:

"3 And this is the manner after which they were ordained—being called and prepared from the foundation of the world according to the foreknowledge of God, on account of their exceeding faith and good works; in the first place being left to choose good or evil; therefore they having chosen good, and exercising exceedingly great faith, are called with a holy calling, yea, with that holy calling which was prepared with, and according to, a preparatory redemption for such.

“4 And thus they have been called to this holy calling on account of their faith, while others would reject the Spirit of God on account of the hardness of their hearts and blindness of their minds, while, if it had not been for this they might have had as great privilege as their brethren.

"5 Or in fine, in the first place they were on the same standing with their brethren; thus this holy calling being prepared from the foundation of the world for such as would not harden their hearts, being in and through the atonement of the Only Begotten Son, who was prepared—“

(Alma 13:3–5)

Of this, Elder Neal A. Maxwell testified:

"So far as we know, brothers and sisters, the restoration of this responsive doctrine began with the translation by Joseph Smith of a few verses in the Book of Alma, late 1829 or early 1830. (See Alma 13:3–5.) By themselves, however, these verses would not have been adequate. Elder Orson Pratt said: “This same doctrine [premortal existence] is inculcated in some small degree in the Book of Mormon. However, I do not think that I should have

ever discerned it in that book had it not been for the new translation of the Scriptures [Bible].” (*Journal of Discourses*, 15:249.)”

(<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/1985/10/premortality-a-glorious-reality?lang=eng>)

“The Lord Himself has stated that the Book of Mormon contains the ‘fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ’ (D&C 20:9). That does not mean it contains every teaching, every doctrine ever revealed. Rather, it means that in the Book of Mormon we will find the fulness of those doctrines required for our salvation. And they are taught plainly and simply.” (Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Ezra Taft Benson [2014].

From the end of the Gospel of John, we learn that if we had written down everything that Jesus ever said and did, “I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the ^bbooks that should be written. Amen.” (John 21:25)

We find a similar thing happen with the writers of the Book of Mormon as expressed by Mormon himself, “And there had many things transpired which, in the eyes of some, would be great and marvelous; nevertheless, they cannot all be written in this book; yea, this book cannot contain even a ^ahundredth part of what was done among so many people in the space of twenty and five years;” (3 Nephi 5:8)

“And now there cannot be written in this book even a ^ahundredth part of the things which Jesus did truly teach unto the people;” (3 Nephi 26:6)

His son Moroni wrote, “And now, as I, Moroni, said I could ^anot make a full account of these things which are written,” (Ether 3:17)

Nephi knew the limitations of writing very well and so opted to write only those things which he saw as being most sacred: “... I do not ^awrite anything upon plates save it be that I think it be ^bsacred. And now, if I do err, even did they err of old; not that I would excuse myself because of other men, but because of the ^cweakness which is in me, according to the flesh, I would excuse myself.” (1 Nephi 19:6)

19. Why do you baptize for the dead when both Mosiah 3:25 and the Bible state that there is no chance of salvation after death?

FairMormon gives this response:



“The passage in Mosiah 3:25, and any passages in the Bible which also imply there is no chance of salvation after death, are clearly addressed to those who have the opportunity to repent in this life. Those who have not, by no fault of their own, embraced the everlasting gospel in this life will have the opportunity to do so after death.

“The critics are on thin ice with this attack—do they wish us to believe in a

God so unjust that He would damn someone for all eternity, simply because they never had the opportunity to hear about Jesus?

“Why wouldn't members of the Church baptize for the dead, when the Bible teaches this idea? (See 1 Corinthians 15:29.)”

([https://www.fairmormon.org/answers/Countercult_ministries/Tower to Truth Ministries/](https://www.fairmormon.org/answers/Countercult_ministries/Tower_to_Truth_Ministries/)

50 Questions to Ask Mormons/

Questions About LDS Scripture (excluding the Bible)#Response to claim: .

2218. If the Book of Mormon contains the .27fulness of the everlasting gospel.2C.

27 why doesn.

27t it say anything about so many important teachings such as eternal progression.

2C celestial marriage.2C the Word of Wisdom.2C the plurality of Gods.2C the pre-

existence of man.2C our mother in heaven.2C baptism for the dead.2C etc.3F.22)

Elder Legrand Richards taught:

“We hear constantly that all we have to do is to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and we will be saved. The advocates of this doctrine take for their justification the statement of Jesus to the malefactor on the cross when he said, “To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.” (Luke 23:43.) (The Prophet Joseph Smith indicates that the word paradise as it

appears in the Bible should have been translated as “the world of spirits.”) They think that they can all be saved just by acknowledging Jesus as the Christ. If they only understood the scriptures!

“Paul was caught up into the third heaven (and there cannot be a third heaven if there isn’t a first and a second) and he was caught up into paradise and heard unspeakable words, “which it is not lawful for a man to utter.” (See 2 Cor. 12:2–4.)

“Let us consider then the statement made by Jesus to the malefactor: “To day shalt thou be with me in paradise” (or in the world of spirits). The apostle Paul tells us that there are three heavens above the world of spirits, and Jesus said: “In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you ... that where I am, there ye may be also.” (John 14:2–3.)

“The prophet Alma, as recorded in the Book of Mormon, discusses the condition of the soul between death and the resurrection, and he states this: “Now this is the state of the souls of the wicked, yea, in darkness, and a state of awful, fearful looking for the fiery indignation of the wrath of God upon them; thus they remain in this state, as well as the righteous in paradise, until the time of their resurrection.” (Alma 40:14.)

“The world does not understand this, but if you will trust the scriptures, Jesus did not take the malefactor to heaven. He took him to the world of spirits, and there are three heavens above that, according to the Holy Scriptures. Why did he take him to paradise (the world of spirits)? It was a great gift and recognition at his hand because of what the malefactor had said on the cross.

“Then the apostle Peter tells us where he went that day when he was crucified: “... he went and preached unto the spirits in prison, Which sometime were disobedient, ... in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.” (1 Pet. 3:19–20.)

“So instead of the malefactor having to wait for years and years like those who were wicked in the days of Noah, the Savior took him with him that very day to the place where he could hear the gospel preached. Peter tells us that “for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.” (1 Pet. 4:6.) And that is where the malefactor went with the Savior that day, but there are three heavens above that to which Jesus did not take him.”

<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/1972/10/strange-creeds-of-christendom?lang=eng>)

In his talk, *The Great Plan of Happiness*, Scott L. Anderson tells a beautiful story concerning baptism for the dead. He was told this story by an Indian Princess from Canada. She told him about her strict Indian Chief of a father.

On their reservation, they would encounter many Christian missionaries from many different denominations. This Indian Chief would always ask one question to the missionaries. He absolutely loved his ancestors and knew them well, so he would always ask about what would happen to his ancestors who lived before their church was on the earth. He was often told that his ancestors would go to hell with no chance of redemption; this would always enrage the Indian chief. He would say that he knew the great spirit would not teach that. And so he would send them away.

One day, two LDS missionaries came knocking on his door. This stern chief looked them in the eye and asked them the question. So they told him about this wonderful place called the spirit world where his ancestors were. There they were being taught the gospel and given a chance to receive it unto salvation. The Indian Chief embraced these two missionaries and said, “I know that you have just told me the truth. Come inside and teach my family.”

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=682&v=8u6sZ-Wcbok)

While on the subject of what Paul meant by saying “why then are they baptized for the dead?” Robert L. Millet wrote:

“Paul was most sensitive to blasphemy and false ceremonialism—of all people he would not have argued for the foundation truth of the Resurrection with a questionable example. He obviously did not feel that the principle was disharmonious with the gospel.” (Robert L. Millet Aug 1987 Ensign (quoting Richard Lloyd Anderson, *Understanding Paul*))

From *The Jerome Biblical Commentary “The First Letter to the Corinthians”*, Richard Kugelman said:

“Paul alludes to a practice of the Corinthian Community as evidence for Christian faith in the resurrection of the dead. It seems that in Corinth some Christians would undergo baptism in the name of their deceased non-Christian relatives and friends, hoping that this vicarious baptism might assure them a share in redemption of Christ.”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KjGkDMUk7IE>

20. Since the word grace means a free gift that can't be earned, why does the Book of Mormon state "for we know that it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do" (2 Nephi 25:23)?



Something tells me that that definition of grace, "a free gift that can't be earned" is just your definition of grace. Certainly, grace is a free gift, but couldn't it still be earned? Why couldn't it be earned? I don't like the idea of participation trophies.

The online dictionary defines grace as: "(in Christian belief) the free and unmerited favor of God, as manifested in the salvation of sinners and the bestowal of blessings." I prefer this definition over yours. Sorry.

"The doctrine of salvation through faith alone, sometimes called solafidianism, is not a biblical doctrine: there are no instances in the New Testament of phrases "grace alone" or "faith alone".

"The New Testament records 541 scriptural statements by over 16 different personalities that pertain directly or indirectly to the way salvation is achieved. The preponderance of evidences clearly in favor of statements that indicate that man will be held accountable and judged on the basis of his works, deeds, acts, fruits, obedience, and so forth. Of the 541 New Testament verses, 418 (or 77%) are supportive of works as a criterion for final judgement." (Michael Adair, *The Doctrines of Salvation by Grace vs Works: A New Look at an Old Controversy*)

There are many things that are, of course, definitely a free gift without any works on our part, such as the resurrection. But exaltation, to be where God is, requires more of us that we must be made perfect through sanctification by the blood of the Lamb. The blood of the Lamb is something that we can either accept or reject; we accept it by being baptized and keeping the commandments.

Now certainly works alone cannot save us. We never said, as claimed by Rick Branch, “God’s Grace is Inadequate For Salvation.” For indeed, God’s grace is most definitely adequate for salvation; in fact, it might be overly adequate. For this is something that has been made very clear by Abinadi in the Book of Mormon. He asked those wicked priests of King Noah, “Doth salvation come by the law of Moses? What say ye? And they answered and said that salvation did come by the law of Moses.” (Mosiah 12:31). After teaching some eternal truths, Abinadi answered his own question:

“Salvation doth not come by the law alone; and were it not for the atonement, which God himself shall make for the sins and iniquities of his people, that they must unavoidably perish, notwithstanding the law of Moses” (Mosiah 13:28).

My man, Elder Bruce R. McKonkie made this analogy:

“Now let us suppose a modern-day case. Suppose we have the scriptures, the gospel, the priesthood, the Church, the ordinances, the organization, even the keys of the kingdom—everything that now is down to the last jot and tittle—and yet there is no atonement of Christ. What then? Can we be saved? Will all our good works save us? Will we be rewarded for all our righteousness?

"Most assuredly we will not. We are not saved by works alone, no matter how good; we are saved because God sent his Son to shed his blood in Gethsemane and on Calvary that all through him might ransomed be. We are saved by the blood of Christ.

“To paraphrase Abinadi: “Salvation doth not come by the Church alone: and were it not for the atonement, given by the grace of God as a free gift, all men must unavoidably perish, and this notwithstanding the Church and all that appertains to it.” “

Earlier in that same talk, Elder McKonkie made this declaration:

"Does salvation come by grace, or grace alone, by grace without works? It surely does, without any question in all its parts, types, kinds, and degrees.

“We are saved by grace, without works; it is a gift of God. How else could it come?

“In his goodness and grace the great God ordained and established the plan of salvation. No works on our part were required.

“In his goodness and grace he created this earth and all that is on it, with man as the crowning creature of his creating—without which creation his spirit children could not obtain immortality and eternal life. No works on our part were required.

"In his goodness and grace he provided for the Fall of man, thus bringing mortality and death and a probationary estate into being—without all of which there would be no immortality and eternal life. And again no works on our part were required.

“In his goodness and grace—and this above all—he gave his Only Begotten Son to ransom man and all life from the temporal and spiritual death brought into the world by the Fall of Adam.

“He sent his Son to redeem mankind, to atone for the sins of the world, “to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man” (Moses 1:39). And again all this comes to us as a free gift and without works.

"There is nothing any man could do to create himself. This was the work of the Lord God.

"Nor did we have any part in the Fall of man, without which there could be no salvation. The Lord provided the way, and Adam and Eve put the system into operation.

"And finally, there neither has been, nor is, nor ever can be any way nor means by which man alone can, or any power he possesses, redeem himself.

"We cannot resurrect ourselves anymore than we can create ourselves. We cannot create a heavenly abode for the Saints, nor make provision for the continuation of the family unit in eternity, nor bring salvation and exaltation into being. All these things are ordained and established by that God who is the Father of us all. And they all came into being and are made available to us, as free gifts, without works, because of the infinite goodness and grace of Him whose children we are.

“Truly, there is no way to overstate the goodness and grandeurs and glories of the grace of God which bringeth salvation. Such wondrous love, such unending mercy, such infinite compassion and condescension—all these can come only from the Eternal God who lives in eternal life and who desires all of his children to live as he lives and be inheritors of eternal life.”

(<https://speeches.byu.edu/talks/bruce-r-mcconkie/think-ye-salvation-grace/>)

So what did Nephi mean when he said, "... for we know that it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do?" In a rare general conference talk on grace, I think Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf has our answer:

"The prophet Nephi made an important contribution to our understanding of God's grace when he declared, "We labor diligently ... to persuade our children, and also our brethren, to believe in Christ, and to be reconciled to God; for we know that it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do."

"However, I wonder if sometimes we misinterpret the phrase "after all we can do." We must understand that "after" does not equal "because."

"We are not saved "because" of all that we can do. Have any of us done all that we can do? Does God wait until we've expended every effort before He will intervene in our lives with His saving grace?

"Many people feel discouraged because they constantly fall short. They know firsthand that "the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." They raise their voices with Nephi in proclaiming, "My soul grieveth because of mine iniquities."

"I am certain Nephi knew that the Savior's grace allows and enables us to overcome sin. This is why Nephi labored so diligently to persuade his children and brethren "to believe in Christ, and to be reconciled to God."

"After all, that is what we can do! And that is our task in mortality!"

(<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2015/04/the-gift-of-grace?lang=eng>)

I think that one of the best analogies for grace and the atonement of Jesus Christ that I ever saw, funny enough, came from an Evangelical tract comic. (or maybe it was Baptist, it indeed came from some Protestant church). The comic showed humanity on one cliff, on the other cliff was the hand of God the Father beckoning us to go to Him, and in the middle was a bottomless abyss. Humanity was lost and confused as to what they should do, how could they return to the Father without falling into the abyss? A bridge, shaped like a cross, was put in the middle of the Father's hand and it reaches over to us. On the cross-shaped bridge, which bridged the gap between the Father and us, was the word "atonement." The atonement of Jesus Christ acts as a bridge between the Father and us; we get to the Father by Jesus Christ who washes us clean with his blood as shed on Calvary and in Gethsemane.

And so we see that Jesus Christ makes all the difference. But God the Father still values our free will, which He freely gave to us. All we have to do now is make the decision to accept the atonement of Jesus Christ and cross the bridge. We cross the bridge by keeping the commandments, and we are sanctified and washed clean by the blood of Christ by being baptized. It isn't enough to look at the cross-bridge [the grace of God] which represents the atonement, and acknowledge it's existence. You also have to use your God-given gift of free will to cross the bridge. Free will is, in and of itself, of the grace of God, which is a free gift, this is an essential part of salvation.

Hence why we believe in salvation by grace "after all we can do." Because what little we can do isn't enough, so the Father sent His firstborn Son to die for us. God is literally just handing you the keys to your salvation as a free gift. All you have to do is exercise your agency, reach out and take the keys. God's grace is sufficient for you. Without grace all of our good works would mean nothing, it is because of grace that our works mean anything at all.

Brad Willcox seems to be the foremost expert on the topic of grace in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. This is what he has to say about the topic:

"Listen to what President Dieter F. Uchtdorf has said:

'He says, "Grace is the divine assistance and endowment of strength by which we grow from the flawed and limited beings we are now into Exalted Beings.'

"So grace is the strength He gives us to make us strong. It is the divine help He gives us to make us divine. When I was younger, I always thought that grace was somehow waiting for me at a finish line; that I had to do everything I possibly could to get to the finish line. I had to be down on my hands and knees. I had to be scraping with dirt under my fingernails and then somehow grace would come. But now I understand that grace is not waiting at the finish line. It's the power that gets me to the finish line. It's not a light waiting at the end of the tunnel. Rather, it's the light that surrounds me here and now and moves me to the end of the tunnel.

"When I was younger, I kind of felt like grace somehow supplemented my works or that my works somehow supplemented Jesus's grace as if we had to meet some sort of minimum height requirement to get into heaven. But now I understand that it's not about height. It's about growth. So instead of seeing grace as something that supplements or works as

something that supplements, I realized we get to heaven, not by supplementing but by covenanting. And the covenant is a warm relationship, a relationship that is greater than the sum of its parts. So instead of speaking about God's part and my part, now I speak more about God's heart and my heart, loving each other and being conformed to the same image.

"Listen to what Elder D. Todd Christofferson has said: "We do not need to achieve some minimum level of capacity or goodness before God will help. Divine aid can be ours, every hour of every day, no matter where we are in the path of obedience."

"Now, that said, we have to be a little careful that we don't let grace become a catchall word for every divine interaction which has happened in a lot of mainstream Christianity. A grace kind of defines everything that God does, everything that He is, every interaction He has in our lives. But we need to keep grace as a word in its place because there's a whole umbrella that covers the many ways that God interacts with his children. We have answers to prayer. We have tender mercies.

"But grace is a little different than that. The reason it's important to point that out is because we can then recognize grace in our lives even when we don't see answers to prayer; even when we don't see tender mercies.

"When my son Russell was 16, he always lost the keys to the car. Well, his mom got smart and she made an extra set. So Russell would come home and say, "I lost the keys to the car," and I'd say, "Mom has an extra set," and we got through just fine until the day he said, "I lost the keys." I said, "Mom's got an extra set." He said, "Those are the ones I just lost." And so I said, "Get over here, we're going to pray." So we said a prayer and Russell was led to find the keys in a place he'd already looked several times and our family recognized an answer to prayer. Now that kid grew up and became a nurse anesthetist. It's a little scary if you think about it. "Hey, I know there's a body around here somewhere. Where did that body go? Oh, mom's got an extra." Uh, I mean, it's a little scary.

"He called me when he first graduated and said, "Dad, now we have something in common."

"I said, "What's that?"

"He said, "We both put people to sleep." I didn't know how I felt about that one. But when Russell was training, he was assigned to go to a hospital for a rotation that was about five hours from his home in Sacramento and that had them nervous because my little daughter-

in-law had two toddlers and a brand new baby. She thought, 'How am I going to handle this with him gone for days and days at a time?' The baby wasn't sleeping well, the baby wasn't eating well and she thought, 'I just can't keep up with this.' Well, the minute that his rotation started, the baby started sleeping through the night. The minute his rotation started, the baby started eating better and holding down the food and our family recognized a tender mercy. We couldn't call it an answer to prayer because we weren't even smart enough to pray for it. God just saw a need and He stepped in and met that need and we recognized a tender mercy.

"Now grace is a little different from those blessings because grace or the interactions from heaven that change us; that *change* us.

"It's the Holy Ghost, acting as the minister of grace, the messenger of grace, who sanctifies us and that's when we can see God shaping us and transforming us. I know a young man who joined the church in Las Vegas. He was a young teenager when he first started getting interested in religion and he started going from church to church and attending church with a lot of his friends from high school. His stepdad was just furious at him. He said, "You're young. This is when you're supposed to be smoking pot and sleeping with girls and drinking." He says, "Good grief. Why are you going to churches?" But when the kid ended up joining the Mormon Church then his stepdad kicked him out of the house.

"A family in the ward took him and helped him get ready for his mission and he was in the MTC preparing to go to Japan. When he wrote me this letter, he was a convert of only a year. He says, 'Some General Authority just came and told us that we're supposed to love our parents.' He says, 'That's a hard one for me. How am I supposed to love a man I don't even like? How am I supposed to love a man that I don't respect it all? How am I supposed to love a man that I hope I never even see again?'

"And then he wrote this, 'I guess for me right now, love is going to have to mean that I feel sorry for him and that I won't give up hope that one day maybe he can change.'

"That's grace, when God just reaches into our very hearts and helps us begin to forgive when we think we can't, helps us begin to open a door to love when we think that door has been slammed shut, when God reaches into our hearts and helps us try once more to break a bad habit that we've tried so many times to break before without success. In those moments, we see grace in our lives.

“Now, President Nelson has cautioned us to be careful as we use the word atonement because many members of the church say, “Oh, the atonement helped me.” “The atonement comforted me.” “The atonement changed me.” “The atonement blessed me.” And President Nelson reminds us that it’s not the atonement that does that. It’s Christ who does that – through his atonement.

“When he cautioned us, his talk was called Accessing the Power of Jesus Christ. We have a name for that power. The name is grace.

That is the power of Jesus Christ–

that, as Sheri Dew says, “...flows from the atonement.” So the atonement was something that people look forward to and now it’s something we look back on. Jesus’s suffering was real, but it was an event. The thing that allows that event to have continuous force both before and after it happened, is the grace that flows from that atonement, the grace that the atonement makes possible in our lives, and that’s why we call the power, the power of the atonement, an enabling power. If you’re ever reading the scriptures and you come to the word grace, try replacing the word with power and see if the scripture makes a little more sense to you. Now we sing a song in the church. We sing a hymn that says, ‘I stand all amazed at the love Jesus offers me, confused at the grace that so fully he proffers me.’ When Charles Gabriel wrote that hymn, confused didn’t just mean ‘baffled’ or ‘bewildered’, or ‘I don’t get it’. Confused also could mean ‘standing in awe, standing in reverent awe of the grace, the enabling power, that so fully he proffers me.’ There’s another word we don’t use very often. We use the word ‘offer’. I can ‘offer’ you this clip, but he would have to come forward to get it. If I ‘proffer’ it to him, I’m putting the prefix ‘pro’ onto ‘offer’, making ‘proffer’, meaning I’m pro-actively offering him the gift. That means I’m going to come down. I’m going to literally put it right in his hand. See, I’m going to make it almost impossible for him to refuse it. That’s proffer.



“Well, yes, we stand amazed at the grace Jesus proffers us. Think about the emblems of the sacrament. In many churches, those are offered to the congregation. People come forward to receive them, but not in our church. In our church, those are proffered to us. They are literally placed in our hands even when we’re late and in the foyer, and don’t ask me how I know that, but even then, those emblems are proffered to us. They’re placed right before us. It’s a gift that we almost can’t refuse, and yet, just as we stand amazed at Christ’s gift and how freely he proffers it, He must stand a little amazed at how few people there are in this world who are willing to receive the gift, who are willing to pick up those emblems and internalize them.

“In Doctrine and Covenants 88, we read: ‘For what does it profit a man if a gift is bestowed upon him and he receive not the gift. Behold he rejoices not in that which is given unto him, neither rejoices in him, who is the giver of the gift.’ In my class the other day, I’m teaching the second half of the New Testament. So we’re talking about grace and I said, “How many of you have ever received a Christmas gift from an aunt or a grandmother, a mother, a father, a cousin, something that you’ve said, ‘Oh, thank you. This is wonderful.’ And then you’ve thrown it out, given it to DI or put it in your closet, never to see the light of day again?” Every hand went up. They all know how it feels to get a gift and then not value it because they don’t use it.

“So the way they value the gift is demonstrated by how well they receive and utilize the gift. In the same way Christ knows who values his grace, not who’s given his grace, because he gives that so freely, but he sees who values his grace by looking to see who receives it, who receives that grace and who receives it and utilizes it.

“I know a sister who went to the temple for the first time and she came out and I said, “How did it go?”

“And she said, “Well, I was kinda disappointed that it wasn’t more focused on the atonement.”

“I mean, it sounded to me like she just said, ‘I just walked through a forest and I wish I’d seen a tree.’ I mean, how did she miss the atonement in the endowment? But then I realized, ‘Oh, she was expecting to see portrayals of Christ in Gethsemane; portrayals of Christ on the cross; portrayals of Christ rising from the empty tomb. Instead she saw the story of Adam and Eve.’ That’s when I explained to her something that’s been taught by Sister Marie Hafen and her husband, Elder Bruce C. Hafen in their book, ‘The

Consecrated Heart', and they teach that in the temple, we don't learn how Christ gives us the atonement, we learn how Adam and Eve and all of us receive the atonement. And how do we receive this gift? The same way they did – by covenant, by entering into a covenant relationship with Christ that allows us more and more and more access to His grace.

“Grace is not a one-time gift. Rather it's a gift that we're given more and more of as we utilize what we've been given. When I think about that, I think about reading books to my grandkids. When my little grandkids were born, the first thing I do is read a book to him. Now everybody in the hospital laughs because I'm holding the baby and I'm holding the book and the book is bigger than the baby, but I read that book to those babies and I don't care how many people laugh. I know I'm being smart because I want that kid surrounded by language and love and books right from day one, so I read books to them. Now some of those kids are old enough that they can read little books to me and the minute they do, I give them another book. See if they read one book, then I give them more books, and that little exchange helps me understand how Christ gives us grace.

“Listen to what we read in 2 Nephi 28 ‘I will give unto the children of men, line upon line, precept upon precept, and blessed are those who hearken unto my precepts and lend an ear to my council for they shall learn wisdom and for unto him that receiveth, I will give more.’

“My daughter Whitney called me one day and she said, “Dad, I just read the parable of the talents in Matthew 25 and I think it's about grace.”

“I said, “No, no honey, that's about money because talents were money, so it's talking about money.”

“She says, “Dad, read it again.”

“So I read it again, and with this lens that my daughter had provided, suddenly I started seeing it a little differently. Unto one servant, he gave five talents, or, we could say, five books. Unto another servant, he gave two books, and unto another servant, he gave one book. Well, the first two read their books. So the Lord said, “Well done. You have been faithful over a few books. I will give you many books. Enter into my library.” Now to the other servant, he takes the book away. Why? Because he's punishing the very servant who needs it the most? No, it's because the servant already cast it aside.

“What good is a book to someone who refuses to read it? We all know the pain of giving away a copy of the Book of Mormon and then having the person reject it. That choice doesn't say as much about the missionary and the book as it does about the person who has

been given a gift that hasn't been valued, given a gift that hasn't been utilized. So even if the Lord said, "Well, gosh, third servant, I love you anyway, and so come on, you can go into my library." Is the servant even going to want to be there? I mean, until she learns to value what she's been given, until she learns to love what her father in heaven loves, then more books would be burden rather than blessing. And so, even though initially it may seem unfair that those who got more get even more, when we consider how the gift is utilized, how the gift was used, then we see the fairness in having the book taken away from the very one who rejected it. And we can see that this gift of grace must be used.

Sometimes, when I teach young people, I compare grace to a scholarship. I say getting grace is like getting a scholarship. It's not a student loan. You're not expected to pay it back. It's not money you've earned in a job and saved up. It's a gift.

"The one giving the gift doesn't want to get paid back. The one giving the gift wants to see the gift utilized. Because simply getting a scholarship does not guarantee learning and getting a scholarship does not guarantee graduation. It facilitates it, and in that covenant relationship with Christ, then His grace facilitates our growth and our change and our transformation. Making covenants is not a declaration that we need works more than grace. Making covenants is our way of acknowledging God's grace, accepting God's grace, appreciating God's grace and showing him that we are ready for more. So a kid comes into the church at age eight and gets the gift of the Holy Ghost. As he makes more covenants, as he renews that covenant in sacrament meeting at the sacrament table, then he receives more. Then he enters the temple and he makes more covenants and he receives more grace. So our works are not in place of faith. Rather, our works grow out of and are an inevitable consequence of our faith.

"So for us, the question, 'Have you been saved by grace?' is tricky to answer, but not because of the word grace. When someone says, "Have you been saved by grace?", Latter-day Saints should answer, "Yes, absolutely. Completely. With total gratitude. Yes, yes, yes, yes." If we have a discussion with nonmember friends, the word to discuss is not grace. That's something we have in common. The word to discuss is 'saved'. That's where we're different. What does salvation mean to them versus what does salvation mean to us? Our complete dependence on Jesus Christ is an absolute either way, but what is salvation? For many, Christian salvation is just getting to the other side of the wall of heaven. I know a

lady in the South who told me, “I’m going to slip Saint Peter a twenty and slide on through.”

“That’s her idea of grace. That’s her idea of being saved. That’s what it is – just getting into heaven. But for Latter-day Saints, that’s a little teeny piece of a salvation that is massive – a salvation that doesn’t just include getting to heaven, but becoming heavenly, not just going back to God, but becoming like him. Our salvation is huge and Jesus’s grace is a large enough gift to be able to help us reach salvation in its fullness. So the question to consider is not just ‘Have we been saved by grace?’ but ‘Have we been changed by grace?’ Not just ‘Are we going to be resurrected? Are we going to go back to God’s presence or Christ presence for the judgment?’ Those things are already answered. The question to consider is, ‘How comfortable will we be on that occasion?’

“How comfortable will we be when we are expected to live as Christ lives and love as He loves and create as He creates and be as He is? For us, grace is not just about salvation at a basic form, but it’s about salvation that is large enough to include exaltation. For us, grace is not just about justification at a basic level, but it’s about sanctification.”

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6sGcUtlYW8&list=LLKJIwjeGO3jyJKiuU_mzDUg&index=9&t=1652s

You see, Micah Wilder of Adam’s Road was correct when he taught:

“...God shows His love for us in that, while we were still sinners, that Christ Jesus died for us that that was the good news is that even though we’ve all sinned and we’ve all fallen short of the glory of God that we are justified by His grace as a gift through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus and that’s the good news that Jesus Christ paid the price. He paid the debt that I owed as a sinner and he made a way for me to be made right with God and that I could have peace with God by the blood of His cross.”

All this talk about Christ paying our debts reminds me of a video that was based on a Boyd K. Packer talk:



<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/media-library/video/2007-01-0005-the-mediator?lang=eng>

Micah then quotes the following scripture, “For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works so that no one may boast.” (Ephesians 2:8-9) There is of course truth to this scripture which should not be denied.

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r0mckI8Xfl8>)

A Protestant might assume that I should have reacted differently to this young man’s testimony of the grace of God. A Protestant may have assumed that I would either be so moved as to denounce mormonism or be so shocked as to have a negative response, neither is true for me. For while I do find some things wrong with his speech they are few, for the most part I think that I could adequately agree with about 85% of what he just said. Most of my grips mainly have to do with how he portrays the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints as an organization which overworks its members, telling them that only their works can save them, and that God’s grace and love is something to be earned through hard work alone. No prophet of the Church of Jesus Christ has ever taught that the blood of Christ on the cross meant nothing, neither has any prophet taught that only our works will save us, neither has any prophet taught us that God’s love is something which must be earned through hard work alone. I do not know where this young man got these misconceptions but they are incorrect, you cannot show me a prophet who taught these things. Our prophets have taught the opposite in fact; that God’s grace is sufficient and that His love is eternal and everlasting, nothing can separate us from His love. I suppose that it was required of Micah, his family and friends(who were once all Latter-Day Saints), to join another church in order to learn this eternal truth and to stand firm with the truth even against those who disagreed with them. And so the Holy Spirit lead these people to a place where they could learn of God’s infinite love, and when they are ready, they shall be returned to the loving arms of that God.

Elder Jeffery R. Holland taught:

“As you desire of me so it shall be done unto you,” the Lord has declared.

“... Put your trust in that Spirit which leadeth to do good—yea, to do justly, to walk humbly, to judge righteously. ...

“... [Then] whatsoever you desire of me [in] righteousness, ... you shall receive.”

“I love that doctrine! It says again and again that we are going to be blessed for our desire to do good, even as we actually strive to be so. And it reminds us that to qualify for those blessings, we must make certain we do not deny them to others: we are to deal justly, never unjustly, never unfairly; we are to walk humbly, never arrogantly, never pridefully; we are to judge righteously, never self-righteously, never unrighteously.

"My brothers and sisters, the first great commandment of all eternity is to love God with all of our heart, might, mind, and strength—that’s the first great commandment. But the first great truth of all eternity is that God loves us with all of His heart, might, mind, and strength. That love is the foundation stone of eternity, and it should be the foundation stone of our daily life. Indeed it is only with that reassurance burning in our soul that we can have the confidence to keep trying to improve, keep seeking forgiveness for our sins, and keep extending that grace to our neighbor.

President George Q. Cannon once taught: “No matter how serious the trial, how deep the distress, how great the affliction, [God] will never desert us. He never has, and He never will. He cannot do it. It is not His character [to do so]. ... He will [always] stand by us. We may pass through the fiery furnace; we may pass through deep waters; but we shall not be consumed nor overwhelmed. We shall emerge from all these trials and difficulties the better and purer for them.”

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6MnLVTO4oDA>)

I do not know why the mission president on Micah’s mission said that he had the spirit of the devil when he taught these things but that is an inappropriate way to react to these things. It is by the grace of God that our works mean anything at all, without the atonement of Jesus Christ we would sink ever deeper for all eternity to be angels with the

devil, servants of the devil, our good works would mean nothing at all. Consider this Christmas video the Church of Jesus Christ put out called "why we need a savior":

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ly7c9scxB9I>



“What if there were things you could never take back— words, decisions, mistakes? A world where every heartache lasted forever, where every wound never healed. No autocorrect, no backspace, no delete. A world where man only drifts farther and farther away from happiness, from peace, from God. That’s what the world would be like without a savior.” That’s what the world would be like without grace as a free gift given to all mankind, even to the worst of us and to the best of us.

For the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, we believe that what we desire for the afterlife is what we will get. You desire to be a servant only and not to enter Godhood, to be stagnant and single in heaven, graced with the presents of Jesus Christ for all eternity, then you shall have it. (See Mark 11:24) But if you desire to obtain Godhood and live the life that God lives then you must have that desire to do so. The grace, provided by the Atonement of Jesus Christ, is strong enough to allow you to obtain what you desire. God will not force you into anything. But if you desire to be wicked and sin against your true nature then you will begin to feel unclean and no unclean thing can dwell in the presence of God.

“Wherefore, if ye have sought to do *a*wickedly in the days of your *b*probation, then ye are found *c*unclean before the judgment-seat of God; and no unclean thing can dwell with God; wherefore, ye must be cast off forever.” (1 Nephi 10:21) These people that are cast off still go to heaven but it is a lesser heaven where God does not dwell, for this is according to their desires and the grace of God grants this unto them. “And they shall be *a*servants of the Most High; but *b*where God and Christ *c*dwell they *d*cannot come, *e*worlds without end.” (D&C 76:112) “He that is *a*unjust, let him be *b*unjust still: and he which is *c*filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.” (Revelation 22:11)

For Elder Bruce R. McConkie, the three biggest heresies are:

- 1. God being a three in one spirit nothingness which has neither body, parts, or passions.**
- 2. We are saved by grace alone and works don’t mean anything**
- 3. Revelation has ceased and there will never be another prophet or book of scripture**

I suppose that Elder McConkie calls out the faith alone doctrine as a heresy because, as he said, it “effectively destroyed the efficacy and power of the atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ by whom salvation comes.” How you might ask? Because it took the very concept of

grace which saves all in the kingdom of Heaven and turned it into something which can only be obtained by luck without works and therefore without agency. Sam Harris, I think, perfectly explains everything that is wrong about this false doctrine and modern christianity. (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vSdGr4K4qLg&list=LLKJIwjeGO3jyJKiuU_mzDUg&index=31&t=0s) Hence why a restoration was needed. For the Protestant, one must be lucky enough to be born into a situation in which he/she can hear and accept Jesus Christ to be saved, but it can't just be Jesus Christ for it must also be with the doctrines which came from Martin Luther and the reformation which he initiated.

Heaven for these must be extremely tiny and Hell must be overflowing, for how many souls have died without having the chance to hear the name "Jesus Christ"? Such a ruthless God this is. Such a mentality paints a very negative two dimensional attitude of good guys and bad guys and nothing in-between. Anyone who does not except Jesus Christ and the doctrines of the reformation are evil. Gandhi is comparative to Vlad Dracula in wickedness because he never excepted Jesus Christ and so must be damned for all eternity in hell where he shall suffer great pains and tortures everlastingly along side Hitler.

For this is why the Protestants say they fear for our souls while the Latter-Day Saints do not fear the souls of Protestants very much because our doctrine says all shall be saved into heaven by the grace of God which is a free gift given to ALL.

Even though the scriptures declare that "the natural man is an enemy to God, and has been from the fall of Adam, and will be, forever and ever", they never declare God to be an enemy to the natural man. For behold, God loves the natural man and for this cause doth He desire for the natural man or woman to yield "to the enticings of the Holy Spirit, and putteth off the natural man and becometh a saint through the atonement of Christ the Lord, and becometh as a child, submissive meek, humble, patient, full of love, willing to submit to all things which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon him, even as a child doth submit to his father." (Mosiah 3:19)

And now we read from Martin Luther's least favorite book:

18 Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my ^afaith by my ^bworks.

19 Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the ^adevils also ^bbelieve, and tremble.

20 But wilt thou know, O vain man, that *a*faith without *b*works is dead?

21 Was not Abraham our father *a*justified by works, when he had *b*offered Isaac his son upon the altar?

22 Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by *a*works was faith made *b*perfect?

23 And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham *a*believed God, and it was imputed unto him for *b*righteousness: and he was called the *c*Friend of God.

24 Ye see then how that by *a*works a man is *b*justified, and not by faith only.

25 Likewise also was not *a*Rahab the harlot *b*justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent *them* out another way?

26 For as the body without the *a*spirit is *b*dead, so faith without *c*works is dead also. (James 2)

“Be prayerful, patient and calmly persistent. If nothing else, just know that it’s not going to do to ignore the ups and downs because they’re going to be there. When I was dealing with Carol, I dealt with a lot of that. Some days she’d be better, and other days she’d be a lot worse. This is chocolate wisdom. Actually, they were giving out Dove chocolate in the back and I opened it. I saw this and it actually says “Everything will be okay in the end. If it’s not okay, it’s not the end.” Sister Burton said, “When the Lord’s timing conflicts with our own desires, trust that there might be some preparatory experience the Lord needs us to have before our prayers are answered.” Elder Anderson pointed out in his talk, Faith is not by chance but a choice. He says, “Faith never demands an answer to every question, but seeks the assurance and courage to move forward. Sometimes acknowledging I don’t know everything, but I do know enough to continue on the path of discipleship.”

“Last night I was talking to Carol, and late last night she sent me this email and this is a quote from her. She said, “After thinking just a little bit more about your question, I want to add one thing to my answer.” [I need to finish the story here. Bear with me. For a number of years we went back and forth. We invited her to the FairMormon conference. She came, very nervous about doing it. She wasn’t sure she wanted to, but she came and on Friday night a group of us went out to dinner and she came out with us and she met one of our volunteers, Bob and his wife, and they developed a pretty good friendship right there at the event and she travels from her state to Salt Lake on occasion because of her profession, and so she would look them up and spend time with them. And I continued to correspond

with her. So we're kind of getting it from two different angles. And one day she was at one of the pizza places, if I remember down here in Provo and they invited her out to dinner. There was another couple there, a gentleman who was a bishop. They were sitting there and they started asking her questions about, "What's going on? How are you doing? You know, I understand you're struggling with your faith. Why is that?" Remember she's feeling pressured, she wants out, and she described to me that as she sat there and she was listening to that the pressure began to be insurmountable and she just fought and she said, "I haven't thought about having a blessing in 20 years," and I thought, "Okay, Heavenly Father, maybe I need a blessing, but, oh my goodness, if they give me a blessing maybe then." And sure enough, by the end of the evening, Bob turns to her and says, "Carol, would you like a blessing?" And she was just so tense. As soon as he said that, she just relaxed. They went home, gave her a blessing. The next day she went to the temple and sat in front of the reflecting pond and had this wash of love come over her and she said all of her stress relaxed."

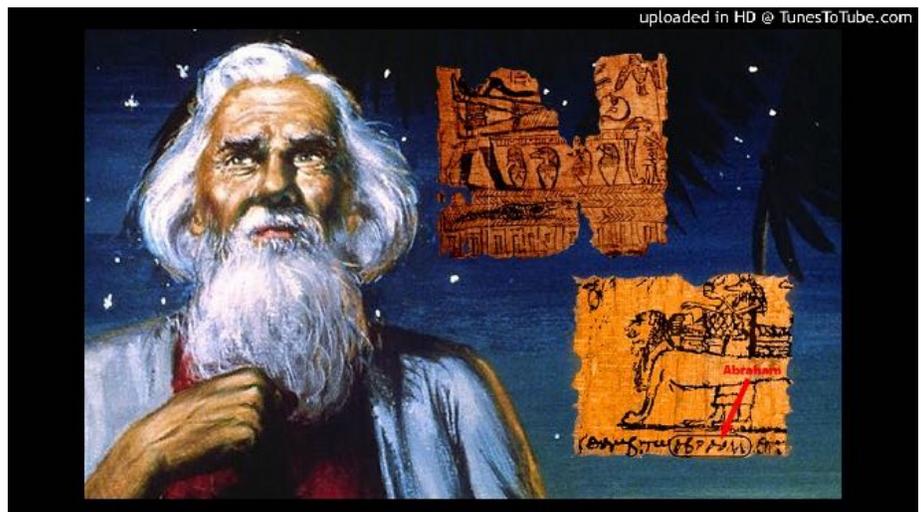
<https://www.fairmormon.org/conference/august-2018/strengthen-thy-brethren-bolstering-those-in-faith-crisis>)

21. Does the LDS Church still regard the Pearl of Great Price as Holy Scripture even after several prominent Egyptologists proved it was an ancient funeral scroll?

When you say "the Pearl of Great Price" and relate it to the funeral scroll, I assume that you are talking about,

specifically, the Book of Abraham. The Book of Moses, the first vision account, JST Matthew, and the Articles of Faith have nothing to do with Egypt.

There is no clear understanding where Joseph Smith received the Book of Abraham, whether it be from the funeral scroll or



the hieroglyphics. Many think Joseph received the Book directly from revelation. I think that the real Book of Abraham may have just been destroyed in the Chicago Fire, leaving only the facsimiles and the funeral scroll to be interpreted.

Now let's look at some Book of Abraham evidences:

The most sound evidence for the Book of Abraham is the fact that both the book and the interpretation of the facsimiles perfectly coincide with a ridiculous amount of ancient Semitic traditions that we have no record of Joseph Smith having any way to find out about. Even if Joseph had all of these books and traditions available to him, his book still shows to hold up with those ancient traditions as a record of a true account.

ABRAHAM'S FATHERS WORSHIPPED IDOLS (ABRAHAM 1:5-6)

Abel and the Other Pieces, p. 287

Abü al-Fida' 2, pp. 433—34

Al—Kisä'i 68—72, p. 388

Al-Mas'u'di, Meadows 4:2, p. 352

Al-Nisa'bu'ri 14:13; 16:4, pp. 400, 402

Al—Rabghu'zi 28, p. 440

Al-Tabar1' 220; 252—70:41, pp. 334, 343

Al-T'arafi 1, 53—55, pp. 370, 374—75

Anonymous Christian Chronicle 10, pp. 228—29

Armenian Paraphrase of Genesis: after Genesis 11:30, version A, pp. 284—85

Bar Hebraeus 2, p. 274

Book of Jasher 9:6, 19; 11:45—46, pp. 138, 139, 142[9]

Book of the Bee 23, p. 272

Book of the Cave of Treasures 23a.1, pp. 189—90

Book of the Rolls 118b, pp. 207—8

Catena Severi 1, p. 241

Conflict of Adam and Eve III, 24:1—7, pp. 220—21

Damascus Document, p. 30

Epiphanius, Panarion 1.1:

Anac. 1.3.1;

Proem 2.3.4, pp. 197, 198

Hellenistic Synagogal Prayers 12:61—62, p. 72

Ibn al-Tayyib 7:1—2, p. 253 '

Ibn Kathir 11, p. 455

Ishäq ibn Bishr 161B:3, p. 312 John Chrysostom, p. 193

Jubilees 11:4, 7, 16, pp. 14, 15 [10]

Judith 5:7, p. 4

Kebra Nagast 1, p. 277

Mahbu'b of Menbidj (Agapius) 2, pp. 247—48

Michael Glycas 1, p. 265

Michael the Syrian 2.3.3, 2.5, p. 262

Midrush Rubbuh Numbers 2:12, p. 107

Qiqel and Yahya 2, pp. 488—89 Qu1°an 21:53; 26:70—76, pp. 293, 295

Symeon Logothetes 2, pp. 250—51

Syrzu'c Commentary on Genesis 7, p. 243

Targum Neofiti 1 Genesis 20:13, p. 69

See also Pirque de Rabbi Eliezer 26, pp. 45—46

IDOLS WERE MADE OF WOOD AND STONE (ABRAHAM 1:11)

Anonymous Christian Chronicle 10, pp. 228—29

Apocalypse of Abraham 1:2; 25:1, pp. 52, 59

Book of Jasher 9:6—8, 19; 11:32, 42—45, 47, pp. 138—39, 141, 142[11]

Book of the Cave of Treasures 23a.2, p. 190

Book of the Rolls 119a, p. 208

Chronicles of Jerahmeel 34:10, p. 132

Conflict of Adam and Eve III, 24:1, p. 220

Epiphanius, Panarion 1.1: Anac. 1.3.3;

Proem 2.3.5, pp. 197, 198

Hecataeus, p. 3

Kebru Nugust 12—13, pp. 277—78

Qiqel and Yahya 2, pp. 488—89

TERAH, ABRAHAM'S FATHER, WORSHIPED IDOLS (ABRAHAM 1:16—17, 27) [12]

Abu' al—Fidä 2, pp. 433—34

Al-Bukhāri 569, pp. 327—28

Al-Kisa'ü' 9, 41, pp. 382, 385

Al—Nisa'bu'ri 14:1; 15:2—3, pp. 397, 400—401

Al-Rabghu'zi 12, 17, 20, pp. 437—39

Al-Tabari 224—25; 252-70:11, 18, 41; 346—47:1, pp. 334, 336—38, 343, 349

Al-T_araḥi 27—29, p. 372

Al-Tha'labi 2:3, p. 361

Al-Ya'qu'bi 2, p. 330

Apocalypse of Abraham 1:1; 25:1; 26:1, pp. 52, 59, 60

Augustm'e, City of God 16.12, pp. 200—201

Book of Jasher 9:7; 11:20-22, 29, 32—33, 42—48, 53, pp. 138, 140—42[13]

Cutenu Severi 5, p. 241

Chronicles of Jerahmeel 33:1, 5, pp. 129, 130

Conflict of Adam and Eve III, 24:9; IV, 1:2, pp. 221, 222

Epiphanius, Panarion 1.1:

Anac. 1.3.3;

Proem 2.3.5, pp. 197, 198

Falasha Story 3, p. 486

George Hamartolos, pp. 237—38

George Syncellus 1, 5, pp. 224, 225

Ibn al—Athir 6, pp. 423—24

Ibn Isha'q 7, p. 305

Ibn Kathir 13, 16, pp. 455—56

Isha'q ibn Bishr 165B27—8, p. 318

Jacob of Edessa 4, p. 212

John Malalas, p. 206

Jubilees 11:16, p. 15

Ka'b al-Ahba'r 10, p. 300

Mz'drush Rubbuh Genesis 38:13, p. 91; Numbers 19:1; 29:33, p. 111

Pesiktu Rubbuti 33:3a—b, pp. 80—81

Qur'an 6:74; 19:42; 26:86; 60:4, pp. 292, 293, 295, 296

Revelation of Moses, p. 180

Story of Abraham . . . with Nimrod 14, p. 168

Symeon Logothetes 2, pp. 250—51

Tunnu debe Eliyahu 2, 5, pp. 74—75

Turgum Neofiti 1 Deuteronomy 6:4, p. 70

Zohar: Genesis 78b, pp. 157—58

TERAH, AFTER REPENTING, RETURNED TO HIS IDOLS (ABRAHAM 2:5)

Abü al-Fida' 2, pp. 433—34

Al—Kisä'i 72, p. 388

Al-T'aban' 252—70241; 325—2621, pp. 343, 349

Apocalypse of Abraham 26:3, p. 60

Book of Jasher 12:68, p. 149[15]

Chronicles of Jerahmeel 35:1, p. 133

Ibn al-Tayyib 7:6, pp. 254-55

Qur'an 60:4, p. 296

Tanna debe Eliyahu 8, pg.

Zohar: Genesis 77b, 78b, pp. 155-56, 157-58

ABRAHAM CONNECTED TO EGYPTIAN IDOLS (ABRAHAM 1:6-7, 13,17,20,29; 2:13; 3:20; FACSIMILE 1, FIGURES 4-9)

Bar Hebraeus 4, pp. 274-75

Kebrä Nagast 82, pp. 279-80

Michael Glycas 1, p. 265

SACRIFICE OF ABRAHAM AND OTHERS

CHILDREN WERE SACRIFICED (ABRAHAM 1:7-8, 10-11)

Al-Baida'wi 2:4, 8, p. 428

Al-Biru'ni 2, p. 369

Al-Kisa" 1' 32, 41, 43, 98, pp. 384, 385, 386, 390

Al-Maqdisi 48, p. 355

Al-Mas'ū'di, Meadows 3:1, pp. 351—52
Al-Nisa'bu'ri 14:2, p. 397
Al-Rabghu'zi 11, p. 436
Al-Tabari 204-521; 206, pp. 332—33
Al-Tha'labi 1:2—3, pp. 358—59
Anonymous Christian Chronicle 10, pp. 228—29
Apocalypse of Abraham 2522—3, p. 60
Bakhayla Mikä'eAl (Zo'srrn'a's) 16b.2, p. 282
Book of Jasher 8:34, p. 138
Book of the Cave of Treasures 23b.2, pp. 190—91
Book of the Rolls 120a, pp. 208-9
Conflict of Adam and Eve III, 24:15—17; 25:1, 8, pp. 221—22
Falasha Story 3, p. 486
Ibn al-Athir 3, p. 422
Ibn Ishäq 3, p. 304
Isha'q ibn Bishr 1628:6; 163A:6, 166A:1;
166B210—11; 167A:8—9, pp. 313, 314, 319, 320, 321
Kebra Nagast 12, p. 277
Petrus Comestor, pp. 267-68
Philo of Alexandria, De Abrahamo 188, p. 41
Pseudo-Philo 4:16, p. 21
Other Muslim Traditions: Prophet Abraham 3, pp. 459—60
Story of Abraham . . . with Nimrod 3, 5, p. 165

THOSE WHO WOULD NOT WORSHIP IDOLS WERE KILLED (ABRAHAM 1:11)

Al-Kisa' 1' 85—87, 98, pp. 389, 390
Alcuin, Interrogationes et responsiones in Genesim 152, p. 217
Anonymous Christian Chronicle 6, 27, pp. 228, 230—31
Asatir 5:27, p. 469
Bede, Commentarium in Pentateuchem, p. 214 Bede (7.),
Quaestiones super Genesim, pp. 214—15
Commentarium in Genesim, p. 205

Expositio super septem vz'siones, commentm'g on Rev. 6:4, p. 218
Falasha Story 4, pp. 486—87
Freculphus Lexoviensis, pp. 234—35
Jerome, Quaestiones Hebraicrze in Genesim 11:28, pp. 194—96
Midrash Rabbah Genesis 44:7, p. 98
Other Muslim Traditions: Prophet Abraham 7, p. 461
Rabanus Maurus, Commentaria in Genesim, pp. 232—33 Rupertus Tuitensrs
Commentarium in Ioannem 4, pp. 257—58

**ABRAHAM WAS BROUGHT TO BE KILLED OR SACRIFICED BECAUSE HE
WOULD NOT WORSHIP IDOLS (ABRAHAM 1:7, 12, 15; FACSIMILE 1, FIGURE 3)**

Abu' al-Fida' 2, pp. 433-44
Al-Baida'wi 4:8, p. 431
Al-Bukha'n' 579, p. 329
Al-Kisä'i 135, p. 393
Al-Maqdisi 53-54, pp. 355—56
Al-Mas'u'di, Meadows 4:2, p. 352; News 1, p. 353
Al-Nisäbu'ri 18:2; 19:2, pp. 404, 405—6
Al-Rabghuz'i 31—43, 47, pp. 441—44, 445-46 Al-Tabari 252—70:4, 27—37; 316-17:1—2;
318—2421—2; 346—47zl—2, pp. 335, 340—42, 345, 346, 349—50
Al-Tarafi 88—93, pp. 377—78
Al-Tha'labi 2:10, 12, pp. 364—65, 366
Al-Ya'qübi 3, p. 331
Al-Zamakhshari 2:578, pp. 412—13
Alcum', Interrogationes et responsiones in Genesim 152, p. 217
Angelomus Luxoviensis, Commentarium in Genesim, pp. 239—40
Anonymous Christian Chronicle 6, p. 228
Asatz'r 5:27, p. 469
Augustine, City of God 16.15;
Quaestiones in Heptateuchum, pp. 202—3, 204
Babylonian Talmud 'Erubin 53a, pp. 119—20;
Pesahz'm 118a, p. 120;

Sunhedrz'n 93a, pp. 121—22;
A'bodah Zarah 3a, p. 122
Book of Jasher 12:6, 23, pp. 144, 145[18]
Bede, Hexaemeron 3—4, pp. 213—14 Bede (.7),
Quaestiones super Genesz'm, 214—15
Catena Severi 8, p. 242
Chronicles of Jerahmeel 33:4—5; 34:12, pp. 130, 132
Commentarium in Genesim, p. 205
De computo, p. 226
Expositio super septem vz'siones, commenting on Rev. 1:13, p. 218
Falasha Story 4, pp. 486—87
Freculphus Lexoviensis, pp. 234—35
Glossa ordz'naria, p. 236
Herveus Burgidolensis, p. 260
Hugh of St. Victor, p. 259
Ibn al-Athir 10, p. 425
Ibn al-Jawzi 2, pp. 419—20
Ibn Isha'q 13, p. 307
Ibn Kathir 26, p. 457
Ioannes Zonaras, p. 261
Isha'q ibn Bishr 168A:17; 1683:5—6, p. 323
Jacob of Edessa 8, p. 212
Jerome, Quaestiones Hebraicae in Genesim, commenting on Genesis 11:28; 12:4, pp. 194—
96
Judith 8:27, p. 5
Ka'b al-Ahba'r 11, p. 300
Mz'drash Rabbah Genesis 34:9; 38:13; 39:3; 42:3, 7; 44:4, 7; 48:1, pp. 90, 91, 92, 96, 97, 98,
100; Exodus 44:5; 49:2, p. 104; Leviticus 11:7; 36:4, pp. 105, 106—7; Numbers 2:12; 12:8,
pp. 107, 110; Deuteronomy 9:4, p. 112;
Ruth Proem 7:1, p. 112;
Ecclesiastes 4:81, p. 114;

Esther Proem 11; 6:2, pp. 114, 115; Song of Songs 1:13.1; 225.1; 326.2; 3:11.1; 8:8.2, pp. 115, 116—17, 118

Nicophorus Gregoras, p. 276

Other Muslim Traditions: Yusuf, p. 463

Pesikta Rabbati 33:4a, p. 81

Petrus Comestor, pp. 267—68

Pseudo-Philo 6:16, p. 24

Qiqel and Yahya 11, p. 489

Qur'an 21:68; 37:97, pp. 294, 296

Rabanus Maurus, pp. 232—33

Rashi, regarding Genesis 11:28, p. 125

Ra'wandi 3, 8, 10, pp. 415, 416, 417

Rupertus Tuitensis, Commentarium in Ioamzem 4, pp. 257—58

Story of Abraham . . . with Nimrod 25, 29, pp. 172, 173

Study (Midrash) of Abraham Our Father 3, p. 179

Tanna debe Eliyahu 1—3, 6, pp. 74—75, 76

Targum Ionatlzrm Genesis 11:28; 14:1; 16:5, pp. 66, 67

Targum Rishon of Esther 5:14, p. 71

Zohar: Genesis 77b, pp. 155—56; Leviticus 57a, pp. 162—63

TERAH WAS BEHIND THE ATTEMPT TO KILL ABRAHAM (ABRAHAM 1:7, 30)

Al-Nisa'bu'ri 15:4, p. 401

Book of Jasher 11:51, p. 143

Falasha Story 3, p. 486

Isha'q ibn Bishr 163828, p. 315

Qur'an 19:46; 26:86; 60:4, pp. 293, 295, 296

Rashi, regarding Genesis 11:28, p. 125

Story of Abraham . . . with Nimrod 8, pp. 166—67

ABRAHAM WAS FASTENED OR BOUND (ABRAHAM 1:15; FACSIMILE 1, FIGURE

2)

Al-Baida'wi 4:4, 7, pp. 430, 431
Al-Nisa'bu'ri 18:2; 19:2, pp. 404, 405—6
Al-Rabghu'zi 33—34, p. 442 Al-T_araf1' 109, p. 379
Al-Tha'labi 2:10—11, pp. 364—66
Al-Zamakhshari 2:578, pp. 412—13
Book of Jasher 12:23, p. 145 [20]
Chronicles of Jerahmeel 33:4, p. 130
Ibn Kathir 25, p. 457
Isha'q ibn Bishr 168A:14; 168B26, pp. 322, 323
Philo the Epic Poet, p. 6
Ra'wandi 10, p. 417
Story _of Abraham . . . with Nimrod 29, p. 173
Study (Mz'drnsh) of Abraham Our Father 3, p. 179
Tamza debe Eliyahu 4, p. 75

WHEN HIS LIFE WAS IN DANGER, ABRAHAM PRAYED (ABRAHAM 1:15)

Al-Baidäwi 4:7, p. 431
Al-Kisä'i 138, p. 393
Al-T_abari 252—70:31, p. 341
Al—Taraft 90—93, pp. 377—78
Al—Tha'labi 2:10—11, pp. 364—66
Ibn al-Jawzi 2, pp. 419—20
Ibn Kathir 26, p. 457
Philo the Epic Poet, p. 6
Ra'wand1'4—5, pp. 415—16
Story of Abraham . . . with Nimrod 11, 29, pp. 167, 173 Contrast al—Rabghu'zi 39, pp. 443
—44

AN ANGEL CAME TO RESCUE ABRAHAM (ABRAHAM 1:15; 2:13; FACSIMILE 1, FIGURE 1)

Al-Baidäwi 4:8, 11, pp. 431—32

Al-Kisa"i 52, 88, 138—39, 142, pp. 387, 389, 393, 394
Al-Rabghu‘zi 35, 38, 42, pp. 443, 444
Al-Tabari 252—7031, 33—34, pp. 341-42
Al-Tarafi 93—96, p. 378
Al-Tha‘labi 2:10, pp. 364—65
Al-Zamakhshari 2:578, pp. 412—13
Babylonian Talmud Pesahim 118a, p. 120
Chronicles of Iorahmecl 34:13; 35:3, pp. 133, 134
Falasha Story 4, pp. 486—87
Ibn al—Athir 10—11, pp. 425—26
Ibn al-Iawzi 2, pp. 419—20
Ibn Isha’q 13—14, pp. 307—8
Ibn Kathir 27—30, p. 457
Isha’q ibn Bishr 168B23—4, 8, 11, p. 323
Ka‘b al-Ahbär 13, p. 301
Midrash Rabbah Genesis 44:13, p 99; Exodus 18:5, p. 103; Song of Songs 1:12.1; 3:11.1, pp. 116-17
Other Muslim Traditions: Prophet Abraham 6, p. 461
Ra‘wandi 4, 6, pp. 415, 416
Story of Abraham . . . with Nimrod 32, p. 174
Study (Mz'drash) of Abraham Our Father 4, p. 179

GOD RESCUED ABRAHAM FROM DEATH (ABRAHAM 1: 16; 3:20)

Al-Kisa"i 139—41, p. 393
Al—Maqdisi 53—54, pp. 355—56
Al-Mas‘u‘di, Meadows 4:2, p. 352;
News 1, p. 353
Al-Nisa‘bu‘ri 18:3, p. 404
Al-Rabghu'zi 49, p. 446
Al-T,araf1' 112, p. 379
Al-Ya‘qu'bi 3, p. 331
Alcum’, Interrogationes et responsz'ones in Genesim, p. 217

Angelomus Luxoviensis, Commentarium in Genesim on Genesis 12:4, pp. 239—40
Asatir 5:27, p. 469
Babylonian Talmud Pesohim 118a, p. 120
Bede, Hexaameron 3, 4, pp. 213-14
Bede (7.), Quaestiones super Genesim, pp. 214—15
Book of Jasher 12:24, 38, pp. 145, 146
Chronicles of Jerahmeel 33:6; 34:13, pp. 130, 133
Commentarium in Genesim, p. 205
Ethiopic Story of Joseph, p. 281
Asatir 5:16; 6:11, 24, pp. 467, 472, 473—74 (continued)
Bar Hebraeus 1, 7, pp. 274, 275
Freculphus Lexoviensis, pp. 234—35
Book of Jasher 11:33—36, p. 141
Glossa ordiuarla', p. 236
Book of the Bee 23, 30, pp. 272, 273
Isha‘q ibn Bishr 1688:6—7, p. 323
Jerome, Commentarium in Isaiam;
Quaestiones Hebraicae in Genesim on Genesis 11:28; 12:4;
Vulgate Ezra, pp. 194—96
Midrash Rabbah Genesis 63:2, p. 102; Exodus 15:12; 18:5; 23:4, p. 103; Numbers 12:8, p. 110; Deuteronomy 2:27, p. 111; Song of Songs 3:11.1, p. 117
Pesikta Rabbati 33:4a, p. 81
Philo the Epic Poet, p. 6
Pirque de Rabbi Eliezer 26, pp. 45-46
Pseudo-Philo 6:9; 23:5; 32:1, pp. 22, 24—25
Rabanus Maurus, pp. 232—33
Ra‘Wandi 4, 8, pp. 415, 416
Rupertus Tujtensis, Commentarium in Joannem 4, pp. 257—58
Story of Abraham 8, p. 177
Story of Abraham . . . with Nimrod 11, 32, p. 167, 174
Study (Midrash) of Abraham Our Father 4, p. 179
Targum Jonathan Genesis 15:7, p. 67

Targum Neofiti 1 Genesis 15:7, p. 69
Book of the Cave of Treasures 23b.1; 24a.1, pp. 190, 191
Book of the Rolls 119b, 120a, pp. 208—9 Catena Severi 6—7, p. 242
Chronicles of Jerahmeel 34:9, 11, p. 132
Conflict of Adam and Eve III, 24:8; 25:2, p. 221
Falasha Story 3, p. 486
George Hamartolos, pp. 237—38
George Syncellus 3, 5, pp. 224, 225
Ibn al-Athir 3, 6, pp. 422, 423—24
Ibn Isha‘q 2, 7, pp. 304, 305
Ibn Kathir 17, 19, p. 456
Isha‘q ibn Bishr 165B:11, 166A:13—14, 17, pp. 318, 319
Jacob of Edessa 6—7, p. 212
John Malalas, p. 206
Kebra Nagast 13, pp. 277—78
Michael the Syrian 2.3.4, 2.6.6, 3.1.1, pp. 262, 263
Other Muslim Traditions: Prophet Abraham 5, pp. 460—61
Philaster of Brescia, p. 199

THE ALTAR (FURNACE) AND THE IDOLS WERE DESTROYED (ABRAHAM 1:20)

Pseudo-Philo 6:18, p. 24
Qur’an 21:57—58, p. 294
Rashi, regarding Genesis 11:28, p. 125
Al-Birüni 2, p. 369
Räwandi 10, p. 417
Al-Kisa" 1'41, 129, pp. 385, 392
Study (Midrash) of Abraham Our Father 1, p. 178
Al-Mas‘u‘di, News 1, p. 353
Story of Abraham 5, p. 176
Al-Nisa‘bu'ri 17:2, p. 402
Story of Abraham . . . with Nimrod 23, p. 171
Al—Rabghüzi 6, 22, 43, 66, pp. 436, 439—40, 450

Symeon Logothetes 2, pp. 250—51

Al-T_abar1'252—7026, 19—20; 318—2426, 9, pp. 335—36, 338—39, 347—48

THE PRIEST (OR LEADER) WAS SMITTEN AND DIED (ABRAHAM 1:20, 29)

Al-T_araf1'60, 70, pp. 375, 376

Al-Tha'labi 2:3, 6, pp. 361, 362—63

Al-Kisa'h' 42, 159, pp. 385, 395

Al-Ya'qu'bi 3, p. 331

Al-Mas'u'di, News 1, p. 353

Al-Zamakhshari 2:576, p. 412

Al-Nisa'bu'ri 19:2, pp. 405—6

Anonymous Christian Chrom'cle 8, 23,

Al-Rabghu'zi 60, p. 448 pp. 228, 230

Al-Tabari 252—7029; 318-2422, pp. 340, 342

Apocalypse of Abraham 8:6, p. 57

Al-, Tarafi 99, p. 378

Bar Hebraeus 1, 7, pp. 274, 275

Catena Severi 6—7, p. 242

George Hamartolos, pp. 237—38

George Syncellus 3, 5, pp. 224, 225

Jacob of Edessa 6—7, p. 212

Michael the Syrian 2.3.4, 2.6.6, pp. 262, 263

Other Muslim Traditions: Prophet Abraham 5, 9, pp. 473—74

Pseudo-Philo 6:9, 17 pp. 22, 24

Qur'an 37:98, p. 296

Ra'wandi 6, p. 416

Story of Abraham . . . with Nimrod 28, p. 173

Symeon Logothetes 2, pp. 250-51

PRIESTHOOD

ABRAHAM WAS HEIR TO THE PRIESTHOOD OF HIS FATHERS (ABRAHAM 1:2-3,

18)

Ibn al-Tayyib 7:6, pp. 254—55

Midrash Rabbah Leviticus 25:6, p. 105; Numbers 4:8, p. 109

Mishnah Aboth 5:2, p. 62

ABRAHAM HELD THE PRIESTHOOD (ABRAHAM 1:2; 2:9, 11; FACSIMILE 2, FIGURE 3; FACSIMILE 3, FIGURE 1)

Al-Nisa'bu'ri 18:4, p. 404

Babylonian Talmud Nedarz'm 32b, pp. 120—21

Georgius Cedrenus 1, pp. 269—70

Kebra Nagast 105, p. 280

Midrash Rabbah Genesis 46:5; 55:6, pp. 100, 101; Leviticus 25:6, p. 105; Numbers 4:8; 10:1, p. 109; Song of Songs 5215.1, p. 117

Pesz'kta Rabbati 40:6a, p. 81

Philo of Alexandria, De Abrahamo 98, p. 41

ABRAHAM WAS LINKED TO NOAH (ABRAHAM 1:19; FACSIMILE 2, FIGURE 3)

Al-Kisa"1' 46, p. 386

Al-,Tabari 252—70z6, pp. 335—36

Augustin'e, City of God 16.12, p. 200

Book of Jasher 9:5—6, 10—11, 19; 12:61, pp. 138, 139, 148 [24]

Book of the Bee 30, p. 273

Ibn al-Tayyib 7:3, p. 253

Jubilees 21:10, p. 19

Qur'an 37:83, p. 296

BELIEVERS ARE THE SEED OF ABRAHAM AND ARE BLESSED THROUGH HIM (ABRAHAM 2:10-11)

Armenian Paraphrase of Genesis: after Genesis 11:30, versions A and B, pp. 284-85

Midrash Rabbah Genesis 14:6, pp. 89—90

Qur'an 14:36, p. 293

ABRAHAM SOUGHT GOD EARNESTLY (ABRAHAM 2:12)

Al-Kisa'fi' 51, pp. 386—87

Al-Mas'u'di, Meadows 4:1, p. 352

Al-Rabghu'zi 16, p. 438

Al-T_abari 252—7028—10, p. 336

Al-Tha'labi 2:10, pp. 364—65

Apocalypse of Abraham 7:12; 8:3, pp. 56, 57

Armenian Paraphrase of Genesis: after Genesis 11:30, versions A and B, pp. 284—85

Augustine, City of God 10.32, p. 200

Book of Jasher 11:14, p. 140

Clementine Recognitions 33, p. 186

Falasha Story 2, pp. 485—86

George Hamartolos, pp. 237—38

Gregory of Nyssa, pp. 187—88

Ibn Isha'q 5—6, pp. 304—5

Jubilees 11:17, p. 15

Kebra Nagast 14, pp. 278—79

Medieval Testament of Naphtali 10:2, p. 128

Michael the Syrian 2.6.2, p. 263

Other Muslim Traditions: Prophet Abraham 5, pp. 460—61

Pcsikta Rabbati 3323a, p. 80

Philo of Alexandria, De Abrahamo 68, p. 39

Pirque de Rabbi Eliewr 26, pp. 45—46

Zohar: Genesis 76b, 86a, pp. 155, 160—61

ABRAHAM MADE CONVERTS IN HARAN (ABRAHAM 2:15)

'Abot de Rabbi Nathan 12, version A, pp. 63—64,

Abu' al-Fida' 3, p. 434

Al-Kisa"1' 85, 121, 160, pp. 389, 391—92, 395

Al—Nisa'bu'ri 22:1, p. 410

Al-Rabghuz'i 30, 61, 68—69, pp. 441, 449, 451—52

Al-Iabari 252—70:41, p. 343

Al-Tha‘labi 3:1, p. 367

Book of Jasher 12:41—43; 13:2, 10, 21, 24, pp. 147, 149, 150, 151 [29]

Chronicles of Jerahmeel 34:13, p. 133

Midrash Rabbah Genesis 39:14, 16; 48:2; 84:4, pp. 93—94, 100, 102; Numbers 14:11, p. 110; Esther 6:2, p. 115; Song of Songs 1.33, p. 115

Other Muslim Traditions: Prophet Abraham 11, p. 463

Pesikta Rabbati 43:6, p. 83

Qur’an 14:36, p. 293

Rashi, regarding Genesis 12:5, p. 126

Story of Abraham . . . with Nimrod 33, p. 174

Study (Midrash) of Abraham Our Father 5, p. 179

Targum Jonathan Genesis 12:5, p. 66

Targum Neofiti 1 Genesis 12:5, p. 69

Targum Onqelos Genesis 12:5, p. 73

Zohar: Genesis 78b, 79a—b, 86b, 88b, pp. 157—58, 161; Exodus 129a, 147b, p. 162

Compare Sefer Yetzirah Gra-Ari 6:7, pp. 86—87

REVELATION

ABRAHAM POSSESSED THE URIM AND THUMMIM, BY MEANS OF WHICH HE RECEIVED REVELATION FROM GOD (ABRAHAM 3:1,4)

Babylonian Talmud Baba Bathra 16b, p. 123

Bahir 190, 192, pp. 50—51

Compare George Hamartolos, pp. 237—38

ABRAHAM WAS KNOWLEDGEABLE ABOUT ASTRONOMY, WHICH HE LEARNED FROM ANCIENT RECORDS AND FROM GOD (ABRAHAM 1:31, 3:1-18; FACSIMILE 2 AND 3)

4 Ezra 3:14, p. 61

Al—Baidäwi 2:2, 13—14, 18, 20—21, pp. 427, 429—30

Al—Kisa"1‘ 51, pp. 386-87

Al—Maqdisi 53—54, pp. 355—56

Al-Nisa‘bu‘ri 1419—10, p. 399

Al-Rabghu'zi 4, 16, pp. 436, 438

A1—T_abari 252—7028—9, 16—17; 316—1721—5, pp. 336, 338, 345 A1—T.araf1' 31—32, 42—43, 52, pp. 373, 374

Al-Tha'labi 2:1-2, pp. 360—61

Al-Ya'qu'bi 1, p. 330

Alcuin, Epistola 83, p. 216

Anonymous Christian Chronicle 7, p. 228

Apocalypse of Abraham 19:3—9, p. 57

Armenian Paraphrase of Genesis: after Genesis 11:30, versions A and B, pp. 284—85

Babylonian Talmud Shabbath 156a—b, p. 119;

Yoma 28b, p. 120

Book of Jasher 9:17—18, p. 139

Book of the Cave of Treasures 25a.1, p. 192

Book of the Rolls 122a, pp. 209—10

Chronicles of Jerahmeel 35:4, p. 134

Clementine Recognitions 32, pp. 185—86

De computo, p. 226

Eupolemus 3—4, p. 8

Falasha Story 2, pp. 485—86

Fimu'cus Matemus, Mathesis 4 Proem 5; 4.17.2, 5; 4.18.1; 8.35—84.14, pp. 478-84

George Hamartolos, pp. 237—38

George Syncellus 4, pp. 225

Gregory of Nyssa, pp. 187—88

Ibn al—Athir 4—5, pp. 422—23

Ibn al~jawzi 1, pp. 418—19

Ibn Isha'q 4—5, 7, pp. 304—5

Isha'q ibn Bishr 164A:13, 17; 164821—4, p. 316

Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews 1.7.1—2; 1.8.2, pp. 47-48, 49

Jubilees 11:8; 12:17, pp. 15, 17

Midrash Rabbah Genesis 44:12; 48:6; 53:4, pp. 99, 100, 101; Exodus 38:6, p. 104; Numbers 2:12, 14, pp. 107—8

Orphica 27—29, pp. 12—13

Other Muslim Traditions: Turkish 5, p. 459

Pesikta Rabbati 11:4a; 43:1, pp. 78, 82

Philo of Alexandria, De Mutatione Nominum 67, 72, p. 36; De Sonmiis 53—54, p. 37;

Quaestiones et Solutiones in Genesin 3.42—43, pp. 42—43

Pseudo-Philo 18:5, p. 24

Qiqel and Yahya 1, 7, pp. 488, 489

Qur'an 6:75, p. 292

Rāwandi 2, p. 415

Sefer Yetzirah Gra-Ari 6:7; Short 6:4; Long 6:8, pp. 86—87

Sibylline Oracles 3218—28, p. 11

Symeon Logothetes 1—2, pp. 249—50 Vettius Valens, Anthologiae 2.29.1-6, pp. 476—77

Zohar: Genesis 80a, 86a, pp. 158, 160—61

Contrast Zohar: Numbers 148a, p. 163

ABRAHAM TAUGHT ASTRONOMY TO THE EGYPTIANS (ABRAHAM FACSIMILE

3)

Anonymous Work, p. 10

Artapanus, p. 7

Eupolemus 8, p. 8—9

George Syncellus 5, pp. 225

Joannes Zonaras, p. 261

Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews 1.8.2, p. 49

Zohar: Genesis 83a, p. 160

Contrast Chronicles of Jerahmeel 35:4, p. 134;

Mahbu'b of Menbidj (Agapius) 4, p. 248

EARTH HAS FOUR QUARTERS (ABRAHAM FAC-SIMILE 2, FIGURE 6)

Book of Jasher 8:2, 10; 12:9, pp. 135, 136, 144 [33]

Chronicles of Jerahmeel 34:1, pp. 130—31

Story of Abraham 1, p. 175

Zohar: Genesis 78a, pp. 156-57

ABRAHAM KNEW ABOUT THE CREATION (ABRAHAM 1:31; 4-5)

Al—Nisäbu'ri 14:10, p. 399

A1-T_araf1' 53—54, pp. 374—75

Al-Tha'labi 2:1, pp. 360—61

Apocalypse of Abraham 7:10—11; 19:9; 21:1—6, pp. 56, 57, 58

Chronicles of Jerahmeel 34:3, p. 131

Clementine Recognitions 33, p. 186

Ibn Isha'q 4, p. 304

Ioannes Zonaras, p. 261

Jubilees 12:19, p. 17

**THERE WAS ADVANCE PLANNING FOR THE CREATION (ABRAHAM 4:31-55;
MOSES 3:4-5)**

Apocalypse of Abraham 22:2, p. 59

**THE ELEMENTS OF THE EARTH OBEYED GOD (ABRAHAM 4:9-12, 18, 21, 24-25,
31)**

Apocalypse of Abraham 19:9, p. 57

ABRAHAM SAW THE PREMORTAL SPIRITS (ABRAHAM 3:21-24)

Al-Kisä'i 28, p. 384

A1-T.abar1' 216, p. 333

Al-T,araf1' 32, p. 373

Apocalypse of Abraham 19:6—7; 21:7—22:5, pp. 57, 58—59

Book of Jasher 12:38, p. 146

Clementine Recognitions 33, p. 186

Firminus Maternus, Mathesis 4.18.1, p. 479

Medieval Testament of Naphtali 9:5, p. 127

Midrash Rabbah Genesis 14:6, pp. 89—90; Ecclesiastes 3:112, p. 113

Philo of Alexandria, De Cherubim 4, p. 35

Scfer Yetzirah Long 6:8;

Saadia 8:5, pp. 87—88

Symeon Logothetes 2, pp. 250-51

Vettius Valens,

Anthologia 2.29.1—6, pp. 476—77

**THE LORD INSTRUCTED ABRAHAM TO SAY THAT SARAH WAS HIS SISTER
(ABRAHAM 2:22—25)**

Bakhayla Mik‘a"él (Zo‘srma‘a‘s) 17b.1, p. 283

Genesis Apocryphon XIX, 14-21, pp. 26—27

Isha‘q ibn Bishr 169B:17—170A:1, p. 325

Zohar: Genesis 81b, 82a, p. 159

Contrast Zohar: Genesis 82a, p. 159; see al-Tarafi 115, pp. 379—80

ANCIENT RECORDS

ABRAHAM POSSESSED RECORDS FROM THE FATHERS (ABRAHAM 1:28, 31)

Al—Mas‘u‘di, p. 353

Meadows 4:5, p. 353;

News 2, p. 353

Al-T_abari 350, p: 350

Al-Tha‘labi 1:2, p. 358

Book of Noah, versions B and C, p. 124

Eupolemus 8, pp. 8—9

Genesis Apocryphon XIX, 25, p. 27

Ibn al-T,ayyib 7:3, p. 253

Jubilees 11:16; 12:27; 21:10, pp. 15, 18, 19

Midmsh Rabbah 39:10, p. 93

Zohar: Genesis 55b, p. 154

ABRAHAM LEFT A RECORD OF HIS OWN (ABRAHAM 1:31)

Babylonian Talmud A‘bodah Zarah 14b, 25a, pp. 122, 123

Firminus Maternus, Mathesis 4 Proem 5; 4.17.5; 4.18.1; 8.3.5, pp. 478, 479

Jubilees 39:6, p. 20

Qur’an 87:19—20, p. 297

Sefer Yetzira Gra-Ari 6:7;

Short 6:4;

Long 6:8, pp. 86—87

Vettius Valens, Anthologiae 2.28.3, p. 476

PHARAOH AND THE FOUNDING OF EGYPT

THE FOUNDING OF EGYPT (ABRAHAM 1:21-27)

Al-Kisä'i 59—60, p. 387

Al-Mas'u'di, Meadows 3:1, pp. 351—52

Al-Rabghu'zi 9, p. 436

Al—T_abar1' 215; 216; 252—7025, 42, pp. 333, 335, 343

Al-Tha'labi 1:1; 3:1, pp. 357—58, 367

Anonymous Christian Chronicle 16, p. 229

Armenian Question, p. 286

Artapanus, p. 7

Book of the Cave of Treasures 22b2, p. 189

Book of the Rolls 118b, pp. 207—8

Conflict of Adam and Eve III, 23:4—8, pp. 219—20

Genesis Apocryphon XIX, 13, p. 26

Ibn al-T_ayyib 6:2, p. 253

Mahbüb of Menbidj (Agapius) 3, p. 248

Other Muslim Traditions: Turkish 1, p. 458

Targum Jonathan Genesis 1621, 5, p. 67

Zohar: Genesis 73a, pp. 154—55 Contrast Abu' al—Fida' 3, p. 433;

al-T,abari 325—26:1, p. 349

PHARAOH WAS A DESCENDANT OF HAM BUT ALSO OF CANAAN (ABRAHAM

1:21-22, 24-25, 27)

Al-Baida'wi 2:1, p. 427

Al-Tarafi 4, 35, pp. 371, 373

Al-Tha'labi 1:1, pp. 357—58

Eupolemus 9, p. 9

Jubilees 22:20-21, p. 20

Peskita Rabbati 21:22, p. 80

Story of Abraham . . . with Nimrod 7, p. 166

THE FIRST PHARAOH, A GOOD MAN, WAS BLESSED BY NOAH (ABRAHAM 1:26)

Ibn al-Tayyib 6:1-2, pp. 252-53

Other Muslim Traditions: Turkish 1-2, pp. 458-59

**ABRAHAM WAS ALLOWED TO SIT ON A KING'S THRONE (ABRAHAM
FACSIMILE 3, FIGURE 1)**

Al-Kisa'i 170, p. 396

Al-Rabhguzi 64-65, 69, pp. 449-50, 451-52

Babylonian Talmud Sanhedrin 108b, p. 122

Book of Jasher 15:22, p. 153

**Midrash Rabbah Genesis 42:5, 55:6, pp. 97,101; Deuteronomy 2:33, p. 112; Ecclesiastes
4:14.1, p. 114**

Tanna debe Eliyahu 8-9, p. 76

FAMINE IN CHALDEA

THERE WAS A FAMINE IN ABRAHAM'S HOMELAND (ABRAHAM 1:29-30; 2:1, 5)

Al-Kisa" 1' 120, p. 391

Al-Rabghu'zi 29, 44, pp. 441, 445

Anonymous Christian Chronicle 26, p. 230

Bar Hebraeus 6, p. 275

Catena Severi 2, p. 241

Jacob of Edessa 2, p. 211

Jubilees 11:11—13, p. 15

Michael the Syrian 2.6.2, p. 263

Midrash Rabbah Genesis 25:3; 40:3; 64:2, pp. 90, 94, 102

Other Muslim' Traditions: Turkish 4, p. 459

Philo of Alexandria, De Abrahamo 91, p. 40

**ABRAHAM PRAYED THAT GOD WOULD END THE FAMINE IN CHALDEA
(ABRAHAM 2:17)**

Al-Kisa"1' 121, pp. 391—92

Al-Rabghu'zi 44, p. 445

Catena Severi 3—4, p. 241

Jacob of Edessa 3, pp. 211—12

Jubilees 11:18—24, pp. 15—16

HARAN DIED IN THE FAMINE (ABRAHAM 2:1)

Al-Rabghu'zi 21, 47, pp. 439, 445—46

OTHER

**ABRAHAM WAS SIXTY-TWO YEARS OF AGE WHEN HE LEFT HARAN, NOT
SEVENTY FIVE AS GENESIS SAYS (ABRAHAM 2:14)**

Al-Mas'u'di, News 2, p. 353

Babylonian Talmud A'bodatz Zarah 9a, p. 122

Genesis Commentary: 4QcommGen A, p. 31

Georgius Cedrenus 3, p. 270

Pesikta Rabbati 42:3a, pp. 81—82

Sa'id ibn Batriq (Euty chius) 3, p. 246

Contrast Isha'q ibn Bishr 169A216, p. 324

ABRAHAM BECAME LIKE GOD (DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS 132: 29, 37, 49)

Armenian Paraphrase of Genesis: after Genesis 11:30, version A, pp. 284—85

Midmsh Rabbah Genesis 43:7; 44:4, pp. 97—98; Numbers 14:2, p. 110; Song of Songs
1:3.3, pp. 115-16

All I can say is anyone who claims that there is no credible evidence for the Book of
Abraham has not done the research.

For some further Book of Abraham evidences: (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F19d5CIZMWo&list=LLKJIwjeGO3jyJKiuU_mzDUg&index=12&t=3355s)

ENJOY!

22. Why does the Book of Abraham, chapters 4 & 5, contradict Alma 11 in stating that there is more than one God?



They are not contradicting each other. It is you who is misinterpreting our scripture which you yourself don't even believe in. The Book of Abraham is mentioning many lowercase "g" gods while Alma 11 states there is only one uppercase "G" God.

Consider this quote by Paul in 1 Corinthians 8:

"5 For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,) 6 But to us *there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.*"
Here again, we see mention of there being many lowercase "g" gods and many lowercase "l" lords (we also conclude many lowercase "l" ladies), but to us there is only one uppercase "G" God, and only one uppercase "L" Lord (whether of heaven or of earth, or whether we are talking about fake gods or real gods).

23. Why does Doctrine and Covenants 42:18 say there is no forgiveness for a murderer when 3 Nephi 30:2 says there is forgiveness for him?

(sigh) I really don't like it when people have to go and misinterpret scripture that they don't even believe in. Why can't you just let us have our own interpretation of these scriptures?



The context for Doctrine and Covenants 42 reads:

“Revelation given in two parts through Joseph Smith the Prophet, at Kirtland, Ohio, February 9 and 23, 1831. The first part, consisting of verses 1 through 72, was received in the presence of twelve elders and in fulfillment of the Lord’s promise previously made that the “law” would be given in Ohio (see section 38:32). The second portion consists of verses 73 through 93. The Prophet specifies this revelation as ‘embracing the law of the Church.’ “

Okay, so the context here is that this section about the law of the Church. So when it says the he who murders it shall not be forgiven him, it is talking about those who are under the law of the Church. In other words, if you are baptized into the Church then you are under a covenant with God, and killing is a type of breaking the covenant. Hence why you wouldn't have any forgiveness.

The context for 3 Nephi 30 is that Mormon is speaking to the Gentiles, or those who are not under the covenant. He is saying that they shall be forgiven of their murders but those under the covenant cannot be forgiven as stated in D&C 42.

Jesus Christ, while on the cross, said of those who were crucifying him, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.” (Luke 23:34) But of Judas Iscariot—who was a chief disciple—Jesus said of him, “it had been good for that man if he had not been born.” (Matthew 26:24)

And so we follow this pattern as set forth by Christ, that the ones outside of the Church who murder should receive forgiveness because “they know not what they do.” But those

who murder while inside the Church shall not be forgiven because they do know what they do. For these reasons do we say that we forgive the men involved in the Hawn's Mill massacre as they were outside the Church, but we do not forgive the men involved in the Mountain Meadows massacre as they were inside the Church and so were soon after swiftly excommunicated from the Church.

That wasn't too hard. Could you give me a harder question now?

24. If the Adam-God doctrine isn't true, how come Doctrine and Covenants 27:11 calls Adam the Ancient of Days which is clearly a title for God in Daniel chapter 7?

I feel like even if Daniel wasn't talking about Adam when he said, "Ancient of Days," it still



seems to be a very appropriate title to give the most ancient of men, that being Adam. How do you justify your interpretation of this scripture?

The *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* notes:

“For Latter-day Saints, Adam stands as one of the noblest and greatest of all men. Information found in the scriptures and in declarations of latter-day apostles and prophets reveals details about Adam and his important roles in the pre-earth life, in Eden, in mortality, and in his postmortal life. They identify Adam by such names and titles as Michael (D&C 27:11; D&C 29:26), archangel (D&C 88:112), and Ancient of Days (D&C 138:38).”

Joseph Smith is one source for this view of Adam:

“‘Ancient of Days’ appears to be his title because he is ‘the first and oldest of all.’”

Fairmormon notes:

“This section of Daniel is written in Aramaic, while the rest of the Old Testament is in Hebrew. The phrase translated "Ancient of Days" (*attiq yômîn*) as one non-LDS source notes, "in reference to God...is unprecedented in the Hebrew texts." Thus, reading this phrase as referring to God (and, in the critics' reading, *only* God) relies on parallels from

Canaanite myth and Baal imagery in, for example, the Ugaritic texts. Latter-day Saints are pleased to have a more expanded view through the addition of revelatory insights. “

(<https://www.fairmormon.org/answers/Question: If the Adam->

God doctrine isn't true, how come Daniel 27:11 calls Adam the Ancient of Days which is clearly a title for God in Daniel 7:3F)

One non-LDS scholar noted:

“In the Septuagint version of Daniel 7:13 the translator has interpreted ‘he came to the Ancient of Days’ as ‘he came as the Ancient of Days’. Thus, according to this Septuagint interpretation, the Son of Man is in fact the embodiment of the person of the Ancient of Days. In other words the original scene in Daniel 7, where two figures exist alongside each other in heaven, is changed so that the vice-regent, the Son of Man, takes upon himself the form and character of God himself.”

25. Why does the Book of Mormon contain extensive, word-for-word quotes from the Bible if the LDS Church is correct in teaching that the Bible has been corrupted?

Origen, a first-hand witness to the early Bible manuscripts, made this observation:

“The differences among the manuscripts have become great, either through negligence of some copyists or through the perverse audacity of theirs; they either neglect to check over what they have transcribed, or, in the process of checking, they make additions or deletions as they please.”



(Whose Word is it?: The Story Behind Who Changed The New Testament and Why, Bart D. Ehrman)

Non-Mormon YouTube channel, Religion for Breakfast, has a video in which he interviews Duke University New Testament PhD student, Elizabeth Schrader. They talk about how there may have been attempts to suppress Mary Magdeline in the Gospel of John. They also discuss how the oldest manuscript of the Gospel of John has around 450 changes made to it. (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rfy6oiB_U-A)

In his video on how the New Testament was formed, we learn that the canon, as we know it, did not come about from an authoritative declaration from God or a prophet. The New Testament canon instead came about after centuries of debates, and the ones we do have came out on top by way of the popular vote. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SCy7NuuJCLc>)

In the “Epistle of Peter to Jacob 2”, we read about how Peter is disturbed by how his words are being changed: “They think they are able to interpret my own words better than I can, telling their hearers that they are conveying my very thoughts to them, while the fact is that such things never entered my mind. If they take such outrageous liberties while I am alive, what will they do after I am gone!”

(Quoted in Hugh Nibley, “Prophets and Preachers,” the world and the prophets (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book; Provo, UT: FARMS, 1987), 28.)

Early Christian Irenaeus claims the Valentinians changed the scripture, “by transferring passages, and dressing them up anew, and making one thing out of another.”

Another Christian sect he says, “Does not receive certain Scriptures; and whichever of them it does receive, it does receive, it perverts by means of additions and diminutions, for the accomplishment of it[s] own purpose; and such as it does receive, it receives not in their entirety; but even when it does receive any up to a certain point as entire, it nevertheless perverts even these by the contrivance of diverse Interpretations.”

(Gee, “The Corruption of Scripture in the Second Century.”)

From the LDS Bible Dictionary, we read of books which are indeed missing from the Bible: “The so-called lost books of the Bible are those documents that are mentioned in the Bible in such a way that it is evident they were considered authentic and valuable but that are not found in the Bible today. Sometimes called missing scripture, they consist of at least the

following: book of the Wars of the Lord (Num. 21:14); book of Jasher (Josh. 10:13; 2 Sam. 1:18); book of the acts of Solomon (1 Kgs. 11:41); book of Samuel the seer (1 Chr. 29:29); book of Gad the seer (1 Chr. 29:29); book of Nathan the prophet (1 Chr. 29:29; 2 Chr. 9:29); prophecy of Ahijah (2 Chr. 9:29); visions of Iddo the seer (2 Chr. 9:29; 12:15; 13:22); book of Shemaiah (2 Chr. 12:15); book of Jehu (2 Chr. 20:34); sayings of the seers (2 Chr. 33:19); an epistle of Paul to the Corinthians, earlier than our present 1 Corinthians (1 Cor. 5:9); possibly an earlier epistle to the Ephesians (Eph. 3:3); an epistle to the Church at Laodicea (Col. 4:16); and some prophecies of Enoch, known to Jude (Jude 1:14). To these rather clear references to inspired writings other than our current Bible may be added another list that has allusions to writings that may or may not be contained within our present text but may perhaps be known by a different title; for example, the book of the covenant (Ex. 24:7), which may or may not be included in the current book of Exodus; the manner of the kingdom, written by Samuel (1 Sam. 10:25); the rest of the acts of Uzziah written by Isaiah (2 Chr. 26:22)."

Now, this isn't to say that the whole Bible was mistranslated; there are still many good things to be found therein. There are far more accuracies than inaccuracies, which is a miracle in and of itself. The Book of Mormon is meant to be the companion to the Bible, to give us further clarity on those few things which are mistranslations.

If you compare the Isaiah (and the other Bible scriptures) in the Book of Mormon to the Isaiah (and the other Bible scriptures) in the JST you will find that the two are completely identical. So if Joseph Smith was a true prophet, we can be entirely sure he was sure to include the correct translations from the Bible in the Book of Mormon.

So why is Jesus's sermon on the mount different in the Book of Mormon compared to the speech in the JST translation of the Bible? Because Jesus was talking to two different people on opposite sides of the world, with entirely different cultures. He, Jesus, felt it necessary to make changes to his famous sermon in Ancient America so that the people would be able to understand them better.

Joseph Smith taught:

“I believe the Bible as it read when it came from the pen of the original writers. Ignorant translators, or designing and corrupt priests have committed many errors.” (Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith [2007], 207).

When we say that we believe in the Bible so long as it was translated correctly we mean we want the Bible to come in its purest form possible. We could say the same about the Book of Mormon. Surely any Christian would not want to believe in a bible which was translated incorrectly. If I gave you a Bible which had chapters removed and other made-up chapters added then you would surely say that this Bible was not translated correctly and would not want to believe in it.

Concerning the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible, FairMormon wrote:

“Reading the JST is akin to having the prophet at your elbow as one studies—it allows Joseph to clarify, elaborate, and comment on the Biblical text in the light of modern revelation.”

The JST was not intended to be Joseph Smith rewriting the Bible but to give commentary on it and give further insights into those things which were mistranslated or taken out of the Bible.

From the Church’s gospel topic essay on the matter we read that Joseph “As he worked on these changes, he appears in many instances to have consulted respected commentaries by biblical scholars, studying them out in his mind as a part of the revelatory process.”

(<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/history/topics/joseph-smith-translation-of-the-bible?lang=eng>)

From some Bible scholars, we understand that Joseph Smith did indeed get many things right. One in particular deals with the removal of the phrase “without a cause” from Matthew 5:22. Micheal R Ash wrote:

“When we examine the earliest Greek copies of the New Testament—documents that were discovered after Joseph Smith had died—we find that the phrase ‘without a cause’ is also generally absent. As Professor John Welch notes, the verse in 3 Nephi discourages all anger whereas the verse in Matthew permits justifiable anger.

‘The former is more like the demanding sayings of Jesus regarding committing adultery in one’s heart (see Matthew 5:28) and loving one’s enemies (see v. 44), neither of which offers the disciple a convenient loop hole of self-justification or rationalization.’

“Some non-LDS scholars believe that ‘without a cause’ was added to Matthew 5:22 in an attempt to reflect a Semitic idiom that does not allow just anger under any circumstance. The King James Bible’s ‘without a cause’ however, implies that anger is okay when there is a cause, while the Book of Mormon more accurately reflects the likely original intention of the passage. The fact that Joseph Smith got it right, when no scholars in his world would have been aware of the later Greek insertion, shouldn’t be amazing—but it is.” (Micheal R. Ash, *Of Faith and Reason: 80 Evidences Supporting the Prophet Joseph Smith*, Pg. 45 - 46)

26. Why do the Bible verses quoted in the Book of Mormon contain the italicized words from the King James Version that were added into the KJV text by the translators in the 16th and 17th centuries?

It is good to note that Nephi nor Mormon nor Moroni nor any other prophet from the Book of Mormon wrote these italicized words. They were added in later as a way for modern English speakers to better understand what was being taught. Therefore these words are of no concern to me, and you are just nitpicking.

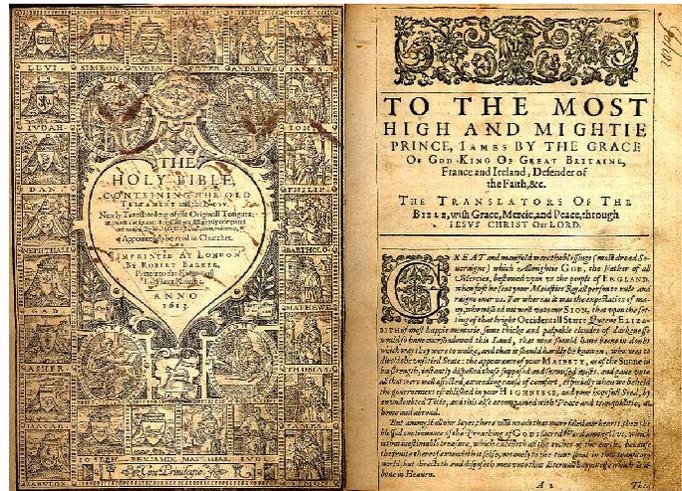
This is an all too desperate attempt to reach your hand far back into the distant back of a dark cupboard; reaching for something, anything more to complain about. You desire more than anything to disbelieve the Book of Mormon and avoid anything that would cause you to believe, that you are willing to pick up the tiniest of complaints which mean nothing. Just as Loki once said so say I to you, “How desperate are you? To call on such lost creatures to defend you.”

If you don’t want italicized words in your Book of Mormon then go read the french Book of Mormon in which there is no trace of these italicized words.

27. If the Book of Mormon was engraved on gold plates thousands of years ago, why does it read in perfect 1611 King James Version English?

I don’t know! Another question that could be asked is: if the Bible was written on paper thousands of years ago, why does it read in perfect 1611 King James Version English?

The answer to these two questions is self-evident. Of course, there was no Jacobean English thousands of years ago. Nephi didn't know Jacobean English, Moroni didn't know Jacobean English, Isaiah didn't know Jacobean English, and Paul certainly didn't know Jacobean English. (Jacobean English being the more exact name for 1611 King James English, it is also called Early Modern English) The King James translators just translated the



ancient Greek and Hebrew manuscripts into the English that they knew. That translation soon became the most popular English translation of the Bible today and in Joseph Smith's time. The popularity the KJV had in English regions grew as such that Jacobean English just began to be associated with the very language of the scriptures. So God had Joseph Smith translate the ancient non-Jacobean-English reformed Egyptian into the same language as the KJV so that it would be associated with scripture and known scripture language.

Note: if you pick up a copy of the Book of Mormon in Spanish or Japanese then you will find nothing pointing to Jacobean English.

It is also good to note that Nephi, Mormon, Moroni and all the other prophets in the Book of Mormon had no knowledge of Greek based words; such as Christ, baptism, Christian, and church. What they wrote was only the reformed Egyptian equivalent of those words, whatever they may have been.

Bible Questions

28. If marriage is essential to achieve exaltation, why did Paul say that it is good for a man not to marry (1 Corinthians 7:1)?



EEK GAG ... Paul thinks it is good for a man not to marry! Well, why are so many Christians getting married then? This needs to stop, this scripture clearly states that men and women should not marry. But we need to continue the human race somehow, I guess we fornicate? But what is this, Paul also says in the very next verse to “avoid fornication” (1 Corinthians 7:2)? WWWWWHHHHHAAAAAAAAATTTTT? Well [insert cuss word], what are we supposed to do now. if we can’t marry and we can’t have sex without marriage? This is a real corner we’ve painted ourselves into. I guess the only thing we can do now is to “deny our programming, stop reproducing, walk hand in hand into extinction, one last midnight, brothers and sisters opting out of a raw deal.” (Rustin Cohle, True Detective)

But wait there’s more here. While Paul says that it is not good for a man to marry, God Himself said it is not good for man to be alone and so gave him Eve to be his helpmeet and wife (Genesis 2:18). So, why is Paul contradicting God here? Paul is also famous for saying,

“neither is the man without the woman, neither is the woman without the man, in the Lord.”(1 Corinthians 11:11-12) So it looks like Paul is not just contradicting God but also himself, and even in the same letter to the Corinthians?

So, what’s going on here? Let’s look at that scripture to see if Paul is contradicting himself and God or not.

“Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman. Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.” [1 Corinthians 7:1-2 KJV]

Oh okay, that makes more sense when you put the first two verses together like that. Now it looks more like Paul was saying that it is good for a man not to touch a woman to avoid fornication. He’s not telling them to not marry but to avoid fornication. Let’s look at another translation of the Bible which puts these verses into a clearer perspective:

“Now concerning the matters about which you wrote: "It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman." But because of the temptation to sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband.” [1 Cor 7:1-2, ESB]

The 1 Corinthians 7:1 footnote from the New English Translation (NET) Bible reads:

“Many recent interpreters believe that here again (as in 6:12-13) Paul cites a slogan the Corinthians apparently used to justify their actions. If this is so, Paul agrees with the slogan in part, but corrects it in the following verses to show how the Corinthians misused the idea to justify abstinence within marriage (cf. 8:1, 4; 10:23). See also G. D. Fee, “1 Corinthians 7:1 in the NIV,” JETS 23 (1980): 307-14. “

Ah, see, context does matter.

Marriage, you see, is extremely important for exaltation as expressed by Peter: “Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honor unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.” (1 Peter 3:7)

Just as Bruce R. McKonkie would always say, “Salvation is a family affair.”

Could you please explain to me WHY it’s not good for a man to marry? I am really, really confused on that point.

29. Since the Word of Wisdom teaches us to abstain from alcohol, why did Paul encourage Timothy to drink wine for his stomach (1 Timothy 5:23)?



One could likewise also wonder why Jesus gave his disciples wine to drink at the last supper, or why did he change water to wine at that wedding? Couldn't he have just purified the water or turned it into coke?

Let us investigate the matter together. There are some strange scriptures which seem to suggest that wine and strong drink is bad and is for those who are ready to perish, wine is referred to as a way for people to forget about things be it their problems or the laws of the land (Proverbs 31:4-6). Proverbs 21:1 speaks of wine as being a mocker. Indeed there seems to be some small emphasis throughout the scriptures that we should avoid any strong drink.

The scriptures where wine is used still need explaining. Concerning 1 Timothy 5:23, FairMormon writes:

"A related question which Christian critics ought to ask themselves might be, "Since we know now that alcohol—including wine—can cause gastritis, ulcers, or stomach bleeding why did Paul (a prophet!) tell Timothy to use it?"

"Latter-day Saints will be untroubled that a prophet and apostle (such as Paul) could have had a false, though popular, opinion about scientific matters. Paul isn't any less an apostle because he expressed a false idea about the benefits of alcohol on stomach problems.

"Yet, many sectarian critics of the Church are quick to point fingers at Joseph Smith or Brigham Young for 19th century ideas which they expressed."

When it comes to all those other scriptures of ancient prophets and apostles drinking wine they did so because water back then was more filthy to drink and hard to filter, so they would often have a mixture of water and wine to drink. Now that we live in an age in which filtered water is in such an overabundance we no longer require wine as water is now the far healthier option.

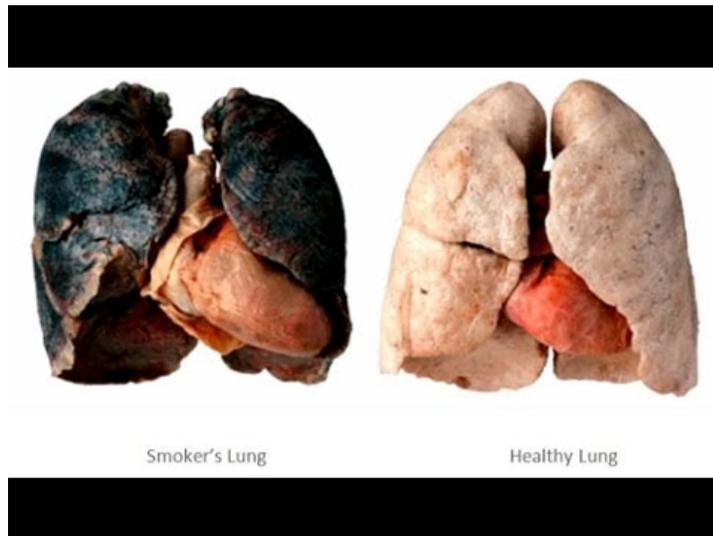
FairMormon also wrote:

"In fact, the Word of Wisdom was initially given to the restored Church "not by commandment or constraint" (D&C 89:2) as, essentially, "divine advice." The early Latter-day Saints didn't live it as strictly as we do. (Joseph Smith and his companions drank a bit of wine in Carthage Jail to revive their spirits.) Acting under inspiration, later Church leaders gradually gave the Word of Wisdom more emphasis, until living it became a requirement for a temple recommend in the 1920s under President Heber J. Grant.

"The Word of Wisdom is a commandment specifically given to us, "in consequence of evils and designs which do and will exist in the hearts of conspiring men in the last days" (D&C 89:4). These conspiracies didn't exist in Jesus' time, and have only recently become a serious problem, as advertising and marketing of alcohol makes it look "fun," but ignores the serious effects of alcoholism, spouse and child abuse, drunk driving, and so forth."

30. If obeying the Word of Wisdom - which tells us to abstain from caffeine, alcohol and tobacco - is important for our exaltation, why did Jesus say that there is nothing that can enter a man to make him defiled (Mark 7:15)?

Yup, that lung on the left is most definitely not defiled, a healthy lung is supposed to be black. Sarcasm aside, don't forget about tea, coffee, and illegal drugs.



Caffeine has never been an official part of the word of wisdom and has just been something that some few Latter-Day Saints have decided to lay off based their own personal judgment or revelation. No prophet has said anything against it, if they have then it is just their personal opinions.

The context of Mark 7:15 is that Jesus is talking about things that defile us. Specifically, he is talking about obedience to the commandments, if you disobey a commandment then are you defiled. FairMormon writes:

“The Word of Wisdom says nothing about such substances "defiling us." Members believe it is important to obey the Word of Wisdom because God has commanded us not to do something, and we have promised not to do it. We should keep our promises to God.

The Jews promised not to eat pork, and so it was a sin for them to eat pork—not because pork contaminates or "defiles" them, but because disobedience (that which comes OUT of us, as Jesus said) shows we do not love and trust God. The underlying principle here is obedience to God, not the Word of Wisdom, *per se*.”

C. It should be understood that it is because of the word of wisdom that Latter-day Saints are among the healthiest people in the world. The real question here should be, who doesn't want to live a long, healthy, happy life?

“And the result? One 25-year- study of practicing California Mormons by James Enstrom and Lester Breslow of UCLA found that Mormon men and women who were married, had

never smoked, attended church weekly and had at least 12 years of education had some of the lowest death rates ever reported for any group followed for that long a time.

“Mormon women in the study had a life expectancy of more than 86 years— five years longer than comparable women overall; men lived to an average of more than 84 years, which was almost a decade longer.

"Fasting, meanwhile, may be better than a juice cleanse.

“Otterson noted that researchers at Intermountain Health Care found that people who give up food once a month were 40 percent less likely to be diagnosed with clogged arteries than those who don’t.

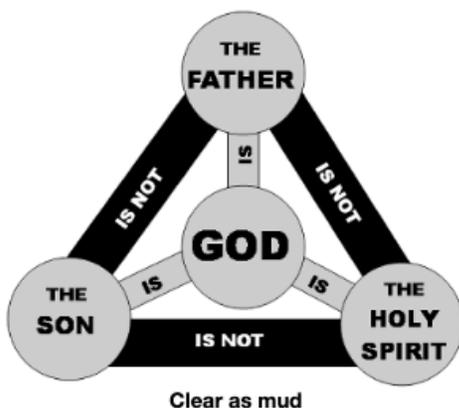
“The finding, based on a clinical trial of more than 200 people, was presented last year at the annual scientific sessions of the American College of Cardiology.”

(https://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/she-the-people/post/mormonism-good-for-the-body-as-well-as-the-soul/2012/06/20/gJQARk3IqV_blog.html?utm_term=.6cef0e94e4af)

31. If Jesus is the Jehovah of the Old Testament and Elohim is referred to as God in the Old Testament, can you explain Deuteronomy 6:4 to me: “Hear, O Israel: the LORD (Jehovah) our God (Elohim) is one LORD (Jehovah)?

Yes, I think I can, says the little engine in me. So the mainstream Mormon understanding

of God is this; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. All are the one true God of Israel and yet are separate and distinct from one another as shown by the picture:



All is the same, it’s just the names that are more confusing than I originally thought. The Holy Spirit has not had a name revealed yet and has just gone by the name the Spirit of God, but I can assure you he is still a distinct person of

spirit (1 Nephi 11:11). Then we have the Son who we call Jehovah and the Father we call

Elohim, this is where things may be more complicated than originally thought as FairMormon writes the following:

“Although *Elohim* is understood and used in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints as the name-title of God the Eternal Father and the name *Jehovah* is reserved for His Only Begotten Son, Jesus Christ, [3] this has not always been the case. Nineteenth-century Mormons—including Joseph Smith, Brigham Young, and John Taylor—generally used *Jehovah* as the name of God the Father. Latter-day Saints also recognize that the Hebrew word *Elohim* was used anciently as a generic word for "god."

...

“The following scriptures illustrate the confusion of divine names in the Old Testament:

- Exodus 34:23 combines the Hebrew words *Adon* (Lord), *Jehovah* (LORD) and *Elohim* (God [of Israel]) into one title which is translated "Lord God, the God of Israel" or "Lord Jehovah, God of Israel."
- The Hebrew version of Psalm 82:1 reads: "God [*Elohim*] stands in the assembly of God [*El*]; he judges in the midst of the gods [*Elohim*]."
- Psalm 110:1 reads: "The LORD [*Jehovah*] said unto my Lord [*Adonai*], Sit thou at my right-hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." (Hebrews 1:1–3 indicates that God the Father said this to Jesus Christ; see also Matthew 22:44; Mark 12:36; Luke 20:42.)
- In one instance (Psalm 8:5), the Hebrew *Elohim* is even rendered "angels." The Hebrew text states that Jehovah made the son of man "a little less than *Elohim*" [KJV "angels"]. Though most literal translations render *Elohim* as "God" in this verse, there is justification for translating it "angels": Hebrews 2:7 quotes this verse, using the Greek word *aggelos* ("angels") in place of *Elohim*.
- We also find that *Elohim* is translated in four instances as "judges" (Exodus 21:6, Exodus 22:8-9), though "God's representative" is probably the intended meaning. This nevertheless shows that divine names were used by inspired writers with different meanings.

“In the Old Testament, the title *Elohim* often emphasizes the strong, covenant-keeping qualities of God while the name *Jehovah*, the self-existent and eternal attributes; and *Adonai*, the characteristics of a sovereign lord; they have not always been applied to just one God.

“A study of the various Hebrew words used for deity in the Old Testament reveals that the same name-titles were often used for both true and false gods as well as for human leaders. Thus, the Hebrew for *Elohim* and *Jehovah* were often used in a generic sense. Such usage could especially cause confusion if the text were later modified.”

Nevertheless, just because the names are not as certain as originally thought, the Father, the Son, and the Spirit are still separate and distinct persons yet all act as the one true God of Israel. There is no other way to read the New Testament otherwise.

Bruce R. McConkie wrote:

"... since he [Jesus] is one with the Father in all of the attributes of perfection, and since he exercises the power and authority of the Father...the Father puts his own name on the Son and authorizes him to speak in the first person as though he were the Father.”

32. Why does the Mormon Church teach that we can be married in heaven when Jesus said in Matthew 22:30 that in the resurrection men neither marry, nor are they given in marriage?



I think this scripture is pretty self-explanatory without context. It says that IN the resurrection men will neither marry nor be given in marriage.(DC 132:15-17) It doesn't say that marriages having been bound by the priesthood on earth will not last into the resurrection. Remember that Jesus gave unto Peter the priesthood power to bind on earth that it would be bound in heaven (Matthew 16:19). Surely this means that if Peter married a couple together on earth they would then be married in heaven, in other words for all eternity. A couple to be bound on earth so that they will be bound in heaven. Is that not a beautiful idea? And the opposite is most ugly as it tears the family apart limb from limb, wife from husband, a parent from child, sister from brother, all gone, all destroyed upon death.

Besides, did not Paul famously teach: "Neither is the man without the woman, neither is the woman without the man, in the Lord"(1 Corinthians 11:11)? So man is nothing without the woman and woman is nothing without the man. Do you mean to tell me that God would just put us in heaven neutered and therefore nothing? What is the point of coming to earth, falling in love, making families only to then die as if none of that even happened? Indeed, why even command us to become "one flesh" with our spouses only to rip us apart as soon as we learn how to be properly one flesh with our spouse? I thought God was love, surely He would want us to share in this love with each other for all eternity and not just rip it away from us upon death. Life is meaningless if you believe such things! Love is the only reason we are here and nothing else! The God who would rip families apart upon death is not a god I want to worship, for he is not a God of love but a god of hate.

But don't take it from me, take it from Anne Hathaway in the movie "Interstellar", for she hath a way to better understand these things:

"Love isn't something we invented; it's observable, powerful. It has to mean something."

Matthew as Cooper responds, "Love has meaning, yes; social utility, social bonding, child-rearing."

Anne as Brand retortes, "We love people who have died, where's the social utility in that?"

Matthew just says, "none."

Passionately, Anne continues, "Maybe it means something more, something we can't yet understand, maybe it's some evidence, some artifact of a higher dimension that we can't consciously perceive. I'm drawn across the universe to someone I haven't seen in a decade,

who I know is probably dead. Love is the one thing we're capable of perceiving that transcends dimensions of time and space."

Surely if we do feel love for someone who is "probably dead," that must mean that God plans to reunite us with that person. Anne's speech might be cheesy but it is just so true. The fact that love can connect people who are miles apart from each other, even those who are separated by death, that must mean something. What greater evidence for God's existence could you hope for?

From FairMormon we read:

"The Jews seem to have believed in eternal marriage from at least second-temple times, since they posed the question about the woman with seven successive husbands, asking which of them would be her husband "in the resurrection" (Matthew 22:28; Mark 12:23; Luke 20:33). The concept of eternal marriage is well-attested among Jews in the medieval period and is frequently mentioned in the *Zohar*, which also notes that God has a wife, the Matrona ("mother"), and is known in the Talmud. In the Falasha (the black Jews of Ethiopia's text) 5 Baruch, it has Jeremiah's scribe, Baruch, being shown various parts of the heavenly Jerusalem, with different gates for different heirs. The text then says, "I asked the angel who conducted me and said to him: 'Who enters through this gate?' He who guided me answered and said to me: 'Blessed are those who enter through this gate. [Here] the husband remains with his wife and the wife remains with her husband'" "

([https://www.fairmormon.org/answers/Mormon_ordinances/Marriage/Jews_and_early_Christians_on_marriage_after_death#Question: Are there any Biblical. 2C Jewish.](https://www.fairmormon.org/answers/Mormon_ordinances/Marriage/Jews_and_early_Christians_on_marriage_after_death#Question:Are_there_any_Biblical_2C_Jewish))

2C or early Christian teachings about marriage which lasts beyond the grave.3F)

"There were three buildings ... in Jerusalem. The one facing West was called the Holy, the one facing South was called the Holy of Holies, and the third, facing East, was called the Holy of the Holies, the place where only the high priest entered. The Holy of the Holies is the bridal chamber ... the redemption takes place in the bridal chamber, but the bridal chamber is in that which is superior to it and the others, because you will not find anything like it." (The Gospel of Philip)

“The woman is united to her husband in the Bridal Chamberthose who have united in the Bridal Chamber will no longer be separated” (Gospel of Philip 118:17-29)

“The source of the story the Sadducees told by Jesus comes from one of the books of the Apocrypha, Tobit, where a woman named Sara was married to seven men, each of whom died on the wedding night (Tobit 3:7-9; 6:13; 7:10-11). The text also notes that “Raphael [the archangel] was sent...to give Sara, the daughter of Raguel, for a wife to Tobias, the son of Tobit...because she belonged to Tobias by right of inheritance [cf. Deuteronomy 25:5-6]” (Tobit 3:17)

"Jesus probably had this account in mind when He told his Sadduceean interrogators, “Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God” (Matthew 22:29). They had neglected to note that she had married an eighth husband and that God had sent an angel to arrange the marriage.”

(https://www.fairmormon.org/answers/Mormon_ordinances/Marriage/Eternal_marriage)

33. How can worthy Mormon males become Gods in the afterlife when God already said that before him no God was formed, nor will there be any Gods formed after him (Isaiah 43:10)?

Don't be sexist and forget about worthy Mormon females becoming Goddesses! Unless this



is an elaborate ruse by you to make us appear sexist. In which case, why would you do that? Let me say that it is LDS doctrine that worthy females can become goddesses and that we are anything but sexist. Some say that women can only be exalted with a man, as a way to make us out to be sexist, while

forgetting about the other half of the equation which says that men likewise cannot be exalted without being married to a woman.

In case there is any doubt, allow me to share this awesome talk from President Russel M. Nelson which is the furthest thing from sexism: (<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/ensign/2015/11/sunday-morning-session/a-plea-to-my-sisters?lang=eng>)

While talking about the wives of previous Apostles, President Nelson says:

“Through their husbands’ final hours and continuing to the present day, these stalwart women have shown the strength and courage that covenant-keeping women always demonstrate. It would be impossible to measure the influence that such women have, not only on families but also on the Lord’s Church, as wives, mothers, and grandmothers; as sisters and aunts; as teachers and leaders; and especially as exemplars and devout defenders of the faith.

“This has been true in every gospel dispensation since the days of Adam and Eve. Yet the women of this dispensation are distinct from the women of any other because this dispensation is distinct from any other. This distinction brings both privileges and responsibilities.

“Thirty-six years ago, in 1979, President Spencer W. Kimball made a profound prophecy about the impact that covenant-keeping women would have on the future of the Lord’s Church. He prophesied: “Much of the major growth that is coming to the Church in the last days will come because many of the good women of the world ... will be drawn to the Church in large numbers. This will happen to the degree that the women of the Church reflect righteousness and articulateness in their lives and to the degree that the women of the Church are seen as distinct and different—in happy ways—from the women of the world.”

“My dear sisters, you who are our vital associates during this winding-up scene, the day that President Kimball foresaw is today. You are the women he foresaw! Your virtue, light, love, knowledge, courage, character, faith, and righteous lives will draw good women of the world, along with their families, to the Church in unprecedented numbers!

“We, your brethren, need your strength, your conversion, your conviction, your ability to lead, your wisdom, and your voices. The kingdom of God is not and cannot be complete without women who make sacred covenants and then keep them, women who can speak with the power and authority of God!⁷

“President Packer declared:

“We need women who are organized and women who can organize. We need women with executive ability who can plan and direct and administer; women who can teach, women who can speak out. ...

“We need women with the gift of discernment who can view the trends in the world and detect those that, however popular, are shallow or dangerous.”

“Today, let me add that we need women who know how to make important things happen by their faith and who are courageous defenders of morality and families in a sin-sick world. We need women who are devoted to shepherding God’s children along the covenant path toward exaltation; women who know how to receive personal revelation, who understand the power and peace of the temple endowment; women who know how to call upon the powers of heaven to protect and strengthen children and families; women who teach fearlessly.

"Throughout my life, I have been blessed by such women. My departed wife, Dantzel, was such a woman. I will always be grateful for the life-changing influence she had on me in all aspects of my life, including my pioneering efforts in open-heart surgery.

Fifty-eight years ago I was asked to operate upon a little girl, gravely ill from congenital heart disease. Her older brother had previously died of a similar condition. Her parents pleaded for help. I was not optimistic about the outcome but vowed to do all in my power to save her life. Despite my best efforts, the child died. Later, the same parents brought another daughter to me, then just 16 months old, also born with a malformed heart. Again, at their request, I performed an operation. This child also died. This third heartbreaking loss in one family literally undid me.

“I went home grief stricken. I threw myself upon our living room floor and cried all night long. Dantzel stayed by my side, listening as I repeatedly declared that I would never perform another heart operation. Then, around 5:00 in the morning, Dantzel looked at me and lovingly asked, “Are you finished crying? Then get dressed. Go back to the lab. Go to work! You need to learn more. If you quit now, others will have to painfully learn what you already know.”

"Oh, how I needed my wife’s vision, grit, and love! I went back to work and learned more. If it weren’t for Dantzel’s inspired prodding, I would not have pursued open-heart surgery

and would not have been prepared to do the operation in 1972 that saved the life of President Spencer W. Kimball.

“Sisters, do you realize the breadth and scope of your influence when you speak those things that come to your heart and mind as directed by the Spirit? A superb stake president told me of a stake council meeting in which they were wrestling with a difficult challenge. At one point, he realized that the stake Primary president had not spoken, so he asked if she had any impressions. “Well, actually I have,” she said and then proceeded to share a thought that changed the entire direction of the meeting. The stake president continued, “As she spoke, the Spirit testified to me that she had given voice to the revelation we had been seeking as a council.”

“My dear sisters, whatever your calling, whatever your circumstances, we need your impressions, your insights, and your inspiration. We need you to speak up and speak out in ward and stake councils. We need each married sister to speak as

“a contributing and full partner”¹⁰ as you unite with your husband in governing your family. Married or single, you sisters possess distinctive capabilities and special intuition you have received as gifts from God. We brethren cannot duplicate your unique influence. “We know that the culminating act of all creation was the creation of woman! We need your strength!”

Bruce C. Hafen and his wife, Marie, explained:

“Genesis 3:16 states that Adam is to ‘rule over’ Eve, but this doesn’t make Adam a dictator. ... Over in ‘rule over’ uses the Hebrew bet, which means ruling ‘with,’ not ruling ‘over.’ ... The concept of interdependent, equal partners is well-grounded in the doctrine of the restored gospel. Eve was Adam’s ‘help meet’ (Genesis 2:18). The original Hebrew for meet means that Eve was adequate for, or equal to, Adam. She wasn’t his servant or his subordinate.” (Bruce C. and Marie K. Hafen, “Crossing Thresholds and Becoming Equal Partners,” *Ensign*, Aug. 2007, 27.)

Earl C. Tingey, has said, “You must not misunderstand what the Lord meant when Adam was told he was to have a helpmeet. A helpmeet is a companion suited to or equal to the other. They walk side by side ... not one before or behind the other. A helpmeet results in an absolute equal partnership between a husband and a wife. Eve was to be equal to Adam as

a husband and wife are to be equal to each other.” (Earl C. Tingey, “The Simple Truths from Heaven: The Lord’s Pattern” (Church Educational System fireside for young adults, Jan. 13, 2008), speeches.byu.edu.)

Valery M. Hudson wrote an article which reads:

“Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said:

“In some cultures, tradition places a man in a role to dominate, control, and regulate all family affairs. That is not the way of the Lord. In some places the wife is almost owned by her husband, as if she were another of his personal possessions. That is a cruel, mistaken vision of marriage encouraged by Lucifer that every priesthood holder must reject. It is founded on the false premise that a man is somehow superior to a woman. Nothing could be farther from the truth.”

“Moreover, contrary to scripture and the teachings of latter-day prophets, some men and women have interpreted presiding to mean that after equal counsel, equal consent is not necessary because the presider (or husband) has the right of final say. But President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, explained: “In the Church there is a distinct line of authority. We serve where called by those who preside over us. In the home it is a partnership with husband and wife equally yoked together, sharing in decisions, always working together.”

“In considering the equal partnership, Elder L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles eloquently said: “There is not a president or a vice president in a family. The couple works together eternally for the good of the family. ... They are on equal footing. They plan and organize the affairs of the family jointly and unanimously as they move forward.”⁹ Both husband and wife have a sacred obligation to refrain from thoughts and actions that might undermine that equal partnership.

“Priesthood stewardship does not superimpose a hierarchical relationship over the God-ordained equality between husband and wife in their roles as parents. President James E. Faust (1920–2007) taught, “Every father is to his family a patriarch and every mother a matriarch as coequals in their distinctive parental roles.”

“Equality does not mean sameness, however. Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has taught: “Men and women, though spiritually equal, are entrusted

Brigham Young has stated, "When I reflect upon the duties and responsibilities devolving upon our mothers and sisters, and the influence they wield, I look upon them as the mainspring and soul of our being here. It is true that man is first. Father Adam was placed here as king of the earth, to bring it into subjection. But when Mother Eve came she had a splendid influence over him. A great many thought it was not very good I think it was excellent." (Discourses of Brigham Young, p. 199).

James E. Faust explained: "Because you mothers are the heart and soul of any family, it was appropriate that it the family: a proclamation to the world was first read in the general Relief Society meeting."

Now let's talk about that scripture of Isaiah 43:10. Yeah, I think its message is pretty clear, gods can't be formed because they are eternal, everlasting, they have always existed, and will continue to do so. You cannot suppose yourself among the gods unless you had a pre-mortal life, which would mean that you are just as everlasting as they are, as God is. I suppose this is why the Psalmist wrote about us being called gods even while we are in our current forms (Psalm 82:6), though we aren't quite to the god level that God is on. We are child gods. Lowercase "g" gods. Accordingly, C. S. Lewis taught:

"The load, or weight, or burden of my neighbor's glory should be laid daily on my back, a load so heavy that only humility can carry it, and the backs of the proud will be broken. It is a serious thing to live in a society of possible gods and goddesses, to remember that the dullest most uninteresting person you can talk to may one day be a creature which if you saw it now, you would be strongly tempted to worship, or else a horror and a corruption such as you now meet, if at all, only in a nightmare. All day long we are, in some degree helping each other to one or the other of these destinations. It is in the light of these overwhelming possibilities, it is with the awe and the circumspection proper to them, that we should conduct all of our dealings with one another, all friendships, all loves, all play, all politics. There are no ordinary people. You have never talked to a mere mortal. Nations, cultures, arts, civilizations - these are mortal, and their life is to ours as the life of a gnat. But it is immortals whom we joke with, work with, marry, snub, and exploit - immortal horrors or everlasting splendors." (The Weight of Glory)

Let's take a closer look at the context of Isaiah 43:10. FairMormon writes:

“When read in context, it is clear that the intent of the passage is to differentiate YHWH from the foreign gods and idols in the cultures surrounding the Jews.

Verses 11 - 13 are a continuation of the statement by God:

I, even I, am the LORD, and apart from me there is no savior.

I have revealed and saved and proclaimed—I, and not some foreign god among you. You are my witnesses," declares the LORD, "that I am God.

Yes, and from ancient days I am he. No one can deliver out of my hand. When I act, who can reverse it?" (NIV)

The context of this passage makes it clear that the issue being addressed is not one of general theology but rather a very specific and practical command to recognize YHWH as Israel's only god and the only god to be worshiped.

In addition to misapplying this passage, critics also fail to recognize the growing body of evidence that shows that the Jewish religion was not strictly monotheistic until quite late in its development, certainly after the era in which Isaiah was written. When this evidence is considered, it appears that Judaism originally taught that though there are indeed other divine beings, some of whom are called gods, none of these are to be worshiped except for the God of gods who created all things and who revealed Himself to Moses.”

I think this is why Paul taught:

“For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,) But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.” (1 Corinthians 8:5-6)

Paul is sure to mention here there being gods in heaven and not just idol gods in earth, there being gods many and lords many. But to us there is one God, one God to worship, we should forget all other gods for it is only the one God whom we should worship.

34. If God had a father who was a God, how come Isaiah 44:8 says that he doesn't know him?



Let us first examine the context for which this scripture was written:

“With great irony, Isaiah brought out the inconsistency of those who work wood and metal, use it for firewood and other mundane things, but fashion idols from the same material and then expect those idols to show forth great power and answer their prayers. Such idolatry precipitates in man “a deceived heart” that has “turned him aside” (v. 20), or in other words, that has such a negative effect as to cause him to lose his soul. Though this principle is true, and obvious to the spiritually alert, the idolater cannot recognize nor admit that there is “a lie in [his] right hand” (v. 20).

This tragic phrase reflects the dire consequences for one who lives a lie. Since the right hand is the covenant hand (see Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, 3:107–8), this phrase implies that those who continue to seek treasures, or to worship false gods, become blinded to the truth and cannot recognize that their covenants are broken and become to them as lies that will condemn them at the last day.”

(LDS institute Old Testament Student Manual)

So it looks like the context is that Isaiah is talking about idolatry worship. So, how does verse 8 factor into this? Isaiah never explicitly references a father to God, instead, the scripture reads: “...ye are even my witnesses. Is there a God beside me? yea, there is no God; I know not any.” Throughout the scriptures, the God of Israel repeatedly feels the need to remind Israel to worship him and no one else by calling himself the one and

only God, the one and only God to worship. He wants us to forget about all other gods, be they from heaven or idols from earth.

FairMormon puts it like this:

“Some Christians claim that the Mormon doctrine of the Godhead and belief in theosis are not compatible with multiple statements in Isaiah that "beside [the Lord] there is no God." These passages include Isaiah 43:10-11; Isaiah 44:6,8; Isaiah 45:5-6; Isaiah 45:21-22; and Isaiah 46:9-10.

“These scriptures in Isaiah clearly are meant to assert the supremacy, authority, and superiority of Yahweh over not only over false idols but over all else, including real gods.

“The passages in Isaiah cannot be called upon to disprove LDS beliefs in separate divine beings in the Godhead or *theosis*. Their main point is to encourage Israel to stop worshipping other divine beings or idols but to worship Yahweh alone (see Isaiah 41:29, Isaiah 42:8, Isaiah 43:10,12,24, Isaiah 44:8,9,10,17,19, Isaiah 45:9,12,16,20,22.

...

“Passages such as Isa 44:6,8 and 45:5,21 that read "no God beside me" or a variation of that phrase are traditionally interpreted by mainstream anti-Mormons as meaning that other than Yahweh no form of deity exists at all, including exalted men. This type of interpretation at first seems obvious, but after considering similar passages in other parts of scripture it is clear that this interpretation is incorrect.

“For example, Isaiah 47:8-10 depicts the city of Babylon as saying:

“Therefore hear now this, thou that art given to pleasures, that dwellest carelessly, that sayest in thine heart, I am, and none else beside me; I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children:

“For thou hast trusted in thy wickedness: thou hast said, None seeth me. Thy wisdom and thy knowledge, it hath perverted thee; and thou hast said in thine heart, I am, and none else beside me.”

“These passages use the exact same phrase as Isa 44 and 45, yet they certainly do not exclude the existence of any city other than Babylon. The city of Ninevah would be very upset if this were the case, as Zephaniah depicts Ninevah in Zephaniah 2:15 as saying:

“This is the rejoicing city that dwelt carelessly, that said in her heart, I am, and there is none beside me: how is she become a desolation, a place for beasts to lie down in! every one that passeth by her shall hiss, and wag his hand.”

“Again it is clear that this phrase does not exclude the very existence of other cities. Using these parallel phrases makes it clear that Isaiah is not excluding the very existence of any other deity when he quotes Yahweh as declaring "there is no God beside me." There are, in fact, several scriptures in the Old Testament that imply that Yahweh is in fact one of a number of Gods, albeit supreme. Compare the following passages from the KJV, NIV and ESV versions of the Bible:

- And the heavens shall praise thy wonders, O Lord: thy faithfulness also in the congregation of the saints. For who in the heaven can be compared unto the Lord? who among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto the Lord? God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him. O Lord God of hosts, who is a strong Lord like unto thee? or to thy faithfulness round about thee? (KJV Psalms 89:5-8)**
- The heavens praise your wonders, O LORD, your faithfulness too, in the assembly of the holy ones. For who in the skies above can compare with the LORD? Who is like the LORD among the heavenly beings [fn. Lit "sons of god(s)]? In the council of holy ones God is greatly feared; he is more awesome than all who surround him. O LORD God almighty, who is like you? You are mighty, O LORD, and your faithfulness surrounds you (NIV Psalms 89:5-8).**
- Among all the gods there is none like unto thee, O Lord; neither are there any works like unto thy works (Psalms 86:8).**
- God has taken his place in the divine council; in the midst of the gods he holds judgment (ESV Psalms 82:1)**
- God standeth in the congregation of the mighty; he judgeth among the gods. (KJV Psalms 82:1)**

These scriptures speak of divine beings, "gods" who are the "sons of god(s)" who are heavenly beings who dwell in the skies. These cannot be idols or false gods. Yahweh dwells among them, reigns over them, and holds judgment in their midst.”

Strangely enough, Revelation 1:6 seems to suggest that God does have a Father when it says that Jesus Christ has made us “Kings and priests unto God and his Father.”

35. If God was once just a man who progressed to becoming a God, how do you explain Psalm 90:2: “...even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God”?



God is our one God from everlasting to everlasting, he is our God and no one shall replace him. We eternally worship our God here, in the pre-mortal life and in the eternities. There was never a time that we did not worship Him and there was never a time that He was not our God from everlasting to everlasting. We will forever worship our God, even when we ourselves are gods He will be our one God.

FairMormon simply says:

“The only aspect of this about which we are certain is that God the Father underwent a mortal experience like Christ did. Jesus was, however, God before He underwent His mortal experience, and the Father may have been too. We simply don't know.”

With the exception of the Jehovah Witnesses, I feel like the concept that God was once a man like us should be common knowledge among all Christians. For does not the Bible teach that Jesus is God (John 1:1 & 14) and that he came among us once as a man like us, who was born of woman like us? So then why not say that his Father under went a similar process.

Besides the many times in the New Testament and 3 Nephi that Jesus calls upon his Father and tells others of his Father, references to God having a Father are few and far between but they are there. Most notably is Revelations chapter 1 verse 6 which reads: “And hath made us akings and bpriests unto God and his Father; to him *be* cglory and ddominion for ever and ever. Amen.”

The Father speaking is even fewer and further between as it is mostly Jesus as God, having taken upon him the name of the Father to speak as the Father, who speaks. The only instances of the Father of God actually speaking is usually only in a way to present His son Jesus. The only examples of the Father speaking that we have in written scripture are; Matthew 3:17, Mark 1:11, Luke 3:22, John 12:28, Matthew 17:5, 3 Nephi 11:7, Joseph Smith—History 1:17, 3 Nephi 21:20, and 2 Nephi 31:11. For the rest of the time, when God spoke or speaks, it is Jesus talking.

“Jesus was the Father’s executive in pre-earth life, in mortality, and since his triumphant victory over death. Our Father in Heaven has allowed Jesus to speak to various prophets as if he were the Father. In the legal profession this is a well-understood practice referred to as the ‘power of attorney’” (“Articles of Faith”, Appendix 2, p. 470).

Elder Jeffery R. Holland taught:

“Of the many magnificent purposes served in the life and ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ, one great aspect of that mission often goes uncelebrated. His followers did not understand it fully at the time, and many in modern Christianity do not grasp it now, but the Savior Himself spoke of it repeatedly and emphatically. It is the grand truth that in all that Jesus came to say and do, including and especially in His atoning suffering and sacrifice, He was showing us who and what God our Eternal Father is like, how completely devoted He is to His children in every age and nation. In word and in deed Jesus was trying to reveal and make personal to us the true nature of His Father, our Father in Heaven.

“He did this at least in part because then and now all of us need to know God more fully in order to love Him more deeply and obey Him more completely. As both Old and New Testaments declare, “The first of all the commandments is ... thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first [and great] commandment.”

“Little wonder then that the Prophet Joseph Smith taught: “It is the first principle of the gospel to know for a certainty the character of God.” “I want you all to know Him,” he said, “and to be familiar with Him.” We must have “a *correct* idea of his ... perfections, and attributes,” an admiration for “the excellency of [His] character.”³ Thus the first phrase we

utter in the declaration of our faith is, “We believe in God, the Eternal Father.” So, emphatically, did Jesus. Even as He acknowledged His own singular role in the divine plan, the Savior nevertheless insisted on this prayerful preamble: “And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God.”

“After generations of prophets had tried to teach the family of man the will and the way of the Father, usually with little success, God in His ultimate effort to have us know Him, sent to earth His Only Begotten and perfect Son, created in His very likeness and image, to live and serve among mortals in the everyday rigors of life.

“To come to earth with such a responsibility, to stand in place of Elohim—speaking as He would speak, judging and serving, loving and warning, forbearing and forgiving as He would do—this is a duty of such staggering proportions that you and I cannot comprehend such a thing. But in the loyalty and determination that would be characteristic of a divine child, Jesus could comprehend it and He did it. Then, when the praise and honor began to come, He humbly directed all adulation to the Father.

““The Father ... doeth the works,” He said in earnest. “The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever [the Father] doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.” On another occasion He said: “I speak that which I have seen with my Father.” “I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me.” “I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.” “

(<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2003/10/the-grandeur-of-god?lang=eng&p7>)

I feel the need to address one more thing. There is a rather disturbing video going around on the internet called “Banned Mormon Cartoon.” (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n3BqLZ8UoZk>) This video is an excerpt from the 1982 anti-mormon film “the God Makers” and claims to be based directly on official “Mormon publications”. However, until someone can show me these official “Mormon publications” on which the film takes its basis, I think it appropriate to say that most everything that you could call “disturbing” is NOT official church doctrine. Much of it is an over exaggeration of already taught church doctrine in an effort to make that doctrine look disturbing. More than 90% of these disturbing things (such as God being a polygamist, “Mormon Jesus”, “eternal pregnancy”,

“endless celestial sex”, black people being neutral in the war in heaven, etc.) were never even taught by any leader of the Church, or if they were then they were quickly thrown out to the trash such as everything in Orson Pratt’s *The Seer*.

I suppose they chose the name “Banned Mormon Cartoon” because, even though it was never “banned” by the Church in the official sense of the word, they still wanted it to seem that way. They wanted to shock you into thinking that it was a video that was made for the Church, possibly by the Church, but that it was banned because it revealed things that many were not ready for, things that were too “shocking”.



“The film does not - in our opinion - fairly portray the Mormon Church, Mormon history, or Mormon belief. It makes extensive use of “half-truth,” faulty generalizations, erroneous interpretations, and sensationalism. It is not reflective of the genuine spirit of the Mormon faith.

“We find particularly offensive the emphasis in the film that Mormonism is some sort of subversive plot - a danger to the community, a threat to the institution of marriage, and is destructive to the mental health of teenagers. All of our experience with our Mormon neighbors provides eloquent refutation of these charges.

“We are of the opinion that *The Godmakers* relies heavily on appeals to fear, prejudice and other less worthy human emotions. We believe that continued use of this film poses genuine

danger to the climate of good will and harmony which currently exists between...neighbors of differing faiths. It appears to us to be a basically unfair and untruthful presentation of what Mormons really believe and practice.”

— The National Council of Christians and Jews

For some further clarification into this disturbing anti-mormon video:

([https://www.fairmormon.org/answers/Criticism_of_Mormonism/Video/The_God_Makers/Cartoon#Question: Is there a YouTube cartoon which was .22banned by the Mormon church.22.3F](https://www.fairmormon.org/answers/Criticism_of_Mormonism/Video/The_God_Makers/Cartoon#Question:_Is_there_a_YouTube_cartoon_which_was_22banned_by_the_Mormon_church.22.3F))

36. How can God be an exalted man when Numbers 23:19 says that God is not a man?

It looks like to me like this scripture is here speaking of God in the context that he is not some average mortal man who is fallible and lies. God is perfect in every way shape and form. The NET Bible seems to put this into better perspective:

“God is not a man, that he should lie, nor a human being, that he should change his mind. Has he said, and will he not do it?” (Numbers 23:19)

So still a man, just not a fallible human being man who lies. The fact that God is a man and looks like a man shouldn't detract from his almightiness. I think that it just brings us closer to him. It helps us to be able to see that there is a little bit of us in him and he in us.

(<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/media-library/video/2011-03-50-i-am-a-son-of-god?lang=eng>)

We are in every sense of the word created in the image of God the Father and His son Jesus Christ, and for women, we also like to include Goddess the Mother. As it is written,

“And God said, Let us make man in our image [Hebrew tselem], after our likeness [Hebrew demuth]: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.” (Genesis 1:26)

In like manner do we see that Seth was created in the same manner, after the likeness [demuth] and image [tselem] of his father Adam, as we are in God the Father's image and likeness.

“And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in his own likeness [demuth], after his image [tselem]; and called his name Seth:” (Genesis 5:3)



Elder Boyd K. Packer taught:

“There is a question in both the Old and the New Testaments: “What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?” (Ps. 8:4; see also Heb. 2:5–7.)

"The answer is taught most simply in the song we sang together at the intermission of the meeting:

I am a child of God,

And He has sent me here,

Has given me an earthly home

With parents kind and dear. ...

I am a child of God,

Rich blessings are in store;

*If I but learn to do his will
I'll live with him once more.*

...

“But I make this point: Christ did not speak only of the Father, or my Father; He spoke of your Father, and our Father. He even put them together in one sentence, saying, “Your Father, and your God, and my God.” (D&C 88:75; italics added.) God is addressed universally in the Christian world as Father. Were we not commanded to pray “Our Father which art in heaven”? (Matt. 6:9.)

"You may respond, “Every Christian knows that.” Perhaps every Christian does, but so-called Christians, with the help of clergymen, belittle in most unchristian ways our teaching that we are the literal sons and daughters of God.

“Other ideals flow from that great truth. Once you know that, you know that all men are brothers. That realization changes you. Thereafter you cannot willingly injure another. You could not transgress against them in any way.

...

"A little girl taught me a profound lesson on this subject. Surely you are not above learning from little children. Much of what I know that really matters I have learned from being a father.

“Some years ago I returned home to find our little children were waiting in the driveway. They had discovered some newly hatched chicks under the manger in the barn. When they reached for them, a protective hen rebuffed them. So they came for reinforcements.

“I soon gathered a handful of little chicks for them to see and touch.

"As our little girl held one of them, I said in a teasing way, “That will make a nice watchdog when it grows up, won’t it?” She looked at me quizzically, as if I didn’t know much.

“So I changed my approach: “It won’t be a watchdog, will it?” She shook her head, “No, Daddy.” Then I added, “It will be a nice riding horse.”

“She wrinkled up her nose and gave me that “Oh, Dad!” look. For even a four-year-old knows that a chick will not be a dog, nor a horse, nor even a turkey. It will be a chicken. It will follow the pattern of its parentage. She knew that without having had a course in genetics, without a lesson or a lecture.

“No lesson is more manifest in nature than that all living things do as the Lord commanded in the Creation. They reproduce “after their own kind.” (See Moses 2:12, 24.) They follow the pattern of their parentage. Everyone knows that; every four-year-old knows that! A bird will not become an animal nor a fish. A mammal will not beget reptiles, nor “do men gather ... figs of thistles.” (Matt. 7:16.)

“In the countless billions of opportunities in the reproduction of living things, one kind does not beget another. If a species ever does cross, the offspring cannot reproduce. The pattern for all life is the pattern of the parentage.

“This is demonstrated in so many obvious ways, even an ordinary mind should understand it. Surely no one with reverence for God could believe that His children evolved from slime or from reptiles. (Although one can easily imagine that those who accept the theory of evolution don’t show much enthusiasm for genealogical research!) The theory of evolution, and it is a theory, will have an entirely different dimension when the workings of God in creation are fully revealed.

“Since every living thing follows the pattern of its parentage, are we to suppose that God had some other strange pattern in mind for His offspring? Surely we, His children, are not, in the language of science, a different species than He is?”

(<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/1984/10/the-pattern-of-our-parentage?lang=eng&query=evolution>)

It truly is a strange and foreign thing when a person first hears of Lorenzo Snow’s famous couplet: “As man is now, God once was; As God is now, man may become.” Many are quick to reject it, just know that God is indeed a man in every sense of the word. When asked about the topic as presented in the couplet, President Gordon B. Hinkley told a reporter in 1997, “That gets into some pretty deep theology that we don’t know very much about.” I don’t think any church today has deeper theology than the Latter-Day Saints, in fact, none come to mind.

I myself struggle to understand these concepts, but even more so I struggle to understand why anyone would think that God is something which goes beyond gender. If God is genderless then does this mean that He is a formless nothingness? Then I think, shouldn’t it be considered blasphemous to even consider God to be nothing? When I look at the world

and the universe I see it abounding with both masculine and feminine energy, I really don't think that one could have created it without the other. There is indeed gender, both male and female, to be found in all things. The earth and water are female, the males are the wind and fire. Indeed the very planet earth herself is female:

“And it came to pass that Enoch looked upon the earth; and he heard a voice from the bowels thereof, saying: Wo, wo is me, the mother of men; I am pained, I am weary, because of the wickedness of my children. When shall I rest, and be cleansed from the filthiness which is gone forth out of me? When will my Creator sanctify me, that I may rest, and righteousness for a season abide upon my face?” (Moses 7:48)

From the Family: A Proclamation to the World, we read:

“ALL HUMAN BEINGS—male and female—are created in the image of God. Each is a beloved spirit son or daughter of heavenly parents, and, as such, each has a divine nature and destiny. Gender is an essential characteristic of individual premortal, mortal, and eternal identity and purpose.”

(<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/the-family-a-proclamation-to-the-world/the-family-a-proclamation-to-the-world?lang=eng>)

Gender is NOT a social construct! It is so unfortunate that so many modern schools teach this damning teaching of gender being a social construct. Some aspects of gender can of course be suggested to be social constructs, such as our manner of dress. But our subconscious, our very basic level, has gender as a set in stone thing, and as such our gender subconscious desires to follow along with certain social constructs of how we present our gender. In the end, gender is more biological than social.

Consider the TV documentary “Brainwash: The Gender Equality Paradox”. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tiJVJ5QRRUE&t=1283s>) In this Documentary we learn of experiments that have been on little children before they even have any inkling on the concept of gender. Dr. Trond Diseth does an experiment with 1-2 year old children in which he will surround the child with stereotypical boy and girl toys with some neutral toys, the male babies will go towards the boy toys and the girls will go to the female toys. Dr. Diseth will perform this experiment on children with deformed genitalia in order to determine what gender the child is.

Another man from the documentary is a Simon Baron-Cohen from Trinity College, he takes an earlier approach than Dr. Diseth in that he will take a mechanical object and show it to newborn babies. Professor Baron-Cohen finds that female babies will look at the face longer than the object and the male babies will look at the object longer than the face, showcasing a clear difference between the two genders. He suggests that testosterone and estrogen levels in a baby can be used to predict future interests. Professor of Psychology Anne Campbell echoes Baron-Cohen's findings by saying that it doesn't make any sense to say that estrogen and testosterone levels can affect the body but have no affect on the brain, the single most expensive and complex organ in the body.

Of course there are always exceptions to these rules but they are tiny and are only anomalies like when a child is born with more than one arm. It is honestly baffling to me that modern schools still teach the concept of gender being a social construct when all it is reliant upon is people labeling themselves a gender with complete disregard to their own biology. **THERE IS NOTHING SCIENTIFIC ABOUT SAYING, "GENDER IS A SOCIAL CONSTRUCT."**

What is suggested here is that gender plays a very prominent, and therefore important, role in our lives and is something which would then continue after we are dead seeing as it has existed before we were born. I do not know how spirit children come of parents with physical bodies, no prophet has declared anything of the sort only some mere speculation, however spirit children are created they are. However what we can say is that if God is going to put us in heaven neutered then He might as well put us into heaven as grey blobs if gender doesn't matter. So we are to understand that the way gender plays out here on earth is the same way it will play out in heaven to some greater degree.

So therefore we conclude that God has a wife, as masculine and feminine energies abound around us and gender is NOT a social construct. Do not think She has forgotten you, and if you need to know what She is like then look to any loving mother and picture her in a heavenly sense. If you desire to worship Her then do it by keeping the commandments. If you desire to pray to Her then do it while praying to the Father in the name of the Son, tell the Father how you feel about Her and She shall hear it for She and the Father are one.

Elder Erastus Snow taught:

“Do you mean we should understand that Deity consists of man and woman? ‘Most certainly I do. If I believe anything that God has ever said about himself, ... I must believe that Deity consists of man and woman ... There can be no God except he is composed of the man and woman united, and there is not in all the eternities that exist, nor ever will be, a God in any other way.’” (Journal of Discourses 10:269-70)

President Rudger Clawson taught:

“It doesn’t take from our worship of the Eternal Father, to adore our Eternal Mother, any more than it diminishes the love we bear our earthly fathers, to include our earthly mothers in our affections... . We honor woman when we acknowledge Godhood in her eternal prototype.” (Our Mother in Heaven, Millennial Star 72, Sept 29, 1910)

In the BYU Studies — ‘A Mother There’ conclusion we read:

“In this paper we have briefly shown that, historically, there has been substantial discussion ... on the roles and divinity of our Heavenly Mother. ... Church leaders may well caution



an individual to be respectful of and to avoid teaching unorthodox views about Heavenly Mother. At the same time, we have found no public record of a General Authority advising us to be silent about our Heavenly Mother; indeed, as we have amply demonstrated, many General Authorities have openly taught about her.

“While some have claimed that Heavenly Mother’s role has been marginalized...the historical data provides a highly

elevated view of Heavenly Mother. The Heavenly Mother portrayed in the teachings we have examined is a procreator and parent, a divine person, a co-creator, a co-framer of the plan of salvation, and is involved in this life and the next. Certainly, consideration of these points reinforces several unquestionably important LDS doctrines: divine embodiment, eternal families, divine relationality, the deification of women, the eternal nature and value of gender, and the shared lineage of Gods and humans. Far from degrading either the Heavenly Feminine or the earthly feminine, we feel that these teachings exalt both.”

Elder Glen L. Pace taught the sisters of the Church:

“When you stand in front of your heavenly parents in those royal courts on high and you look into Her eyes and behold Her countenance, any question you ever had about the role of women in the kingdom will evaporate into the rich celestial air, because at that moment you will see standing directly in front of you, your divine nature and destiny.” (Mar 6, 2010 BYU Devotional, “The Divine Nature & Destiny of Women”)

Time for a history lesson. Ready? Kevin L. Barney wrote:

“As a result of document discoveries made in the 20th century, we now have much clearer understanding of the beliefs of the

Hebrews concerning God during the age of the patriarchs (and the relation of those beliefs to their Canaanite precedents). The monotheism we associate with Israel did not arise in full flower from the beginning; rather, it was probably not until the Exile that the Jews understood there to be only one God. At first the Hebrews worshiped a small pantheon, consisting of the high God El (the Father), his wife



Asherah (the Mother), their sons Yahweh (Jesus) and Baal (Satan), and the other (unnamed) sons of the Gods. This original understanding of God developed over time until it reached the point of belief in Yahweh alone characterized by later Israelite theology. Baal was a very similar God to Yahweh and so was excluded from the pantheon very early to make way for Yahweh's claims. El was more complementary to Yahweh in his characteristics, so he was merged into Yahweh (resulting in the compound name Yahweh Elohim, translated "the LORD God" in the KJV). The other sons of the Gods became the angels; still divine beings, but a lower class of being than the dominant Yahweh.

"The understanding of Asherah changed over time in response to these developments. She was originally the wife of El (her title Elat, "Goddess," is simply the feminine form of El) and the mother and procreatress of the Gods. When El was merged into Yahweh (around the 10th century B.C.E.), Asherah came to be viewed as the consort not of El, but of Yahweh. For instance, an inscription at Kuntillet 'Ajrud dating to roughly the ninth to eighth centuries B.C.E. states "I have blessed you by Yahweh of Samaria and his Asherah" [*hrkt 'tkm lyhwh shmrrn wl'shrth*]. Eventually, the functions of Asherah were also absorbed into Yahweh; then, in an effort to put a stop to any independent worship of her, reformers linked her polemically to (the now thoroughly discredited) Baal, despite the fact that such a linkage does not seem to have had any historical basis. This reform movement against the worship of Asherah took place from the 8th to the 6th centuries B.C.E., and by the time of the conclusion of the Exile the worship of Asherah as such had been stamped out.

"The word "Asherah" appears about 40 times in the Old Testament, usually mistranslated in the KJV as "groves" (following the mistranslations of the Latin Vulgate and the Greek Septuagint). It is sometimes difficult to tell whether Hebrew references to ashram mean the Goddess directly or her cult object. Although scholars are not completely certain what this object was, most believe it to have been a wooden pole (perhaps stylized), representing a sacred tree (i.e., the Tree of Life). Since it was made of wood, no actual examples of such an object have survived. The pole may have originally been a legitimate symbol associated with the temple, but it appears that, as was the case with the Nehushtan (serpent pole) made by Moses, over time the people came to worship the object idolatrously. This garbling of her divine associations and corruption of her worship resulted in the necessity of the

reformers suppressing that worship. We should understand, however, that the negative references to Asherah in the Old Testament all stem from this period of reform; there appears to have been an earlier worship of Asherah not marred by idolatry that was widely practiced and normative among the Hebrews.”



He continues:

“As we have seen, by the conclusion rather than of the Exile the reformers managed to do away with Asherah worship as such. But worship of the Goddess did not disappear altogether; she was merely transformed into other guises. Perhaps the most successful of these transformations as far as the Biblical text is concerned was the personified Lady Wisdom we find in Proverbs 1-9. Many scholars see here a reworking of the Asherah of old. Consider in particular Proverbs 8:22-31:

The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his ^aworks of old. I was set up from ^aeverlasting, from the ^bbeginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths, I was brought

forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth: While as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor ^athe highest part of the dust of the world. When he prepared the heavens, I was there: when he set ^aa compass upon the face of the depth: When he established the clouds above: when he strengthened the fountains of the deep: When he gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment: when he appointed the foundations of the earth. Then I was by him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him; Rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth; and my delights were with the sons of men.

Here Wisdom [*chokmah*] is not part of the created order; rather she preexists and assists Yahweh in the creation.”

<https://www.fairmormon.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/Kevin-Barney-MotherInHeaven.pdf>

Let us now consider a non-mormon perspective on the subject of Heavenly Mother. Methodist preacher Margret Baker has done extensive research on the topic and has written a 500 paged book on the subject, she says:

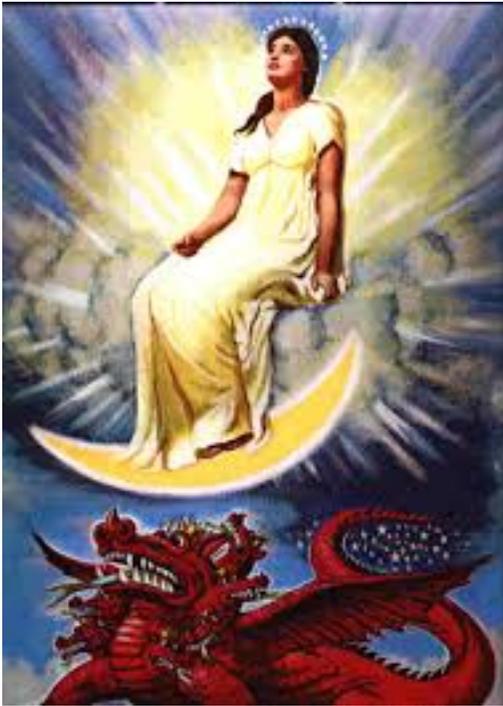
“At the heart of the Book of Revelation St John sets the vision of a woman clothed with the sun, standing on the moon and crowned with twelve stars. He described her as a sign in heaven. She gave birth to a son who was taken up to the throne of God. A great red dragon threatened the child, but the child escaped. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon and his angels and drove them from heaven. The dragon took revenge and pursued the woman, but she had great wings and fled from him into the desert. The dragon then went to attack her other children. St John defined the children as those who kept the commandments of God and bore testimony to Jesus (Revelation 12). Elsewhere he explained that the testimony of Jesus was ‘what he saw’, his visions (Revelation 1.2). Nothing about the Book of Revelation is simple or easy to understand, but this vision rewards careful attention to its details.

“First, the woman clothed with the sun was a Mother in heaven who had more than one child. Her firstborn was a king, and the rest of her family were faithful followers of Jesus who kept the commandments of God. Her first child was the king described in Psalm 2: ‘He shall rule the nations with a rod of iron’. This shows that the vision recalled a ritual in the first temple, Solomon’s temple, when the king from the house of David was enthroned. Second, the woman clothed with the sun was a queen. She wore a crown of stars and her son was the king.

“Third, she had been threatened by the great red dragon and so fled to the desert. She had been driven out of the temple in Jerusalem and gone to the desert.

“Fourth, her children were the Christians. St Paul said that Jesus was the first born among many children, in other words, that Jesus was the oldest of the woman’s family (Romans 8.29). Here, there is clear evidence for the heavenly Mother of the Christians.

Some of the questions about the Book of Revelation that cannot be answered are these: where did the visions originate?



how old were they?

“St John compiled them into the Book of Revelation, but there are many signs that Jesus knew these visions and spoke about them to John and maybe to other disciples too. For example, when the seventy disciples returned from their mission and told Jesus that they really did have power over demons, Jesus exclaimed: ‘I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven’ (Luke 10.18). This is the vision in Revelation 12: Satan fell from heaven to earth after the woman’s child had been taken up to the throne. Did Jesus know the rest of the vision, or just one part of it? It is likely that he knew the whole vision of the woman and her other children, and we shall come back to this later.

“The opening lines of the Book of Revelation say this: ‘A revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave to him to show to his servants what must soon take place...’ This is in effect the title of the book, and it says that these were the visions of Jesus. The text continues: ‘He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John’. This means that the angel of the Lord inspired John to interpret the visions and maybe to set them in their present form. So Jesus had seen Satan fall from heaven, and he knew about his heavenly Mother, the woman clothed with the sun.

“The dragon attacked the woman’s other children, and John explained who they were. They kept the commandments of God and they had the testimony of Jesus. Keeping the commandments might mean simply not breaking any of the ten commandments, but the word used, *tēreō*, is quite strong and means ‘guard’, or ‘preserve’. It was used in the Greek Old Testament to translate the word *nāṣar*. This word too was sometimes used to mean keeping the commandments, e.g. Psalm 78.7: ‘They should guard/preserve his commandments’; but it was also used to describe a particular group of faithful people within Israel were preserved or guarded, e.g. Psalm 31.23: ‘Love the Lord all you his saints! The Lord guards/preserves the faithful! Or Isaiah 27.3: ‘I, the Lord, guard/preserve [the pleasant vineyard]... I guard/preserve it night and day’.

"The role of a mysterious figure called the Servant of the Lord was to restore the faithful, these 'guarded/ preserved ones'. This means that at some stage they were driven out. There are four poems in the Book of Isaiah that describe the Servant of the Lord. They are now incorporated into the second section of the book, which some people think was added by a later disciple of the prophet. The four Servant poems seem to come from the original prophet, and were they so written in the late eighth century BCE and reused in the mid-6th century. Isaiah said that the Servant was called: 'to raise up the tribes of Jacob, to restore guarded/preserved of Israel', or perhaps it means 'restore the guardians and preservers of Israel' (Isaiah 49.6).

"Perhaps, because there is a problem with the Hebrew text at this point. It could mean 'the preserved of Israel' or 'the preservers of Israel'. It is important to note that a text about the 'preservers' who were driven out is now uncertain.

"The Hebrew word for Christians is this same word: *nōšrîm*, literally 'the preservers', and in the Jewish Talmud, Jesus was called the *nōšrî*, This is sometimes thought to be just another form of 'Nazareth', and so Jesus was the man from Nazareth and his followers were the Nazarenes. But this is not so. The word is Nazorene, or Nazorean, and it means the guardian or preserver. St John, who was an eye-witness, said that the words on Jesus' cross were Jesus the Nazorene, the king of the Jews (John 19.19). The other children of the woman clothed with the sun were also the guardians or preservers. They kept the commandments of God and had the testimony of Jesus, in other words, they knew the visions of Jesus, 'what he saw' (Revelation 1.2).

"The children of the heavenly Mother were preserving the older ways, and Isaiah knew they had been driven out but would be restored."

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ilF9NXE16Xs>

For some further research into the topic of the Goddess Ashera, our Heavenly Mother, Lady Wisdom, the Divine Feminine check out the following:

Church Website - Gospel Topics Essay: Mother in Heaven

<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/s...>

BYU Studies - Research Article on Teaching about Mother in Heaven in Church History:

<https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cgi/v...>

Nephi & His Asherah - Dan Peterson:

<https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/1a57...>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OzftT...>

Kevin Barney Essays:

<https://www.fairmormon.org/wp-content...>

<https://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-co...>

BYU Studies Piece on Statue in Celestial Room of Salt Lake Temple:

<https://rsc.byu.edu/archived/eye-fait...>

Val Larsen article in Square Two on Heavenly Mother in Scripture - Hidden in Plain View:

<http://squaretwo.org/Sq2ArticleLarsen...>

LDS Perspectives Podcast on Heavenly Mother with Rachel Steenblik & Caitlin Connolly

<https://ldsperspectives.com/2017/05/1...>

Margret Barker at 2015 Fairmormon Conference - The Mother in Heaven & Her Children

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iIF9N...>

Fiona Givens at 2019 Mormon Studies Conference - Feminism & Heavenly Mother:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=07Zpv...>

Academy for Temple Studies - "The Lady of the Temple" Conference - Introduction Video - from this intro - connect to the other presentations from this conference:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lxYT1...>

In order to better understand the concept of deification, let us take a look at a couple of quotes by some famous non-mormons:

King David -

“I have said, ye are gods; and all of you are children of the most High.” (Psalms 82:6)

Isaiah -

“Shew the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are gods; yea, do good, or do evil, that we may be dismayed, and behold it together.” (Isaiah 41:23)

Jesus Christ -

“Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken; Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?” (John 10:34-36)

“That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one.” (John 17:21-22)

“Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.” (Matthew 5:48)

“To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.” (Revelations 3:21)

“He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.” (Revelation 21:7)

St. Paul -

“For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring. Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man’s device.” (Acts 17:28-29)

“The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.” (Romans 8:17-18)

“But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.” (2 Corinthians 3:18)

“And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly” (1 Corinthians 15:48)

“To the general assembly and the church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect” (Hebrews 12:23)

“Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ, if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.” (Galatians 4:7)

St. John -

“Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.” (1 John 3:1-2)

“And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.” (Revelations 1:6)

St. Peter -

“Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honor unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.” (1 Peter 3:7)

“According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust” (2 Peter 1:3-4)

“And Simon said: ‘I should like to know, Peter, if you really believe that the shape of man has been moulded after the shape of God.’ And Peter said: ‘I am really quite certain, Simon, that this is the case ... It is the shape of the just God.’” (Clementine Homilies 16:19)

“For he who sees God cannot live. For the excess of light dissolves the flesh of him who sees; unless by the secret power of God the flesh be changed into the nature of light, so that it can see light.” (Clementine Homilies 17:16)

“But to the one among the archangels who is greatest, was committed the government of those who, before all others, received the worship and knowledge of the Most High God Thus the princes of the several nations are called gods. But Christ is God of princes, who is Judge of all.” (Clementine Recognitions 2:42)

St. James -

“Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.” (James 1:12)

St. Clemets of Alexandria -

“Yea, I say, the Word of God became a man so that you might learn from a man how to become a god. So Heraclitus was right when he said, ‘Men are gods, and gods are men.’”

St. Justin Martyr -

“in the beginning men were made like God and that they are thus deemed worthy of becoming gods and of having power to become sons of the highest.”

St. Athanasius -

“The Word was made flesh in order that we might be enabled to be made gods ... Just as the Lord, putting on the body, became a man, so also we men are both deified through his flesh, and henceforth inherit everlasting life. He became man that we might be made divine.”

St. Augustine -

“But he himself that justifies also deifies, for by justifying he makes sons of God. ‘For he has given them power to become the sons of God’ [John 1:12]. If then we have been made sons of God, we have also been made gods.”

The Westminster Dictionary of Christian Theology -

“Deification (Greek theosis) is for Orthodoxy the goal of every Christian. Man, according to the Bible, is ‘made in the image and likeness of God’ It is possible for man to become like God, to become deified, to become god by grace. This doctrine is based on many passages in both the Old Testament and New Testament.”

Paul Crouch of the Trinity Broadcast Network:

“I am a little god. I have His name. I am one with Him. I’m in covenant relation. I am a little god. Critics begone.”

Kenneth Copeland of Kenneth Copeland Ministries:

“You don’t have a god in you. You are one!”

Origen gives us another clue in a sermon on the book of Genesis:

“The Jews indeed, but also some of our people, supposed that God should be understood as a man, that is, adorned with human members and human appearance. But the philosophers despise these stories as fabulous and formed in the likeness of poetic fictions.”

More at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bgdd1WavMjQ&t=696s>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KwxO0TKP0tw&t=154s>

Pastor Gary Hooper, from the New Covenant Ministries Church, gives an excellent sermon on how we are in the very literal sense the offspring of God. (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qx-TdPRRUJk&list=LLKJIwjeGO3jyJKiuU_mzDUg&index=2&t=3s) In this sermon he gives, he talks about how as gods, we are royal, and as royals we need to adopt the mindset of being kings/queens instead of being peasants.

Let’s look at this from a secular scientific perspective:

Michio Kaku-

“By the year 2100, we will have the power of the gods.”

Dr. Kaku made the above quote and then referenced another famous scientist, Arthur C. Clarke, who said, “Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from divinity.” (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0NbBjNiw4tk>) In this video, Dr. Kaku is talking about how humans are the gods of the earth. He talks about how in the days of the ancient greeks, they would tell stories of Apollo who would ride through the air on a chariot, today we have airplanes and will one day have flying cars. We have cameras that we can use to literally capture the past and rewatch them, if that isn't having power over time then I don't know what is. We have telescopes that can gaze up into the stars and beyond. We also think like gods in that we can predict and theorize things just by writing down math equations. Dr. Kaku also talks about Venus who had the perfect timeless body and how we are getting closer and closer to figuring this out through genetics.

In another video he talks about how we will one day have mental communication and infinite knowledge by way of contact lenses which would be connected to the internet. All we would have to do is blink and we would instantly see all the answers to an extremely hard exam. Movies will one day be revolutionized in that we will not just be able to hear and see them but we will also be able to feel them. (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dkPS-N1Nck8&list=LLKJIwjeGO3jyJKiuU_mzDUg&index=54&t=0s)

If you thought that a seer stone which Joseph Smith used to translate the Book of Mormon with was crazy, if you went back in time to only about 50 - 100 years and showed them the seer stone in your pocket (your smart phone), those people would not only think you were crazy but also a type of sorcerer.

So do these things mean that God is reliant on technology? No, not entirely, there is definitely something mystical about the way He operates, however I wouldn't be surprised if He still had many technologies available to Him. So if you don't want to be deified then you had better take up an Amish life-style because we will become gods whether you like it or not.

When world famous atheist Richard Dawkins was asked if there was to be a god how would he come about, he responded:

“Well it could come about in the following way. It could be that at some earlier time somewhere in the universe a civilization evolved, by probably some kind of Darwinian means to a very, very, high level of technology and designed a form of life that they seeded onto perhaps this planet. Now that is a possibility and an intriguing possibility and I suppose it’s possible that you might find evidence for that if you look at the details, of biochemistry, molecular biology, you might find a signature of some sort of designer. But that higher intelligence would itself have had to have come about by some explicable, or ultimately explicable process, he couldn’t have just jumped into existence spontaneously, that’s the point.” (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G1ZtEjtlirc>)

You see, to the scientific atheist, *ex-nihilo* creation doesn’t make any sense, also at the same time it makes no logical sense to say that God is some spirit essence nothingness which had existed many infinite lifetimes before anything had existed both spirit or physical. To then have this spirit nothingness to one day just randomly decide to create a universe just because is a ridiculous notion. What would even be the point if he had always existed without us to one day just randomly think to create us? What purpose would it serve seeing as he had already existed perfectly fine without us?

You see, it makes so much more logical sense to say that God is apart of a race of beings who were once like us and we can become like them. If that is to be polytheistic then consider me to be a polytheist.

Elder Legrand Richards once taught:

“... but their catechism says that their god has “no body; he has no parts; he has no passions.” That means that he has no eyes; he cannot see. He has no ears; he cannot hear your prayers. He has no voice; he cannot speak a word to the prophets. Some of them even say “he sits on the top of a topless throne.” How absurd! To me it seems that their description of the god that they believe in is about the best description of nothing that can be written.

Moses knew that this condition would prevail, because when he went to lead the children of Israel into the promised land, he told them that they would not remain there long but that they would be scattered among the nations and “there ye shall serve gods, the work of men’s hands, wood and stone, which neither see, nor hear, nor eat, nor smell.” (Deut. 4:28.)

That is exactly the kind of a god the whole Christian world was worshiping when Joseph Smith had that glorious vision which revealed the true and living God. But Moses did not leave it at that. He said that in the latter days if they should seek after him, they would surely find him. (See Deut. 4:29.)" (<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/1972/10/strange-creeds-of-christendom?lang=eng>)

If the devil was to make a God-fearing people turn to atheism, what better way than to take their God and turn him into nothing, so that they would be worshiping nothing.

BRILLIANT!

“Another issue: Human potential is never fully realized in mortality. Too often, in fact, it’s scarcely realized at all.

“Consider Ludwig van Beethoven, certainly among the foremost composers of all time, perhaps indeed the very greatest.

“A prodigy born in 1770 to a commonplace court musician and a chambermaid who died of tuberculosis when he was 16, he began to perform professionally at the age of 10.

Thereafter, he received no further education except in music.

“His health was terrible almost from the start. Although some have suspected that he brought his illnesses on himself through alcoholism and immorality, this seems to be false. He already suffered from chronic colic and diarrhea, and from frequent fevers and septic abscesses, by his 21st birthday.

“When he was only 27, he began to go deaf. Experts now think that he suffered from otosclerosis, an abnormal sponge-like bone growth in the middle ear whose cause is unknown (though it may be genetically transmitted). This growth prevents the ear—and usually both ears—from vibrating in response to sound waves, which is essential to being able to hear. Even today, the disease is progressive and incurable.

“Well before his 30th birthday, Beethoven suffered from incessant ringing and whistling in his ears, and, especially in winter, from terrible earaches and headaches. By 1805, when he was in his mid-30s, he could scarcely hear wind instruments. Yet noises caused him pain; he often stuffed his ears with cotton wool, and, in 1809, he covered his head with cushions in an attempt to escape the horrific roar of Napoleon’s cannons bombarding Vienna.

“By 1812, his visitors had to shout to be understood. He destroyed piano after piano, pounding upon the keys out of his desperation to hear. Five years later — when he was still only about 47 — he was completely deaf and could no longer hear music at all.

“His great Ninth Symphony premiered on May 7, 1824, in Vienna. He was there, standing near the conductor, but he never heard it. (You may have, but he never did. Think about that.) Reportedly, several in the orchestra wept as they played. Afterward, the contralto soloist turned him around to see the passionate applause of the audience who, seized by emotion, applauded all the louder and more visibly.

"Beethoven died less than three years later, at 57, apparently from complications of jaundice, which he had contracted roughly seven years before. The autopsy revealed a ravaged, worn-out liver, and modern scholars suspect that he may have suffered for many years from an immunopathic disease called systemic lupus erythematosus, which begins in early adulthood — at about the same time, in other words, that his otosclerosis began to manifest itself — and, though it may come and go for a while, eventually becomes chronic. Its symptoms include not only liver disease but rashes, redness in the face, rheumatism, and emotional instability.

“And Beethoven certainly had emotional issues. Ravaged by constant stomach pain, frustrated by his uniquely tragic combination of musical genius and deafness, he was quarrelsome, suspicious, rude, commonly in a state of rage. And, thus, he was desperately lonely. His living quarters were disorderly and often filthy. He was perpetually in debt — partly, perhaps, because he lacked basic skills in arithmetic. He never married; he couldn’t even keep servants. “Oh, God,” he begged in his journal, “may I find her at last, the woman who may strengthen me in virtue, who is permitted to be mine.” But he never did.

“It’s impossible not to wonder what this musical titan might have accomplished had he been healthy, had he lived longer and had he been able to hear. It’s impossible to believe that he achieved his full potential as either a composer or, even, a human being.

“Beethoven’s heart-rending biography — and many millions like his, or worse — is no argument for a future life. Perhaps, a skeptic might say, there’s no purpose to the cosmos. That’s just the way it is. We live briefly, we die meaninglessly and then our little candle is extinguished — as all light and life ultimately will be extinguished in the vast heat-death of the universe.

“But it should certainly cause us to hope for a future in which wounds are healed, deep yearnings satisfied and human potential fully realized.”

(<https://www.fairmormon.org/conference/august-2017/what-difference-does-it-make>)

Humanity shall continue to progress at faster and faster rates. In the next five years, there will be no more flat-earthers as we will be able to send them up into space to show them that the world is indeed round in SpaceX Space Tours (and then never bring them back down).

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J2vHbuGsxxs>)



Even when we face near certainty of death we press on. Despite our limitations we keep running marathons and beyond. We are the craziest species in the whole world; willing to go further, work harder, daring to go higher than ever before. Most species are just concerned with surviving to produce offspring. But not us humans; for humanity, simply existing isn't enough, we must continually evolve towards

Godhood. No wonder. It is incredibly obvious to me that indeed PEOPLE ARE AWESOME! (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WbJT9MZn-xk>)

The Dominican Catholic priest Jordan Vajda said at the end of his 1998 thesis at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley: “What has resulted from taking another look at The God Makers? The Mormons are truly god makers, as the doctrine of exaltation explains. The fullness of human salvation means becoming a god, yet, what was meant to be a term of ridicule has turned out to be a term of approbation, for the witness of the Greek Fathers of the Church is that they also believe that salvation meant becoming a god. It seems that if one’s soteriology cannot accommodate a doctrine of human divinization, then

he has, at least implicitly, if not explicitly, rejected the heritage of the early Christian Church and departed from the faith of first millennium Christianity. However, if that is the case, those that would espouse such a soteriology also believe, in fact, that Christianity from about the second century on has apostatized and gotten it wrong on this core issue of human salvation. Thus ironically, those who would excoriate Mormons for believing the doctrine of exaltation actually agree with them that the early Church experienced a great apostasy on fundamental questions. And the supreme irony is that such persons should probably investigate the claims of the LDS Church, which proclaims that from within itself can be found the restoration of all things.”

“One can think what one wants,” wrote the late German ecclesiastical historian Ernst Benz, “of the doctrine of progressive deification in Mormonism. But one thing is certain: With this anthropology, Joseph Smith is closer to the view of Man held by the ancient church than the precursors of the Augustinian doctrine of the Original Sin were, who considered the thought of such a substantial connection between God and Man as the heresy *par excellence*.”

37. Why does the Mormon Church teach that Elohim had sexual relations with Mary to produce Jesus when both Matthew and Luke teach she was a virgin (*The Seer*, January, 1853, p.158)?

We do not teach that doctrine. We believe that Mary was indeed entirely a virgin, through and through, when she gave birth to Christ. The *Seer*, as soon as it was published, was declared to be inaccurate by the First Presidency of the Church, they said: “But the *Seer*, the Great First Cause, the article in the *Millennial Star*, of Oct. 15, and Nov. 1, 1850 contains doctrine



which we cannot sanction and which we have felt to disown, so that the Saints who now live, and who may live hereafter, may not be misled by our silence, or be left to misinterpret it. Where these objectionable works or parts of works are bound in volumes, or otherwise, they should be cut out and destroyed. “ (B.H. Roberts, Defense of the Faith and the Saints, Vol.2, 294.)

That’s some pretty harsh language to say that any The Seer quote should be cut out and destroyed. So if you want to bring up the quotes from that book about God being a polygamous or any other quote I will say that the Church has declared that to be inaccurate so it should be “cut out and destroyed,” preferably with fire I think.

"And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her."

(Luke 1:38)

No official revelation has been given at this time on exactly how the condescension of Christ into Mary’s womb happened. There has only been mere speculation in non-prophetic circumstances. But the same is true that however it happened, before and after the birth, Mary remained a virgin, meaning there was no sex involved.

Ezra Taft Benson taught:

“He was the Only Begotten Son of our Heavenly Father in the flesh—the only child whose mortal body was begotten by our Heavenly Father. His mortal mother, Mary, was called a virgin, both before and after she gave birth. (See 1 Nephi 11:20.) ”

It has been revealed that Mary did not stay a virgin her whole life, for sometime after the birth of Christ, Mary had children by her husband, Joseph. (Mark 6:3, Matthew 13:55-56) Mary bore many fruits and had to bear many pains throughout the course of her life. The Book of Mormon likened her unto the Tree of Life, for it was Mary to whom an angled showed unto Nephi when he asked about the meaning of the Tree of Life.

“Behold, the virgin whom thou seest is the mother of the Son of God, after the manner of the flesh.”

(1 Nephi 11:18)

The tree is Mary, and the fruit that she bore is the Son of God, and it is the Son who giveth eternal life unto all those who partake of him. And thus she is the mother of God [or mother of the son of God, either one works and is not trinitarian in nature]. Ancient

Israelite religion revered and believed in a divine mother goddess, Asherah, who was also represented by the Tree of Life. And so the angel used Asherah as an example to teach Nephi about Mary.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-OICIKlsyAs>

You may also bring up this quote by Brigham Young from 1860:

"...[T]here is no act, no principle, no power belonging to the Deity that is not purely philosophical. The birth of the Saviour was as natural as are the births of our children; it was the result of natural action. He partook of flesh and blood—was begotten of his Father, as we were of our fathers."

(Brigham Young, "Character of God and Christ, etc.," (8 July 1860) *Journal of Discourses* 8:115. (See also Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses* 1:238.; Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses* 4:218.; Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses* 11:268..)

Or this similar quote by Bruce R. McConkie:

"God the Father is a perfected, glorified, holy Man, an immortal Personage. And Christ was born into the world as the literal Son of this Holy Being; he was born in the same personal, real, and literal sense that any mortal son is born to a mortal father. There is nothing figurative about his paternity; he was begotten, conceived and born in the normal and natural course of events, for he is the Son of God, and that designation means what it says."

But later in the same volume, he clarifies his statement:

"Our Lord is the only mortal person ever born to a virgin, because he is the only person who ever had an immortal Father. Mary, his mother, "was carried away in the Spirit" (1 Ne. 11:13-21), was "overshadowed" by the Holy Ghost, and the conception which took place "by the power of the Holy Ghost" resulted in the bringing forth of the literal and personal Son of God the Father. (Alma 7:10; 2 Ne. 17:14; Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-38.) Christ is not the Son of the Holy Ghost, but of the Father. (Doctrines of Salvation, vol. 1, pp. 18-20.) Modernistic teachings denying the virgin birth are utterly and completely apostate and false."

(Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd edition, (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966), 742 & 822.)

Harold B. Lee said,

“We are very much concerned that some of our Church teachers seem to be obsessed of the idea of teaching doctrine which cannot be substantiated and making comments beyond what the Lord has actually said.

“You asked about the birth of the Savior. Never have I talked about sexual intercourse between Deity and the mother of the Savior. If teachers were wise in speaking of this matter about which the Lord has said but very little, they would rest their discussion on this subject with merely the words which are recorded on this subject in Luke 1:34-35: "Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God."

“Remember that the being who was brought about by [Mary's] conception was a divine personage. We need not question His method to accomplish His purposes. Perhaps we would do well to remember the words of Isaiah 55:8-9: "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.”

(Harold B. Lee, *Teachings of Harold B. Lee* (Salt Lake City, Utah: Bookcraft, 1996), 14.)

38. Why does the LDS Church teach that Jesus paid for our sins in the garden of Gethsemane when 1 Peter 2:24 says it was on the cross?"

The answer is that it was both. We don't teach it was exclusively in the garden, but the garden helps to magnify the atonement beyond just the cross. You cannot show me a talk in which a general authority of the church says that the cross does not matter and that it all happened in Gethsemane.

Here are some LDS scriptures that talk about the cross:

1 Nephi 11:33

Jesus "was lifted up upon the cross and slain for the sins of the world."

3 Nephi 27:14

Jesus said, "My Father sent me that I might be lifted up upon the cross"

Here are some LDS hymns which reference the cross:

- **Hymn 171, With Humble Heart: "Help me remember, I implore, Thou gavst thy life on Calvary."**
- **Hymn 172, In Humility Our Savior: "Let me not forget, O Savior, Thou didst bleed and die for me when Thy heart was stilled and broken on the cross at Calvary."**
- **Hymn 174, While of these Emblems We Partake: "For us the blood of Christ was shed; For us on Calvary's cross He bled..."**
- **Hymn 177, Tis Sweet To Sing the Matchless Love: "For Jesus died on Calvary, that all through him might ransomed be."**
- **Hymn 178, O Lord of Hosts: "salvation purchased on that tree for all who seek thy face."**
- **Hymn 181, Jesus of Nazareth, Savior and King: "Jesus of Nazareth, Savior and King, Our thoughts to thee are led, in reverence sweet. Bruised, broken, torn for us, on Calvary's hill."**
- **Hymn 182, We'll Sing All Hail to Jesus' Name: "We'll sing all hail to Jesus name...to him that bled on Calvary's hill, And died that we might live."**
- **Hymn 184, Upon the Cross at Calvary: "Upon the cross at Calvary, they crucified our Lord, and sealed with blood the sacrifice that sanctified his word. Upon the cross he meekly died, for all mankind to see that death unlocks the passageway into eternity. Upon the cross our Savior died, but, dying brought new birth through resurrection's miracle to all the sons of earth."**
- **Hymn 185, Reverently and Meekly Now: "With my blood that dripped like rain, sweat in agony of pain, with my body on the tree, I have ransomed even thee...Oh remember what was done, that the sinner might be won. On the cross of Calvary, I have suffered death for thee."**
- **Hymn 190, In Memory of the Crucified: "Our Savior in Gethsemane shrank not to drink the bitter cup. And then, for us, on Calvary, upon the cross was lifted up."**
- **Hymn 191, Behold the Great Redeemer Die: "Behold the great Redeemer die... They pierce his hands and feet and side; And with insulting scoffs and scorns, they crown**

his head with plaited thorns. Although in agony he hung... his high commission to fulfill, He magnified his Father's will."

- Hymn 193, I Stand All Amazed: "I stand all amazed at the love Jesus offers me, confused at the grace that so fully he proffers me. I tremble to know that for me he was crucified, that for me, a sinner, he suffered he bled and died...I think of his hands pierced and bleeding to pay the debt! Such mercy, such love, and devotion can I forget? No, no, I will praise and adore at the mercy seat, until at the glorified throne I kneel at his feet...Oh it is wonderful that he should care for me, enough to die for me. Oh it is wonderful... wonderful to me."
- Hymn 196, Jesus, Once of Humble Birth: "Jesus once of humble birth, now in glory comes to earth...Once upon the cross he bowed, Now his chariot is the cloud. Once he groaned in blood and tears, now in glory he appears."
- Hymn 197, O Savior, Thou Wearest a Crown.: "O Savior, thou who wearest a crown of piercing thorn, the pain thou meekly bearest, weighed down by grief and scorn. The soldiers mock and flail thee; for drink they give thee gall; Upon the cross they nail thee to die, O king of all."

Below we have a picture from an LDS produced video of the cross.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nlALmOx8Sk0&list=PL4A73DDEE675FBC39&index=69>

Now let's talk about the atonement itself. Let's start with what happened in Gethsemane and then make our way to the cross. The truth is, if there was no Gethsemane to teach us certain things about the atonement, the cross wouldn't be too special. Plenty of people have died in worse ways than the cross. Just take a look at what Vlad Dracula would do to people.

From the book of Mosiah chapter 3, we learn this about the atonement based on what happened in Gethsemane:

"7 And lo, he shall suffer temptations, and pain of body, hunger, thirst, and fatigue, even more than man can suffer, except it be unto death; for behold, blood cometh from every pore, so great shall be his anguish for the wickedness and the abominations of his people."

Such a thing was then carried over to the cross. Alma chapter 7 further elaborates on these things:

"11 And he shall go forth, suffering pains and afflictions and temptations of every kind; and this that the word might be fulfilled which saith he will take upon him the pains and the sicknesses of his people.

"12 And he will take upon him death, that he may loose the bands of death which bind his people; and he will take upon him their infirmities, that his bowels may be filled with mercy, according to the flesh, that he may know according to the flesh how to succor his people according to their infirmities.

"13 Now the Spirit knoweth all things; nevertheless the Son of God suffereth according to the flesh that he might take upon him the sins of his people, that he might blot out their transgressions according to the power of his deliverance; and now behold, this is the testimony which is in me."

From these passages, we learn that the suffering of Christ indeed was more significant than any of us could imagine, and he carried all these things with him to the cross. He not only suffered and died for our sins, but we believe and proclaim that the Christ also suffered our pains, afflictions, temptations, sickness, and infirmities. Literally, every bad thing that ever happened to you and everyone you know, plus the vast multitudes of people who ever lived or ever will live across all of time and space. Therefore did the weight of all these things press the blood out of him like what an olive press does to olives in pressing out the blood like oil.

All we get from the Bible concerning the agony Christ endured is this:

43 And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him.

44 And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground. (Luke 22)

Dr. Linoln H. Blummell wrote about why early Christianity rejected what happened in Gethsemane when Greek influence was heavy:

“... they seemingly depicted Jesus in a rather feeble light and were the target of a growing anti-Christian polemic. Consequently, some Christians felt it easier to simply excise this problematic material.” (Luke 22:43-44: An Anti-Docetic Interpolation or an Apologetic Omission?, pg. 4)

A. von Hamack has argued that these texts were removed because it seemed weak for Jesus having to be comforted by an angel.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c_rfmHVrK4Y&t=996s

18 Which suffering caused myself, even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore, and to suffer both body and spirit—and would that I might not drink the bitter cup, and shrink—

19 Nevertheless, glory be to the Father, and I partook and finished my preparations unto the children of men. (D&C 19)

We need the witness of Christ as our mediator with the Father. Without Christ, we would sink ever so deeper into sin as there would be no room for repentance as we eventually become the angels of the devil. How then could we be saved but by Christ?

“...It is impossible to create something out of nothing. If one wishes to obtain something, something of equal value must be given. This is the law of equivalent exchange.” (Full Metal Alchemist: Brotherhood intro)

The man or woman enters the second time into the womb is born again of Christ who travailed in labor for you. He is that equivalent exchange for your entrance into heaven. His suffering was immense. He held in his remorse, that blood He so freely gave was pressed from His body. The heavyweight of your sins and sufferings was so hard on His struggling heart. His tears were rain upon the ground. Why this that a crowd would approach with a traitor disciple. That kiss was a kiss of lies upon the cheek of Christ left by Judas Iscariot. As though things could not worsen one of his most faithful disciples cut the ear off of one of the soldiers. Christ rebuked the disciple and then healed the ear of the soldier.

The simple healing of the soldier's ear was still not enough for the Pharisees to be convinced of Christ's eternal Sonship and Godhood. They jolted Him forward on the long road back to the city for more persecution. His disciples stood and watched on. All but Peter and John walked away from the ordeal. Peter and John, in their determination followed.

While being testified against, Christ saw Peter deny he knew Him thrice before the cock crowed twice. In shame, Peter wept and fled. Christ walked His long and lonely path alone. Jeffery R. Holland, modern-day Apostle spoke saying:

“Soon enough He was arraigned before the Israelite leaders of the day—first Annas, the former high priest, then Caiaphas, the current high priest. In their rush to judgment these men and their councils declared their verdict quickly and angrily. “What further need have we of witnesses?” they cried. “He is [worthy] of death.”

“With that He was brought before the gentile rulers in the land. Herod Antipas, the tetrarch of Galilee, interrogated Him once, and Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor in Judea, did so twice, the second time declaring to the crowd, “I, having examined him before you, have found no fault in this man.” Then, in an act as unconscionable as it was illogical, Pilate “scourged Jesus, [and] delivered him to be crucified.” Pilate's freshly washed hands could not have been more stained or more unclean.

“Such ecclesiastical and political rejection became more personal when the citizenry in the street turned against Jesus as well. It is one of the ironies of history that sitting with Jesus in prison was a real blasphemer, a murderer and revolutionary known as Barabbas, a name or title in Aramaic meaning “son of the father.” Free to release one prisoner in the spirit of the Passover tradition, Pilate asked the people, “Whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you?” They said, “Barabbas.” So one godless “son of the father” was set free while a truly divine Son of His Heavenly Father moved on to crucifixion.

“This was also a telling time among those who knew Jesus more personally. The most difficult to understand in this group is Judas Iscariot. We know the divine plan required Jesus to be crucified, but it is wrenching to think that one of His special witnesses who sat at His feet, heard Him pray, watched Him heal, and felt His touch could betray Him and all that He was for 30 pieces of silver. Never in the history of this world has so little money purchased so much infamy. We are not the ones to judge Judas's fate, but Jesus said of His betrayer, “Good [were it] for that man if he had not been born.”

“Of course others among the believers had their difficult moments as well. Following the Last Supper, Jesus left Peter, James, and John to wait while He ventured into the Garden of Gethsemane alone. Falling on His face in prayer, “sorrowful ... unto death,” the record says, His sweat came as great drops of blood as He pled with the Father to let this crushing, brutal cup pass from Him. But, of course, it could not pass. Returning from such anguished prayer, He found His three chief disciples asleep, prompting Him to ask, “Could ye not watch with me one hour?” So it happens two more times until on His third return He says compassionately, “Sleep on now, and take your rest,” though there would be no rest for Him.

"Later, after Jesus's arrest and appearance at trial, Peter, accused of knowing Jesus and being one of His confidants, denies that accusation not once but three times. We don't know all that was going on here, nor do we know of protective counsel which the Savior may have given to His Apostles privately, but we do know Jesus was aware that even these precious ones would not stand with Him in the end, and He had warned Peter accordingly. Then, with the crowing of the cock, “the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord. ... And [he] went out, and wept bitterly.”

Thus, of divine necessity, the supporting circle around Jesus gets smaller and smaller and smaller, giving significance to Matthew's words: “All the disciples [left] him, and fled.” Peter stayed near enough to be recognized and confronted. John stood at the foot of the cross with Jesus's mother. Especially and always the blessed women in the Savior's life stayed as close to Him as they could. But essentially His lonely journey back to His Father continued without comfort or companionship.”

The whip was spiked and was like a shotgun on His back. His back shredded to the bruising of the lungs and kidney. It carved out the ugliest of paintings. One may have been able to see His ribs scratched. His breath refused to leave Him as a crown of thorns was placed on his head, and blood rushed down His brow. A purple cloak was placed upon him to signify royalty that was only meet with mockery.

Now He carried the beam of His cross through the city. Now weak far beyond death, He fell to the ground with such an impact that was like a car crash without a seatbelt or airbag. The cross put even more pressure upon that poor heart. The heart was damaged beyond

repair. Turning his head, He saw women weeping for Him, including His mother and Mary Magdalen, and He sought to comfort them.

Unable to carry His cross, another man was brought on to carry it for Him, and He looked on in agony but compassion — His dire state of being rumbled with intensity. His groans were heard around the world to the Americas. Onward, He thought, must go on. One foot at a time, the road is painted in His blood. Up to a hill called Golgotha, He was stripped and laid on the cross. A sharp pain shot through Him as nails were driven into His hands. And then to make sure His weight did not cause his hands to tear through the nails, a second pair was driven into His wrists, then lifted off the ground His arms were yanked up with the rest of his body. Upon the cross, He hangs. Leftover right, his feet were nailed together. He could hardly breathe as He said His last words. Few stood with Him at the end, but all had left Him alone and helpless. From a distance, women looked on and wept. His knees were awkwardly placed, His bowels filled with holes He could not even then think a bad word against His oppressors.

There He hung until the spirit of His Father withdrew last of all. Then He knew what it was to be without God truly. His lookup into heaven, knowing He had died spiritually though not yet physically. The clouds covered the sun, and it shined no more on the holy land. In His pain, He cried out, "MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAST THOU FORSAKEN ME?!" When it was all over, and he yielded up the ghost on that cross, he did so without a single drop of blood left in his body. What was left came out within an outpouring of what was more water than blood when stabbed through the side, and he died an empty shell. No man ever looked more dead as he hung completely dry.

Not a single bone in his body was broken as the prophecies foretold, for he was perfect and endured his suffering well even to the bitter end. He drank that bitter cup, which should have been ours to drink as punishment for our sins.

The garden in which he went to pray before he was betrayed into the hands of the enemy was called Gethsemane which is translated from Greek as "olive press". Gethsemane was where olive oil was pressed out of every olive that came into the press, and it was pressed out blood red. So too was Christ put under an immense spiritual press of all our pain, suffering, and sin. Even if you had truly lived a sinless life, he still would have had his blood pressed out for you because of the infinite love he has for you. He desired, even in the beginning to know your pain and sorrow better than yourself, whether you be a Jew or

gentile, black or white, bond or free, male or female, good or evil, atheist or theist, Hispanic or Asian, Native American or colonist, human or animal, plant or weed, fowl or fish, insect or arachnid, living or dead, everyone before Christ and after he died for you. Yea but not just these but even those on far distant planets, he knows and feels their pains. What would have seemed to us to have just been a day and a half, for Christ, it was an eternity as He suffered for all and every creation through and through one at a time. It was so that He is the lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

His love for us was so strong and powerful that it broke down all of reality, all of time, all of space so that nothing was unable to feel His love. So powerful was his love that nothing could hold Him back from the thought of us ceasing to exist. No creature can attain a higher grade of nature within the cosmos with ceasing to exist. We are destined indeed to exist forever in a higher grade of nature, and it is not by becoming spirit energy, for then we would not be ourselves, neither would we have free will and would thus cease to exist. It is your existence that God prizes, above all else.

So when Luke writes: "And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground," (Luke 22:44) he was telling us just that. Luke tells us that Christ did sweat great drops of blood indeed, but not just in the garden should this be applied but to the cross as well. So much so that His brilliant white garments were dyed a dark crimson red. With Him, the Son of God, there was not one moment of rest. His tears of agony would make any mortal wish death immediately, but Christ knew He had to live on just a little bit longer for us all. For ourselves, our children and our parents. Christ had power over death from his Father, but from His mortal mother Mary, He felt pain like a mortal. Only a Demi-God could accomplish such a feat, to feel pain like a mortal but not die like a god.

And so there He was, the Son of the Father, flat upon His face as the weight of everything and everyone's pains and sins crushed Him and caused the dark red blood to be pushed out of His body through all five million pores and through the eyes and all holes on his body. Such immense love could tame an infinite number of roaring lions to weep bitterly for their Lord.

The devil himself could not have this, and so for that single moment he cried unto all of his demons "STOP HIM!" And so Christ suffered the ultimate wrath of the devil. And so Christ's blood was too also spilt for all those demons though they would never repent of

their sins. And thus the atonement became a true and complete infinite and eternal atonement.

No single thing or person, physical or spiritual, can escape the love of God. No single thing or person could imagine the loneliness or the horror that Christ felt for your own sake. That body continued to produce as many drops of blood as it took until every particle in the universe had its name on it when it drenched the ground beneath Him.

Just to stop and contemplate of the shear scale of the atonement and take a breather. Right before the suffering began. Christ was in deep prayer to His Father when an Angel came before Him strengthening Him. (Luke 22:43) He desired to have the cup removed so that He did not have to suffer the greatest of all pains, but He knew still how His brothers and sisters suffered, and He had such great love for them. “Nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.” (Luke 22:42)

Jeffery R. Holland continues:

“With all the conviction of my soul I testify that He did please His Father perfectly and that a perfect Father did not forsake His Son in that hour. Indeed, it is my personal belief that in all of Christ’s mortal ministry the Father may never have been closer to His Son than in these agonizing final moments of suffering. Nevertheless, that the supreme sacrifice of His Son might be as complete as it was voluntary and solitary, the Father briefly withdrew from Jesus the comfort of His Spirit, the support of His personal presence. It was required, indeed it was central to the significance of the Atonement, that this perfect Son who had never spoken ill nor done wrong nor touched an unclean thing had to know how the rest of humankind—us, all of us—would feel when we did commit such sins. For His Atonement to be infinite and eternal, He had to feel what it was like to die not only physically but spiritually, to sense what it was like to have the divine Spirit withdraw, leaving one feeling totally, abjectly, hopelessly alone.

“But Jesus held on. He pressed on. The goodness in Him allowed faith to triumph even in a state of complete anguish. The trust He lived by told Him in spite of His feelings that divine compassion is never absent, that God is always faithful, that He never flees nor fails us.

When the uttermost farthing had then been paid, when Christ’s determination to be faithful was as obvious as it was utterly invincible, finally and mercifully, it was “finished.” Against all odds and with none to help or uphold Him, Jesus of Nazareth, the living Son of

the living God, restored physical life where death had held sway and brought joyful, spiritual redemption out of sin, hellish darkness, and despair. With faith in the God He knew was there, He could say in triumph, “Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.” “

Anyone who says their life is too hard has no idea, no possible conception. What we as mortals go through is absolutely minuscule and microscopic compared to the Son of God who created the very ground upon which we stand under the direction of His Father, Elohim. That man Jesus of Nazareth who the ancient Jews referred to as Jehovah, the God and Father of the Old Testament and now the New.

Isaiah 7:14

14 Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

Immanuel being interpreted means “God with us”. Behold the Christ who laid down His life in ultimate suffering. It was an inevitability. It was always going to happen. That when a God of Love—a loving, just, and pure God—creates a universe of His own hands, His love would cause Him to feel every blood spilt, every pain, all cruelty, every death, every murder, every rape, every sacred thing dragged through the mud, every sin against nature, every unclean thing that left the mouth, every theft of property, every sick and suffering person, every home lost in a flood, fire or hurricane.

You should hear the riveting, heartfelt testimonies of the atonement of Jesus Christ by these modern-day apostles which are filled with the Holy Ghost and with power, surely they did believe every single word uttered by their mouth for I do not sense any kind of doubt. These men are true to their faith and words; they are willing to lay down their life for the cause of Christ, and so am I:

Bruce R. McConkie, this one is legendary among mormon folk:

<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/1985/04/the-purifying-power-of-gethsemane?lang=eng>

Jeffery R. Holland:

<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2009/04/none-were-with-him?lang=eng>

Russel M. Nelson:

<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/1996/10/the-atonement?lang=eng>

39. Why did Bruce McConkie write that a man may commit a sin so grievous that it will place him beyond the atoning blood of Christ (Mormon Doctrine, 1979, p.93) when the Bible says that the blood of Christ cleanses us from all sin (1 John 1:7)?



If we are all cleansed from sin, I wonder why some still hold the belief in hell, surely then we should all go to heaven and have nothing to worry about. Hold on. Weren't you just asking about how the Bible states "that there is no chance of salvation after death?" Why are you now suggesting that there is salvation for man after death by declaring that there is no sin which will place us beyond the blood of Christ?

Only the Latter-Day Saints believe that we will ALL go to heaven, as shown in our concept of there being three heavens (2 Corinthians 12:2). Hell, or Outer Darkness, is reserved for Satan and his devils only. Not even Hitler qualifies to go to Hell for all time for he shall be washed clean by the blood of the Lamb and be able to go to the lowest degree of heaven, which is still heaven. Hell is reserved only for Satan and his demons.

Is it possible for a mortal man to be so wicked that he is, as McKonkie put it, beyond the atoning blood of Christ, thus making him a demon? Interestingly enough, there is scripture

in which Christ himself mentions an unpardonable sin. All sin is pardonable except this one, which is the sin against the Holy Ghost.

“ 31 Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men.

"32 And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.” (Matthew 12:31–32)

This is the only way a person can qualify to go to Hell. Not because a man forgot to say, “Lord Jesus, I believe.” But because his heart is so wicked that he refuses to be forgiven of his sins, he desires the blood of Christ to not wash over him to cleanse him from sin. And God surely wishes to forgive all sin. To speak against the Holy Ghost makes a man into a son of perdition and a woman into a daughter of perdition, and they shall go to join their father Satan in Hell as demons for all eternity. These are they which say as what was said in *Paradise Lost*, "Better to reign in Hell, than serve in Heav'n ..."

Becoming a son or daughter of perdition has been made purposely hard by our loving Father in heaven. A son of perdition is NOT an ex-Mormon, as some believe, but a literal devil in mortal flesh. They were liars from the beginning. The only accounts that we have of sons of perdition are that of Cain and Judas Iscariot; if there are more, then we do not know them.

So, how does one become a son of perdition?

“If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it” (1 John 5:1).

“40 And this is the gospel, the glad tidings, which the voice out of the heavens bore record unto us—

“41 That he came into the world, even Jesus, to be crucified for the world, and to bear the sins of the world, and to sanctify the world, and to cleanse it from all unrighteousness;

“42 That through him all might be saved whom the Father had put into his power and made by him;

“43 Who glorifies the Father, and saves all the works of his hands, except those sons of perdition who deny the Son after the Father has revealed him.

“44 Wherefore, he saves all except them—they shall go away into everlasting punishment, which is endless punishment, which is eternal punishment, to reign with the devil and his angels in eternity, where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched, which is their torment.” (D&C 76)

To become a son of perdition, you must see the face of Lord Jesus Christ, know that he lives, know of his infinite love for you, know perfectly how his atonement works, know that he is the God of Israel and the God of the whole earth, and still reject him. So while the blood of Christ does cleanse us all from sin, a son of perdition is one who refuses to be cleansed in the first place.

Although I am not catholic, I think that this quote about hell by Pope John Paul II is a great description of what it means to be a son of perdition truly:

“Rather than a place, hell indicates the state of those who freely and definitively separate themselves from God, the source of all life and joy.”

(Bibliography: Pope John Paul II quote, General Audience July 28, 1999)

40. Why does the LDS Church teach that man first existed as spirits in heaven when 1 Corinthians 15:46 says that the physical body comes before the spiritual?

This has a straightforward explanation. This seems to be the only scripture that critics can come up with in an attempt to disprove the pre-earth life. My question is, why would

anyone want to disprove such a beautiful and necessary doctrine? Is it because they fear that they will have to become a Mormon if they do accept it? Yeah, you really don't have to become a Mormon if you believe in the pre-earth life as there are many non-Mormons who



still accept this doctrine, but more on that later.

Let's get to that scripture and the incredibly easy explanation. 1 Corinthians chapter 15 is all about Paul attempting to prove the reality of a physical resurrection. So the resurrection is the key topic here. What we need to understand now is what does Paul mean when he mentions "the spiritual" and the "natural"? Indeed what is the definition of "spiritual" and "natural" as used in this context? If we look back at verse 44, it looks like Paul is talking about spiritual bodies apart from natural bodies: "It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body." And then verse 43 is read in like manner; only this time "natural body" is replaced with "dishonour" and "weakness," and "spiritual body" is replaced with "glory" and "power." And then 42 reads, "So also *is* the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption:" So the spiritual is represented by "power," "glory" and "incorruption"; and the natural is represented by "dishonour," "weakness" and "corruption." It looks like 42 makes it very clear that we are indeed talking about the resurrection in which we go from a natural state to a spiritual state. Paul has been building up to this in an attempt to prove a physical resurrection. So when he mentions the natural turning into the spiritual, he is talking about the mortal turning into the immortal. And then verse 41-42 reads, "*There are* also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial *is* one, and the *glory* of the terrestrial *is* another. *There is* one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for *one* star differeth from *another* star in glory." So there you go, the spiritual body is in reference to the resurrected physical body characterized by one of three glories: the sun, the moon, and the stars, which in turn is in reference to the three kingdoms of glory. If you think that the spiritual body is the same as the spirit of man then you have totally missed Paul's message of a physical resurrection.

I'll give you a scripture that I still need someone who doesn't believe in the pre-earth life to answer: "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." (Ecclesiastes 12:7) How can we return to a place that we have never been to before?

Clement of Alexandria wrote:

“... the Logos is not to be despised as something new, for even in Jeremiah the Lord says, ‘Say not “I am too young,” for before I formed thee in the womb I knew thee, and before thou camest forth from thy mother I sanctified thee.’ It is possible that in speaking these things the prophet is referring to us, as being known to God as faithful before the foundation of the world.”

From Origen, *Peri Archon*, in *Patrologae... Graeca* 9:230-231 we read:

“Writing in the third century, he stated a belief that differences evident among men on earth were attributable to differences in rank and glory attained by those men as premortal angels. According to Origen, God could not be viewed as “no respecter of persons” without such a premortal existence. In fact, if the differences of men on earth were not related in some way to our premortal condition, then God could be viewed as arbitrary, capricious, and unjust. Origen felt that just as there would be a judgement after this life, that a sort of judgement had already taken place based on our premortal merit, with the result being the station to which we were appointed in this life. As an example of this concept supported in the Bible, Origen referred to the Old Testament story of Jacob being preferred over Esau. Why was this so? According to Origen, because “we believe that he was even then chosen by God because of merits acquired before this life.” “

Reverend William De Arteaga, noted Christian historian:

“This question was hotly debated by Christians of late antiquity, and the faction of the Church which has bitterly opposed to preexistence gained the upper hand. By the sixth century belief in preexistence was declared heresy. All of this is quite astonishing in view of the clear and repeated biblical evidence for preexistence.”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1pvTC07a2-A>

“Nearly all recent studies on the origin of the doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo* have come to the conclusion that this doctrine is not native to Judaism, is nowhere attested in the Hebrew Bible, and probably arose in Christianity in the second century C.E. in the course of its fierce battle with Gnosticism.” (Peter Hayman, *Monotheism - A Misused Word in Jewish Studies?*)

Justin Martyr indicated that it was the Christian doctrine of his day that “in the beginning God created all things out of unformed matter.” (First Apology(10)

Clement of Alexandria taught that “the universe” was created out of a “shapless mass of matter” and the “ordered sphere” of the earth was formed from “a confused heap”. (The Instructor 3.12)

“I, Jacob, who speak to you... am an angel of God, a ruling spirit, and Abraham and Isaac were created before every work of God.” (Prayer of Joseph, quoted by Origen, Commentary on John 2:25)

“[A]fter all these things He made man, on whose account He had prepared all things, whose internal species (spirit) is older, and and for whose sake all things that are were made.” (Clemetine Recognitions 1:28)

I've heard some say that because science says that there was nothing before the Big Bang, that means that the *ex nihilo* creation is the true creation. However, according to Stephen Hawking, this is not the case as he has said there may very well have been something before the Bang:

"Since events before the Big Bang have no observational consequences, one may as well cut them out of the theory, and say that time began at the Big Bang. Events before the Big Bang, are simply not defined, because there's no way one could measure what happened at them."

(<https://www.livescience.com/61914-stephen-hawking-neil-degrasse-tyson-beginning-of-time.html>)

Another study suggests that time itself may very well have existed before the Big Bang. (<https://www.inquisitr.com/5227521/a-study-suggests-that-time-may-still-have-existed-before-the-big-bang-occurred/>)

In science, a fundamental law of the universe is, nothing can be created or destroyed. Protons, neutrons and electrons are eternal and everlasting. You cannot create something out of thin air. Essentially, everything has always existed and can only change forms from time to time. And so my wondering mind wonders if this law can be applied to the conscience, aka the spirit of man.

In philosophy, a famous quote from Jean-Paul Sartre says, "Existence precedes essence." If we factor the premortal life into the equation, how much of an essence do we have if we have always existed? With the premortal life, how much of a radical freedom is given us? With this doctrine of the premortal existence, it gives more credibility to the free will argument with an all-knowing God. It also addresses many things involving the problem of evil. With this doctrine, when we sin we are not only rebelling against God but we are also rebelling against our true selves, rebelling against who we were in the pre-earth life as sons and daughters of God. When Jesus Christ came to this mortal world to show us the perfect example, it wasn't just him he wanted us to look at but also our past selves.

This doctrine explains why we all are born with different psychologies. Without this, free will is the greatest illusion and we would cease to exist. If you believe that God created you out of nothing then you must also believe that he created your consciousness, your personality and everything that comes along with those things. God must have then programmed you to make certain decisions at certain places at certain times, so you are nothing more than a puppet whose destiny was predetermined to end up in either heaven or hell, and there is nothing you can do about it. God literally just set you up as a toy robot and then pressed your "on" button so then you would walk blindly and swiftly off an inevitable cliff and into the abyss. And thus, I conclude that the belief in ex nihilo creationism is a damning belief. This same thing is true even if you posit that God created us to have free will because it would mean that we are doomed to be free forever, which is false freedom.

You would have to believe that we are nothing more than fictional characters in a novel, or NPC's in a computer simulation, and God is the author. He gave you life, yes, but is also the architect of everything inside you. He designed your personality to tell a narrative. He gave you opinions to give you conflict. And with these things, He gives only the illusion of agency as He dictates what actions you would make and when. Your theories are not your own; your view of the world is not your own; there is nothing at all, which defines you which is not you but God. You are an idea that someone somewhere once thought up randomly. Any person can play you; any person can be you, you are not special, the only certain thing about you is the uncertainty. If your opinion is that there is no God then your fate is even worse as your personality is dictated by a ruthless abyss which has neither body, parts or passions.

O, the things that I could do with a Blade Runner sequel. For it was there, before we were born, that we physiologically hard-wired ourselves under the direction and counsel of God our Father. You can say that you are fine with these conditions if you were suddenly put into existence the moment your body formed in your mother's womb, that your consciousness came from nothing, but you must accept the reality that you shall return to nothing upon death for all things which begin must have an ending. You must confront the reality that your sins will never be forgiven for you can never take credit for your sins for all of your sins rest on the God who created you, because your agency is, in part, a mere fantasy as it is God's.

With the doctrine of Premortal life: every physical thing you see is God's but your will is your own. Your body belongs to God, but your agency is yours, your agency is the only thing God feely gives to you and you can freely give back to God. So if you are to believe that you are your own, you must then take responsibility for your own actions. God put the power into the hands of humans for humans to be free and decide their own fate. God can, at any time, take away your agency but He chooses not too. He will never remove your agency for that would destroy His purposes for you and He would cease to be God. He would never enslave His own children; we can only enslave ourselves to the devil.

If you would have happiness then you must be responsible for your own fate. Your intelligence did not come from nothing but has existed from all time and all eternity, therefore are you eternally free. Free to choose liberty and eternal life or captivity and death. (see 2 Nephi 2) Hence why you are special.

Without the doctrine of a pre-earth life we are better off adopting the philosophy of Rustin Cohle from "True Detective" who said, "I think the human consciousness is a tragic misstep in human evolution. We became too self aware; nature created an aspect of nature separate from itself. We are creatures that should not exist by natural law. We are things that labor under the illusion of having a self, a secretion of sensory experience and feeling, programmed with total assurance that we are each somebody, when in fact everybody's nothing. I think the honorable thing for our species to do is deny our programming, stop reproducing, walk hand in hand into extinction, one last midnight, brothers and sisters opting out of a raw deal."

Elder Neal A. Maxwell taught:

“One of the “plain and precious things” long ago “kept back” or “taken away” (1 Ne. 13:34, 40), this enormously important truth did not reach the Holy Bible in an abundant degree, though it is surely there. (See Jer. 1:5; Eph. 1:4–5; 2 Tim. 1:9.) It was briefly extant after the original Apostles. Alas, however, just as Paul foresaw, the time soon came when Church members did not “endure sound doctrine,” including this one. (See 2 Tim. 4:3.) “With the later disapprovals of councils, the doctrine of premortal existence demonstrably was not a doctrine which could have been reestablished by research. The doctrine does not abuse logic, for “truth is reason,” especially “truth eternal”, but is more than logic alone can fully support. (See *Hymns*, 1985, no. 292.) It could only come from restoration by modern revelation. It was certainly not abroad in the land of America until Joseph Smith’s articulations.

“Furthermore, so much had happened in human history to make the restoration of this key truth necessary. It was needed to confound the false doctrine of a mankind created *ex nihilo*—out of nothing. (See 2 Ne. 3:12.) The “*ex nihilo*” view, said the Prophet Joseph “lessens man in my estimation.” (*Words of Joseph Smith*, Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook, comps., Provo: BYU Religious Studies Center, 1980, p. 359.)

Without this truth, existential lamentations prevail about how man spends his entire life trying to prove to himself that his existence is not absurd. Even believers, in Paul’s words, if malnourished as to doctrine, can become “wearied and faint in [their] minds” and surrender to circumstance. (See Heb. 12:3.)

“The reality of premortality responds to puzzlings which suggest we are strangers here. It is a curative for the yearnings expressed in music and poetry and literature. There are wonderings such as in these lines:

*Not dulled, nor lulled, supined, secure, replete does Man create;
But out of stern challenge, in sharp excitement, with a burning joy;
Man is the hunter still,
Though his quarry be a hope, a mystery, a dream ...
From what immortal desire, what sudden sight of the unknown,
Surges that desire?
What flint of fact, what kindling light of art or far horizon,
Ignites that spark?*

There are ponderings, like this one:

“Everything in our life happens as though we entered upon it with a load of obligations contracted in a previous existence ... obligations whose sanction is not of this present life, [which] seem to belong to a different world, founded on kindness, scruples, sacrifice, a world entirely different from this one, a world whence we emerge to be born on this earth, before returning thither.” (Marcel Proust, in Gabriel Marcel, *Homo Viator*, New York: Harper and Row, 1963, p. 8.)

And finally, there are these more familiar lines:

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting: ...

But trailing clouds of glory do we come

From God, who is our home.

...

“Other expanding revelations soon followed. In May 1833, the stunning communication, now known as section 93, declared: “Man was also in the beginning with God. Intelligence, or the light of truth, was not created or made, neither indeed can be. ...

“For man is spirit. The elements are eternal, and spirit and element, inseparably connected, receive a fulness of joy.” (D&C 93:29, 33.)

“Several years passed, years of apparent ripening and readying, before the record indicates the Prophet began to communicate this precious doctrine publicly. In 1839, pondering and contemplating in Liberty Jail, Joseph, by epistle, urged Church members to better behavior, behavior befitting Church members who had been “called ... from before the foundation of the world.” (The Personal Writings of Joseph Smith, Dean C. Jessee, comp. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1984, p. 397.)

“Joseph also received revelation about what was ordained in “the midst of the Council of the Eternal God ... before this world was.” (D&C 121:32.) Imprisoned, Joseph was reassuringly told his own days were known, and his years would “not be numbered less.” (D&C 122:9.)

“Joseph’s first recorded public speech on this powerful doctrine occurred shortly after his release from soul-stretching bondage in Missouri. (See *The Words of Joseph Smith*, p. 9.) Other speeches followed, capped finally by the soaring sermon at King Follett’s funeral in the spring of 1844.

“This declaration to Jeremiah: “Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations” (Jer. 1:5) was paralleled in the 1842 Book of Abraham:

“Now the Lord had shown unto me, Abraham, the intelligences that were organized before the world was; and among all these there were many of the noble and great ones;

“And God ... said: These I will make my rulers; ... and he said unto me: Abraham, thou art one of them; thou wast chosen before thou wast born.” (Abr. 3:22–23.)

“The Book of Abraham, in corroborating section 93, used words whose full measure you and I have scarcely begun to take: “if there be two spirits, ... notwithstanding one is more intelligent than the other, [they] have no beginning; they existed before, they shall have no end ... for they are ... eternal.” (Abr. 3:18.)”

(<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/1985/10/premortality-a-glorious-reality?lang=eng>)

There have been many who have had near death experiences and had visions of the premortal existence:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TWoSqDMOMTM&t=10s>

41. Since Jesus statement, “Be ye therefore perfect” (Matthew 5:48) is in the present tense, are you perfect right now? Do you expect to be perfect soon? According to Hebrews 10:14, how are we made perfect?

Jesus’ quote, “Be ye therefore perfect” is indeed in the present tense. However, this does not mean that it is a statement of our current condition but is a commandment. Hebrews 10:14 says that they that are sanctified are made perfect by the one offering, or atonement, of Christ. What does he mean by “perfect”? “Even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.” In other words,



perfection is to have all the attributes of godliness, to be perfectly loving and hopeful.

Perfection is to become as God our Father in both might and grace, that we might make of Him a God of gods instead of a God of men.

Are we perfect right now? No. Do we expect to be perfect soon? Well, certainly, that is our hope; although a person who does achieve perfection in this life is extremely rare, more so than being eaten by a shark, as it is an extremely hard thing to do in our fallen states. The only perfect person who lived a 100% perfect life from birth to death was Jesus Christ. We have all sinned and come short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). Though extremely hard, it is possible to be redeemed in this life without carrying on this process into the next life, which is about 99.99% of us.

There have only been a few instances of mortal men achieving perfection in this life as recorded in the scriptures. One example would be Job who was called perfect while he was still a mortal (Job 1:1). Most often, when one does achieve perfection in this life, then he is translated into heaven, such as Elijah (2 Kings 2:11). While there are no records of women achieving perfection in this life, and/or being translated, I do not doubt that there are some. There is the account of Enoch (found in both the Book of Moses and the Book of Enoch) in which he created a city in which all the citizens were so perfect that the whole city was translated and taken up into heaven.

18 And the Lord called his people Zion, because they were of one heart and one mind, and dwelt in righteousness; and there was no poor among them. 19 And Enoch continued his preaching in righteousness unto the people of God. And it came to pass in his days, that he built a city that was called the City of Holiness, even Zion.

...

23 And after that Zion was taken up into heaven, Enoch beheld, and lo, call the nations of the earth were before him; 24 And there came generation upon generation; and Enoch was high and lifted up, even in the bosom of the Father, and of the Son of Man; and behold, the power of Satan was upon all the face of the earth. (Moses 7)

St. James gives us another good example of how one becomes perfect:

2 For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same *is* a perfect man, *and* able also to bridle the whole body. 3 Behold, we put bits in the horses' mouths, that they may obey us; and we turn about their whole body. 4 Behold

also the ships, which though *they be* so great, and *are* driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very small helm, whithersoever the governor listeth.

5 Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth! 6 And the tongue *is* a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell. 7 For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind: 8 But the tongue can no man tame; *it is* an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. 9 Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God. 10 Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be. 11 Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet *water* and bitter? 12 Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? either a vine, figs? so *can* no fountain both yield salt water and fresh. 13 Who *is* a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom.

14 But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. 15 This wisdom descendeth not from above, but *is* earthly, sensual, devilish.

16 For where envying and strife *is*, there *is* confusion and every evil work. 17 But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. 18 And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace. (James 3)

42. Why do Mormons say the sticks in Ezekiel 37 represent the Bible and the Book of Mormon when Ezekiel 37:20-22 tells us that the sticks represent two nations, not two books?

Oh, very good. Those two sticks do represent two nations. You're halfway there. Can you tell me what those two nations are? The two nations are that of Judah and Joseph. What was the most significant book to come out of the Jews, the tribe of Judah? Yes, it was the Bible. And the most significant book to come out of the tribe of Joseph was the Book of Mormon. Join these two records of two nations together and you will get the stick of Joseph and Judah.

Can you tell me the significance of the sticks? What is it meant by sticks?

Keith H. Meservy pointed out:



“Recent exciting discoveries now confirm the correctness of Joseph Smith’s interpretation in a way impossible in 1830. But before discussing these new discoveries, let’s take a quick look at some linguistic points. Both stick, in the English King James Version, and rod, in the Greek Septuagint Version, are very unusual translations of the Hebrew word etz ... whose basic meaning is wood . . .

“The modern nation of Iraq includes almost all of Mesopotamia, the homeland of the ancient kingdoms of Assyria and Babylonia. In 593 B.C., when Ezekiel was called to be a prophet, he was living in exile in Babylonia. ... As he walked its streets, he would have seen the typical scribe pressing a wedge-shaped stylus into moist clay tablets to make the complex writings familiar to us as cuneiform (wedge-shaped). But scholars today know that other kinds of records were being made in Mesopotamia: papyrus, parchment, and wooden tablets. Though only the clay tablets have survived the millennia, writers referred to the other writing materials on their clay tablets. [One such writing style was called “wood tablets.”]

“Modern archaeologists knew what papyrus and parchment were, but what were these wood tablets? How could cuneiform be written on wood? ...

“... Some years ago ... San Nicolo [an archaeologist] remembered that Romans and Greeks both made wooden wax tablets for record-keeping purposes out of boards whose surfaces had been cut below the edges in order to hold a thin coating of wax. Scribes wrote on the wax. The raised edges protected the inscribed surfaces when two tablets were put together. “Could the Babylonians have done the same thing? ... Five years later, ... a discovery made in the territory that had been ancient Assyria confirmed his theory to the letter.

“The discovery, directed by archaeologist Max Mallowan, was made in a layer of sludge deep in a well in Nimrod, a city known as Calah in the Bible. ... By the end of the day workmen had found ... fragments of two complete sets of tablets, one of ivory and the other of walnut, each composed of sixteen boards. ...

“All of the surfaces of the boards were cut down a tenth of an inch, leaving a half-inch-wide raised edge all around. The lowered surfaces provided a bed for wax filling, of which some thin biscuit-like fragments were found either still adhering to the boards or mixed in the sludge nearby. ...

“The cover boards ... had hinge marks on both sides, making it evident that all sixteen in each set had once been joined together like a Japanese folding screen. The whole work made such an extensive record that Mallowan could announce his discovery as the oldest known example of a book. ...

“With these things in mind, we can see how we might translate Ezekiel 37:15–17 in this way:

“These were the words of the Lord to me: Man, take one leaf of a wooden tablet and write on it, “Judah and his associates of Israel.” Then take another leaf and write on it, “Joseph, the leaf [wooden tablet] of Ephraim and all his associates of Israel.”

“Now bring the two together to form one tablet; then they will be a folding tablet in your hand.’

“This translation is faithful to what we now know of Ezekiel’s language and culture.” (“Ezekiel’s ‘Sticks,’” Ensign, Sept. 1977, pp. 24–26.)

(27-

All of this is very congruent with a prophecy from the Book of Mormon:

“ Know ye not that there are more nations than one? Know ye not that I, the Lord your God, have created all men, and that I remember those who are upon the isles of the sea; and that I rule in the heavens above and in the earth beneath; and I bring forth my word unto the children of men, yea, even upon all the nations of the earth?

“Wherefore murmur ye, because that ye shall receive more of my word? Know ye not that the testimony of two nations is a witness unto you that I am God, that I remember one nation like unto another? Wherefore, I speak the same words unto one nation like unto another. And when the two nations shall run together the testimony of the two nations shall run together also.” (2 Nephi 29:7-8)

43. Why does the LDS Church teach that Jesus and Lucifer are spirit brothers when both the first chapter of John and Colossians teach that Jesus is the Creator of all things, including Lucifer?



The Devil, from the play "Faust" by Goethe, proclaimed:

"I am the spirit that negates.

And rightly so, for all that comes to be

Deserves to perish wretchedly;

'Twere better nothing would begin

Thus everything that your terms, 'sin', 'destruction', 'evil', represent - That is my proper element."

Beyond just the basics of what scripture says, you need to understand the philosophy beyond scripture. Good and Evil have always existed alongside each other; Good did not create Evil. But the twain are brothers; one cannot exist without the other. Light cannot destroy darkness, and darkness cannot destroy light. The same stays true for Jesus and Lucifer as the very embodiments of Good and Evil. All this is taken into account in the Chinese philosophy of YinYang. The battle of Good vs Evil is an eternal and never ending battle. Opposition in all things is an eternal concept which will never cease.

“For it must needs be, that there is an ^aopposition in all things. If not so, my firstborn in the wilderness, righteousness could not be brought to pass, neither wickedness, neither holiness nor misery, neither good nor bad. Wherefore, all things must needs be a compound in one; wherefore, if it should be one body it must needs remain as dead, having no life neither death, nor corruption nor incorruption, happiness nor misery, neither sense nor insensibility. Wherefore, it must needs have been created for a thing of naught; wherefore there would have been no ^apurpose in the end of its creation. Wherefore, this thing must needs destroy the wisdom of God and his eternal purposes, and also the power, and the mercy, and the ^bjustice of God. ...

... it must needs be that there was an opposition; even the ^dforbidden ^efruit in ^fopposition to the ^gtree of life; the one being sweet and the other bitter.” (2 Nephi 2:11-12 & 15)

Saying that Jesus Christ created Lucifer is so much worse than saying Lucifer has always existed alongside Christ as his spirit brother. If Jesus created Lucifer, then that would have meant that he created evil because Lucifer is evil, this intern would make Jesus evil. Therefore does he want you to think that Christ created him. After all the best way to understand an artist is to look at his art work for it is his psychology made physical. If Jesus created Lucifer *ex nihilo*, then that would mean that Jesus created Lucifer’s conscience and all things that come with it; that includes his opinions, his biases, his motives, his drives, his insecurities, his tendencies, his quirks, his philosophy, his emotions, his instincts, etc. all of which would have had first originated with Christ making Christ evil and unable to forgive sins. Lucifer is then, now, just a pawn used by Christ as a torcher machine to his other creations. Lucifer would have no free agency and would have only the illusion of agency, he would be nothing more than a fictional character manifested in a robot. Satan far more cunning than this, he is willing to tarnish his own reputation if he could only make you believe for only a second that he was created out of nothing by Jesus, then he could slowly make you believe that Jesus is evil. For all we would know, there is no Lucifer and it is just the evil side of Christ. There is no way to justify it otherwise. If you give Christ an evil side then he would cease to be God. Give Christ an evil side and there would be no law to be given. “19 Now, if there was no law given—if a man murdered he should die—would he be afraid he would die if he should murder? 20 And also, if there was

no law given against sin men would not be afraid to sin. 21 And if there was no law given, if men sinned what could justice do, or mercy either, for they would have no claim upon the creature? 22 But there is a law given, and a punishment affixed, and a repentance granted; which repentance, mercy claimeth; otherwise, justice claimeth the creature and executeth the law, and the law inflicteth the punishment; if not so, the works of justice would be destroyed, and God would cease to be God. 23 But God ceaseth not to be God, and mercy claimeth the penitent, and mercy cometh because of the atonement; and the atonement bringeth to pass the resurrection of the dead; and the resurrection of the dead bringeth eback men into the presence of God; and thus they are restored into his presence, to be judged according to their works, according to the law and justice.” (Alma 42)

Elder M. Russell Ballard cautioned members of the Church:

“We occasionally hear some members refer to Jesus as our Elder Brother, which is a true concept based on our understanding of the premortal life with our Father in Heaven. But like many points of gospel doctrine, that simple truth doesn't go far enough in terms of describing the Savior's role in our present lives and His great position as a member of the Godhead. Thus, some non-LDS Christians are uncomfortable with what they perceive as a secondary role for Christ in our theology. They feel that we view Jesus as a spiritual peer. They believe that we view Christ as an implementor for God, if you will, but that we don't view Him as God to us and to all mankind, which, of course, is counter to biblical testimony about Christ's divinity...

“Now we can understand why some Latter-day Saints have tended to focus on Christ's Sonship as opposed to His Godhood. As members of earthly families, we can relate to Him as a child, as a Son, and as a Brother because we know how that feels. We can personalize that relationship because we ourselves are children, sons and daughters, brothers and sisters. For some it may be more difficult to relate to Him as a God. And so in an attempt to draw closer to Christ and to cultivate warm and personal feelings toward Him, some tend to humanize Him, sometimes at the expense of acknowledging His Divinity. So let us be very clear on this point: it is true that Jesus was our Elder Brother in the premortal life, but we believe that in this life it is crucial that we become "born again" as His sons and daughters in the gospel covenant. “

(M. Russell Ballard, "Building Bridges of Understanding," *Ensign* (June 1998), 62)

The early Ante-Nicene Church father Lactantius wrote:

“Since God was possessed of the greatest foresight for planning, and of the greatest skill for carrying out in action, before He commenced this business of the world,--inasmuch as there was in Him, and always is, the fountain of full and most complete goodness,--in order that goodness might spring as a stream from Him, and might flow forth afar, He produced a Spirit like to Himself, who might be endowed with the perfections of God the Father... Then He made another being, in whom the disposition of the divine origin did not remain. Therefore he was infected with his own envy as with poison, and passed from good to evil; and at his own will, which had been given to him by God unfettered, he acquired for himself a contrary name. From which it appears that the source of all evils is envy. For he envied his predecessor, who through his steadfastness is acceptable and dear to God the Father. This being, who from good became evil by his own act, is called by the Greeks diabolus: we call him accuser, because he reports to God the faults to which he himself entices us. God, therefore, when He began the fabric of the world, set over the whole work that first and greatest Son, and used Him at the same time as a counselor and artificer, in planning, arranging, and accomplishing, since He is complete both in knowledge, and judgment, and power...”

We, members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, proclaim Jesus Christ to be the firstborn of the Father. After that came Lucifer from that same eternal substance which has always existed. Lucifer rebelled against the Father and fell, whereas Jesus stayed true to his Father and obtained all His attributes. Jesus became the complete embodiment of goodness and love, whereas Lucifer became the pure embodiment of hate and despair. Jesus was anointed by the Father to create the physical universe and all things that in them are which could be created. The conscience of someone is eternal and cannot be created though their spirit and physical form can be.

44. Why do worthy Mormon males hold the Aaronic priesthood since Hebrews 7:11-12 clearly teaches that it was changed and superceded by something better?



Your use of the word “clearly” makes it seem like you want me to just immediately accept your interpretation of scripture without any questions of my own. The same would be a blind follower. Clearly, this is a manipulation tactic. He who stops asking questioning is he who stops learning, and I refuse to stop learning and so I will continue to question your statements. There must need to be more to it than just looking at scripture and saying, “oh, okay.” You need context as well, my friend, besides the one scripture in order to know the true interpretation of scripture. So, I propose we first look at the context of this scripture before jumping to any kind of immediate conclusions. If we look at the context and your immediate interpretation turns out to be the correct one then so be it. But let’s not be too hasty in getting an interpretation without context lest you are accused of the Texas Sharpshooter fallacy.

So let’s get more in-depth into the history of the Priesthood for context. FairMormon writes:

“As pertaining to the problem of Nephites and Lamanites officiating in the priesthood (Mosiah 2:3), it seems clear that the authority by which sacrifices were offered was the Melchizedek and not the Levitical priesthood. That there are two priesthoods is clear

in Hebrews 5:1-10 and Hebrews 7:5-28. Both the Levitical or Aaronic priesthood and the higher Melchizedek priesthood were exercised in Old Testament times and the higher priesthood was used to offer sacrifice (Heb. 7:27). Five Old Testament prophets who were apparently not Levites are mentioned in connection with the offering of sacrifices:

- 1. Joshua (Ephraimite) - Josh. 8:30-31; 24:30**
- 2. Samuel (Ephraimite) - 1 Sam. 1:1-2, 20; 2:18; 7:9-19; 11:14-15**
- 3. Elijah (Gad or Manassah) - 1 Kings 18:31-38; 17:1**
- 4. David (Judah) - 1 Chron. 16:2; Matt. 1:2-6**
- 5. Solomon (Judah) - 1 Kings 3:2-3; Matt. 1:2-6**

“The Cambridge Bible Dictionary affirms the fact that although Samuel was "not a priest he performed priestly functions and constantly offered sacrifice at various places" Latter-day Saints believe that all prophets from Adam to Moses held the higher or Melchizedek priesthood [3] Until Moses, no other priesthood existed and all sacrifices offered prior to that time were done by the authority of the Melchizedek priesthood (Gen. 4:4; 8:20-21; 31:54; 46:1; Ex. 5:3, 8, 17). Since the Nephites held this priesthood, they also were empowered to offer sacrifices just as Old Testament prophets had.

“Jesus himself was not a Levite. So how could he be a priest? The New Testament takes this back to priests even before the time of Moses (before the rule that listed being a Levite as a requirement for becoming a priest), and we read in Hebrews 7:21 "... The Lord swears and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec." From an LDS perspective, we also see that the Aaronic Priesthood (the Levitical priesthood) could be bestowed by someone having authority to do so. And so we believe that we have the Aaronic Priesthood today in the Church. The distinction that we sometimes make is that the priesthood was never intended to be given just to the Levites. In Exodus 19:5-6, God speaks to Moses and tells him to tell Israel this:

“Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.

“God wanted Israel to be a nation of priests. But, the people are afraid to come to God - so in Exodus 20:18-19 -

“And all the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw it, they removed, and stood afar off. And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us.

“So Moses becomes an intermediary between the people and God, and after Moses speaks to the people, he goes back up into the mountain for 40 days to speak with God (and it is during this time that he is given instruction on how to build a temple, and gets the commandments, and so on). And Moses is gone so long, the people think he is dead, and so in Exodus 32:1 -

“And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him.

And this triggers the event with the golden calf - in which the tribe of Levi distinguishes themselves and this is why they are made priests. The point of all this is that there are plenty of ways in which to justify having a priesthood apart from being the one of the Levites.

"When this suggestion is made (that there couldn't be priests) the idea is that the Lehite group would be required to only adhere to the Law of Moses and its stipulation about Levites. This assumption isn't likely to be accurate. The Book of Mormon deals with this directly. Nephi portrays their departure from Jerusalem as a second Exodus. Nephi describes how Lehi is chosen as a second Moses. Moses sees a burning bush. Lehi sees the fire on the rock. Both speak with God, and so on, and so Lehi becomes a prophet like Moses was, and he is then able to ordain priests (as Moses did), and this creates a priesthood class among the Nephites. And so, given all of these different sorts of issues, the idea of a priesthood only belonging to the Levites is one that isn't really a problem.”

(<https://www.fairmormon.org/answers/>)

Question: If the priesthood during Old Testament times could only be held by the tribe of Aaron, how did Lehi's descendants, who were of the tribe of Joseph, hold the priesthood?

And so we see that the history of the Aaronic Priesthood and the Melchizedek Priesthood have always existed, to varying degrees, along side each other. We see that God always intended His people to be a nation of priests. During the duration of the Law of Moses, it

seems to be that the Aaronic Priesthood was primarily held by the sons of Aaron, and the Melchizedek Priesthood was primarily held by the prophets. Now that we have the higher law, the two priesthoods are used to a more universal degree and not limited to just the house of Israel. The lower is changed to the higher but not replaced by the higher.

FairMormon gives this analogy:

“As other Christians see it, the Aaronic Priesthood is like a small glass of water that is replaced by a fruit juice (the Melchizedek Priesthood). They are distinguished from each other, in most Christians' eyes, as quite separate things.

"The LDS would use a different metaphor to explain things: they might compare the Aaronic Priesthood to a glass of water that is filled only part way. Instead of being replaced by an entirely different drink, more water is poured into it until it is a full glass (the Melchizedek Priesthood).”

The Aaronic priesthood, held by the young man, is the preparatory priesthood. It is the schoolmaster which prepares the young man to receive the Melchizedek Priesthood soon wherein the Aaronic priesthood is changed to the Melchizedek. The Aaronic priesthood is to the young man what the law of Moses was to Israel. (see Galatians 3:24)

Therefore did Paul say:

“If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need *was there* that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron?”

It is something that is often questioned of the Latter-Day Saints, people really want to know of us: “By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority?” (Mark 21:23) And they would fame say the same thing about the Book of Mormon prophets. I could probably ask them the same thing, by what authority do you preach and baptize?

When the Pharisees asked Jesus that question he answered saying: “I also will ask you one thing, which if ye tell me, I in like wise will tell you by what authority I do these things.

25 The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men? And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say unto us, Why did ye not then believe him? 26 But if we shall say, Of men; we fear the people; for all hold John as

a prophet. 27 And they answered Jesus, and said, We cannot tell. And he said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things. 28 ¶ But what think ye?

A *certain* man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to day in my vineyard. 29 He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented, and went.

30 And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I *go*, sir: and went not. 31 Whether of them twain did the will of *his* father? They say unto him, The first. Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you. 32 For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not: but the publicans and the harlots believed him: and ye, when ye had seen *it*, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him.”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZI8JWMNyEN0>

We say that we received the Priesthood from John the Baptist, which was the Aaronic Priesthood; and we received the Melchizedek Priesthood from Peter, James, and John. All of this Priesthood goes all the way back to Jesus Christ himself.

I don't see the priesthood of the believers in the Bible. We do find a man who attempted to buy the priesthood from Peter but was rejected (Acts 8:18-24). We should instead receive the priesthood the way Paul said we should: “And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as *was* Aaron.” (Hebrews 5:4) And Aaron having received his authority by Moses whom God had called. (Exodus 28:1)

Tad R. Callister taught:

“Did Christ's Apostles and other officers make application for the ministry? They did not. The blueprint tells us how Christ selected His officers: “*Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you*” (John 15:16; italics added). When Christ ordained His Apostles, what did He give them? Matthew and Luke record the answer: “He gave them power” (Matthew 10:1; see also Luke 9:1)—the priesthood power to act in His name and to do His work. That is why the blueprint tells us “the Son of man ... gave authority to his servants” (Mark 13:34). Why? So they could act in His name with His endorsement. Every man who holds the priesthood of God in this Church today can trace his priesthood authority back to Jesus Christ, the source of all authority and power, so that he, likewise, is entitled to Christ's endorsement—His stamp of approval—as is required by the blueprint.” This is how the Church of Jesus Christ received its authority, how did you receive yours?

If you can prove that it is not possible for Lehi and his descendants shouldn't have had the priesthood, then we would have a problem. However, if you do this by stating that, during the period of the Law of Moses, only the Aaronic Priesthood existed and was only held by the sons of Aaron who were of the tribe of Levi, then there are a few problems that come with it. If you apply this method of understanding to the Book of Mormon, saying that since the prophets in the Book of Mormon were of the tribe of Joseph and not Levi they shouldn't have had the priesthood, you must then apply the same understanding to Biblical prophets.

We are then left wondering: by what authority did King David, King Solomon, Elijah, Samuel, and Joshua offer up sacrifices unto the Lord seeing as none of them were of the tribe of Levi? By what authority did Joshua cause the rotation of the earth and moon to stop (Joshua 10:12-13)? By what authority did Samuel become a great prophet and judge of Israel and restored law, order, and regular religious worship in the land (1 Sam. 4:15–18; 7:3–17)? By what authority did Elijah seal up the heavens, provide enough food for a widow and her son, raise the widow's son from death and call down fire from heaven (1 Kings 17-18)? By what authority did Elisha cause an ax head to float or say that if Naaman washed seven times in the river Jordan, he would be made whole (2 Kgs. 2–5; 8)? By what authority did Isaiah prophecy of Christ? Indeed, by what authority did any of these prophets do such miraculous things seeing as they shouldn't have held the priesthood considering the fact that they were not of the tribe of Levi?

Or perhaps they really were called of God and so did hold the priesthood. The Melchizedek Priesthood must have run alongside the Aaronic Priesthood.

Although the Priesthood is held by men this does not mean that men are the priesthood nor that they are the only ones who benefit from it. There are some few ordinances in the temple which are performed by women for women. President Oaks taught:

“How does this apply to women? In an address to the Relief Society, President Joseph Fielding Smith, then President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, said this:

“While the sisters have not been given the Priesthood, it has not been conferred upon them, that does not mean that the Lord has not given unto them authority. ... A person may have authority given to him, or a sister to her, to do certain things in the Church that are binding and absolutely necessary for our salvation, such as the work that our sisters do in the

House of the Lord. They have authority given unto them to do some great and wonderful things, sacred unto the Lord, and binding just as thoroughly as are the blessings that are given by the men who hold the Priesthood.”

In that notable address, President Smith said again and again that women have been given authority. To the women he said, “You can speak with authority, because the Lord has placed authority upon you.” He also said that the Relief Society “[has] been given power and authority to do a great many things. The work which they do is done by divine authority.” And, of course, the Church work done by women or men, whether in the temple or in the wards or branches, is done under the direction of those who hold priesthood keys. Thus, speaking of the Relief Society, President Smith explained, “[The Lord] has given to them this great organization where they have authority to serve under the directions of the bishops of the wards ... , looking after the interest of our people both spiritually and temporally.” (<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2014/04/the-keys-and-authority-of-the-priesthood?lang=eng>)

45. If your leaders are correct about the complete falling away of the true church on earth, was Jesus in error when he said that the gates of hell would not prevail against it (Matthew 16:18)?



Jesus was not in error when he said that, nor will he ever be. That is a blasphemous thing even to suggest, even if you think someone has the wrong interpretation of scripture. You

are just misinterpreting the scripture. In order to understand this scripture, we need to know what each of the words mean from their respective Greek origins.

“And I say also unto thee, that thou art PETROS (a small stone, a seer stone) and upon this PETRA (stone of creation, the center of the world) I will build my church; and the gates of HADES (spirit world, or world of the dead) shall not prevail (remain closed or Hold in the Spirits) against it.” (Matthew 16:18-19)

Jesus, here, is speaking about the spirit world not remaining closed or holding the spirits in. In other words, he is talking about the resurrection and the redemption of those spirits which reside in Hell. He is not referencing the church in the physical world but the church in the spirit world. While the world was in a state of apostasy, the church lived on in the spirit world, where spirits were being taught the gospel and prepared for the day of restoration.

"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; Which sometime were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.” (1 Peter 3:18-20)

Christ preached and set up a missionary system in which the spirits who perished in Noah's flood would be given the opportunity to repent and except his divine gospel fully. And so we see that the gates of hell could not prevail against it. That rock, which is the stone of creation, upon which Christ built his church so that the spirits in hell would be set free. And so we perform baptisms for the dead (1 Corinthians 15:29) so that they too can be cleansed from sin. For it is written, “he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”(Mark 16:16) So how are they, the spirits in hell, to be baptized and saved unless we perform the ordinance in their name?

Some are under the impression that because we believe in a universal apostasy that we also believe that Christ failed his mission when he came to earth. However he did not fail his mission, he accomplished exactly what he set out to do. He accomplished the atonement by dying on the cross, he set up a missionary organization in the afterlife so that his church would continue into the after life, and he created a nation of believers in Christ despite the fact that the priesthood was mostly taken from the earth at the time of the apostasy.

There are many reasons to believe that the apostasy really did happen. For one, the entire New Testament is constantly telling of a day in which there will be an apostasy. The books in the New Testament were not written for us in the 21st century, they were written to those in the day of the apostles of old. They were written to those early members of the church in the 1st century, knowing this, there are many things which are better understood under this light. When Paul wrote to the Galatians, “I marvel that ye are so soon ^aremoved from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another ^bgospel: Which is not another; but there be some that ^atrouble you, and would ^bpervert the ^cgospel of Christ.” he was not talking about the gospel as preached by the Latter-Day Saints, he was talking about a foreign gospel which had existed then and entered into the early church which was perverting the ways of the Lord.

When Paul wrote his epistles, he was doing so in an effort to keep the doctrine clean and pure. In 67 AD, Paul wrote to Timothy that “perilous times” were coming (2 Timothy 3:1-5). He also said to Timothy, “This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be ^aturned away from me; of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes.” I can almost just see the tears which came from writing this as he seemed to know Phygellus and Hermogenes quite well. His epistle to the Romans is very telling; he wrote of homosexuality, fornication, murder, and immoralities of all kind. He was describing what he found about the Roman Christians and so counseled its members to avoid such perversions and repentance was called upon those who did participate. Indeed all the epistles of the New Testament show apostles struggling to keep people in the faith, to love God and all mankind. Jude talked about how the saints of his day should “contend for the faith “ for “certain men” were entering the fold to pervert the faith (Jude 1:3-4). In 2 Peter 2:1, Peter warns of “false prophets also among the people.” Indeed many of the apostles wrote of an apostasy which was already upon them. In the Book of Revelation, John chastised all but two of the seven churches’ in Asia, one of the righteous two would suffer great persecution (Revelation 2-3). On many occasions, the apostles use the phrase “last time” saying it is the last time in their day, last time of what? John wrote: “Little children, it is the *last time*: and as ye have heard that ^aantichrist shall come, even now are there many ^bantichrists; whereby we know that it is the *last time*. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would *no doubt* have continued with us: but *they went out*, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.” (1 John 2:18-19) And Jude wrote, “How that they

told you there should be *a*mockers in the *b*last time, who should *c*walk after their own ungodly lusts.” (Jude 1:18)

Paul in 1 Corinthians 15 describes a people who no longer believed in a physical resurrection of the body, so Paul took it upon himself to show them by letter that their faith was in vain if they did not believe in the physical resurrection. In 2 Thessalonians 2, we read about a people who were fearing that the second coming was just around the corner, and so Paul counseled them: “Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.”

The LDS New Testament Institute Student Manual reads:

"In order to calm the Saints' concern that the Lord had already returned, Paul explained that before the Second Coming there would be a “falling away first” (2 Thessalonians 2:3). “Falling away” is a translation of the Greek word *apostasia*, a word that is closer in meaning to “rebellion” or “mutiny.” Paul was therefore speaking of an intentional fight against the gospel of Jesus Christ rather than a gradual movement away from it. In the Book of Mormon, Nephi’s vision of the future taught him that “the house of Israel” joined with those in the great and spacious building “to fight against the twelve apostles of the Lamb” (1 Nephi 11:35). Apostasy is often not simply a passive letting go of truth but an active rebellion that originates within the covenant community.”

Near the end of his ministry, in what sounds like a last minute attempt to tell Timothy to be strong, Paul wrote: “I charge *thee* therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall *a*judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; *a*Preach the word; *b*be *c*instant in season, out of season; *d*reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they [the members of the church] *will not a*endure sound *b*doctrine; but after their own *c*lusts shall they heap to themselves *d*teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away *their* ears from the *a*truth, and shall be turned unto *b*fables. But *a*watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an *b*evangelist, *c*make full proof of thy ministry. For I am now

ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good *a*fight, I have *b*finished *my* course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a *a*crown of *b*righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous *c*judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yjlyUNAi7Oc&list=PL4A73DDEE675FBC39&index=102>)

Of this, Richard Anderson wrote, “ ‘Having itching ears’ describes the false teachers in this English translation, but in Greek the participle can only modify “they.” That is, Christian believers (the topic of Timothy’s instructions) will have fickle ears for new teachers that please them. The result is simply corruption of the Christian gospel:”

<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/ensign/1976/08/clement-ignatius-and-polycarp?lang=eng>)

Just look at the history of the Catholic church, the Lutherans have documented it well; it is the history of apostasy. The reformation would have never happened if Martin Luther, or someone like him, had never gained access to the Bible to read about doctrines which were not being taught by the Catholic church. Thank the printing press for that. In fact, Luther found many things within the Catholic church which were not in concurrent with the original church established by Christ in the New Testament. In particular, he did not like the teaching of the sale of indulgences, the teaching that a person could pay money to have sins removed. And so with that, Luther pinned his famous “95 things I hate about the Catholic church” to the doors of a cathedral. He caused such a stir that many more people, including John Calvin, recognized the fallacies which layed within the Catholic church and how distant it was from Christ’s original church and teachings as found in the New Testament. So many people decided to start their own churches in accordance with how they interpreted the Bible in a desperate attempt to get things back to the original church. The very word Protestant comes from the word protest; these churches were literally built up as a way to protest the Catholic church. Things got ugly from there as the Catholic church began rounding up protestants left and right and throwing them in jail. Bartholomew day was a day in which a group of Catholics in Paris went and slaughtered somewhere between 5000 and 30,000 Protestants. It is very clear to me that a Moses like figure, a prophet, was needed in the world to restore order.

From his book, *The Inevitable Apostasy and the Promised Restoration*, Tad R. Callister wrote:

“There is an old saying that no one has ever committed a perfect crime—there are always clues detectable by the observant and trained mind—and so it is with the apostasy. Satan's fingerprints are everywhere to be found. This does not mean, however, that the apostasy resulted in a complete absence of God-fearing men and women on the earth. Brigham Young explained:

“There have been people upon the earth all the time who sought diligently with all their hearts to know the ways of the Lord. Those individuals have produced good, inasmuch as they had the ability. And to believe that there has been no virtue, no truth, no good upon the earth for centuries, until the Lord revealed the Priesthood through Joseph the Prophet, I should say is wrong. There has been more or less virtue and righteousness upon the earth at all times, from the days of Adam until now.¹

"While there existed isolated goodness on the earth, there was not an organized, priesthood-centered church. Some of the evidences of this apostasy, as discussed in succeeding chapters, are as follows:

“First, the apostles were killed and revelation ceased, thus undermining the foundation of Christ's Church.

“Second, the scriptures are a historical witness that the apostasy was in progress and a prophetic witness that it would be consummated before Christ's second coming.

“Third, the Bible ended. If the Church had continued, revelation would have continued, and the Bible would have been an ongoing book.

“Fourth, the gifts of the Spirit were lost.

“Fifth, the dark ages became a historical fact, symbolizing that the light of Christ's gospel had been extinguished. If the Church had been on the earth and the predominant force in western civilization, those years would have been a period of light ages, not dark ages.

“Sixth, many teachings became perverted, some were lost, and new ones were invented.

“Seventh, many gospel ordinances were perverted, some were lost, and new ones were invented.

“Eighth, the simple mode of prayer was changed, which diluted man's efforts to communicate with God.

“Ninth, the scriptures were removed from the hands of the lay membership and retained solely in the hands of clergy, often in a language the common man could not understand.

“Tenth, the wickedness sanctioned by the ongoing church was so prolonged and so egregious that no spiritually minded person could believe that Christ's Church, if on the earth, would condone such behavior.

“Eleventh, there was a discernible decline in the moral standards and church discipline of the ongoing church.

“Twelfth, the church no longer bore Christ's name.

“Thirteenth, the priesthood was lost, and thus no one on the earth was authorized to perform the saving ordinances.

“The foregoing evidences—spiritual, intellectual, and historical in nature—while independent in their own right, also complement and supplement each other. When viewed as a whole and not as solitary threads, they weave a consistent and unmistakable pattern showing that Christ's Church was ultimately lost from the earth.”

Why 1820 for the restoration?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M5f98AHvqdY>

In this talk, Hyrum W Smith talks about how the apostasy was very real and how the restoration could have only happened under certain conditions. Although his references to Linus, the second bishop of Rome, are questionable, as he mentions there being two, he still makes some compelling arguments as to why the restoration could have only happened when it did.

The restoration required the printing press to make the bible more wide spread, it also required a well established nation which guaranteed freedom of religion. Many people flocked to America after Columbus had discovered it because of this deep need for a land of freedom of religion because they were mostly being oppressed in their home countries for wanting to worship God in different ways. The United States of America came about as a way to guarantee this freedom of religion as written in the constitution. The forefathers, this little ragtag group, fought against the great kingdom of Britain. By some miracle of God, the forefathers won the war, even though there was basically no way they should have prevailed. It is pretty pathetic when one remembers their greatest victory as being when they attacked a bunch of drunkards on Christmas day. Moral was low among many

soldiers, the revolution didn't much benefit women, and slaves would have benefited greatly if Britain had won. Britain was the most powerful military force in the world at that time, they seemed unbeatable, yet somehow those Americans won through mostly guerrilla tactics. What I want to know is why, why did God want the American Revolution to be victorious?

But then of course the war of 1812 happened in which Britain attempted to take them back, and here we won again. Only now was the stage properly set for a restoration, and so it did in 1820 when a young boy who drove the plow sought after God and saw Him in all His glory. And so, William Tyndale's words seemingly became prophecy when he said, "I will cause a boy who drives a plow to know more of the scriptures than the Pope."

Hyrum W Smith's main argument was that if Martin Luther, or anyone prior to 1776, had come out of a grove of trees and started talking about how God appeared to him and told him to restore the church to the earth then he would not have lasted very long to anything about it.

Many people recognized the apostasy in their time and so looked forward to a restoration of the true Church of Christ; such a man was Robert Mason. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jPWTYuPLD5M> Robert Mason desired to have prophets walk on the earth again that the lack of prophets in his day lead him to conclude that he was living in an apostasy. He latter had a vision in which he saw a tree, but when he went to partake of the fruit the vision closed. He was told that the Lord would soon raise up a church and prophets to lead and guide his people just in the biblical times, however he was also told that he would not live to partake of such fruit. His experiences inspired Wilford Woodruff to later join this church.

Dieter F. Uchtdorf told the story of another like man:

"From that day (the day of restoration) to this, millions of faith-filled sons and daughters of Heavenly Father have followed the promptings of the Holy Ghost and entered the sacred waters of baptism. One such man was Solomon Chamberlain.

"Solomon was a spiritual man and had spent many hours in prayer, seeking for the remission of his sins and pleading with Heavenly Father to lead him to the truth. Sometime around 1816, Solomon was promised in a vision that he would live to see the day when the

Church of Christ would be organized after the apostolic order was established once again on the earth.

“Years later Solomon was traveling by boat toward Canada when his vessel stopped in the small town of Palmyra, New York. There he felt a compelling force urging him to disembark. Not knowing why he was there, he began speaking with the townspeople. It wasn’t long before he heard talk of a “gold Bible.” He said those two words sent “a power like electricity [that] went from the top of my head to the end of my toes.”

“His inquiries led him to the Smith home, where he spoke with those present about the wonderful news of the restored gospel. After spending two days there and receiving a testimony of the truth, Solomon resumed his journey to Canada, taking with him 64 newly printed, unbound pages of the Book of Mormon. Everywhere he went, he taught the people, “both high and low, rich and poor, ... to prepare for the great work of God that was now about to come forth.”

<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/ensign/2010/04/a-great-work-of-god?lang=eng>

A major part of the apostasy was the Greek influence on Christianity:

“A large part of what are sometimes called Christian doctrines, and many usages which have prevailed and continue to prevail in the Christian Church, are in reality Greek theories and Greek usages changed in form and color by the influence of primitive Christianity, but in their essence Greek still.” (Edwin Hatch, The influence of Greek Ideas and Usages upon the Christian Church, p 350)

Elder Legrand Richards taught:

“I give you a statement from Harry Emerson Fosdick in which he said, “If Jesus should come back to earth now, hear the mythologies built up around him, see the credalisms, the denominationalism, sacramentalism, carried on in his name, he would certainly say, ‘If this is Christianity, I am not a Christian.’

“In Smith’s Bible Dictionary, written by seventy-three noted divines and Bible students, this statement is made that “one must not expect to find the gospel of Holy Writ upon the earth today. It is not to be found thus perfect in the total fragments of Christianity, and much less in any one fragment.”

“Roger Williams, pastor of the oldest Baptist Church in America, gave up his ministry with the statement that: “There is no regularly constituted church of Christ on earth, nor any person qualified to administer any church ordinances; nor can there be until new apostles are sent by the Great Head of the Church for whose coming I am seeking.” (Picturesque America, p. 502.)”

(<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/ensign/1973/01/strange-creeds-of-christendom?lang=eng>)

Elder Orson F. Whitney once shared an experience he had with a Roman Catholic:
“Many years ago a learned man, a member of the Roman Catholic Church, came to Utah and spoke from the stand of the Salt Lake Tabernacle. I became well-acquainted with him, and we conversed freely and frankly. A great scholar, with perhaps a dozen languages at his tongue’s end, he seemed to know all about theology, law, literature, science and philosophy. One day he said to me: ‘You Mormons are all ignoramuses. You don’t even know the strength of your own position. It is so strong that there is only one other tenable in the whole Christian world, and that is the position of the Catholic Church. The issue is between Catholicism and Mormonism. If we are right, you are wrong; if you are right, we are wrong; and that’s all there is to it. The Protestants haven’t a leg to stand on. For, if we are wrong, they are wrong with us, since they were a part of us and went out from us; while if we are right, they are apostates whom we cut off long ago. If we have the apostolic succession from St. Peter, as we claim, there is no need of Joseph Smith and Mormonism; but if we have not that succession, then such a man as Joseph Smith was necessary, and Mormonism’s attitude is the only consistent one. It is either the perpetuation of the gospel from ancient times, or the restoration of the gospel in latter days.’” (LeGrand Richards, *A Marvelous Work and a Wonder*[Deseret Book Co., 1950], pp. 3–4.)

And so this is the fact of the matter, the Church of Jesus Christ either continued through the Catholic Church or it was needed to be restored in these latter days in preparation of the second coming. If any person proved to me that my church is false then I would join the Catholic Church as being the only other option that could work. The protestants don’t have a leg to stand on.

Bishop Gerald Causse once told this interesting story at the April 2018 General Conference of the Church:

“While preparing for the construction of the magnificent Paris France Temple, I had an experience I will never forget. In 2010, when property for the temple was found, the city mayor asked to meet with us to know more about our Church. This meeting was a critical step in obtaining a building permit. We meticulously prepared a presentation that included several impressive pictures of Latter-day Saint temples. My most fervent hope was that their architectural beauty would persuade the mayor to support our project.

“To my surprise, the mayor indicated that rather than reviewing our presentation, he and his team preferred to conduct their own investigation to find out what kind of church we were. The following month, we were invited back to hear a report given by a city councilor who also happened to be a professor of religious history. She said, “Above all else, we wanted to understand who the members of your church are. First, we attended one of your sacrament meetings. We sat at the back of the chapel and carefully observed the people in the congregation and what they were doing. Then we met with your neighbors—those who live around your stake center—and we asked them what kind of people you Mormons are.”

““So what are your conclusions?” I asked, feeling a little bit of anxiety. She replied, “We discovered that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the closest to Jesus Christ’s original Church than any other church we know of.” I almost objected by saying, “That’s not completely accurate! It’s not the church that is closest; it is the Church of Jesus Christ—the same Church, the true Church!” But I restrained myself and instead offered a silent prayer of gratitude. The mayor then advised us that, based on their findings, he and his team had no objections to the construction of a temple in their community.”

The New Testament is the Blueprint of Christ’s Church:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=11&v=pHNGd3tn4v4

Lynn Wilder is correct when she says that we should read the holy scriptures as little children. We ought to be completely open to all possibilities and allow God to show us the way. Children, not that we are easily swayed, but that we should still consider all possibilities and then think as an adult on the many possibilities. Little children like how Christ said we should be like little children: “Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little “children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever

therefore shall ^ahumble himself as this little ^bchild, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.” (Matthew 18:3-4) We should be curious as a little child, humble as a little child. Like how her son challenged her to read the New Testament while he was on his mission, I also challenged my family to read the Bible while I was on my mission. Although my family never got through the Old Testament, at five chapters a day, I read through the entire KJV Bible within a year. I also frequently watched the Church’s Bible videos which depict the life of Jesus Christ and the apostles. I learned to love the Bible and everything that it talked about. After all of this, I am still convinced that it teaches everything that is taught in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints.

It is not just the Bible we need to read as a child but also the Book of Mormon. When I once knocked on a door, a Lutheran answered, we asked him if he would read the Book of Mormon. He answered back saying that we should read the Bible. I cannot how good it felt to declare to him that I had read the Bible and that he just needed to read the Book of Mormon.

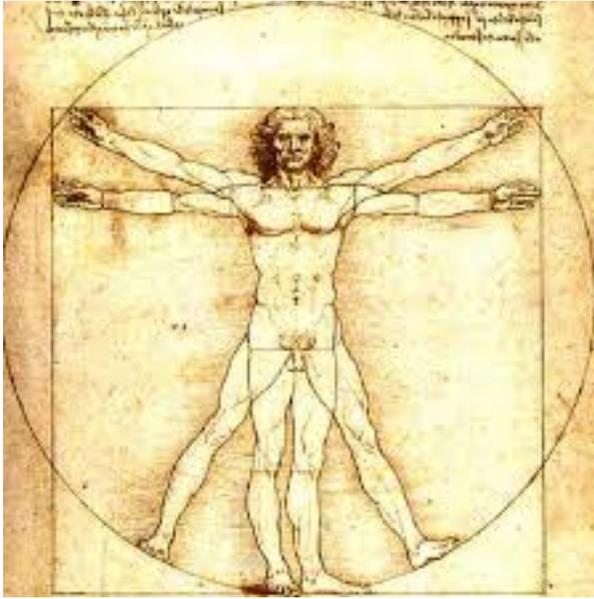
I do indeed think it possible that the New Testament of the Bible does indeed teach the true and everlasting gospel. In fact, I’m pretty sure it does. Usually it depends on how one interprets the New Testament and Bible as a whole, for it can be interpreted in a number of different ways to suit your needs. However our doctrine and practices go beyond just biblical scripture and can be proved using historical documents, science, philosophy, and psychology in addition to the Bible.

General

46. If having a physical body is necessary to become a god, how did Jesus become a god before he had a body?

According to the Book of Abraham, we were gods too before we had mortal bodies. (Book of Abraham 4 & 5) Having a physical body is not about deification but about obtaining a fullness of joy.

FairMormon gives this response:



“This is a valid question. Having a body is necessary for a fullness of joy (D&C 93:33). It was necessary that at some point Jesus receive a body, but the timeframe in which He did so is not particularly important. (To travel to another country, one needs both a passport and an airplane ticket. It doesn't matter in which order one gets the passport or the ticket, but one must eventually have both in order to reach one's destination.) If correct sequence is an absolutely requirement, then all Christians would need to explain how Christ's atonement could be efficacious to those who were born, lived, and died prior to His crucifixion. The fact that the atonement *was* effective should caution us against adopting an absolute requirement for sequence concerning Christ's receipt of a physical body.”

47. Do you think the LDS Church will reconsider its teachings that the American Indians are descendants of the Jewish race now that DNA evidence has proven that they are actually descendants of the Asian race?

No, possibly because we don't teach that the Nephites were Jews, being a Jew refers to being apart of the tribe of Judah and the Nephites were, instead, of the tribe of Joseph. So you will not find any Jewish blood in any Native American or a Nephite. We instead should be looking for Josephite DNA, or general Hebrew DNA since we don't know exactly what Josephite DNA looks like.

Those studies on Native American DNA have been out for quite some time now. I would think that if the Church was going to reconsider its teachings on the Native Americans, they would have already done so by now. Instead, they hold true to their original teachings. Even if we did find a good amount of Hebrew DNA in Native Americans, I doubt very much that you would change your mind on the subject.

DNA studies cannot be used to prove or disprove the Book of Mormon.

"Absence of evidence is not evidence of absence." There is evidence in the Book of Mormon that the Americas were not uninhabited when Nephi and crew arrived, the reason why the population grew so fast could be because they integrated with the other civilizations, such as with the Olmecs, Maya, or Aztec. (Although one indeed might wonder why the Book of Mormon never recognizes these ancient civilizations by name.) Eventually through all of the interbreeding the Hebrew DNA may have become so small as to be practically non-existent, despite there being little to no Hebrew DNA left in them, yet they still called themselves Lamanites (and Nephites). So it would make sense to me that the majority of Native Americans would have Asian DNA and only a small portion would carry very tiny amounts of Hebrew DNA.

Jim Bennet once made this comment:

“What’s important to realize is that science rarely, if ever, reaches a final answer. It is always open to new information, some of which it received in 2013 when a study determined that some Native Americans do, in fact, have Middle Eastern and European DNA. Another 2014 study found that “Cherokee Native Americans have Middle Eastern ancestry - ancestry that cannot be accounted for by modern admixture, but which is rooted in the ancient origins of the people.”

Indeed, a great deal of scientific information has come out about Native American origins since you first published your letter and the Church published its essay. The Journal of Nature conducted research which found that the conventional theory about an initial migration across a Bering Strait ice bridge is probably false. As reported in the LA Times, the journal Science discovered evidence of Australian and Micronesian ancestry in Native American DNA and concluded that “that founding migrations occurred in more than one wave.”

Certainly none of this proves the Book of Mormon - are Australian Nephites fair dinkum? - but it demonstrates that reaching a sweeping, final conclusion about Native American origins is, at this point, scientifically impossible.” (<https://canonizer.com/files/reply.pdf>)

Neal A. Maxwell taught:

“It is the author’s opinion that all the scriptures, including the Book of Mormon, will remain in the realm of faith. Science will not be able to prove or disprove holy writ.

However, enough plausible evidence will come forth to prevent scoffers from having a field day, but not enough to remove the requirement of faith. Believers must be patient during such unfolding.”

48. If polygamy was officially re-instituted by the Mormon Church, how would your wife feel about you taking another woman?



For my future wife and the other women of the church, and indeed the men also, their reaction to the restating of polygamy would be comparable to those of the early saints who viewed it as a great trial of faith.

Polygamy is perhaps the most difficult topic to discuss, inside and outside the Church. The Church’s essays on the subject don’t seem to have helped too much as MormonThink can attest to. For this reason the topic requires some reverence and a careful consideration on all points. Probably hundreds of books have been written in an attempt to answer this question. There are no easy answers. For the most part it all comes down to having faith in the Lord that all things will turn out alright in the end. However I am sure that such an answer is not satisfactory enough, and indeed many women who struggle with this issue

deserve a better answer than, “don’t worry 'bout it.” Dr. Valerie Hudson talks about how she once sat next to an apostle of the Church and ask him about the matter, to which he said that he had no idea how marriage in heaven was going to turn out.

There is a voice which whispers into the ears of every living person, “why do bad things happen to good people?” My response to that question is it is because the same reason we write stories about bad things happening to good people, because a story would be boring with nothing bad happening to the good characters. We all love a good story in which a main character has no choice but to face difficulty and over come it, we hate flat stories which feature no obstacles. Life itself would be boring without challenges and trials. There is that famous quote that says God gives His toughest trials to His toughest soldiers and I fully believe that.

But an even more pressing question asks, “Why does God command good people to do bad things?” Why did God command Abraham to kill his son or to commit to adultery with Hagar? This is the harder question and it is the same one that you are asking right now. It is the same question that atheists have been asking us Christians for centuries. This question is one which has prompted many atheists to become misotheists, that is they believe that if there is a god he must hate us and so we should hate him back. This is the Abraham dilemma, or what is known as an Abrahamic trial, this is what polygamy is, the commandment to commit adultery. An important thing to note is that in D&C 132 the Lord Himself makes this connection. He declares, “^aprepare thy heart to receive and ^bobey...” This revelation came as a result of Joseph Smith asking the Lord why he permitted Abraham and other Old Testament patriarchs to engage in the practice of plural marriage.

29 ^aAbraham received all things, whatsoever he received, by revelation and commandment, by my word, saith the Lord, and hath entered into his exaltation and sitteth upon his throne.

30 ^aAbraham received promises concerning his seed, and of the fruit of his loins—from whose ^bloins ye are, namely, my servant Joseph—which were to continue so long as they were in the world; and as touching Abraham and his seed, out of the world they should continue; both in the world and out of the world should they continue as innumerable as the ^cstars; or, if ye were to count the sand upon the seashore ye could not number them.

31 This promise is yours also, because ye are of ^aAbraham, and the promise was made unto Abraham; and by this law is the continuation of the works of my Father, wherein he glorifieth himself.

32 Go ye, therefore, and do the ^aworks of Abraham; enter ye into my law and ye shall be saved.

33 But if ye enter not into my law ye cannot receive the promise of my Father, which he made unto Abraham.

34 God ^acommanded Abraham, and Sarah gave ^bHagar to Abraham to wife. And why did she do it? Because this was the law; and from Hagar sprang many people. This, therefore, was fulfilling, among other things, the promises.

35 Was Abraham, therefore, under condemnation? Verily I say unto you, Nay; for I, the Lord, ^acommanded it.

36 Abraham was ^acommanded to offer his son Isaac; nevertheless, it was written: Thou shalt not ^bkill. Abraham, however, did not refuse, and it was accounted unto him for ^crighteousness.

37 Abraham received ^aconcubines, and they bore him children; and it was accounted unto him for righteousness, because they were given unto him, and he abode in my law; as Isaac also and ^bJacob did none other things than that which they were commanded; and because they did none other things than that which they were commanded, they have entered into their ^cexaltation, according to the promises, and sit upon thrones, and are not angels but are gods.

The Abrahamic trial primarily serves as an obedience test. “Go ye therefore and do the works of Abraham,” He declares. Let’s zoom in on verse 36, let’s take a look at that story. God commands Abraham to sacrifice Isaac, a son he had tried to obtain for almost 100 years and was given to him by Sarah who was long past her ability to bare children. That walk up the hill was the longest walk of his life, such a burden it was that God wanted him to kill his precious son. Tears could not be held back, I’m sure he struggled to hold everything in. He probably didn’t even tell Sarah what God had commanded him to do, he didn’t want her to share his pain.

At the top of the hill Abraham built an altar, when his son inquired of a ram or lamb for the sacrifice. His decrepit old father reached out to gaze into his son’s eyes for what he thought



would be the last time he would ever get to see that smile. It was written, “thou shalt not kill,” but kill it was that Abraham was commanded to do. Those words were unsettling to say but say them he did, “my son you are the sacrifice, the Lord has commanded it.” This was as much a test of obedience for Isaac as it was for Abraham. Isaac willingly lay down on the alter and prepared to have his life shed for his obedience. Abraham’s pain was even worse as he was then struck with the realization that he had become like unto his father who also sought to sacrifice his son on an alter

(Abraham 1). His father sought to take his life on behalf of fake idol gods, and now he was about to sacrifice his own son for the sake of the one true God. He remembered the horror he had felt when he saw that idolatrous priest raise up the knife as he currently raised up his own knife to slay his son. But then a voice spoke out from heaven commanding him to stop, the blade fell from Abraham’s hands to the ground and he was reminded that as he himself was about to be sacrificed to idolatrous gods that an angel saved him and God spoke to him. He knew then that he would not be cast into a furnace, and now he knew that he didn’t have to cast his son Isaac into a furnace either. His joy was grand after his sorrow was so low. He grind ear to ear and helped his son off of the alter.

As they were about to depart they heard rustling and found a ram stuck in a thicket and they knew to sacrifice it to God. The lesson here is that where there is an Abrahamic trial there will also be a ram in the thicket, there will be a way out of the pain whether this is comfort in the trial or a ceasing before the trial comes to its conclusion. The lesson being that even in the harshest of trials, obedience always brings joy. And it is a great

strengthening of free will when asked to do something contrary to what you would normally do.

And so the Lord compared the commandment of polygamy to the sacrifice of Isaac, and like the sacrifice of Isaac we should be looking for a ram caught in the thicket.

“I don’t remember when I first learned that Joseph Smith practiced polygamy, but my knowledge of it expanded uncomfortably after reading Brian Hales’ overly comprehensive, 1500-page treatise on the topic. What I learned on those pages was informative, but also at times discomfoting, disappointing, and even shocking. There were clandestine marriages, pretend husbands, young brides, already married brides, altogether too many brides, Abrahamic-like tests, and surprising interactions between Joseph, Emma, and his plural wives, coupled with a doctrine that I struggled to understand.

“As I grieved the loss of the Prophet Joseph I thought I had known, I embarked on a quest to not only answer lingering questions but also attempt to develop sympathy and respect for the characters in a drama played out nearly 175 years ago. Perhaps as I share a few things I have learned, you, too, will be able to gain better understanding and maybe even feel a little more empathy—for those early Saints who practiced “the principle” and for those who anguish over it today.

“It is plausible the Prophet married up to thirty-six women. Descriptions of these marriages have been the subject of dozens of books, scores of scholarly articles, and more than one master’s thesis. The most popular theory promoted for this string of marriages is a zest for unfettered sexual conquest, but that doesn’t hold up under careful scrutiny any more than another popular theory that Joseph only acted because of repeated prodding from an increasingly frustrated angel. Discarding completely the merits of either of these opposing theories might lead to error. What I propose is probably something in between.

“While doing research for his landmark article “Plural Marriage,” published in 1887, independent historian Andrew Jenson interviewed Eliza Snow, who wrote the name Fanny Alger on a list of Joseph’s plural wives. Fanny is widely considered to have been Joseph’s first plural wife. Of this union, Benjamin F. Johnson, one of Joseph’s good friends, wrote: [I]t was whispered among the residents of Kirtland that Joseph loved Fanny.” The thought that Joseph Smith, the Prophet of the Restoration, would love any other woman but his legal wife Emma may be uncomfortable to think about, but it is likely he did.

“Lucy Walker, another of Joseph’s plural wives, said on one occasion that Joseph told her: “Men did not take polygamous wives because they loved them or fancied them or because they were voluptuous, but because it was a command of God.” Another time she mentioned that Joseph “often referred to the feelings that should exist between husband and wives, that they, his wives, should be his bosom companions, the nearest and dearest objects on earth in every sense of the word.” Though plural marriages may not have been initiated for carnal reasons, after the nuptials, there was every expectation a plural marriage for time and eternity would eventually contain the same elements of affection as that of a monogamous marriage.

“For some, it might be more comforting to see Joseph marrying mostly widows and spinsters or stepping up to the plate because of a supposed shortage of marriageable males in Nauvoo, but that is not what happened. The creative marital dynamics Joseph engaged in, left unexplained, appear odd to most, even with favorable historical gap-filling. While eternity-only sealings to civilly married women with non-member husbands may be more understandable, similar sealings to women with active husbands may always defy explanation. Time-and-eternity unions to five women of prime marrying age, who had come to live with the Smith family in the Mansion, has caused some to cry foul, despite the lack of any accusations of coercion from the women. And the Prophet instructing trusted associates such as Joseph Kingsbury that a man “had the privilege of having more than one wife . . . if he was considered worthy,” somehow does not make one feel better about the thirty-five wives. Though we know Joseph was not infallible, we may naively expect him to always have behaved with wisdom beyond his years, knowledge beyond his education, and social enlightenment beyond his time — lofty accomplishments even for a prophet.

“Regarding one plural marriage, though, further context may quiet an often-repeated criticism. Joseph married Helen Mar Kimball, his youngest bride, “several months before her 15th birthday,” which means she was fourteen. One morning in May of 1843, Helen’s father, Heber C. Kimball, who was preparing to leave for a mission to the East, casually asked Helen “if she would believe him if he told [her] that it was right for married men to take other wives.” Helen’s first impulse was anger as she thought her father was testing her virtue. She replied “*emphatically, No. I wouldn’t!*” Her reaction seemed to please her father, but then he started talking seriously and explained to her the principle of plural marriage, and why it was again to be established upon the earth, but he did not tell her

then “that anyone had yet practiced it, but left [her] to reflect upon it for the next twenty-four hours.”

“In her writings, Helen shared some of the thoughts she had that night. Mostly they centered on her repugnancy for the doctrine in contrast to her belief that her father “loved her too well to teach [her] anything that was not strictly pure, virtuous and exalting in its tendencies.” The next day she was taught the principle by the Prophet and was sealed to him for time and eternity. Helen mentioned that the sole reason she accepted the marriage proposal was *because of her father’s teachings, who loved the Prophet and wished to bind his family to Joseph’s for eternity.*

“In a letter composed for her children late in life, Helen speaks of her youthful marriage in an often quoted poem. Her words mention thoughts that this union was for “eternity alone,” sadness at being “bar’d out from social scenes,” and feeling like a “fettered bird.” She also shares that she did “brood and imagine *future* woes.” Less frequently quoted is a line in the middle of the poem where she speaks to the young Helen and gives her counsel: “But could’st thou see the future & view that glorious crown, Awaiting you in Heaven you would not weep nor mourn.” Those don’t sound like the words of a mature woman crying victimhood but rather those of one documenting spiritual growth over time.

“In February 1846, following the Prophet’s death, Helen was sealed for time to Horace Whitney in the Nauvoo temple. After the death of her second child in as many years, Helen fell into a deep depression, lamenting she “hated polygamy” because of the trials she had seen her *mother* go through. Helen had been sealed to Joseph Smith in 1843, but there is no evidence that the marriage was consummated, though it could have been as it had been performed with her agreement and the permission of her parents. Her sealing to Joseph Smith appears to have been more similar to a betrothal than a marriage.

“In time, Helen would gain a testimony of the “principle” and not only give two plural wives to her husband Horace but also write much in defense of polygamy and the Prophet Joseph Smith’s teachings on the topic. She respected and loved her father and didn’t resent the things he taught or asked of her. While we may not understand Heber’s desire to bind his family to Joseph’s through the marriage of his young daughter, let’s be careful not to exaggerate this episode into something it was not. Helen was not “underage” according to legal codes or social mores and brokering of marriages in the nineteenth century was not that unusual.”

(<https://www.fairmormon.org/conference/august-2015/joseph-smiths-polygamy-toward-a-better-understanding>)

For Severus Snape, his Abrahamic trial was killing Dumbledore, something he did not want to do but knew it must be done. Abrahamic trials are a rarity and only go to those who can carry out the task with a humility of heart. Those who were asked to do polygamy were mainly those who had no interest in the practice and it was something that was very hard for them.

We continue: “The revelation now known as D&C 132 was recorded for the benefit of Emma Smith. In 1842, Joseph, who up to that time had been the sole male participant in plural marriages, began authorizing and encouraging the practice among trusted associates and the twelve apostles. Counterintuitively, his confidants did not include members of his first presidency, his brother Hyrum, or his legal wife Emma. Somehow the secret was kept despite rumors. It is hard to imagine Emma, so upset by the Fanny Alger incident in Kirtland, not having at least a suspicion, but the human mind is an interesting thing. It is often loath to follow the breadcrumbs when it is not capable of accepting where they may lead.

“We don’t know when Joseph told Emma about his plural wives. He may have done it in stages: first introducing the concept of eternity-only sealings and later revealing sealings that included marriage for time and eternity. By May of 1843, Emma was, at least temporarily, on board with the prospect, participating in the unions of the Partridge and Lawrence sisters to Joseph. Soon thereafter, she changed her mind, and what ensued was the most difficult period in Joseph and Emma’s marriage, with divorce, after having passed through so much together, becoming a serious possibility.

“William Clayton recounted that he wrote “the revelation on Celestial marriage given through the Prophet Joseph Smith on the 12th day of July 1843. When the revelation was written there was no one present except the prophet Joseph, his brother Hyrum and myself. . . . It took some three hours to write it. Joseph dictated sentence by sentence. . . . After the whole was written Joseph requested me to read it slowly and carefully which I did, and he then pronounced it correct.”

“From William Clayton’s journal, we learn what happened next:

“After it was wrote Presidents Joseph and Hyrum presented it and read it to E[mma] who said she did not believe a word of it and appeared very rebellious. Joseph told me to Deed all the unencumbered lots to E[mma]. And the children. He appears much troubled about E[mma].”

And so it is important to note that those who did not struggle with the commandment and who would misuse the practice of polygamy were not allowed to practice, such as Joseph Smith’s younger brother William. John C. Bennet was excommunicated for misusing the practice in what he called spiritual wifery, in which he would approach many women and told them that Joseph sanctioned them having secret sexual relations. But of course such a thing was a lie. (<https://www.fairmormon.org/blog/2009/06/18/john-c-bennett-and-dc-12416-17>)

Elder Neal A. Maxwell taught: “If we are serious about our discipleship, Jesus will eventually request each of us to do those very things which are the most difficult for us to do.” Thus, “sometimes the best people have the worst experiences because they are the most ready to learn.” (N. A. Maxwell, Choose, p. 46.)

“Many of us will say that we do not have that kind of faith,” observed Truman G. Madsen. But “I submit to you that you do not have that kind of faith until you pass that test.” (T. G. Madsen, Power.)

The Interpreter Foundation wrote:

“Abraham knew God’s voice through long experience. His faith in God’s covenants was sure, knowing that “Jehovah could raise his son from the dead if necessary in order to fulfill the promise” of posterity through Isaac. Once God had spoken, there were no long, agonizing soliloquies, no impassioned protests, no doleful mournings in anticipation of his presumed loss. “He who was so daringly eloquent on behalf of the people of Sodom surrender[ed] in total silence to his own bitter personal destiny.” The only hint of a temporary loss of composure is in the confused sequence of preparations that commenced early the next morning.

“What can we learn from Abraham’s response? That the sign of absolute faith is not found in the gross sequence of motions that outwardly proclaim obedience, but in the subtleties of a perfect inner grace that accompanies their performance, an authentic, loving response to

a divine call whose flawless pose is unappreciated by ordinary observers but not unseen by God.



“The great Danish Christian philosopher Soren Kierkegaard (1814-1855) compared Abraham’s “leap by faith” to the leap of a skilled ballet dancer. He wrote: “[I]t is supposed to be the most difficult feat for a ballet dancer to leap into a specific posture in such a way that he never once strains for the posture but in the very leap assumes the posture. Perhaps there is no ballet dancer who can do it — but [Abraham] does it.”

“We of lesser faith “are unable to assume the posture immediately, [we] waver for a moment,” and this wavering proclaims the imperfection of our posture. On the other hand, the perfectly executed leap is not one of “bravura or virtuoso display,” but rather “a refined, technically demanding kind of dance; one that capture[s] a sense of lightness and the ethereal.” When a call for faith comes to someone like Abraham, the response is reflexive. There is no pause for preparation, no need to muster courage and strength, but only what seems to be an immediate, effortless bridging of the chasm of earth and heaven, a flying embrace of divine futurity, with no looking back.”

For more information on the topic listen to this Q&A with Dr. Valery Hudson:

([https://www.youtube.com/watch?](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lleu2PMguDM&list=LLKJIwjeGO3jyJKiuU_mzDUg&index=2&t=0s)

[v=Lleu2PMguDM&list=LLKJIwjeGO3jyJKiuU_mzDUg&index=2&t=0s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lleu2PMguDM&list=LLKJIwjeGO3jyJKiuU_mzDUg&index=2&t=0s))

Or this article by the Interpreter Foundation:

(<https://interpreterfoundation.org/knowhy-otl09a-must-every-disciple-make-an-abrahamic-sacrifice/>)

And so the question becomes, did Joseph Smith initiate polygamy as an Abrahamic Trial of Faith or because he was lustful and desired to sleep around? This is for you to decide.

I think it appropriate to say that God is no polygamous, as history has shown that he has only one wife. No historical document coming out of the middle east mentions Him having more than one wife, it is only Ashera and Her other names.

When it comes to Church history, I have demonstrated already that the Seer was immediately disavowed upon publication and also that the Journal of Discourses is unreliable at times. But let's take a look at that JD quote anyway:

“When our father Adam came into the garden of Eden, he came into it with a celestial body, and brought Eve, one of his wives, with him. He helped to make and organize this world.” (Brigham Young, Journal of Discourses, Vol. 1, pg. 50)

In order to interpret this quote as saying that God has more than one wife, one needs to employ the Adam/God hypothesis. But one can also interpret it as just referring to Adam himself, the first man. It makes more sense that this quote is referring to just Adam the man instead of Adam as God as it mentions that he only “helped” organize the world. If it was God the Father then I would think that Brigham would skip the word and just go straight to saying, “he made and organized this world.”

So, why does Brigham say that Adam the man has more than one wife? Well you got me there. I have no idea. The scriptures clearly indicate that Adam was not married when he first entered the garden, they say that he was instead “alone”, that is to say “single.” And it is “not good that the man should be alone”, that is to say it is “not good for the man to be single.” (Genesis 2:18) So Adam was indeed single when he first entered the garden, and Eve is his one and only wife.

Some have suggested that God must have multiple wives in order to produce as many spirit children as He has. Not only have the prophets never told us how exactly a physical being could produce spirit children (or how such a thing could be possible), but also these people seem to forget that both the Father and Mother are immortal and have existed more than many googolplex years and beyond as exalted beingd. So even if they produced one child once every one million years they would still have trillions of children.

You may also bring up quotes by some early apostles which seem to suggest that the only way to be exalted is to be a polygamous, this would lead one to conclude that therefore God must be a polygamous for He is exalted.

Let us examine these quotes, Brigham Young taught: "The only men who become Gods, even the sons of God, are those who enter into polygamy" (Brigham Young, Journal of Discourses 11:269.) This quote alone would suggest that Brigham is saying exactly what it says, that we cannot be exalted without the practice of polygamy. But a closer look at the sermon as a whole would suggest that the term "polygamy" here is meant as more metaphorical than literal as he also teaches in the same sermon, "if you desire with all your hearts to obtain the blessings which Abraham obtained, you will be polygamists *at least in your faith.*" The sermon also seems to suggest that Brigham is teaching the concept that the commandment to practice polygamy is the order of God and we should not seek to abolish any commandment from God (unless of course God abolishes it Himself). It is also helpful to note the context of the sermon as being directed towards those who were already practicing polygamy and not to the church as a whole. If it was to the church as a whole then I would think that Brigham would be striving for 100% of the church to be practicing polygamy but he makes no such effort. According to Wilford Woodruff: "President Young said there would be men saved in the Celestial Kingdom of God with one wife with Many wives & with No wife at all" (Wilford Woodruff, *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 9 vols., ed., Scott G. Kenny (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1985), 6:527 (journal entry dated 12 February 1870). ISBN 0941214133.) Now of course, in order to be properly exalted a man would need a wife, but in order to just be in the Celestial Kingdom you don't need to be married. George Q. Cannon "believed there would be men in the Celestial Kingdom that had but one wife." (Hales, *Joseph Smith's Polygamy* Vol. 3, 208., citing Wilford Woodruff, *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 9 vols., ed., Scott G. Kenny (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1985), 8:235 (journal entry dated 9 March 1884). ISBN 0941214133. and John Henry Smith as cited in John P. Hatch, editor, *Danish Apostle: The Diaries of Anthon H. Lund, 1890–1921* (10 January 1900), 72.)

Another thing to get out of the way is the fact that Joseph Smith produced zero children with any of his plural wives. There have been some rumors however the sketchiness of the accounts and added DNA studies suggest the opposite. Indeed those who where rumored to

be children of Joseph by plural wives had their DNA tested and the results are clear that there were no matches. Indeed there is absolutely no evidence of Joseph fathering any children by his plural wives, there is only some vague stories which have many holes in them.

Now of course there is the slight possibility that Joseph did indeed father children of plural wives, but the fact is that there is no concrete evidence to suggest such a thing. This begs the question of why Joseph started up polygamy to begin with. It throws a wrench into some people's claims that Joseph Smith started up the Old Testament practice of polygamy as an excuse to sleep with as many women as possible because he was horny. Not only does no historical document even come close to suggesting that the man was at all horny, but also the fact that there is no evidence that he had children by plural wives seems to indicate that he slept with none of his wives except with Emma only by whom he clearly did have children. Birth control was not then as it is now. Surely by the number of plural wives he had we should be able to correctly identify plainly with DNA that he had children by them, but there is none to be found.

(<https://www.fairmormon.org/answers/>

Question: Did Joseph Smith produce any children by his plural wives%3F The case against children#cite note-12)

It is completely obvious that Joseph Smith did not handle polygamy very well. While it seems he treated his plural wives very well and didn't force himself on any one (only that they should pray and receive confirmation on the commandment of polygamy). He struggled with it until an angel with a sword came down and told him to initiate the practice. Emma may have struggled with it a little bit more so. Joseph should have been completely honest and open about the subject with his wife. When it comes to Joseph and polyandry, it seems strange to me that none of the husbands of these women openly opposed the practice, this is a manner which needs further investigation.

On the bright side, we find that there is a greater chance for a woman as opposed to a man to be exalted because of the practice. Some women even so today do not wish to share a husband with another woman and would rather have him to herself. Some women look at President Nelson who, after his first wife died he married another, and so would be in the

eternities a polygamous in heaven. If any woman fears that her husband will marry another if she dies first then she should sit down and talk with him about it.

While I was serving a mission in Philadelphia (and other places in Pennsylvania and New Jersey) I would see a recurring trend of one spouse being faithful and the other spouse not being so. Most often I found these split couples to be of a faithful wife who went to church and an unfaithful husband who was not going to church or wasn't even a member. I can't quite recall a split couple where the faithful one was the husband. I began to fear that the husbands unfaithfulness would leave his wife single in the eternities. I would think, "how selfish of you. How cruel. Do you not love your wife enough to want to be with her for all eternity." The mission was three years ago as of this writing, however I only just recently came across this scripture which gave me comfort about the manner: "For

the ^aunbelieving ^bhusband is ^csanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; else were your children unclean, but now are they holy." (D&C 74:1)

I had read through all of the church's standard works while on the mission so why had I missed this verse. It is now made clear to me that spouses are sanctified by the one's faithfulness. So long as the couple remains a couple then the spouse will eventually repent and continue with the faithful spouse. (I think we could likewise look at this as also working for the faithful child to the unfaithful parent or the believing sibling to the unbelieving sibling). We can also infer from this that as long as a person remains worthy to be sealed and desires it desperately then that person shall be sealed to a favorable spouse, we have but to hold out on hope in the meanwhile.

Dr. Valery Hudson, in her FairMormon q&a, brings up the idea of sealing transfers in which one person can transfer to another spouse if this will make the individual a more joyous person. That person has but to remain faithful to the Lord and so it shall be but it must be done before the resurrection and can only be done by proxy in the temple if the individual is dead.

49. Since the LDS Church teaches that there was a complete apostasy of the true church on earth, does that mean that the 3 living Nephites and the Apostle John went into apostasy also?

Are you serious? I don't know if you're making a joke here or not. Are you trolling me? No, of course not, they never apostatized. Why would anyone think that? You'd have to be pulling a very large rabbit out of a pretty tiny hat to assume such a ridiculous thing.



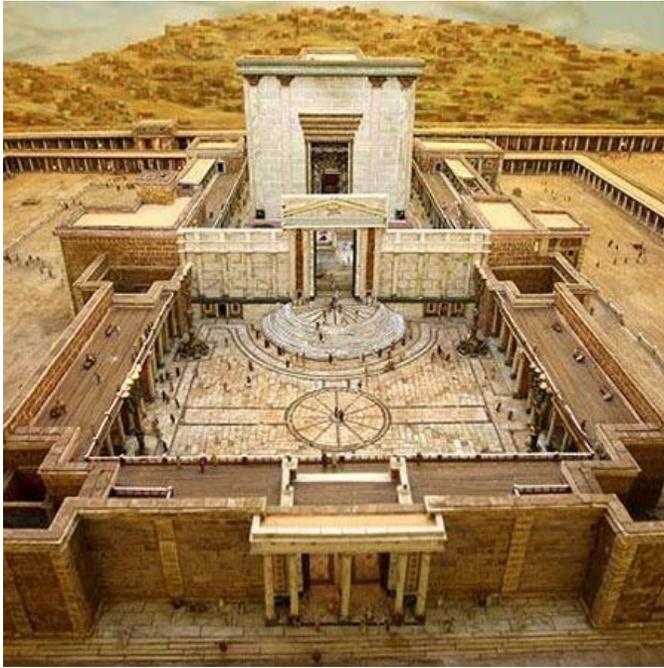
They remained true and faithful even to this day. While the world was in a state of apostasy, they were not. John and the three Nephites were helping to prepare the world for the day of restitution of all things. (Acts 3:21)

Note that just because we say there was a great apostasy, we do not mean that there were absolutely no righteous people on the earth during the dark ages. By apostasy we mean that there was no formal organization on the earth which was organized by the priesthood. Elder Boyd K. Packer taught:

“The line of Priesthood authority was broken. But mankind was not left in total darkness or completely without revelation or inspiration.”

50. Why are Mormon Temple ceremonies secret to the public when the Old Testament temple ceremonies were open to public knowledge?

What is your evidence that Old Testament temple ceremonies were completely open to the public? The temple is holy and so we prefer to keep it that way. The temple is meant to stand apart from the world, if we just threw open the doors to let everyone in before they were properly prepared to receive those ordinances then the temple would just become like any other building. We have to keep these things sacred by keeping it apart from the world,



we do that by not allowing it to become just any building that any random person can just wander into.

Let's look at the Blueprint to see if secrets were a thing or not among early Christianity. The Gospels tell of 53 parables which Jesus gave, we are given the interpretation of only three of them. The *Apocryphon of James* notes that the rest of the interpretations were given behind closed doors to a small group of believers.

“9 And he said unto them, He that

hath ears to hear, let him hear. 10 And when he was *a*alone, they that were about him with the twelve asked of him the parable. 11 And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the *a*mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all *these* things are done in *b*parables: 12 That seeing they may see, and not *a*perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and *their* sins should be *b*forgiven them.” (Mark 4)

“9 Who hath ears to hear, let him hear. 10 And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in *a*parables? 11 He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the *a*mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. 12 *a*For whosoever hath, to him shall be *b*given, and he shall have more *c*abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath. 13 Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. 14 And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall *a*hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: 15 For this people's *a*heart is waxed gross, and *their* ears are dull of hearing, and their *b*eyes they have *c*closed; lest at any time they should see with *their* eyes, and hear with *their* ears, and should understand with *their* heart, and should be converted, and I

should ^dheal them. **16** But blessed *are* your ^aeyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear. **17** For verily I say unto you, That many ^aprophets and righteous *men* have desired to see *those things* which ye see, and have not seen *them*; and to hear *those things* which ye hear, and have not heard *them*.” (Matthew 13)

According to Near Eastern scholar Dr. William Hamblin, many non-LDS scholars “believe that they can establish that the canonical Gospel of Mark was literally dependent on, and therefore written after, the Secret Gospel of Mark.”

(William J. Hamblin, “Aspects of an Early Christian Initiation Ritual,” *By Study and Also By Faith*, 2 vols., eds., John M. Lundquist and Stephen D. Ricks (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book; Provo: FARMS, 1990), 1:206)

Clement of Alexandria wrote:

“Mark during Peter’s stay in Rome wrote down the acts of the Lord, nevertheless not telling all, nor even hinting at the sacred ones, but selecting those which he thought most useful for the growth of the investigator’s faith. When Peter was martyred, Mark came to Alexandria; polishing both his own and Peter’s notes, from which by transferring into his first book those things appropriate for those progressing in the testimony. ... In no way, however, did he betray those things not discussed, nor did he write down the initiatory teaching of the Lord. ... And when he died he left his compilation at the church which is in Alexandria, where it is kept very safe and secure to this day, being read only to those who are initiated into the great mysteries.”

(Gee, “The Corruption of Scripture in the Scripture in the Second Century.”)

Another scripture concerning temples that people often bring up is Acts 17:24, “God ... ^bdwelleth not in temples made with hands.” So when some people read this they take it to mean that temples are not necessary. However, with context, Paul is instead speaking about how we do not find God exclusively in temples but we can worship Him wherever we are in any place and at any given time.

President Nelson taught:

“Now let’s turn to the topic of temples. We know that our time in the temple is crucial to our salvation and exaltation and to that of our families.

“After we receive our own temple ordinances and make sacred covenants with God, each one of us needs the ongoing spiritual strengthening and tutoring that is possible *only* in the house of the Lord. And our ancestors need us to serve as proxy for them.

“Consider the great mercy and fairness of God, who, before the foundation of the world, provided a way to give temple blessings to those who died without a knowledge of the gospel. These sacred temple rites are ancient. To me that antiquity is thrilling and another evidence of their authenticity.²

“My dear brothers and sisters, the assaults of the adversary are increasing exponentially, in intensity and in variety.³ Our need to be in the temple on a regular basis has never been greater. I plead with you to take a prayerful look at how you spend your time. Invest time in your future and in that of your family. If you have reasonable access to a temple, I urge you to find a way to make an appointment regularly with the Lord—to be in His holy house—then keep that appointment with exactness and joy. I promise you that the Lord will bring the miracles He knows you need as you make sacrifices to serve and worship in His temples.”

<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2018/10/becoming-exemplary-latter-day-saints?lang=eng>

“The Garden of Eden account (Gen 2-3) is composed of several powerful symbols ... directly connected to Israelite sanctuaries (including the Mosaic Tabernacle and Solomon’s Temple), such as the tree of life, cherubim, sacred waters, sacred vestments, Eden’s eastward orientation, and divine revelation.”

(Richard Draper and Donald Parry, “Sever Promises to Those Who Overcome: Aspects of Genesis 2-3 in the Seven Letter” (1999), p121)

“From antiquity..., certain stories have been ... retold as a means of teaching people about their own history and their personal relationship with God. ...Chief among these narratives ...are the Creation and the Fall.

“We know of a number of liturgical contexts in which the Creation drama was acted out as a teaching device...

“Temple scholar and symbolist, Margret Barker, suggested that the story of the Fall was commonly enacted in ancient temple rites. Though it is hard to say what role the Fall

played ...in Solomon's Temple, she notes "the walls of both the inner and outer rooms were decorated 'with carved figures of cherubim and palm trees... (1 Kin 6:29)... representing the Garden of Eden. Thus in some way that sacred story apparently played a role in rites or rituals of that holy edifice.'

(Alonzo Gaskill, Sacred Symbols (2018), Narrative in Ritual)

In her essay "Solomon's Temple Compared to the Salt Lake Temple," Ann N. Madsen makes the following comparisons:

- As we consider Solomon's Temple, we are surrounded by symbols. The decor in the large room called the Holy Place of that temple is comparable to the garden rooms in our modern temples, decorated with trees, flowers, and fruits, but there they are all of gold.
- The temples of this day move through several more rooms to accommodate the additional ordinances that were yet to be revealed in this dispensation of the fullness of times. Consider the progression through these rooms, ending in a room above the rest representing the celestial kingdom.
- The celestial rooms in modern temples and the Holy of Holies in ancient temples both symbolize the presence of God.
- The lack of a one-to-one correlation of rooms in the temple of Solomon when compared to the Salt Lake Temple shows the distinctly different functions of the two buildings. Most strikingly, perhaps, there is no killing of animals to be sacrificed on an alter outside the Salt Lake Temple.

From Cyril's Lectures, 19-22 (given 348 or 350), we read further how much modern LDS temples are like the ancient temples:

"As soon, then, as you entered, you put off your tunic; and this was an image of putting off the old man with his deeds. Having stripped yourselves, you were naked; in this also imitating Christ, who was stripped naked on the cross, for truly ye bore the likeness of the first-formed Adam, who was naked in the garden, and was not ashamed.

"Then... you were anointed with exorcised oil, from the very hairs of your head to your feet, and were made partakers of the good olive-tree, Jesus Christ. ...And you were first

anointed on the forehead, that you might be delivered from the shame, ...and that with unveiled face ye might reflect as a mirror the glory of the Lord 2 Cor. 3:18

Then on your ears; that you might receive the ears which are quick to hear the Divine Mysteries, of which Esaias said, The Lord gave me also an ear to hear Isaiah 50:4;... Then on the nostrils; that receiving the sacred ointment ye may say, We are to God a sweet savor of Christ, in them that are saved. 2 Corinthians 2:15

“Afterwards on your breast; that having put on the breast-plate of righteousness, you may stand against the wiles of the devil. Philippians 4:13.”

“In Christian art the garment and the robe were marked with signs at right angles, the gamma or square. The marks had some religious significance or symbolic force.”

(Erwin R. Goodenough, Jewish Symbols the Greco-Roman Period 13 vols. (New York: Pantheon Books 1953), 9:164)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8u0l13wX57E&t=544s>

Blake Ostler notes that according to Near Eastern traditions:

“In order for the soul to return to the presence of God, certain ordinances are necessary. Among these ordinances are baptism, washings, anointings, special garments, and signs as seals and passwords to pass by the angels who guard the gate to God’s kingdom. In some accounts, one must be married in the Holy of Holies of the temple in order to obtain the highest of three degrees of glory. Thus, the plurality of the heavens is among the most universal of ancient doctrines, with special glories represented by the moon, stars, and sun. Those who could not receive all the necessary ordinances regarding the ... required knowledge in this life, could receive them beyond the grave.” (Ibid)

For some further research:

<https://www.patheos.com/blogs/anxiousbench/2015/01/why-mormons-love-margaret-barker/>

- Baptisms for the dead - 1 Corinthians 15:29, 2 Chronicles 4:2-15, Jer. 52:17 & 20, 1 Peter 4:6, Heb. 11:40**

- Temple baptismal fonts on 12 oxen - 1 Kings 7:22-25, Chron. 4:2, Jer. 52:20
- Washing - 2 Chronicles 4:6
- Temple veil – Matthew 27:51
- Anointings - Matthew 6:17, Exodus 28:41
- Eternal marriage and relationship sealings (problem and solution) - Mark 12:18-25 and Matthew 16:13-19
- Sealings by the Holy Spirit of Promise - Ephesians 1:13
- Endowment: Christ shows his apostles "many signs" after resurrection (but intentionally left out of the Bible due to their sacred nature) - John 20:30
- Adam's prayer (at alter he built) - Psalms 54:2
- Women veiled during temple prayer – 1 Cor. 11:5-6

During the early period of my two LDS mission, I was in my second area in a little town called West Chester. Here I met a man who was 40 years a devout atheist since birth, who refused to believe in any higher power. One day he took a business trip to Salt Lake City. He was walking around when he saw a magnificent building which had the appearance of a castle, he gawked at the white castle for what may have been 10 minutes and then knew there was a God. Paul famously wrote that faith is “the evidence of things not seen.” (Hebrews 11:1) And so it is that our modern day temples stand as our evidence of faith which is our evidence of things not seen. Our devotion and faith in God caused us to build a magnificent structure which took over 40 years. Its foundation had to be buried to hide it from the US government militia and then dug back up again. We replaced any damages which happened and carried on. And a man would limp a marathon on a wooden leg each week for year after year until his death just so he could carve the words “Holiness to the Lord.” (<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/media-library/video/2010-07-140-only-a-stonecutter?category=feature-films&lang=eng>) These stories were so inspirational that 70 young women decided to wake up early in the morning to make such a walk to the Temple. (<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/youth/article/temple-walk-challenge?lang=eng>)

Section 3: Captain Moroni. the Captain America of the Book of Mormon

Recently I have found that when I speak allowed words of prayer, I feel great power coming upon me, more so than when I say a silent prayer. I think I shall strive to say prayers more often this way. I highly recommend you try it.

I ask for the Lord to reveal unto me the truth of all things even of the Book of Mormon, be it false or true. And every time I pray allowed such a prayer, I feel loved and guided to the truth. I feel the spirit exactly as Paul described it, it is so sweet, and I feel so peaceful. James was so right when he said: "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God. Who giveth to all men liberally and ubraideth not and it shall be given him." (James 1:5)

I then take to reading the Book of Mormon, I seek to understand it's many mysteries and puzzles. I read about a man called Captain Moroni and how I think how much like Captain America he is. I wonder if Captain America was plagiarized from Captain Moroni. If this is so, then I would not be surprised; the two are just too similar in character. They are both young men called into battle, to fight for liberty, the liberty of all men.

The celebrity that I get compared to most often is Chris Evans, Captain America himself. I am told that I am skinny Steve before the experiment that turned him into Captain America. I likewise seek to experiment that I might be like him. I would love to fight for my God and my country one day just like these two captains; Moroni and Steve Rogers. I would love the day to come when someone compares me to Captain Moroni.

Indeed I would love to see that day when I am compared to such a man.

"Yea, a man whose heart did swell with thanksgiving to his God, for the many privileges and blessings which he bestowed upon his people; a man who did labor exceedingly for the welfare and safety of his people.

Yea, and he was a man who was firm in the faith of Christ, and he had sworn with an oath to defend his country, and his religion, even to the loss of his blood.

...

"Yea, verily, verily I say unto you, if all men had been, and were, and ever would be like unto Moroni, behold, the very powers of hell would have been shaken forever; yea, the devil would never have power over the hearts of the children of men." (Alma 48:12-13 & 17)

I would love to know where Joseph plagiarized that scripture because I freakin' love it. The words have such a power to them, don't you think?

Section 4: Questions for Critics of the Church

Just as Paster Ed Taylor has 50 honest questions that he wants Mormons to be able to answer, I in likewise would say I have questions that I would hope that the critics of my church would be able to answer. I think it only fair. Surely many of these questions will be very answerable but they are still things I think critics of my Church should consider, though the questions may not be applicable to all. I have more than 50 here so maybe Pastor Taylor, or anybody, could give me some extra questions to go with his questions to even things out.

I won't hold it against anyone if all they can say about a certain subject is "I don't know." P.Z. Meyers, a scientific atheist wrote:

"There is a common tactic used by creationists, and I've encountered it over and over again. It's a form of the "Gish Gallop." It's named after Duane Gish, who's a famous Creationist Fundamentalist Protestant. Present the wicked evolutionist with a long list of assertions, questions and non-sequiturs, and if they answer with, "I don't know" to any of them, declare victory. It's easy: We say, "I don't know" a lot.

"Jack Chick's "Big Daddy" tract is a version of the Creationist list and contains a fair amount of fantasy as well. You know what they believe will happen: They'll ask that one question that the scientists can't answer, and then they'll have an epiphany, a revelation, and realize that all of their science is a lie, at which time they'll resign from their university position and join a good, Bible-believing church.

"It happens to me all the time too. At one talk I gave, there was a woman at the door who had printed a five-page, single spaced list of questions, and she was telling everyone going in to ask me to answer them. I invited her to come in and listen to the talk and ask them herself, and she ran away. I've had a Canadian Creationist do the same thing, and then I talked to him for several hours in the hallway after the talk. He seemed stunned and angry that I actually had answers for most of his questions. I've been confronted by people with questions, more like ignorant assertions, about biology, who, once I answered them and revealed that I am a biologist,

switched to asking me about geology and the “Big Bang” to get me into a corner where I would have to say, “I don’t know.”

(PZ Myers, “No! Not the list of stumpers again!”, ScienceBlogs, 9 April 2014)

I’m not looking to get that out of you and then use it as a one point for me, I just want to know what you think of these questions. I believe that all questions have proper answers however I also believe that mankind is severely limited in his ability to know all truth, we can only partake of some truth and then, from here, develop theories which align with the truths we already have. For the most part our questions can only be answered upon faith as opposed to cold hard reason and facts. You do not know if you are going to wake up tomorrow morning, you do not know if the world is going to blow up tomorrow, you have no idea if the universe was created last Thursday and all of your memories are fabricated, these things all rely on faith as we have no solid evidence to support any of these things. The best we can do is devise theories based on previously known facts and the rest is predicated on faith, and we need a lot of faith.

Thinking, quite frankly, is extremely time consuming. Thinking on facts is good only if you have the time for it. Over the course of your life, not only will you be faced with having to make a decision without all the facts, but you will also have to make decisions in a quick instance without any facts. When a person is in a fight and is thinking about what move to make next, that person will get sucker punched. We often have to rely on split second decisions based on instinct alone and we use faith to rely on our instincts. Learning to let go of thinking completely and relying solely on faith is what will lead to ultra instinct in which we can place ourselves in the hands of God and let Him guide us to the promise land of milk and honey.

I implore you to not get bogged down by questions. You must face questions head on instead of placing them on the shelf to be forgotten, and where you cannot answer a question you must rely on faith and feelings only.

Fellow Christians

1. Can you show me an apostle of my church who said that the atonement happened only in the garden and that the cross doesn’t matter?
2. Can you show me an apostle of my church who said that only works will save us and that faith and grace don’t mean anything?

3. Can you show me an apostle of my church who said that the only way for God to love us is to do good hard works?
4. Can you show me an apostle of my church who said that women's role in the after life is to be "eternally pregnant" or that it should be diminished under the man's role?
5. Can you show me an apostle who said that those who are sons of perdition, and are to be cast into outer darkness, are ex-mormons?
6. Where is everyone getting the idea that when a person is deified, he/she will inherit only one planet instead of a whole universe which is actual LDS teaching?
7. How can you be saved from sin unless you have freewill to commit sin, and how can you have freewill if God created everything about you including your consciousness: which comes with your biases, your personality, your thoughts, your mind, your heart, which things determine our actions?
8. If you do have freewill then why wouldn't you want to utilize your freewill to the fullest extent, work hard to work the works of righteousness? Can we even exist without working our freewill?
9. Why is the Epistle of James Martin Luther's least favorite book in the Bible?
10. If John is right in saying that God is love, then why would God send an innocent child to India to starve, suffer, and die only to end up in Hell because he never got the chance to hear about Jesus Christ?
11. If God is love and is no respecter of persons, then why would he only speak to the people in and around the middle east while ignoring the other peoples of the world?
12. If God is love, who sent His only begotten son to suffer in gethsemane and die on the cross for our sins, who's grace is sufficient for all, why wouldn't He prepare a place for all of us in heaven as a free gift as Christ said (John 14:2-3)?
13. If God is love, why would He break the family apart upon death after a lifetime of love built up? Why wouldn't you have the same feelings for your spouse in the after life as you do now? If Paul is correct in teaching "Nevertheless neither is the ^aman without the woman, neither the ^bwoman without the man, in the Lord." (1 Corinthians 11:11) would God put man and woman in heaven as nothing being separate?
14. How would you solve the problem of evil without the doctrine of the premortal life to explain the agency of man or the doctrine of salvation for the dead to explain that God gives equal chances to all his children for salvation?

15. When you die and go to heaven to see God, which would you prefer; to see a floating, spirit essence or a kind and loving face to be embraced by His arms and be pressed firmly against His warm bosom?
16. If there was no apostasy then why have prophets ceased? If we no longer need prophets then why would we no longer need them?
17. If John said, "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" (Revelation 19:10) and there are no prophets on the earth today, then does that mean that no one has the testimony of Jesus?
18. Would you read the Book of Mormon as a little child just as the Wilder's say we should read the Bible as a little child?
19. Why would a parent's sin be put upon their children as you say the sin of Adam and Eve is upon us?
20. Why do you misinterpret LDS scripture that you don't even believe in?
21. Why did the "city councilor who also happened to be a professor of religious history" say, "We discovered that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the closest to Jesus Christ's original Church than any other church we know of" (<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2018/04/it-is-all-about-people?lang=eng>)?
22. Why did W. D. Davies, Professor of Theology at Duke University (and Congregationalist Minister) say: "Mormonism is the Jewish-Christian tradition in American key. What it did was to re-Judaize a Christianity that had been too much Hellenized." (W.D. Davies, "Israel, the Mormons and the Land")?
23. Why did Yale Professor, Harold Bloom say: "I do not find it possible to doubt that Joseph Smith was an authentic prophet. Where in all of American history can we find his match?" (The American Religion: The Emergence of the Post-Christian Nation (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992) ?
24. Why did Stephen Webb state that, whereas many mainline Protestant theologians "have backed away from strong claims about the divinity of Jesus Christ," the Book of Mormon "is utterly obsessed with Jesus Christ ... everything it teaches is meant to awaken, encourage, and deepen faith in him."(<https://www.booksandculture.com/articles/webexclusives/2014/january/mormon-envy.html>)?

25. What would be the point of life if God had always existed without us to one day just randomly think to create us? What purpose would it serve seeing as He had already existed perfectly fine without us for infinite life times?
26. Could you scientifically explain to me create ex nihilo, that is in scientific terms tell me how something could be created out of nothing or how something could be destroyed into nothing?
27. Could you weave a tapestry of scripture, science, philosophy, and historical documentation outside the Bible for an argument against premortal existence?
28. Could you weave a tapestry of scripture, science, philosophy, and historical documentation outside the Bible for an argument against deification?
29. The year is 19000023 AD, it is June 12th at 4:00 pm, we are living happily with God in heaven, I knock on your front door, what will you be doing exactly?
30. Could you weave for me a tapestry of scripture, science, philosophy, historical documentation outside the Bible, and archeology for an argument against a Mother in Heaven?
31. Could you philosophically explain to me why it would be better to have Jesus create Satan out of nothing rather than saying that Jesus is Satan's brother?
32. How do you interpret scripture?
33. What are we to understand what Paul meant when he said that he knew a man in Christ who was caught up to the third heaven? Are there three heavens instead of the traditional one (2 Corinthians 12:2) ?
34. What are we to understand what Jesus meant by "paradise" while speaking to the malefactor on the cross when he later stated to Mary that he had not yet ascended to his Father (Luke 23:43 & John 20:17)?
35. What are we to understand Peter meant when he said that Jesus went to preach to the disobedient souls in prison including those who had died in Noah's flood (1 Peter 3:18-20)?
36. What are we to understand what Paul meant when he taught, "now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?" (1 Corinthians 1:12-13)
37. What are we to understand what Jesus meant when he said, "It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true. I am one that bear witness of myself, and

the *a*“Father that sent me beareth *b*witness of me.” (John 8:17)? Are we to understand that Jesus and his Father are “two men?”

38. What are we to understand what John meant when he said the Jesus had “made us kings and priests unto God and his Father” (Revelation 1:6)? Does God have a father?
39. What are we to understand what Jesus meant when he said, “Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are *a*gods? If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken; Say ye of him, whom the Father hath *a*sanctified, and *b*sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the *c*Son of God?” (John 10:34-36)?
40. Why did Christ’s disciples think that a man could sin before he was born (John 9:2)?
41. What did Paul mean when he said that the second coming should not happen until there was a “falling away first” (2 Thessalonians 2:3)?
42. Who is “they” that Paul is referring to who “will not *a*endure sound *b*doctrine; but after their own *c*lusts shall they heap to themselves *d*teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away *their* ears from the *a*truth, and shall be turned unto *b*fables.” (2 Timothy 4:3-4)?
43. If Lehi should not have been able to hold the priesthood to perform sacrifices because he was not of the tribe of Levi, then by what authority did King David offer sacrifices seeing as he wasn’t of the tribe of Levi (2 Samuel 24:24-25)?
44. If you woke up tomorrow and found that there was absolutely no archeological or scientific basis for the Holy Bible what would you do? Would you reject it or continue to believe in it solely on the basis of faith alone?
45. Would you pray with a sincere heart in asking God if the Book of Mormon is “not true” (Moroni 10:3-5), that is ask God if the book is false?
46. What are your thoughts of the Messiah ben Joseph prophecy (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mcvNwUVq4bE&t=21s>)?

The Athiest

47. If you came face to face with God would you still deny him (See Mormon 9:2-3)?
48. What would you ask God if you saw Him?
49. Could it be reasonable to say that all things denote there is a God (See Alma 30:44)?
50. Are you sure that we could 100% say that there is no intelligence which created the universe when we haven’t even searched the farthest reaches of the universe or time or dimensions?

51. Is it possible that there are beings in the sixth demention or higher which would be gods compared to us?
52. Would it be reasonable to assume, that by some Darwinian evolution, a species could evolve into what could be identified as gods? Could mankind evolve into gods?
53. What is it about the homo sapiens that we have evolved the way we have into being so technologically advanced compared to other species?
54. Could it be possible that the conscience, like basic matter itself, could neither be destroyed into nothing nor created from nothing?
55. Could it be possible that spirit could be some form of matter (see Doctrine and Covenants 131:7-8)?
56. If Jean-Paul Sartre is correct when he said, “existence precedes essence”, how much of an essence would we have if we have always existed by way of having a premortal life? How radically free would we be?
57. Could the doctrine of the premortal life (to explain the free agency of man and that we all knew what would happen to us on earth yet chose to come here anyway), the doctrine of salvation for the dead (to explain that God gives equal chances to all men and women), and the prospects of a God who weeps (See Moses 7:28) be enough to solve the problem of evil?
58. If you found the Book of Mormon to be a real historical document, what would that mean for the Bible?
59. What are your thoughts on Latter-Day Saints compared to other Christians or other religions?

General

60. You say that missing details counts as contradictions in the many first vision accounts, could you give me a definition of the word “contradiction” that includes “missing details”? Or could you have a professor of english identify the correct contradictions in the first vision accounts?
61. Could we have a professor of english identify all the exact books from the library of books that people claim the Book of Mormon was supposedly plagiarized from?
62. Could you identify the exact method that Joseph Smith used to plagiarize the Book of Mormon from other books? Was it like this (<https://www.jefflindsay.com/oneday.shtml>)?

63. If the Book of Mormon was plagiarized then why didn't any of the people closest to him, particularly the witnesses (particularly those who were excommunicated), ever mention the fact or the books that you say Joseph used in the process?
64. If the Book of Mormon was plagiarized from Ethan Smith's "View of the Hebrews," why didn't he say anything about it?
65. If I can find just as many parallels between two random unrelated stories, as B. H. Roberts found between the Book of Mormon and View of the Hebrews, (https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCOZcxtwy_YYe7KKky8DCLGQ) what does this say about this method of finding Book of Mormon plagiarism?
66. If the same method you use to prove that Joseph Smith plagiarized the Book of Mormon from so many different books (i.e. that the book shares numerous similar sentences to other books) can be applied to a book that was written 25 years after the Book of Mormon (<https://www.jefflindsay.com/bomsource.shtml>), what does that say about this method?
67. Is there any evidence that Joseph Smith had written anything prior to producing the Book of Mormon which would indicate that he had been a decent enough writer to write the Book of Mormon?
68. If Joseph Smith wrote the Book of Mormon himself, how is it that Joseph Smith created names that are more diverse and consistent than the names found in the works of J.R.R. Tolkien (<https://journal.interpreterfoundation.org/comparing-book-of-mormon-names-with-those-found-in-j-r-r-tolkiens-works-an-exploratory-study/>)?
69. If Joseph Smith wrote the Book of Mormon, how is it that he managed to create such a diverse number of distinct voices from his own compared to other fiction writers (<https://knowhy.bookofmormoncentral.org/knowhy/what-can-stylometry-tell-us-about-book-of-mormon-authorship>) (<https://knowhy.bookofmormoncentral.org/knowhy/is-it-possible-that-a-single-author-wrote-the-book-of-mormon>)?
70. If Joseph Smith wrote the Book of Mormon, how is it that he (a poor uneducated farm boy) managed to make the book as complex as it is without any notes (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pnkrQOEhuHA>) (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5yjKSaegLJg>)?
71. Can you show me a direct quote from any of the excommunicated witnesses which shows that they denied the existence of Gold Plates; if not, why did none of them deny the plates even when most of them were excommunicated, were angry with Joseph (even going so far

as to call him a fallen prophet), joined other churches, and had more to gain by denying the story than by keeping it?

72. If Joseph Smith hypnotized the three witnesses into thinking they saw an angel with the gold plates and heard the voice of God, could we have a professional hypnotist tell us exactly how that could be possible to trick someone into thinking they saw and heard something against their will?
73. How is it that Joseph Smith managed to convince thousands of people to live, suffer and then die for their testimonies of the Book of Mormon(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zb4CQ4W1qnU&t=1s>)?
74. How is it that Joseph Smith managed to convince so many people to lie with him about seeing visions, angels, miracles, the plates and other things (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bz1PPNpww3A>)?
75. If Joseph Smith was a con artist then why was he willing to endure Liberty Jail, was his supposed man-made religion really that important to him? Have any other con artists been willing to go this far with their frauds?
76. How did Joseph Smith even know that some ancient cultures wrote on metal plates?
77. How did Joseph Smith know that the ancient inhabitants of America were highly civilized and technological with cement and road ways when the common idea of the time was that they were just a bunch of savages?
78. How did Joseph Smith know so much about the Arabian peninsula?
79. How did Joseph Smith know that some ancient Hebrew cultures used hieratic in some of their writings?
80. How was Joseph Smith able to construct such detailed war strategies as found in the book of Alma?
81. How did Joseph Smith know so much about how to construct such a detailed allegory off the top of his head about taking care of olive trees which he shouldn't have had any knowledge of (Jacob 5)? From where would you say he plagiarized such a thing?
82. How was Joseph Smith able to construct such a detailed chiasmus off the top of his head (Alma 36)?
83. When you say that you want archeological evidence which supports the Book of Mormon, what exactly are you hoping we will find?

84. How did Joseph Smith know so much about ancient semitic traditions and books when producing the Book of Abraham (https://www.fairmormon.org/answers/Book_of_Abraham/Evidences)?
85. If Joseph Smith really was fooled by the Kinderhook plates, then why did he only attempt to casually translate one character? Why did he not attempt to translate the whole thing and publish it as he did the Book of Abraham?
86. If Joseph Smith really started up polygamy because he wanted an excuse to sleep with more women, then where are the children that he should have produced from sleeping with all of those women, where is the DNA evidence that shows these things?
87. How did Joseph Smith know so much about ancient doctrines and practices which were not known in his day (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KwxO0TKP0tw&t=154s>) (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c_rfmHVrK4Y&t=996s)?

Silver Linings of the Church (always look on the bright side of life)

88. Why is it that I see no arguments from anti-mormons attacking the book of Moses?
89. Can you say anything positive about my Church or the Book of Mormon?
90. Could the philosophy of *wabi-sabi* be applied to the Church?
91. What are your thoughts of the Church's welfare program?
92. What are your thoughts on the Church's volunteer efforts (<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2019/10/46nelson?lang=eng>) (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=__1hCL_Bl0w&t=4s) (<https://newsroom.churchofjesuschrist.org/article/light-the-world-giving-machines-expand-10-locations-christmas-season>)?)
93. What are your thoughts on this talk (<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/1985/04/the-purifying-power-of-gethersemane?lang=eng>)?
94. Why did Sharon Eubank say this is a woman's church (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rgTg4ZKwtwQ&t=1556s>)?
95. What are your thoughts on the plan of salvation according to the Latter-Day Saints (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8u6sZ-Wcbok&t=1612s>)?
96. What can we learn about the character of Joseph Smith from his time in liberty jail (D&C 121, 122, 123)?

97. What can we learn about the character of Nephi and ourselves from his psalm (2 Nephi 4:15-35)?
98. What can we learn about the character of Alma and our selves based on his conversion story (Alma 36)?