

***Dear  
Mormon  
Missionaries***

Dear Elders White and Young,

A while back ago you came to my door here in the Midwest and helped move furniture up and down three flights of stairs. That was not a small job!

Then we set up a time to talk about the faith and I couldn't have been more thrilled. Not because I'm an actual "investigator" but because I want to have a greater understanding of your perspective.

You shared your message and then we only had a few minutes of discussion before you had to leave. I so would have loved to talk more but it didn't happen. Yet I'm glad for the little time we did have.

The Mormon people are truly a great people. Your moral standards are high, you are kind and respectful to many and you do a lot of good in the world. You have a lot to be proud of in the way you take care of one another. It truly is beautiful.

I also respect both of you guys for going on your mission. You guys are required to work hard, 12 hour days with only a half day off and have very limited communication home. That has got to be hard.

Add to that you and your missionary companion must be together at all times, always within sight and hearing distance of each other. The bathroom is the only exception or meeting with leadership. That's quite the commitment of someone you do not get to choose to be around. I'm sure that can be both a blessing and a problem. And what I'm learning more and more, very lonely.

Recently I have also learned of how intense the pressure is that you face to even go on a mission. Families expect you to go, your local ward (church) does not deem you "worthy" unless you go, businesses are told they should hire returned missionaries, and then there is the pinnacle of them. It is what the young single women are told. It is drilled into them over and over to *only* marry returned missionaries. Any young man who does not go on a mission is a non-desirable. That kind of pressure has got to be tough.

So here you are on your mission, committed to doing what you feel is right. I respect that. You guys are also both kind and enjoyable to talk to. Yet there are some things I would like to respond to that I didn't feel like we had the time to do during our conversation.

I know that you only are allowed to use the KJV which I will do here, and even more so you are not allowed to read anything not sanctioned or blessed by the church. No problem. I will try to reference only the LDS website, the Journals of Discourse (see footnotes)<sup>1</sup> and approved church history for my questions and thoughts.

What I want to bring up is not small. Nor are they petty points of disagreement. These are life-altering eternal issues. Issues of living in eternity with Jesus or in outer darkness. What Jesus actually says might surprise you.

I do this because your own prophets have made the formal invitation. Orson Pratt encourages those to come to you and compare the Bible and the Book of Mormon. He initiated the invitation so this is my response.<sup>2</sup>

This is about questions I have and more importantly, it is about the person and gospel of Jesus Christ. Who really is Jesus? And what does he really teach?

Secondly and more importantly, I want to speak to you because if what the Book of Mormon/Doctrine and Covenants/Pearl of Great Price says is true, you have nothing to worry about. But if it is false and does not align with the Bible, then possibly it is not the actual gospel of Jesus Christ in the Bible. It then becomes a dangerously beautiful substitute—a lookalike gospel that leads people down a road that the Bible says *cannot save*.<sup>3</sup>

What I write here isn't to convince you. Only God can do that. But I do want to encourage you to think on these things. So will you do that? Will you consider what I write here?

And even read the New Testament not based on how you're told to believe but by what it actually says? As a child? Or as I like to say, as someone who has been given the Bible on a deserted island and no one influenced the into what to believe?

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<sup>1</sup> "The Journal of Discourses deservedly ranks as one of the standard works of the Church, and every right-minded Saint will certainly welcome with joy every number (issue) as it comes forth".

- President George Q. Cannon, *Journal of Discourses*, Preface, Vol.8.

<sup>2</sup> — *The Seer*, Orson Pratt, 1854, p. 15

<sup>3</sup> **"Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace."** - Gal 5:4 - KJV

I know that you are told, "When the prophet speaks, the thinking is done." Or some people say, "When the prophet speaks, the debate is over." That if you try to ask questions or read anything outside of the official church bubble, you are told to stop, just trust God that it will make sense after awhile ("put it on the shelf"). Stop doubting your testimony. Read the Book of Mormon more and pray more if you have questions/doubts/concerns.

But I also want to challenge you with this quote from one of your own:

*"If we have the truth, it cannot be harmed by investigation. If we have not the truth, it ought to be harmed."*

*- President Reuben Clark*

The Bible also affirms this. Proving all things out is actually the more honorable way to go (Acts 17:11; 1 Thess 5:21). Jesus says to love Him with all your heart but also with all your mind (Mt 22:37). And what is most noble people are the ones who search the Scriptures out to see if it is true (Acts 17:11).

I hope that one day you are the 1/100 that actually dares to think for yourself and see if what you believe is true. It can be scary especially from pressure from your leaders. But I hope you will so love truth that you are Ok with where it leads. Jesus is truth and he leads to good places.

You were nothing but kind and respectful. But I wanted to "finish" the conversation. And since we have no contact information, I thought I could at least send this out in writing. Perhaps this will be shared enough that it will one day reach you.

I do pray for you and hope that one day you will have the courage to investigate your own faith. Nothing is more important than your eternity.

My hope is that you would find the Jesus of the Bible. The Bible has stood the test of thousands of years of historical and manuscript scrutiny. And in it Jesus teaches that is able to save you completely (Heb 7:24-26). He is the place of rest, not striving. Good works from his love, not for his favor. Jesus is enough. He alone is worthy.

May you think on these things.

## Table of Contents:

Table of Contents:	5
1) You asked me to pray whether the Book of Mormon is true.	6
2) You said there was no difference between the Bible and the Book of Mormon	10
4) We Discussed I Salvation through Grace	22
5) You are Told You can't Trust the Bible.	34
6) You said that in 200 years the Book of Mormon has never been proven as anything but true.	41
7) Other Questions I Ponder	58
Conclusion:	61

## **1) You asked me to pray whether the Book of Mormon is true.**

When we ended our conversation as we were leaving, you asked me to pray and ask if the Book of Mormon was true. This is the main way you determine if the Mormon church is true, by the infamous “burning in the bosom.” I am told that if I am sincere enough, I will know the Book of Mormon is true. Here’s the issue I have.

Subjective feelings and/or spiritual experiences alone have never been a valid means of truth. Muslims have very real dreams and visions and they come to pass, Christians have the move of the Holy Spirit, New Agers have visions and experience spirit guides, witches experience supernatural events, etc.. Every faith has supernatural occurrence. The spiritual world is very real.

But just because something is real doesn’t make it true and good. Demons are real but they aren’t purveyors of truth. To use spiritual experience or feeling alone is a form of subjectivity.

Subjectivity allows for great differences. Many have different experiences. But to say only one subjective truth is true and nobody else’s is not a good determining factor of truth.

What if someone prays and does not receive a “burning in the bosom” or they sense that the Book of Mormon is false? I have heard that they are told that they need to keep praying, are not worthy enough, are not sincere enough, etc...

But is this an appropriate way of determining truth? Keep trying until your subjective truth lines up with mine? If subjectivity is the sole indicator of truth, then everything is true to the person who experiences it, and that makes no exclusive truth out there.

For example, I’m sure you know of all those off-shoots of the Mormon church. And yet you can only have one “prophet” from God according to LDS teaching as it is a prophetic voice of “succession,” similar to the Pope.

So can all these be equally true? Can those in the FLDS with Warren Jeffs be correct? Can the LDCJC and Matthew Gill be true at the same time? They all have had burnings in the bosom and real spiritual experiences, but they are in complete contradiction with one another. If they were to stand in front of investigators,

seekers of faith, which one is an investigator to believe? They can't all be right as they all have different claims of who is the prophet. Each one says the other group is wrong.

This is the problem with subjectivity. They are mutually exclusive but who has the truth and who doesn't?

This is known intrinsically. Imagine a young 15-year old boy in your ward comes to you and says the following:

*"My girlfriend and I were having such strong desires to have sex together that we decided to both go away for awhile, pray and ask Heavenly Father if we could start having sex.*

*When I asked Heavenly Father if I could start being sexually involved, I was overcome with a burning sensation so strong I almost began to shake. When my girlfriend prayed she had a strong vision that we were going to be married for all time and eternity. But she felt that we were to wait until she turned 14 since one of Joseph's 34 wives according to the LDS Gospel Topics Essays was 14.<sup>4</sup>*

*So we waited a few months until she turned 14 and then began having sex. Since then we've been involved physically on a regular basis. It's been great. Best thing ever. And we know it's right. Why?*

- 1) We know we have Heavenly Father's blessing. We both have strong testimonies.*
- 2) We know that the two of us will be married for all time and eternity. Therefore there is no problem.*
- 3) We know that this is good to do because the fruit has been much more peace and joy and happiness for both of us.*
- 4) We know that what we're doing is true because when we tell others we get persecuted and we know that people only persecute the truth."*

What would you say to them? If they both had a burning in the bosom and a spiritual experience, can their subjective experiences be denied? Especially since

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/gospel-topics-essays/plural-marriage-in-kirtland-and-nauvoo?lang=eng>

both of them had confirming experiences? And their fruit brought about “good” as they say? And made them happy and gave them joy?

I’m guessing if you were their leader you might say that their experiences and what they felt were not of God. But how can you say that if what a person feels is the foundation of truth?

Secondly and more importantly, we are specifically warned in the Scripture of practices based solely on spiritual experiences or feelings:

- **"He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool: but whoso walketh wisely, he shall be delivered."** (Prov 28:26)
- **"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?"** (Jer 17:9 )
- **"But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed"** (Gal 1:8-9).

Solomon says to be careful. Jeremiah says the heart can be deceptive. And Paul says that even if we have a real, angelic encounter, if it differs in the message of the gospel that is preached, then we should reject it. In fact, he says twice if someone says this is the gospel then he should be eternally condemned. Yikes!

And what is the gospel that Paul is referring to? Have you read the book of Galatians to see?

When we want something really strongly or are feeling pressure, it’s easy for us to deceive ourselves. We have to be careful. Also we can open up ourselves up to real spiritual experiences that may or may not be of God. **"And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light"** (2 Cor 11:14 - KJV).

Every faith is going to have its subjective elements. *Every* faith. And this isn’t bad or wrong. But to validate a faith as true only based on subjective feelings and experiences alone isn’t enough. There has to be primary, substantive objective evidence.

**Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen** (Heb 11:1).

Evidence and faith go hand in hand.

That is why I cannot pray about whether the Book of Mormon is true. According to Scripture even if I had a “burning in the bosom,” subjective experience is never enough. Otherwise we can easily deceive ourselves as well as experience something real, but not true and Biblical. Or experience something real but it is not of God.

For me that objective standard is the Bible. Not just because it says it is. But because there are many reasons to trust it because of external testimony as well as internal validation. That and Jesus validated it. I want to speak more on this. But first to respond to one of your statements.

## 2) You said there was no difference between the Bible and the Book of Mormon

Elder Young, when you said that there was no difference between the Bible and the Book of Mormon, I was honestly quite surprised. I know you are aware of the Eighth Article of Faith of the Mormon Church that says the Bible is only true “as long as it is translated correctly.”

I also know you are taught not to trust the Bible but only the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price. That the Bible is good but highly suspect. For you the Bible is to be approached with great caution.

Perhaps a contributing factor from what you said, Elder Young, is that you have not read the Bible yourself. That’s common not only among Mormons but among Christians as well.

I can assure you, though, as one who has read the Bible extensively, there is nothing between the Bible and the Book of Mormon that is the same. Not the nature of God, Christ, salvation, eternity, grace, the church and more.

You can take one or the other but not both as their teachings are directly opposed to one another. If you read the Bible as it says without looking through a lens of what you’ve been taught it says, you will see this clearly.

Have you ever considered what is “not translated correctly”? Or what “plain and precious truths” are absent as your Scripture says? Or when it was supposedly changed?

The truth is no one will ever tell you. It really comes down to arbitrary truth—if it agrees with what we like and want we’ll take it but if it is different it “hasn’t been translated correctly.” So let’s start with what Brigham Young says in this matter:

***“I say to the whole world receive the truth. No matter who presents it to you. Take up the Bible, compare the religion of the latter day saints with it, and see if it will stand the test.”<sup>5</sup>***

— Brigham Young

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<sup>5</sup> Journal of Discourses - Vol 16, p 46 (<https://jod.mrm.org/16/40>)

Elder White, I appreciated that you asked me, "Like what?" when we were discussing differences between what the Bible teaches and what the Book of Mormon teaches.

I was still so taken aback by Elder Young's comment that I said something dumb. Really dumb. Because it is not an issue that really matters.

"Like genealogies," I said. Then I quoted this very:

**<sup>3</sup>...they teach no other doctrine, <sup>4</sup> nor give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which cause disputes rather than godly edification which is in faith. <sup>5</sup> Now the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, *from* a good conscience, and *from* sincere faith,**

—1 Tim 1:3-5.<sup>6</sup>

This while true, is not essential to the faith. So let me talk to you about how I would have liked to have responded.

"Like God" I should have said. Or, "like Christ." So let's start with God.

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<sup>6</sup> This is from the NKV as I believe it is more clear. The NKJV is the KJV in modern English. Here is the KJV - "As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine, Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: so do.

<sup>5</sup> Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned:

## A) Doctrinal Differences in Understanding God

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### God the Father

I know the LDS teach that god (“Heavenly Father”) was a man just like us in human form,<sup>7</sup> but that he achieved god status, paving the way for us to do the same. That all men can become gods and rule their own planets. And that there are billions of gods.<sup>8</sup>

Mormonism also teaches that god had parents just like us.<sup>9</sup> But can I ask, whose parents were his parents, and then his parents, and his parents? How can there be an infinite regress of gods? There has to be an original God. A Creator God of all.

The teaching that God was once a man like us and attained perfection is not the character and nature of God in the Holy Bible. In fact, the great sin in the Garden of Eden was that man believed he could become like God (Gen 3).

Now I know that the Mormon church says that this was a fall “up.” And that the fall was necessary for Adam and Eve to sin so they could move from spirit beings in the pre-existence to mortals in the flesh.

But the Bible says this was one of the greatest falls “down,” causing the cancer of sin and separation to infect all humanity. That sin brought condemnation and death to all mankind (Rom 5).

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<sup>7</sup> “God himself was once as we are now, and is an exalted Man, and sits enthroned in yonder heavens . . . I say, if you were to see him to-day, you would see him like a man in form—like yourselves, in all the person, image, and very form as a man . . . it is necessary that we should understand the character and being of God, and how he came to be so; for I am going to tell you how God came to be God. We have imagined and supposed that God was God from all eternity, I will refute that idea, and will take away and do away the veil, so that you may see . . . and that he was once a man like us; yea, that God himself the Father of us all, dwelt on an earth the same as Jesus Christ himself did.” (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 6, p. 3).

<sup>9</sup> *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 345. On June 16, 1844, Smith went on to teach that Heavenly Father has his own Heavenly Father (*History of the Church*, vol. 6, pp. 473-479).

**12 Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned—**

**15 But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God's grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many! 16 Nor can the gift of God be compared with the result of one man's sin: The judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation, but the gift followed many trespasses and brought justification. 17 For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ!**

Even more importantly, what does the Bible say about God? And is it that it teaches there are billions of gods who were once in the flesh? That there was a council of gods?

Let's just look in Isaiah. It says God is "everlasting" (Ps 9:6). Similar to what is said in the Psalms 90:2 that

**2 Before the mountains were born  
or you brought forth the whole world,  
from everlasting to everlasting you are God.**

According to Scripture, he is the Creator God. He is God alone.

**Before me no god was formed,  
nor will there be one after me.**

**-Is 43:10**

I did hear one person say that this was referring to the the God of our planet. But if that is true, then why does he say this?

**Is there any God besides me?  
No, there is no other Rock; I know not one."**

Is 44:8

He doesn't know of any other gods. There are no others.

I then heard one Mormon leader say when quoted this verse that we don't know what the context is, so we can't know the meaning. The context though is actually quite clear.

The nations surrounding Israel worshiped and served many gods. After a long season of no repentance, God sent them into exile in Babylon.

At this point he was promising that they would return to Jerusalem. But he wanted to make one point clear—He is the everlasting God, the only God, none before him and none after him, the Creator of all things. There is absolutely no other God. Let's see if he can make the point in a few chapters:

**Before me no god was formed, nor will there be one after me.**

Isaiah 43:10

**You are my witnesses. Is there any God besides me?**

**No, there is no other Rock; I know not one."**

Isaiah 43:8

**I am the first and I am the last; apart from me there is no God.**

Is 44:6

**Is there any God besides me?**

**No, there is no other Rock; I know not one."**

Is 44:8

**I am the Lord, and there is no other; apart from me there is no God. I will strengthen you, though you have not acknowledged me,**

Is 45:5

**so that from the rising of the sun to the place of its setting people may know there is none besides me.**

**I am the Lord, and there is no other.**

Is 45:6

**For this is what the Lord says— he who created the heavens, he is God; he who fashioned and made the earth, he founded it; he did not create it to be empty, but formed it to be inhabited— he says: “I am the Lord, and there is no other.**

Is 45:18

**And there is no God apart from me, a righteous God and a Savior; there is none but me.**

Is 45:21

**“Turn to me and be saved, all you ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is no other.**

Is 45:22

**I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me.**

Is 46:9

Ok, I'll stop there. Does you think in only a few chapters he has made his point? In fact Joseph Smith in the early days believed this as well:

*And Zeezrom said unto him: Thou sayest there is a true and living God? Yea, there is a true and living God. Is there more than one God? No. How knows these things. An angel hath made them known to me...Now Zeezrom saith again unto him: “Is the Son of God the very Eternal Father? Yeah, he is the very Eternal Father of heaven and earth...”*

- Alma 11:26-31, 38-40<sup>10</sup>

If there was a council of gods, how would he “know not one”? The only way to make it conform to current LDS theology is to add to the text what it does not say.

‘Ok, then,’ somebody might say. ‘Then this is where it is not translated correctly.’ And yet we have the Dead Sea Scrolls of an Isaiah scroll dated 150 BC.

Jesus himself attested to the historicity of the book of Isaiah, quoting from it and preaching from it saying that he was its fulfillment.

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<sup>10</sup> <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/scriptures/bofm/alma/11?lang=eng>

Secondly the Bible also says, "God is Spirit" (Jn 4:24). Not a body. In fact, Joseph Smith believed this too. He originally wrote: - "The Father being a personage of spirit...[and] the Son, who was in the bosom of the Father, a personage of tabernacle, [and] possessing the same mind with the Father, which mind is the Holy Spirit, and these three are one..."<sup>11</sup>. Joseph was clear that in the beginning days he believed the three were one. Only later did he say they were three separate beings.

The Bible never says God has a physical body. Or that he had sex with Mary as Mormonism teaches. Or that Adam was God as Brigham Young teaches in the Journal of Discourse.<sup>12</sup> Granted I realize that not all LDS buy into the Adam-God theory of Brigham Young.

That leads us to Jesus. Mormonism teaches that Jesus was the result of the sexual union of God and Mary. And that he is now our "elder brother." He serves as an example but is not God in flesh.

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## Nature of Jesus

The Bible does teach that, like Joseph Smith in the early taught, that Jesus was part of the godhead and was God and with God in the beginning. Just like we are body, soul and spirit, God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Look at these Scriptures:

**1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.** (Jn 1:1).

It says he was with God in the beginning. And notice here that he makes all things, things visible and invisible, meaning angels, thrones and more. In fact, he made the angel Lucifer and later Lucifer rebelled and fell. But let's look at this:

**<sup>14</sup> In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: <sup>15</sup>Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth,**

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<sup>11</sup> Lectures of Faith #3, pg 48 (1832-1833)

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.adamgod.com/> - Cross ref - <https://www.mrm.org/adam-god>

**visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:** (Col 1:16).

Yes, Jesus was part of the God-head. Not three separate beings but three in one. Again, Joseph Smith in the early days understood this also.

*"the Father and of the Son, which Father and Son and Holy Ghost, is one God, infinite and eternal, without end"* (Book of Commandments 24:18).<sup>13</sup>

The trinity is a challenge for many and I get it. But think about your own self for a moment. If I were to come to you and ask you if you believed that when you died, your spirit went up to heaven. What would you say? Of course you would answer, "yes."

But if I said, "where is your spirit as I would like to touch it for a moment," you couldn't answer. The same would be true if I asked you to think of a pink elephant, where could I touch the pink elephant in your thoughts? I couldn't.

God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. In a similar fashion you and I are body, soul and spirit. I am one person in three parts. My body is not my spirit, my spirit is not my soul, but all of them make up me as a person.

Same with God. The Father is not the Son and the Son is not the Holy Spirit, but the three make up One.

The Bible affirms that Jesus was God. The Bible says that Jesus was killed because he said of himself that he was God (John 5:18). Jesus didn't deny this but received it. He also received worship (Mt 14:33; Mt 28:8-9; Mk 16:1; Lk 24:10).

## **B) Heaven and Hell ("Outer Darkness")**

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### **LDS Heaven(s)**

When people say that Christians share the same vocabulary but not the same dictionary, this is never more true than when it comes to eternal matters of heaven

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<sup>13</sup> <https://2think.org/hundredsheep/boc/boc24.shtml>

and hell. So to understand what Scripture teaches, it requires a very different perspective.

Mormonism teaches that all people go to one of three levels of heaven. When I asked where did that teaching come from, Elder Young, you said that the Bible teaches this. You then pointed to 1 Cor. 15:41:

**The sun has one kind of splendor, the moon another and the stars another; and star differs from star in splendor.**

Scratching my head here. How do you get that this teaches three heavens? Have you read the context? He is not talking about heaven but about the two types of bodies we have—the earthly physical and the heavenly heavenly body at the resurrection. I encourage you to read the verses in context:

**<sup>39</sup> Not all flesh is the same: People have one kind of flesh, animals have another, birds another and fish another. <sup>40</sup> There are also heavenly bodies and there are earthly bodies; but the splendor of the heavenly bodies is one kind, and the splendor of the earthly bodies is another. <sup>41</sup> The sun has one kind of splendor, the moon another and the stars another; and star differs from star in splendor.**

**<sup>42</sup> So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; <sup>43</sup> it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; <sup>44</sup> it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.**

The context I think is clear and is summed up in the last sentence answering their question about the heavenly body we will have: **If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body** (v. 44). That's the point he was trying to make.

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### **Eternal Destination:**

The LDS then teach that everyone pretty much goes to one of these three heavens (celestial - highest heaven, terrestrial -middle, and celestial - lower heaven). This is called "exaltation" and is not the "salvation" that Bible teaches. But let's continue.

The only ones who don't go to heaven are those who are LDS and then leave the church, apostates. They will end up in "outer darkness" or as Christians call it, hell. That and Satan and the demons. All others are in one of the three heavens.

But the lowest heaven, called the "telestial" heaven is so good that if people knew how good it was they would commit suicide to go there (according to Wilford Woodruff quoting what he heard from Joseph Smith). Even the likes of Hitler is found in this glorious heaven. Of which I might ask, where then is justice?

It is also taught in the LDS church that a person can be sprung from "spirit prison" and put into heaven by others. It does make me wonder why anyone would want to live a righteous life.

Why not just live like a hellion and then have someone spring you from spirit prison? And at the worst, you are just in this incredible and amazing lower part of heaven that is glorious and good. But how does this reconcile with what Jesus taught?

Jesus told a parable in which a rich man went to Hades (hell) and a poor man went to heaven. The man suffering in Hades called out to Abraham and asked him to have pity on him and give him some cool water.

**<sup>25</sup> "But Abraham replied, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony. <sup>26</sup> And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been set in place, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.'** (Lk 16:25-26).

And then the Bible says this:

**<sup>27</sup> Just as people are destined to die once, and after that to face judgment,** (Heb 9:27)

And then in Matthew 25 it talks about the parable of the virgins. There were some not ready and they didn't get a second chance to get ready either. Too late was too late when the groom came to get them.

Consider these:

The Bible teaches that there are only two destinations - with God or without Him. Eternal life or eternal punishment.

#### Eternal Punishment:

**These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.” - Mt 25:46**

**If your eye causes you to stumble, throw it out; it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye, than, having two eyes, to be cast into hell, where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched. - Mark 9:47-48**

**<sup>8</sup> He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. <sup>9</sup> They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might. 2 Thess 1:8-10**

#### Eternal Life:

The offer for eternal life is offered here through Jesus. Jesus wants that none should “perish.” Perishing or not is predicated on the acceptance or rejection of the Son.

**<sup>16</sup> For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. John 3:16**

**Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God’s wrath remains on them. Jn 3:36**

**Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. (Jn 17:3)**

**And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. (1 John 5:11)**

The Bible teaches that there are two eternities—one with Christ and one without Christ. Not everyone goes to heaven. In fact many will not.

**Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. Mt 7:13-14**

Salvation is not about which level of heaven you will enter, but rather you have united yourself with Christ through his blood on the cross. Then you trust him for your righteousness and do not seek a righteousness of your own. In fact, this is such an important topic, let's address this, as you guys did have questions.

## 4) We Discussed! Salvation through Grace

Salvation/Eternal Life is a huge difference in Christian teaching. The Book of Mormon teaches that 2 Nephi 25:23 *"we know that it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do."*

The third article of faith also states: *All mankind may be saved, by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel.*

This is nothing like the grace of Jesus Christ taught in the Bible. In fact, it is the complete opposite. Grace by the very meaning of the word is a "gift." Once you pay for a gift, it is no longer a gift.

Grace and works are so completely opposite that Paul says if you have trust in any work or works *at all* for your salvation, then you have disposed of Christ.

**<sup>4</sup> Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.. (Gal 5:4 - KJV).**

Read the above again. Then consider also these Scriptures:

**Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.**

**<sup>5</sup> But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.**

(Rom 4:4-5 - KJV)

**<sup>6</sup> And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.**

- Rom 11:6 - KJV

**<sup>8</sup> For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:<sup>9</sup> Not of works, lest any man should boast.**

- Eph 2:8-9 (KJV)

It's why the cross is so important to Scriptures. It's not just that the Bible makes the cross the central part (Gal 6:14; Col 1:20; 2:14; Heb 12:2; Eph 2:16; Php 2:8), but that it is the most important part of salvation. It is where Jesus paid for our sins in their entirety through his blood.

The Scriptures teach there is no one worthy, no righteous, no one who does good. **"All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God"** (Rom 3:23). The Scriptures also teach that good works are impossible to save you. Jesus is NOT there to make up for our lack. Our righteousness and good works is as filthy rags to him (Isaiah 64:6). He saves completely (Heb 7:25).

**Man: COMPLETELY SEPARATED  
from God through Unrighteousness**

**Man:**  
Declared Unrighteous

**GOD:**  
Righteousness  
Holiness  
Purity

“For I can testify about them that they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge. <sup>3</sup>Since they did not know the righteousness of God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God’s righteousness.” (Rom 10:2-3)

Good works cannot save

**Justice of God for our Crimes**

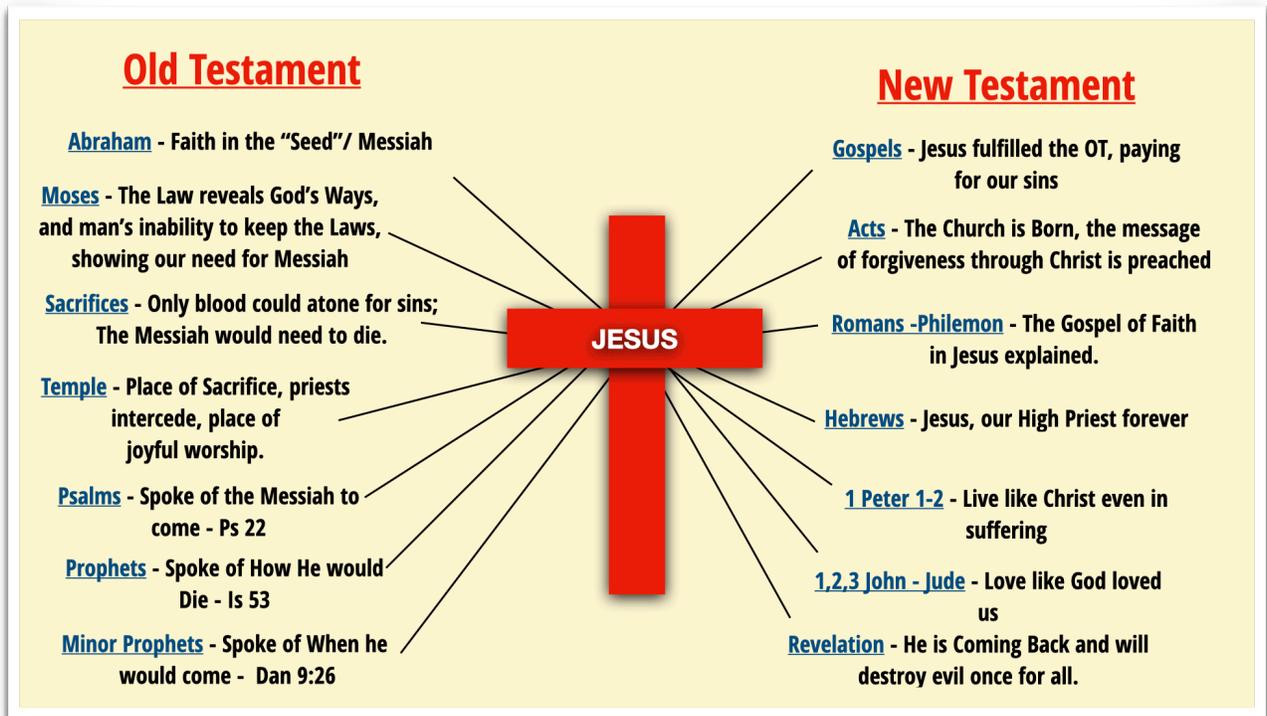
**As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins** (Eph 2:1)

**...We were by nature deserving of wrath.** (Eph 2:3)

There is NOTHING you or I can to do earn or contribute to our salvation. There is

nothing we do that makes us worthy. We can't be worthy. Read John, Romans, Galatians, Ephesians and Hebrews. I encourage you to read them over and over.

All the temple in the Old Testament, the prophets, and the Psalms point to Jesus.



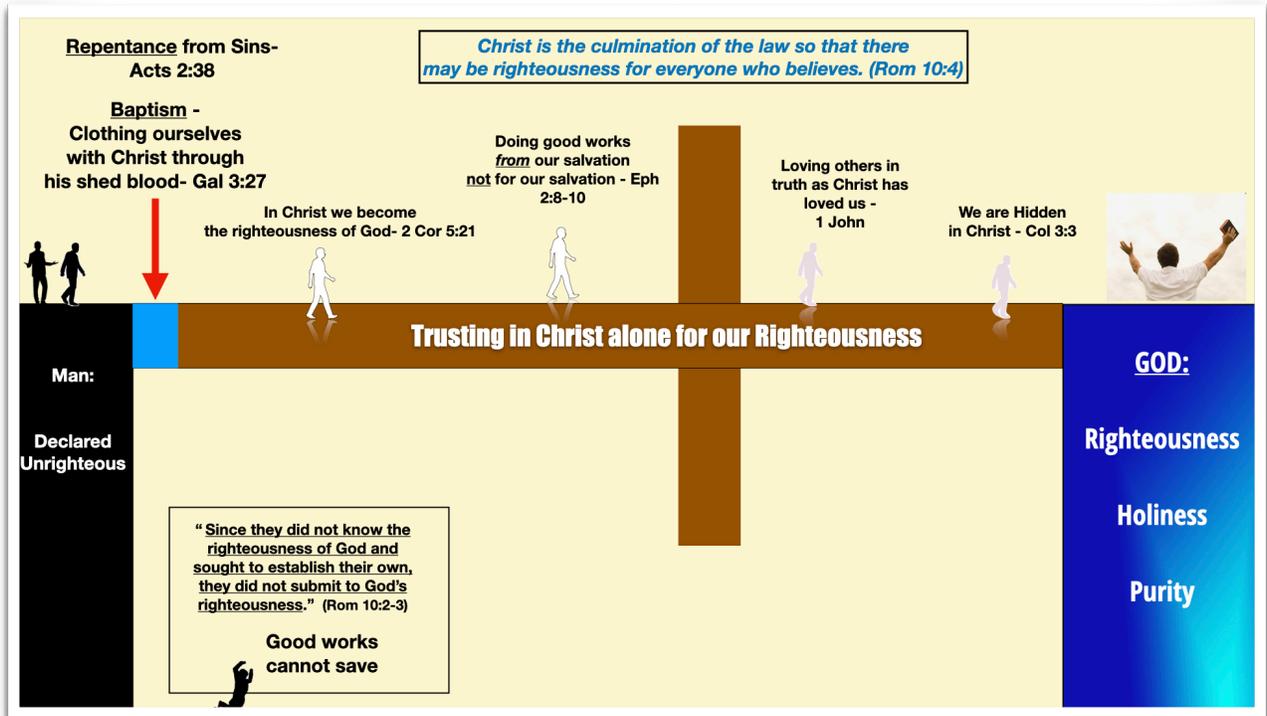
Every part of the Old Testament was pointing to Jesus, our need for a Savior, and that the Messiah would take our sins upon the cross. There is nothing at all we can do to contribute to our salvation. Jesus did it all.

**Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.** (Heb 7:25)

God's justice, since he is a good God, requires punishment for our sin. Sin is so awful he that our wages is "death" (Rom 6:23). Complete and utter separation from God forever. No chance of crossing from death to life.

Except Jesus took the punishment for our crimes upon ourselves, so that all who trust in Him and Him alone have eternal life.

This does not come from our works. The Bible makes clear our works do not save. Only Jesus saves.



Now I know your alarm bells are probably going off. But if we teach grace then people will just go out and live wild, riotous lives, won't they? That's only because you do not know what it is to be born again, and to be made "alive in Christ." When we come to Christ, yes, there is freedom (Gal 5), but he changes our hearts that we might desire righteousness.

## A) Works Based Scripture?

### But what about Mt 7:21 and James 2 and Jesus' Words to Be Perfect in Mt 5:48??

Don't these Scriptures say we need good works for salvation? Elder White, you brought up Mt 7:21. I was hoping you were going to bring up James 2, but you went to Mt 7:21. And then I would like to also bring up Jesus' Sermon on the Mount's words to "be perfect" as this is just such a stressful thing to LDS to be "perfect/worthy" all the time. So let's look at that one first. In context:

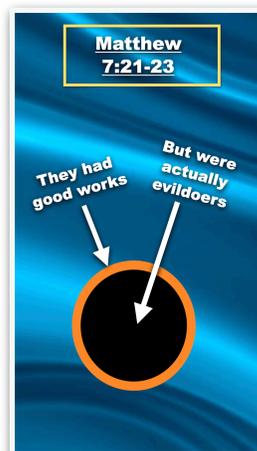
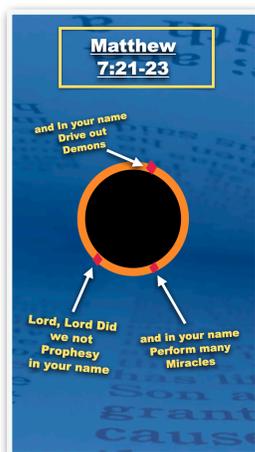
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#### (i) He Who Does the Will of My Father - Mt 7:21

**21 "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. 22 Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?' 23 Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'**

Elder White, you say this proves that works are key to salvation. Let's look at the text again. The people had all the works. And they were doing amazing works—driving out demons and performing miracles. Impressive by all counts.

But what does the next part say? And this is what the text is about. They had all the works, but inside they were full of "wickedness." Christ 'never knew them.' Their works were perfect, but their hearts were far from God.



Jesus says the **“one who does the will of my father”** (Mt 7:21) who is in heaven will enter the kingdom of heaven. Did you know he actually states what is Father’s will actually is?

**28 Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?**

**29 Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.”**

- John 6:28-29 (KJV)

Those who trust in Christ have eternal life. Not those who trust in their works to gain exaltation.

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## **(ii) James 2 - Faith and Works?**

But since you didn’t bring up James 2 even though I’m sure you would have had there been time, I’m going to bring it up for you. The Scripture say this:

**24 Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. (Jms 2:24 - KJV)<sup>14</sup>**

“Ha!” You think. James is teaching salvation by works. I would encourage you again to read the context. He says just a few verses prior:

**10 For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.**

. Jms 2:10 (KJV)

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<sup>14</sup> If you want a thorough explanation of this, watch this video here: <https://youtu.be/oIVe8rZZ1oA>

Just like in a court of law, if you murder someone but live a great life, as in you don't steal, you don't cheat on your girlfriend, etc... it doesn't matter. If you break any part of the law you are a lawbreaker and are guilty. The court holds you responsible.

The same is true for any sin. All sin violates the holiness of God. And if we break just one law, we are responsible. It makes us guilty and we cannot be righteous before God. The problem is that only the righteous can enter the presence of God.

But the Law for those who are in Christ is the law of love:

**<sup>8</sup> If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well: (Jms 2:8 - KJV).**

And that's what James is talking about. He is saying the fruit of salvation is love. This is evidenced by taking care of widows and orphans (1:27); not showing favoritism to the rich (Jms 2:1-4) and taking care of those without food or clothes (James 2:14-16).

He isn't talking about salvation here. There is nothing about the cross, ordinances, repentance, priesthood, the law of Moses, baptism, tithing, etc.... He is talking about relationships. He is saying that the fruit of being alive in Christ is love. If we do not have love for others, he is asking, are we truly alive in Christ?

If someone is alive in Christ, they will do good works as they are a new creation. We do good works from our salvation, not for our salvation (James 2:10). He is actually confronting those who say they are of Christ and yet live a life of uncaring towards others and total selfishness. We would both agree that continuing in sin and not caring of others is not of God.

**For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.. (Gal 5:13).**

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

- 1 Jn 4:8 - KJV

It's all about love.

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### **(iii) But Jesus Said to “Be Ye Perfect” - Mt 5:48**

Didn't Jesus himself say we should strive to be perfect? Not that any of us are, but that we should work to that endeavor? Because it says:

**48 Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.**

So what does Jesus mean? The key here is the word “therefore.” A good axiom is that wherever Scripture uses the word “therefore,” we need to ask ourselves, “What is it there for?” Because “therefore” implies a context. So let's look at this context:

**43 Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. 44 But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; 45 That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. 46 For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? 47 And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so? 48 Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.**

Let's list what Jesus says in context:

- Love your enemies
- Pray for those who persecute you
- Don't just love those who are good but love those who do you wrong (v. 44), are evil (v. 45) and your enemies (v. 44).

What is being “perfect”? It's to love not just that we like and enjoy but those people we can't stand and are our enemies. Jesus' words about being perfect are all about love.

And this fits the greater context. The Sermon on the Mount is not a treatise on how to be saved/exalted, but rather paints a picture of what love looks like. It's all about relationships.

To confirm that this is the valid interpretation, we look at the Sermon on the Plain in Luke which is the same sermon Jesus preached with a different audience and some slight variation. But the core teaching is the same (Lk 6:35-37).

<p><sup>43</sup>Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy.</p> <p><sup>44</sup>But I say unto you, <b>Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;</b></p> <p><sup>45</sup>That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.</p> <p><sup>46</sup>For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?</p> <p><sup>47</sup>And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so?</p> <p><sup>48</sup><b>Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.</b></p>	<p><sup>32</sup>For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them.</p> <p><sup>33</sup>And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same.</p> <p><sup>34</sup>And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again.</p> <p><sup>35</sup>But <b>love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again;</b> and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil.</p> <p><sup>36</sup><b>Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.</b></p>
<b>Matthew 5:43-48</b>	<b>Luke 6:32-36</b>

Same exact teaching. Loving and doing to your enemies. Being kind to the unrighteous, the ungrateful and the evil (v. 35). And how does Jesus end this teaching?

<sup>36</sup> **Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.**

This is the same teaching that we read about in Matthew.

<sup>48</sup> **Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.**

Being “merciful” and being “perfect” are the same. They are synonymous in what he was trying to teach.

The context is clear. What Jesus is advocating is a mature love, one that goes beyond just loving those who are easy and those we like. Even the ungodly do that.

But the life of the Godly is marked by loving our enemies, our persecutors, and even those who are just plain evil. It's an act of great mercy which flows from great love.

It isn't about moral perfection. Or being perfect. But about loving perfectly. With maturity.

## **B) Jesus Alone or Jesus + Joseph + (Works)**

Ok, back to the core root of salvation as taught by the Bible and salvation taught by Mormonism. The first thing was that the Bible teaches grace, not works.

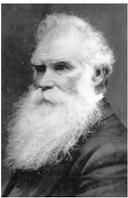
And secondly that salvation is through Jesus Christ alone.

Jesus says this:

**Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.**" (Acts 4:12).

**If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.** (Rom 10:9)

But the LDS church teaches a different gospel, one through Joseph Smith. It is an addition:



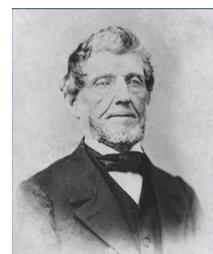
*"Every man and woman must have the certificate of Joseph Smith, junior, as a passport to their entrance into the mansion where God and Christ are."*

-Orson Pratt, member of then Quorum of 12, Journal of Discourses Vol 7, p

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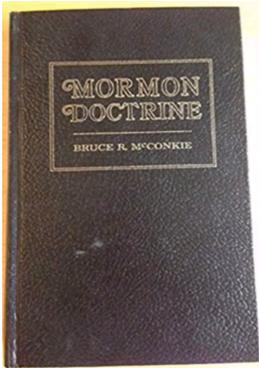
"Believe in God, believe in Jesus, and believe in Joseph his Prophet, and in Brigham his successor. And I add, "If you will believe in your heart and confess with your mouth **that Jesus is the Christ, that**



**Joseph was a Prophet, and that Brigham was his successor, you shall be saved** in the kingdom of God," which I pray, in the name of Jesus may be the case. Amen."

- Joseph Young (elder brother of Brigham Young-Council of 50), Journal of Discourse, Vol 6, pg 229

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"There is no salvation outside of the church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints"

-Bruce R. McConkie, Mormon Doctrine, 2nd Edition

Mormonism teaches that salvation is through the church, and through the approval of Jesus Christ, and of Good works. The Bible teaches salvation is through faith in Christ alone.

If you study healing in the Bible, it wasn't their godliness that brought, but faith in Christ (Acts 3:12). If you look at the place of righteousness, it was through faith in Christ (Romans, Galatians). If you look anywhere, it teaches that all we have in God is through faith in Christ alone. Not through the church. And not through Joseph Smith.

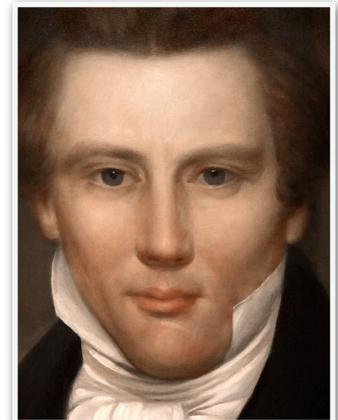
But Joseph Smith says this:

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*"I am learned, and know more than all the world put together"*

- Joseph Smith (*History of the Church*, Vol 6, p 408-409)

***"I have more to boast of than any man had. I am the only man that has ever been able to keep a whole church together"***



*since the days of Adam. A large majority of the whole have stood by me. **Neither Paul, John, Peter, nor Jesus ever did it.** I boast that no man ever did such work as I. The followers of Jesus ran away from Him; but the Latter-day Saints never ran away from me yet."*

- Joseph Smith (*History of the Church*, vol 6, pp 408-09)

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Joseph Smith says he is better than Jesus. If Jesus is God in flesh as the Bible says (John 1:1), isn't that deeply troubling to you? And church leaders saying that salvation is through Jesus + Joseph Smith+ works?

The Bible says Jesus and Jesus alone. No others.

So we have looked at the nature and character of God (He is God alone, there are no others - Isaiah 43-45), Jesus (the Son of God - John 1:1), and other things such as eternity, sin and salvation. Huge issues. But there's an issue. You have been taught over and over and over.

'We can't trust the Bible.'

Can I ask you Elders Young and White, is this because you have studied and found this to be the case? Or is it because you are told to believe this and not study it for yourselves?

## 5) You are Told You can't Trust the Bible.

The LDS teaching says that the Bible has lost "plain and precious truths" and that it is only good "as it is translated correctly." Although no one ever says tells you what parts are translated correctly or incorrectly. Or when these "plain and precious truths" were lost. Because there is overwhelming evidence to affirm the reliability of the Bible.

So let's look at this. Why can we trust in and rely upon the translation of the Old Testament Scriptures?

### The Validation of the Old Testament

**1) *The Dead Sea Scrolls*** - In 1946/7 the Dead Sea Scrolls were found in the Qumran Caves in southern Israel. It was perhaps one of the most amazing discoveries of the times as they contained parts from almost the entirety of the Old Testament (missing only the book of Esther). These scrolls dated from the 3rd Century BC to 1st Century BC/AD.

These were incredibly significant as they were almost 1000 years older than any other manuscript that had previously been found. So the question was, had the words of the Old Testament been faithfully preserved through the centuries?

Because if it wasn't the same, then that would create problems that said that the texts had been changed or not translated correctly. Scholars around the world studied the texts intensely. The verdict came in. The transmission of the text was astonishing and the results were a resounding Yes! The text had been faithfully preserved! Only a very small percentage was different and those were minor issues such as small variants of how a name was spelled (like "Jon" as opposed to "John").

The Isaiah scroll is perhaps the most famous because of its sheer size and preservation. I actually have seen the Isaiah scroll in person. It's quite spectacular.



*The Isaiah Scroll - Dead Sea Scrolls*

So we do have strong reason to believe that the Old Testament Scriptures were well-preserved and translation based on the Dead Sea Scrolls, but there's more.

## 2) Josephus affirmed the Canon of the Old Testament

Josephus (AD 37-100) was one of the most well-known first century historians. He affirmed the historicity and canonicity of the Old Testament.

*“We have but twenty-two [books] containing the history of all time, books that are justly believed in; and of these, five are the books of Moses, which comprise the law and earliest traditions from the creation of mankind down to his death. From the death of Moses to the reign of Artaxerxes, King of Persia, the successor of Xerxes, the prophets who succeeded Moses wrote the history of the events that occurred in their own time, in thirteen books. The remaining four documents comprise hymns to God and practical precepts to men”* (William Whiston, trans., Flavius Josephus against Apion, Vol. I, in Josephus, Complete Works, Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1960, p. 8).

The folks over at Blue Letter Bible point out the significant of this quote<sup>15</sup>:

1. *Josephus includes the same three divisions of the Hebrew Scripture, as had the Prologue to Ecclesiasticus and Philo.*
2. *He limits the number of canonical books in these three divisions to twenty-two. This would be the same as the current twenty-four – Ruth was attached to Judges, and Lamentation attached to Jeremiah.*
3. *He says there has been no more authoritative writings since the reign of Artaxerxes, son of Xerxes (464-424 B.C.). This is the same time of Malachi – the last book in the Old Testament.*  
*We know that Artaxerxes ruled for forty years. Ezra came to Jerusalem in the seventh year of his rule. The Bible says:*  
*Ezra arrived in Jerusalem in the fifth month of the seventh year of the king ([Ezra 7:8](#)).*  
*Nehemiah came in his twentieth year:*  
*In the month of Nisan in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, when wine was brought for him, I took the wine and gave it to the king. I had not been sad in his presence before ([Nehemiah 2:1](#)).*  
*Therefore the last canonical books were composed in this period.*

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<sup>15</sup> <https://blogs.blueletterbible.org/blb/2012/05/29/josephus-historical-evidence-of-the-old-testament-canon/>

4. *Between the time of Malachi and Josephus' writing (425 B.C. to A.D. 90) no additional material were added to the canon of Scripture. Consequently there was the notion of a long period of time without a divinely authoritative Word from God.*

Josephus goes on to say that the Jewish people willingly died to preserve their sacred writings (ibid, pg 609). He also mentions there were other writings but they had no validity (*Against Apion 1:41*),

But let's continue.

**3) Jesus himself Affirmed the Old Testament** - Jesus himself affirmed the authenticity and preservation of the Old Testament. Let's look at how he treated the teachings of Isaiah. Here are some things he said:

**<sup>7</sup>You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you:**

**<sup>8</sup>"These people honor me with their lips,  
but their hearts are far from me.  
<sup>9</sup>They worship me in vain;  
their teachings are merely human rules."**

- Matthew 15:7-9; cf. Mark 7:6

**<sup>16</sup>He [Jesus] went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read, <sup>17</sup>and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written:**

**<sup>18</sup>"The Spirit of the Lord is on me,  
because he has anointed me  
to proclaim good news to the poor.  
He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners  
and recovery of sight for the blind,  
to set the oppressed free,**

- Luke 4:16-18

These Scriptures are affirmed as translated correctly by the Dead Sea Scrolls, which may have even been an older scroll than what Jesus used (or who knows? Maybe the same!). Jesus used these Scriptures and affirmed that he was the one whom Isaiah spoke about.

So did Jesus just affirm the writings and teachings of Isaiah? He actually affirmed more than that.

After he rose from the dead, he was walking along the road to Emmaus talking with two men. They were downcast as they didn't understand why Jesus died. They had hoped he was their deliverer, the one who would redeem Israel (Luke 24:21).

**“we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel. And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place. <sup>22</sup>In addition, some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning <sup>23</sup>but didn't find his body. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive. <sup>24</sup>Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but they did not see Jesus.”**

**<sup>25</sup>He said to them, “How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! <sup>26</sup>Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?” <sup>27</sup>And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.”**

- Luke 24:21-27

The disciples on the road to Emmaus testify that Jesus used Moses and the Prophets to explain all the things concerning himself.

#### **4) The Disciples and Apostles Affirmed the Old Testament**

The disciples of Jesus and the apostles affirmed the Old Testament constantly. There are thousands of quotes and allusions in almost every book of the New Testament. From the fulfillment of Jesus in the Prophets and Psalms to the teaching of grace and faith in the words of Paul that reference Abraham. There is no doubt that the early church affirmed the authority and preservation of the Old Testament.

But what about the New Testament? How can we trust that? This too is **absolutely essential that you understand**. I can't make that statement strong enough.

## **The Validation of the New Testament**

You can have great confidence in the truths and teachings of the Bible. In fact, the validity and transmission of the New Testament has no equal in the world of "textual criticism," evaluating texts.

### **1) How it is Translated**

Some faiths today say that the Bible is a translation of a translation of a translation. This could not be further from the truth and no scholar, atheist or Christian believes otherwise.

It's so absurd that you can literally take a Greek class and translate the Bible for yourself, because the manuscripts used for translation are online. [Here](#).<sup>16</sup>

Bible translators use the oldest manuscripts available and translate directly from those Scriptures.

### **2) Manuscript evidence.**<sup>17</sup>

Scholars call the number of evidential manuscripts for the New Testament an "embarrassment of riches."

- We have manuscripts within decades of the original (P51, P46).
- We have 5500 Greek NT mss.<sup>18</sup>
- By end of 2nd century in Latin. Since Latin was so popular 10,000 Latin mss

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<sup>16</sup> <https://www.csntm.org> - founded in 2002 based in Plano, digitally preserve all Greek NT mss and provide free for all time - [csntm.org](https://www.csntm.org) - Digitized 500,000 pages of NT mss, discover more than 90 NT mss

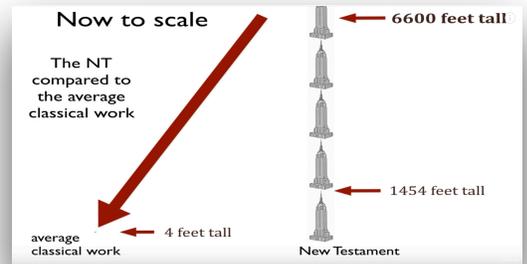
<sup>17</sup> Danial Wallace Presentation - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zZ5cgQUJnrl>

<sup>18</sup> Münster Institute official catalog, 90% of all discovered greek mss - <https://ntvmr.uni-muenster.de/>

And let's imagine for a minute that every single Biblical Greek manuscript was burned up in a fire. We would still be good. Because we can reconstruct the entirety of the New Testament many times over because there are over 1,000,000+ quotations by the early church pastors, elders, theologians and leaders. It would be like today if Bibles were banned, we could still reconstruct the Bible from the commentaries, sermons, books, etc...

Compare this to ancient Greek classical writers.

- Avg classical Gk writer has less than 15 copies of their works still in existence
- Stack them and they're 4 feet high



Number of NT MSS

- Equivalent of 4 1/2 NYC empire state building

Well-known Greco-Roman Historians / Biographers. And yet the first manuscript evidence dates hundred of years and sometimes a millennium away from the original.

- Pliny the Elder: 700 years
- Plutarch: 800 years
- Josephus: 1200 years
- Pausanias: 1400 years
- Herodutus' Histories: 1500 years
- Xeonphon's Hellenica: 1800 years



Daniel Wallace is a leading New Testament scholar and presents the substantial evidence here.

The New Testament has about 1000x more evidential manuscripts than the average classical author, and comes as much as 1000 years earlier than the avg classical author.

There is substantial, and I mean substantial evidence to believe in the reliability of the New Testament Scriptures.

But I want to challenge you to read the New Testament. Not through Mormon glasses but as if you were a child and no one had told you what to believe.

But now to be fair, let's look at the Book of Mormon from several different angles.

### **3) Substantial Archaeological Validation**

The Bible is THE book for archeologists in Israel and the surrounding areas. The peoples mentioned, the battles, the locations, etc... match with what is found. One barely has to dig into Israeli soil to find such artifacts. Thousands of discoveries are still being made and they are still validating the Bible.

The same is true with the botany, the metals used, the animals, the plants, etc.... All affirm the validity of the Scripture.

### **4) Fulfilled Prophecy**

The Bible makes stunning prophecies by the hundreds that came to be fulfilled. The most important are those about Jesus. These are very specific prophecies—where he would be born, how he would die, that he would raise again. These are powerful in showing that the Bible is true and can be trusted.

## **6) You said that in 200 years the Book of Mormon has never been proven as anything but true.**

Elder White, this is something you brought up. The authority, preservation and reliability of the Book of Mormon. But I think there are important questions that many of us have.

You were the one who asked, so I am going to answer. I have 10 such questions. You probably don't want to read these. Just saying.

### **Question #1 - No Originals?**

From the get-go we have an issue. According to Joseph Smith the golden plates written in "reformed Egyptian" and were given to him. No one has ever heard of "reformed Egyptian" outside of the Mormon church but we'll continue.

He said he translated the Book of Mormon and they were then taken back to heaven by the angel Moroni. So we don't have anything to go on there. No original plates. No drawings or copies or anything.

There is supposedly three witnesses. But those witnesses recanted their testimony in the end and Joseph Smith actually denounced them as wicked and evil and they were excommunicated.<sup>19</sup> Martin Harris even admitted he didn't see the plates physically but with his "second sight."

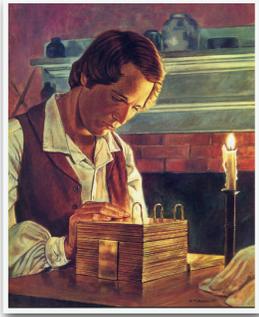
### **Question #2- The Translation Process?**

Some sources say he translated the Scripture from the golden plates. Then there's the Urim and Thummim. But then other sources say he took the seer stone he found in a well, he put it in a hat and looked at it and was given word-for-word translation.

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<sup>19</sup> Joseph Smith said Dec 16, 1838, "Such characters as McLellin, John Witmer, David Witmer, Oliver Cowdry, and Martin Harris are too mean to mention; and we had liked to have forgotten them." History of the Church, Vol 3, p232 ; Also read Rough Stone Rolling by an LDS leader,

These are two different depictions of how he translated.



OR?



So which is it? Most modern day Mormon leaders say he did not translate from golden plates, but rather by looking at a seer stone in a hat. So why did he need the golden plates at all if this was the case?

### **Question #3 - Unable to Reproduce what Was Lost?**

Martin Harris who paid him to translate the plates and served as his scribe, took some of the translated pages home. Lucy Harris who was skeptical of Joseph then hid the pages to see if Joseph could translate them again. Martin was furious but couldn't find the translated pages.

When Martin went back to Joseph, Joseph said God told him he was mad for letting Martin Harris borrow the pages, and so he wasn't going to be told the revelation from the plate of Lehi again. But he would still allow a translation from Nephi, but it would be written differently.<sup>20</sup> So again, no confirmation of that which is written. And is this the character of God?

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<sup>20</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lost\\_116\\_pages](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lost_116_pages) - While Wikipedia certainly isn't the final authority, this article contains the references so rather than repeating all of them, I've included the link here.

## Issue #4 - THE Kinderhook PLATES

Could Joseph Smith actually translate “reformed Egyptian” as he claimed?

Three men in 1843 forged what are called “the kinder hook plates” to test Joseph to see if he could translate “reformed egyptian.”

They were sent to Joseph in Nauvoo and he translated them. They were not considered Scripture for LDS but his translation was considered authentic.

Joseph says this:

*I have translated a portion of [the plates] and find they contain the history of the person with whom they were found. He was a descendant of Ham, through the loins of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and that he received his kingdom from the ruler of heaven and earth.<sup>21</sup>*

It was later discovered that the kinderhook plates were a complete hoax. They showed 19th century metal and the etching was nitric-acid based. Also small dents on the plate were made by a hexagonal tool showing clearly that this was not ancient material but rather a 19th century fabrication. So can we trust his translation if he falsely translated a hoax?

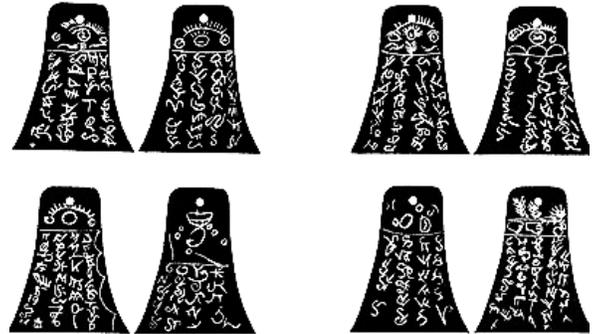
## Issue #5 - THE BOOK OF ABRAHAM

This is perhaps the most documented problematic event by the LDS church. In 1835 the church purchased some ancient Egyptian papyri. Joseph Smith was brought the papyri as he claimed he could read “Reformed Egyptian.” He acquired the papyri and did two things:

- 1) He translated it from Egyptian into English. (These comments are dated soon after receiving the papyri in 1835). Joseph says this:

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<sup>21</sup> History of the Church, Vol. 5, p. 372.



a) "I commenced the translation of some of the characters or hieroglyphics, and much to our joy found that one of the rolls contained the writings of Abraham, another the writings of Joseph of Egypt, etc."<sup>22</sup>

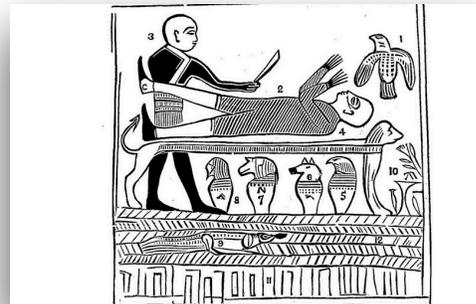
b) "The remainder of this month, I was continually engaged in translating an alphabet to the Book of Abraham, and arranging a grammar of the Egyptian language as practiced by the ancients."<sup>23</sup>

c) "This after noon labored on the Egyptian alphabet, in company with bro. O. Cowdery and W. W. Phelps: the System of astronomy was unfolded."<sup>24</sup>

d) "exhibited the alphabet of the ancient records to Mr Holmes and some others"<sup>25</sup>

In his own words he said he was "translating" the plates. You can double check this online in the Joseph Smith Papers.

2) He also filled in the blanks of the drawing. This is the facsimile (copy) and how he filled it in.



He stated in his translation that this is a depiction of Abraham sacrificing his son and was a very important document. A translation of the Egyptian writing on the sides was then given by Joseph Smith. We have the actual facsimile (copy).

At the time this provoked wonderment in Joseph Smith's ability. Since no one could read Egyptian at the time, there was no way to confirm or deny his translation.

<sup>22</sup> History of the Church, Vol 2:236

<sup>23</sup> (DHC Vol. 2:238 for July 1835; written in the year 1843)

<sup>24</sup> (Diary of Joseph Smith, October 1, 1835, p.3; also in DHC Vol. 2:286)

<sup>25</sup> (Diary of Joseph Smith, November 17, 1835, p. 45; DHC Vol. 2:316)

After a time the papyri was lost. It was thought to have been burned up in the Chicago fire. But on the contrary it was later found in a museum. It was verified to be the papyri that Joseph used to translate the Egyptian. The LDS church bought it back.

Since the time scholars had finally cracked the code on Egyptian thanks to the Rosetta Stone. They were now able to read Egyptian hieroglyphs.

There was tremendous excitement in the LDS church as this would prove once for all that Joseph was who he said he was. And that he could faithfully translate Egyptian.

Egyptologists, both Mormon and non-Mormon were brought in. Excitement mounted and the LDS publications waited on edge.



What it really would have looked like according to other hieroglyphs.

*The little volume of Scripture known as the Book of Abraham will someday be recognized as one of the most remarkable documents in existence. It is evident that writings of Abraham while he was in Egypt, of which our printed Book of Abraham is a copy, must of necessity be older than original text of Genesis...*<sup>26</sup>

- Dr. Sidney Sperry

And then the big reveal. Except that it wasn't a big reveal. The Book of Abraham was not the book of Abraham, but the papyrus was actually a funerary text from the 3rd BC to 1 BC, not Abraham's time. And the drawing he filled in was not accurate to the times or text.

Nothing at all of Joseph's translation was correct. He had completely made-up a translation and defrauded the people into believing he could translate the text.

The LDS church has kept it quiet. Although they do discuss it on their website:

*"None of the characters on the papyrus fragments mentioned Abraham's name or any of the events recorded in the book of Abraham. Latter-day Saint and non-Latter-day Saint*

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<sup>26</sup> (Dr. Sidney B. Sperry, *Ancient Records Testify in Papyrus and Stone*, 1938, p. 83, quoted from *Mormonism: Shadow or Reality*, p. 294)

*Egyptologists agree that the characters on the fragments do not match the translation given in the book of Abraham"*<sup>27</sup>

Now the standard narrative response is to say that Joseph did not have 100% of the papyri (which is true). But even if he had only 1% of the papyri, we have the copies of his notes that you can see in his letters that correspond directly, and systematically (left to right as ancient scripts were written) and the hieroglyphs corresponding to Joseph's notes. You can even check this out for yourself.



Now the church has tried to justify why this doesn't matter. But the arguments in my opinion fall flat. Joseph clearly proclaimed that he was able to translate Egyptian. He said it was Egyptian. He said he translated these plates. Yet, none of it corresponds. So how can someone trust a translation from a seer stone in a hat when he the translation of the Book of Abraham was clearly made up?

## **Issue #6 - Joseph Smith Continues to Get Updated Revelation regarding Polygamy?**

This is all in the Gospel Topics Essays on the LDS website:

- A. He spoke against polygamy while practicing it
- B. Changing revelation
  1. He received a revelation that he must practice polygamy. He was hesitant but he "obeyed."
  2. Originally he said the revelation meant had to have Emma's permission to take on additional wives. After 4, she said no more.

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<sup>27</sup> <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/gospel-topics-essays/translation-and-historicity-of-the-book-of-abraham?lang=eng>

3. He then received new revelation that because Emma was being disobedient to the revelation, he no longer needed her permission
  4. He also had revelation that she had to accept polygamy and could not marry anyone else or she would be damned
- C. He married 30-40 wives from age 14 (when he was 36 y/o) to ages 56
- D. 11 of the women he married **were married to other men**, some of whom were on a mission for the church
- E. He believed for men that "heaven" is polygamy with eternal sex and endless wives. Women then had to share their husbands with other women and be eternally pregnant.

These things are disturbing to me. Revelation kept changing. He married many others which the LDS website says his wife Emma didn't even know about. He said God told him he had to marry other men's wives???

### **Question #7 - Where are the Museums of Artifacts?**

There has been no archeological evidence for the Book of Mormon. The cities, the peoples, the battles, etc... have no artifacts. The LDS leaders state that certainly there is evidence of ancient peoples in America.

Yes. That's true. But they do not correlate with what we read about in the Book of Mormon. There are no artifacts from any battles where tens of thousands were said to die on Hill Cumorah. Or of the ancient peoples talked about.

Furthermore we read many anachronisms. These are things that appear before their time. It would be like saying Moses used a cell phone to organize the Revolutionary War. Many of these anachronisms exist in the Book of Mormon. That's a whole study in and of itself. You can do but the research.

So let's look at where we are at so far:

Book of Mormon	Bible
No golden plates available.	Thousands and thousands of pieces of manuscript evidence.
Was unable to reproduce parts of the Book of Mormon when Lucy Harris hid the translation.	Reproducible today by anyone willing to study the language and read the texts.
Kinderhook Plates Hoax	Translated affirmed by Dead Sea Scrolls
Book of Abraham - Completely fabricated translation and drawing	Translated affirmed by Jesus, Dead Sea Scrolls and textual evidence
No archaeological evidence of cities, events, and places that are found. No museums full of artifacts.	Tens of thousands of artifacts filling museums. The Bible is the central focus of Israel archaeology today.

So which book can we rely upon and have confidence in? Then I have some other questions.

### **Question #8 - The Book of Mormon and the Tenants of LDS Doctrine Keep Changing (even recently)**

Many things keep changing in LDS teachings about the Scripture and LDS beliefs. But LDS Scriptures say God is unchanging (although remember it's also taught he was just a man like we are.) He says,

*"By these things we know that there is a God in heaven, who is infinite and eternal, from everlasting to everlasting the same unchangeable God..." D&C 20:17*

*"From eternity to eternity he is the same, and his years never fail..." D&C 76:4*

*"the Lord Omnipotent who reigneth, who was, and is from all eternity to all eternity..." Mosiah 3:5,*

*"God is not a partial God, neither a changeable being; but he is unchangeable from all eternity to all eternity. Moroni 8:18*

This sounds more like the Biblical God. That he is everlasting and unchanging.

The point is there is much teaching on his unchangeable nature. Yet there is much change in the LDS church. And continues to be change.

"Eternal" Things	Updated Version
<p><b>Trinity of 3 in one:</b></p> <p>1822-1834 - Joseph taught monotheism - one God of three parts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The BOM</li> <li>• The testimony of the three witnesses</li> <li>• Book of Commandments 24:13-18</li> <li>• Book of Moses</li> <li>• 1832 Account of the First Vision</li> <li>• Lectures of Faith #3, pg 48 (1832-1833) - "The Father being a <u>personage of spirit</u>... [and] the Son, who was in the bosom of the Father, a <u>personage of tabernacle</u>, [and] possessing the same mind with the Father, which mind is the Holy Spirit, and <u>these three are one</u>..."</li> </ul> <p><i>And Zeezrom said unto him: Thou sayest there is a true and living God? Yea, there is a true and living God. <u>Is there more than one God? No. How knows these things. An angel hath made them known to me</u>...Now Zeezrom saith again unto him: "Is the Son of God the very Eternal Father? Yeah, he is the very Eternal Father of heaven and earth..."</i></p> <p>- Alma 11:26-31, 38-40</p>	<p><b>Two and Three Separate Deities:</b></p> <p>1835-1838 - Joseph taught that two personages formed God</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• D&amp;C 20:28</li> <li>• Book of commandments 24:18</li> <li>• Lectures in Faith #5</li> </ul> <p>1939 - on - Joseph taught a plurality of gods</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Abraham 4 and 5</li> <li>• LDS temple ceremony</li> <li>• D&amp;C 121:32</li> </ul> <p>(Charts from Shawn McCraney's <u>Born Again Mormon</u>)</p> <p><i>"According to that which was ordained in the midst of the Council of the Eternal God of all other gods before this world was..."</i> - D&amp;C 131:32</p> <p><i>"I will preach on the <u>plurality of Gods</u>... I have always declared God to be a distinct personage, Jesus Christ a separate and distinct personage from God the Father, and that the Holy Ghost was a distinct personage and a Spirit: and <u>these three constitute three distinct personages and three Gods</u>."</i></p> <p><i>—Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 370</i></p>

"Eternal" Things	Updated Version
<p><b>Blacks in the Priesthood</b> - Blacks are the curse of God and cannot be part of the priesthood -</p> <p><i>"There is a reason why one man is born black and with other disadvantages, while another is born white with great advantages. The reason is that we once had an estate before we came here, and were obedient; more or less, to the laws that were given us there. Those who were faithful in all things there [pre-existence] received greater blessings here, and those who were not faithful received less ... There were no neutrals in the war in Heaven. All took sides either with Christ or with Satan. Every man had his agency there, and men receive rewards here based upon their actions there, just as they will receive rewards hereafter for deeds done in the body. The Negro, evidently, is receiving the reward he merits."</i> (Joseph Fielding Smith, <i>Doctrines of Salvation</i>, vol. 1 pp. 61, 65-66)</p> <p><i>Cain was cursed with a dark skin; he became the father of the negroes, and those spirits who are not worthy to receive the priesthood are born through that lineage ... Cain, Ham, and the whole negro race have been cursed with a black skin, the mark of Cain, so they can be identified as a caste apart, a people with whom the other descendants of Adam should not intermarry</i></p> <p>(Bruce R. McConkie, <i>Mormon Doctrine</i>, pp. 109, 114, 527-528; 1966 original edition, later changed after the 1978 black revelation change).</p>	<p>1978 Blacks can be part of the priesthood. Teachings were not disavowed until 2013. (And almost 200 years teaching is disavowed, does that not break prophetic succession? And what else will one day be disavowed? )</p>
<p><b>Intermarriage to a black person is the death penalty.</b></p> <p><i>"Shall I tell you the law of God in regard to the African race? <u>If the white man who belongs to the chosen seed mixes his blood with the seed of Cain [black people], the penalty, under the law of God, is death on the spot. This will always be.</u>"</i> (Brigham Young, <i>Journal of Discourses</i>, vol. 10, p. 110)</p>	<p>It's Ok now. That's all disavowed.</p>

"Eternal" Things	Updated Version
<p><b>You would be damned if you didn't practice polygamy.</b> Polygamy was for "all time" (Brigham Young, Journal of Discourses, vol 3, pg 266)</p>	<p>Because the US government stood against polygamy, the church changes its practices (though still practiced in secret)</p>
<p><b>Book of Mormon says Polygamy was wrong:</b> Jacob 2:24 - <i>"Behold, David and Solomon truly had many wives and concubines, which thing was abominable before," says the Lord.</i></p>	<p>Polygamy was commanded (D&amp;C 132) and then politically set aside for the US government.</p>
<p><b>1830 version of the BoM</b>, although it was purported to be translated "word for word" and that Joseph Smith couldn't move on to the next word until he got the word he was working on correct.</p>	<p>Current BoM - At least 4000 changes— significant changes (see them at <a href="http://utlm.org">utlm.org</a>) - See samples below.</p> <p>Example:  <b>1830</b>          "And the angel said unto me, behold the Lamb of God, yea, even the <b>Eternal Father!</b>"          - 1 Nephi 11:21 (pg. 25)</p> <p><b>Present</b>          "And the angel said unto me: Behold the Lamb of God, yea, even <b>the Son of The Eternal Father.</b>"          1 Neph 11:21</p>
<p><b>Temple ceremonies were eternal and forever</b></p>	<p>1990 temple ceremonies removed things like anointing (touching) private areas, the thumb drawn against the neck as a sacred oath, the 5 points of fellowship, the Christian preacher being mocked and more.</p>
<p><b><u>One First Vision</u></b></p>	<p>So many "first vision" accounts that the LDS site says approximately 4+ (and they contradict each other)</p>
<p><b>Updated text:</b> "white and delightsome " - Has always been about the black people are a curse, but they would turn white if they followed the Book of Mormon</p>	<p>Changed Book of Mormon to "pure and delightsome" from 1981 on for racism purposes. If the BOM was translated word for word, why did this need to change?</p>
<p><b>Word of Wisdom</b> says no hot drinks as they are bad for the stomach.</p>	<p>Updated today and was caffeinated drinks, now Coke is Ok where it didn't use to be and more. Keeps changing.</p>

If God is unchanging, why does God keep changing his practices? And if the Book of Mormon was “word for word” translated directly from God, why is it so different today from the 1830 version? And why can one change any word if Joseph Smith ‘couldn’t move on until he get each word perfect’?

### **Question #9 - Why does The Book of Mormon borrow so much from other sources?**

#### **1) KJV Usage**

It’s undeniable that Joseph Smith used large portions of the 1769 KJV Scriptures for the Book of Mormon.<sup>28</sup> It is word for word in large volumes (20 chapters in Isaiah alone), with occasional changes thrown in.

To accomplish such a feat, it would have to be

- A. A miracle of God to have so much word-for-word content
- B. Joseph copied it in creating his own book of faith.

Let’s take the first option. Is this a good argument? That it was God who gave him so much?

Translator explanation notes are copied.

In the 1769 version the translators put some explanatory notes in italics to clarify the meaning. It was put in italics so as to differentiate from the translation. When Joseph Smith made his translation, he actually copied these translator notes and put them as text. How is that the Word of God? How would that even be needed or possible?

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<sup>28</sup> This is the best side by side comparison. Sorry but no LDS sites publish this so I had to make an exception. <http://www.mormonismdisproved.org/plagiarism.html>

Here's an example:

Malachi 3:10 (KJV)

...and pour you out a blessing, that **there shall** not **be room** enough **to receive it**.

3 Nephi 24:10

...and pour you out a blessing that **there shall** not **be room** enough **to receive it**

That's 7 words! The odds of that "just happening" have got to be about a trillion to one.

Also Joseph copied Isaiah and at places changed verses as we have previously noted. But these changes are not supported in any way by what was found in the Dead Sea Scrolls.

## 2) Other Sources The Book of Mormon is Borrow From<sup>29</sup>

A) View of the Hebrews - This storyline from the Book of Mormon copies this book quite well, and this book was published prior to the Book of Mormon

B) Joseph Smith's father had a revelation in 1811, and Joseph claims a similar revelation

C) The geography has 20 names of cities very similar to the area around where Joseph Smith grew up.

D) The First Book of Napoleon has striking similarities with the Book of Mormon, and again was written earlier.

E) Islam. Yes. It's astonishing how many similarities there are between Mormonism and Islam.<sup>30</sup>

MODERN GEOGRAPHIC PLACE	BOOK OF MORMON NAME
Alma	Alma, Valley of
Antrim	Antum
Antioch	Ani-Anti
Boaz	Boaz
Hellam	Helam
Jacobsburg	Jacobugath
Jerusalem	Jerusalem
Jordan	Jordan
Kishkimitas	Kishkumen
Lehigh	Lehi
Mantua	Manti
Moriantown	Morianton
Noah Lakes	Noah, Land of
Oneida	Onidah
Oneida Castle	Onidah, Hill
Rama	Ramah
Ripple Lake	Ripliancum, Waters of
Sodom	Sidom
Shiloh	Shilom
Sherbrooke	Shurr

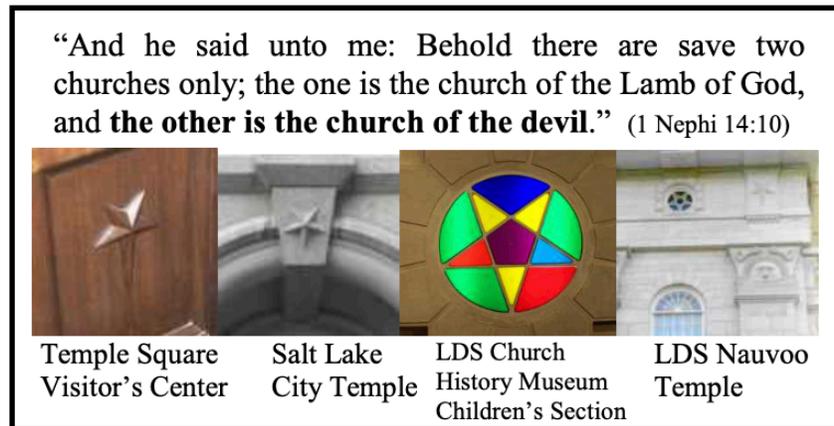
Source: Book of Mormon Authorship: A Closer Look, Vernal Holley

<sup>29</sup> Taken from the CES Letter. <https://cesletter.org/>

<sup>30</sup> Same beliefs: Visitation from angel, Bible supposedly prophesied their prophet, all previous faiths are wrong, married a young person, lying for the Lord is Ok, 5 Pillars of faith/5 declarations of faith, polygamy, salvation by works, heaven is eternal sex for men, the Bible is corrupted, The Bible supposedly is a translation of a translation of a translation (so not rue), not allowed to question their faith without strong repercussions.

## Question #9 - Masonic rituals and Satan symbols are in the temple. Is God a Mason?

The temple is a copy of Masonic rituals with its handshakes and words and ceremonies. But also the temple is filled with both Masonic symbols and rituals,<sup>31</sup> as well as Satanic symbols such as the Pentagram<sup>32</sup>:



We know that Joseph Smith was a 32nd degree mason. MUCH of the temple ceremony is from free-masonry and a lot of it is verbatim from that ceremony. Same with the secret tokens and handshakes you guys learned in the temple.

Those are free masonry and the LDS church admits this. But says it's ok as there is a slightly different focus. But can it be that Joseph just copied these practices and modified them slightly just like he did the KJV Bible? That perhaps it wasn't revealed?

<sup>31</sup> <http://www.utlm.org/newsletters/pdfnewsletters/132saltlakecitymessenger.pdf>

<sup>32</sup> From <https://www.4mormon.org/>

## Questions 10: More Questions as in Your Own Leaders Say “The Dominant Narrative is NOT TRUE”???! (Video Link included)

Alright Elders Young and White, back to the beginning of your presentation. You said that Joseph Smith had a first vision in the Sacred Grove, meeting with God the Father and Jesus Christ who told him about the golden plates.

The deeper I look, the more issues that I find troubling. And you can actually read more on these in the Gospel Topics Essays on the LDS website. They aren't easy to find so click on them in the footnotes.<sup>33</sup> But here are some issues I read about there.

- 1) Multiple first vision accounts that have different ages for Joseph Smith and even different personages showing up .<sup>34</sup>
- 2) The fact that DNA analysis has shown that the Native American Indians were not descended of the Hebrew people as the Book of Mormon states, but rather came from Asia, in specific the Mongolian region.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> <https://abn.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/gospel-topics-essays?lang=eng>

<sup>34</sup> <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/gospel-topics-essays/first-vision-accounts?lang=eng>. - “In the 1832 version Joseph only mentions the appearance of Christ, while in the 1838 rendition he claims both the Father and the Son appeared. In the 1832 account he already knows all the churches are wrong, while in the 1838 story he says it never occurred to him that all were wrong until the two deities informed him of this fact” (<https://mit.irr.org/new-light-on-joseph-smiths-first-vision>)

<sup>35</sup> <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/gospel-topics-essays/book-of-mormon-and-dna-studies?lang=eng>

3) Specific prophecies unfulfilled. For example in 1835 Joseph says the end of the world would come in 56 years. That's specific. Deut 13:1-4 and 18:22 says that if a prophet's prophecies do not come true, they aren't a prophet.<sup>36</sup>

4) I'm reading the Book of Mormon as we agreed (still working on it). You agreed to read the New Testament. And I have to say I'm seeing issues in the Book of Mormon also.

There are a lot of good things taught in it. Although it's not very "Mormon" in the sense that a lot of the major mormon practices aren't there.

I honestly do have some questions. Like how can a headless person rise up on their hands and knees and struggle to breathe (Ether 15:30-31)?

*30 And it came to pass that when Coriantumr had leaned upon his sword, that he rested a little, he smote off the head of Shiz.*

*31 And it came to pass that after he had smitten off the head of Shiz, that Shiz raised up on his hands and fell, and after that he had struggled for breath, he died.*

I looked it up online and it says that this is "decerebrate posturing." I'm actually in the medical field so I know what this is and that it is a reflex.

First the reflex comes from the brain, so without a head, such a posture would be impossible. By it's nature it's a reflex.

Secondly, we wouldn't find a headless person struggling to breathe. The explanation is "If the person — as in Shiz's case — were face down, the body would

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<sup>36</sup> President Smith then stated that the meeting had been called, because God had commanded it; and it was made known to him by vision and by the Holy Spirit. . . . it was the will of God that they should be ordained to the ministry and go forth to prune the vineyard for the last time, for the coming of the Lord, which was nigh - even fifty six years should wind up the scene. (*History of the Church*, Vol. 2, page 182).

This prophecy was spoken by Joseph Smith in 1835, and recorded by Oliver Cowdery. The fifty-six years were passed by 1891. For more prophecies that didn't take place: <https://mit.irr.org/failed-prophecies-of-joseph-smith>

appear to rise up, with the neck bent backward and the face upraised.”<sup>37</sup> That’s the FAIR Mormon defense. But he had no face. ?? How could his face be upraised if he had no. head?

Third decerebrate posturing doesn’t look like someone trying to get on their hands and knees to breathe. I work with many who exhibit decerebrate posturing and this isn’t what it looks like.

Again, there’s more there, and as I read I find more issues. Things that don’t make sense. I’m all for miracles, but some things just don’t connect in the narrative.

5). Then LDS historians say things like this:

Read this excerpt from a faithful mormon and respected historian Richard Bushman, but better yet, watch him say it in person:

*Bushman: I think for the Church to remain strong it has to reconstruct its narrative. The dominant narrative is not true. It can’t be sustained. So the Church has to absorb all this new information or it will be on very shaky grounds, and that’s what it’s trying to do. And it will be a strain for a lot of people, uh older people especially. But I think I think it has to change. Uh, you know Elder Packer had the sense of “protecting the little people.” He felt like the scholars were an enemy to this faith, and there was the grandmothers living in Sanpete County. And that was that was a very lovely pastoral image. But the price of protecting the grandmothers was the loss of the grandsons. They, they got a story that didn’t work. So we’ve just had to change our narrative.*



Click to Listen.  
YouTube: Faithful Mormon historian Richard Bushman admits Mormon church leaders have been misleading members

So you can see Elder White and Elder Young why do I trust the Bible, yet have significant and notable issues trusting the Book of Mormon. Let’s continue with the Book of Mormon and the Bible.

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<sup>37</sup> [https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/answers/Question:\\_How\\_is\\_it\\_possible\\_for\\_Shiz,\\_after\\_he\\_had\\_been\\_beheaded,\\_to\\_raise\\_up\\_on\\_his\\_hands\\_and\\_struggle\\_for\\_breath%3F](https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/answers/Question:_How_is_it_possible_for_Shiz,_after_he_had_been_beheaded,_to_raise_up_on_his_hands_and_struggle_for_breath%3F)

## 7) Other Questions I Ponder

On a personal note, I'm bothered by some things I see taught. Again, don't read this if you don't want. This is the overflow of my own thoughts.

- 1) LDS are told that "when the prophet speaks, the thinking is done." That is significantly bothersome. The Bible tells us to love God with all our mind. The prophets do not always have a righteous history (look at the racism comments). Never stop thinking on your own. Please.
- 2) The centrality of truth comes from the church. But the Bible teaches it's not about the church or an organization. The church is the gathering of believers. The real question is about the nature of Jesus and his gospel. It isn't about whether the church is true or not, it's about Jesus and what he says about himself.
- 3) I heard a testimony the other day about a single mother who raised her daughter, but was devastated when she couldn't see her daughter get married because she was deemed "not worthy."

Who is the one "not worthy" here? This woman probably worked countless jobs and made many sacrifices to raise her daughter. And she is told she is "unworthy" to see her daughter get married? Yes, I know the temple is deemed "sacred." But there are other things sacred too. Like a mother who raises a daughter.

And "Worthiness" in general. There is only one who is worthy—Christ. We worship him alone. When you have to have rules to proclaim people as worthy or not, it creates a severe sense of inadequacy, guilt and shame in people, as well as pride, envy and competition. This does not produce the fruit of humility that God desires.

True humility comes when we recognize we are sinners in need of a Savior, and there is nothing we can do to contribute to our salvation. In fact, it is an insult to say that the death of Christ's wasn't enough.

- 4) As I write these things and post very minimal info on my blog, the LDS tracking system which is very real and admitted by the LDS church has been hitting my site like crazy. This is nuts.

Why track strangers? And worse, why feel the need to track your church members about every post to ensure it says nothing negative about the church? Really?<sup>38</sup> Truth fears nothing. Fear must control everything.

- 5) When I hear from LDS people, they talk about how busy they are. They are so busy they barely have time for their families. Even family night is scripted in and is "busy." Jesus "my yoke is easy and my burden is light" (Mt 11:30).
- 6) There' so much pressure to be "worthy." The Bible teaches no one is worthy except Jesus Christ. This pressure, along with the belief that the Telesstial heaven is so amazing people would commit suicide to go there, has to be a factor of the high suicide rate in Utah. With 70% professing Mormonism, in 2021 Mental Health America listed Utah was the worst state for suicidal ideation. Could it be the desperation people have when they know inside they are sinners who will never be "worthy enough"?
- 7) One takes an oath in the temple and you are supposed to pledge all your time, talent and resources to an organization, not to Jesus Christ. And you have to commit to saying the oaths prior to knowing anything about them. ??
- 8) Is the Church truly about Jesus Christ? Or is it about the organization and church body. I have a challenge for you. Count how many times Jesus is mentioned compared to Joseph Smith and the current day prophet. You can't count when a prayer is taken on as "in Jesus name" as that is not talking about Jesus except as an afterthought. Count it up. Tell me I'm wrong.
- 9) I'm bothered by a faith that promotes celestial sex (polygamy) and power (be a god, have your own planet) for men. And eternal pregnancy and women must share their husbands for women.

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<sup>38</sup> Strengthening the Members Committee is the name of the group that tracks online statements about the LDS. It says this: "The Strengthening Church Members Committee is a committee of general authorities of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints who monitor the publications of church members for possible criticism of local and general leaders of the church. If criticism is found, the committee may forward information to local church authorities, who may bring charges of apostasy, which can result in excommunication." [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Strengthening\\_Church\\_Members\\_Committee](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Strengthening_Church_Members_Committee)

This does not make heaven as the central place of honoring, giving thanks, praise and glory to God Almighty. The notion of every worthy man becomes a god and it's all about sex steals from the great, Almighty and only God of glory.

10) There is the belief generally taught that if the Mormon church isn't true, then no church is true. This leads to disaster when people start asking questions.

It isn't about whether the church is true or isn't true. That isn't even a question. The real question is about Jesus Christ. Is he God in flesh like he claims to be, the total Savior of our souls, and therefore worthy to be worshiped? Is the gospel the true gospel as we read there will be false gospels (Gal 1) and false Christs (2 Cor 11:4).

Yes, the church does really great things. And has created mandatory systems in place of attendance, duties and such that foster great relationships are formed. So much so that people do not even want the truth as they don't want to risk such great relationships.

Truly, the LDS people are amazing and some of the most respectful and kind you will ever meet. There's so much good. But good doesn't always mean of God.

When I list the things above, it seems like the church is the center, not Jesus Christ as the name suggests. It's more like the Church of the organization of the Latter Day Saints in the name of Jesus.

## Conclusion:

The deeper I dig into church history, even what is found on the LDS website under Gospel Topics Essays or in the Journals of Discourse and the History of the Church, I find the deviation from the Bible significant. And the history of the LDS church disturbing (much of what I didn't put in here<sup>39</sup>).

For me, the big ones are the clear fabrication of the translation of the Book of Abraham, the total mis-alignment of the true gospel of Jesus Christ saying the Bible is translated wrong but with no proof or support, and the clear borrowing and twisting of the Holy Bible, the blatant and horrific racism, the marrying of Joseph Smith to many women secretly and even to other men's wives... These in my opinion are not small issues.

Both of you guys are great guys, but I challenge to seriously think through what is believed and taught. Of course, the church has an answer to all the "issues" but for me, many of those answers can't hold water anymore than Shiz could hold up his face without a head.

But it's more than that. It's about what the Holy Scripture teaches.

**"Now there have been many of those priests, since death prevented them from continuing in office; but because Jesus lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood. Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them." (Hebrews 7:23-25)**

**"Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross" (Col 2:14).**

**<sup>4</sup> But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, <sup>5</sup> made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. <sup>6</sup> And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, <sup>7</sup> in order that in the coming ages he**

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<sup>39</sup> <https://gracedfollower.com/why%20I%20didn't%20become%20mormon>

**might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. <sup>8</sup> For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— <sup>9</sup> not by works, so that no one can boast. - Eph 2:8-9**

**<sup>16</sup> For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. <sup>17</sup> For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. (Jn 3:16-17)**

I want to simply ask you again if you are following the challenge we gave each other. I would read the Book of Mormon and you would read the New Testament. Start with John, Romans, Galatians, Ephesians and Hebrews if you don't have time initially.

Certainly you will have to take off for glasses and read it as a child, not as the LDS church tells you how to interpret the Scripture. Make sure to read with 20/20 vision, that means 20 verses before and 20 verses after so you are taking things within their proper context. I think you will be surprised by what you read if you read it with just letting the text speak for itself.

The LDS church does some great things. And they form great people who strive to be worthy. But at the same time I have to seriously question the gospel message that is preached and was put forth by Joseph Smith.

My concern for you is that when you find the truth, you will reject the lies but still believe the lie, "that there's no salvation outside the LDS church." I'm here to tell you that there is. Don't throw out Jesus. Just come to know him as he is and not as how you've been told.

My prayers are with both of you guys. It is my hope and desire that you will come to a knowledge of the truth of Jesus Christ as written in the Bible. He alone is worthy.

In Christ's Love,

One of His Followers

