The Mormon Dilemma



The gospel of Jesus Christ cannot be restored by changing the God it proclaims.

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Jesus Christ is Lord.

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Introduction

The gospel of Jesus Christ cannot be restored by changing the God it proclaims. Scripture declares the eternal God without an equal, the Creator on whom His creatures depend.[1] Jesus Christ is the Word who was with God and was God, through whom all things were made, and who became flesh.[2] Yet the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints teaches that every person has an eternal core and an inherited divine nature capable of development. Its canon promises the exalted that they will be gods, with “all power”.[3] The difference reaches beyond a shared religious word. Scripture gives life and glory to those God saves; the later teaching makes godhood the development of what we already are by divine origin and nature. It changes the distinction between the Creator and His creatures. That is a change of the God we worship and the Savior we trust, and it cannot be received as restored apostolic teaching.

The strongest answer is that the Bible itself calls others gods, promises likeness to God and grants believers a place with Christ on His throne. The church's essay says God's children will always worship Him. It presents their hope through God's grace and

Christ's Atonement, with obedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel.[3] But Psalm 82's gods stand under judgment and face death; John 10 defends the Son's claim without promising that everyone shares His divine nature. Revelation grants the redeemed a throne while keeping the whole creation in worship before God and the Lamb.[4] The biblical gift brings creatures into God's life and glory; it does not make them members of a divine family whose members have an uncreated core. Salvation is at stake: the Son suffered and rose again, and forgiveness is proclaimed in His name.[5] We are justified freely by God's grace through His redemption.[6] Paul warns even his own party and an angel from heaven against preaching another gospel.[7] Turn from the teaching that changes His identity to the Christ the apostles proclaim.

The Book of Mormon itself directs its audience to the earlier record. It says its own record was written "for the intent that ye may believe that"; in a vision recorded in 1 Nephi, an angel says later records "shall establish the truth of the first".[8] The church's eighth Article of Faith receives the Bible as God's word "as far as it is translated correctly".[9] Believing that the Bible is God's word does not require us to believe that every copyist or translator has worked without error. But a particular claim that a passage was changed or a teaching lost still needs evidence. A later teaching's disagreement with the Bible does not, by itself, establish that the Bible is at fault. If the later teaching decides in advance what the earlier Scripture must mean, then Scripture can never test the claim to restore what was lost. The claimant would be deciding the verdict in its own favor. We must examine the words and the strongest explanation offered for them.

The aim is that you may know Jesus Christ and have eternal life in Him. In his first letter, the apostle John writes that God has given us eternal life, that this life is in His Son, and that believers may know they have it.[10] Bring your questions to the Scriptures you claim to stand on. Examine the evidence and follow the argument.

Christ's grace is sufficient, and we fall from it when we seek to add our works as a basis for being made right with God. Paul warns those who seek justification by the law: “ye are fallen from grace”.[11] Receive the Savior, and rest your hope in Him.

Source notes

1. Isaiah 40:25-26; 44:6, 8; 46:5, 9; Psalm 90:2, King James Version. Read the passages: Psalms 90 Isaiah 40 Isaiah 44 Isaiah 46 ↑
2. John 1:1-3, 14; Colossians 1:15-18; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Hebrews 1:8-12, King James Version. Chapter 2 develops the argument from these passages together. Read the passages: John 1 1 Corinthians 8 Colossians 1 Hebrews 1 ↑
3. Doctrine and Covenants 93:29; 132:20; Abraham 3:18-19, current official text. The brief quotation of all power is from 132:20. The appendix prints the corresponding 1833 manuscript passage, 1843 Kingsbury-copy passage and 1842 Abraham printing, each identified separately. “Becoming Like God,” Gospel Topics essay, paragraphs on divine origin and potential, continuing worship of the Father, and grace through Christ. The chapter states the qualifications and tests the teaching. Read the passages: Doctrine and Covenants 132:20, Kingsbury copy (1843) Doctrine and Covenants 93:29, manuscript witness (1833) Abraham 3:18–19, historical printing (1842) ↑ ↑
4. Psalm 82:6-7; John 10:33-36; Revelation 3:21; 5:13, King James Version. These are read together with the Creator passages, not as a claim that the bare word gods can have only one sense. Read the passages: Psalms 82 John 10 Revelation 3 Revelation 5 ↑
5. John 1:14; Luke 24:44-47, King James Version. Read the passages: Luke 24 John 1 ↑
6. Romans 3:23-28; Ephesians 2:8-10, King James Version. Read the passages: Romans 3 Ephesians 2 ↑
7. Galatians 1:6-9, King James Version. The warning concerns the message's content and applies to the author as well as the later claimant. Read the passages: Galatians 1 ↑
8. Mormon 7:8-9, *Book of Mormon* (1830), p. 531; 1 Nephi 13:40-41, *Book of Mormon* (1837), p. 35. Complete historical passages and the material edition difference appear in the cited-passages appendix. Read the passages: Mormon 7:8–9, first edition (1830) 1 Nephi 13:40–41, second edition (1837) 1 Nephi 13:40, first edition (1830) ↑
9. Article of Faith 8; first printed in “Church History,” *Times and Seasons* 3, no. 9 (1 March 1842), p. 709. The qualification remains in the current official text. Read the passages: Article of Faith 8, first printing (1842) ↑
10. 1 John 5:11-13, King James Version. Read the passages: 1 John 5 ↑

11. Galatians 5:4; Romans 4:4-5; Ephesians 2:8-10, King James Version. Galatians 5:4 concerns justification by the law; Romans 4:4-5 and Ephesians 2:8-9 state the same principle for works. Good works belong to the life God gives in Christ (Ephesians 2:10). Read the passages: Romans 4 Galatians 5 Ephesians 2 ↑



CHAPTER 1

The eternal Son

The One who died for sinners is the Lord who made them. The gospel joins His identity to His saving work: the Word who was with God and was God became flesh,[1] and the Christ who suffered rose from the dead. Repentance and forgiveness are proclaimed in His name.[2,3] We need to know whom we are trusting when we call on Jesus Christ.

The question reaches each of us. Our sin is before God, and we cannot justify ourselves by belonging to the right community, defending a tradition or exposing another person's error. Paul declares that all have sinned and that justification is freely given by God's grace through the redemption in Christ Jesus.[4] The Savior we need is the Savior God has given. We must hear His apostles before deciding whether a later message restores their witness.

With God, and God

The Gospel of John begins before it tells us about Jesus' public ministry. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” John then says that all things were made through Him and that nothing made came into being without Him.[2] The Word does not enter the account as one of the things whose beginning John explains. He is already there, with God, as the One through whom they came to be.

Both parts of John's confession matter. The Word was with God: He is not simply another name for the Father. The Word was God: His distinction from the Father does not put Him outside the divine identity. John later speaks of the only begotten Son in the Father's bosom, who makes Him known.[5] The Father and the Son are personally distinct. That distinction does not place the Son among the things that were made; John has already set Him apart from them.

The apostles also keep His relation to us clear. Paul confesses one God, the Father, “of whom are all things, and we in him” and one Lord Jesus Christ, “by whom are all things, and we by him.”[6] We belong among those who live through Him. The Son is no rival who takes creatures away from the Father; through Him we have our relation to the Father.

Colossians gathers heaven and earth, the visible and invisible, and thrones, dominions, principalities and powers under the Son's creative work. All were created by Him and for Him, and by Him all things consist.[7] Paul grounds His supremacy in His relation to the whole creation: He is its Maker, its end and the One on whom it depends. He then speaks of Christ as the head of the church and the firstborn from the dead, with preeminence in all things.

Hebrews brings His identity and saving work into the same sentence. God has spoken by His Son, through whom He made the worlds. The Son is “the express image of his person”, “upholding all things by the word of his power”; having purged our sins, He sat down at God's right hand.[8] The One who sustains creation is

the One who cleanses sinners. His nearness to us does not diminish His glory, and His glory does not keep Him from coming to save.

This confession gives us the measure for every later explanation of Jesus. We must preserve the whole witness: His distinction from the Father, His deity, and His relation to those He made. A reading that retains one part by changing another must be tested against them together.

The Word became flesh

John identifies the Word with the One who came among us: “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us”.[1] The Creator entered the life of His creatures. The gospel is God's coming to us in His Son, full of grace and truth.

The incarnation joins the identity of the Savior to the humanity in which He saves. The One who became flesh is the same Word John has already identified as God. John does not introduce a new person when he reaches this sentence, or withdraw what he has said about the Word. The Son comes among us as the One through whom we were made.

Paul describes this humility in Philippians. Christ, “being in the form of God”, “took upon him the form of a servant” and “became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross”.[9] The movement is from His glory into service and suffering. The death He accepts is the death of the cross. God's Son enters the obedience and suffering through which He saves us.

God exalts Him, and every knee is to bow and every tongue confess Him as Lord, to the glory of God the Father.[10] The Father's exaltation of the Son does not make them the same person. Nor does it cancel John's identification of the Word before His coming in flesh. We must hold His eternal identity, His humiliation and His exaltation together.

That matters when we face our need for mercy. We cannot climb out of our guilt by becoming more impressive than our neighbors. We need God to save us. John tells us that grace and truth came by Jesus Christ, and that we receive from His fullness.[11] Our hope begins with what He gives.

His offering for sinners

Our sin is not a small defect that religious effort can erase. Paul excludes boasting when he proclaims justification through faith, apart from the deeds of the law. God remains just while justifying the one who believes in Jesus.[4] Forgiveness comes through the redemption Christ accomplished. God does not ask us to pretend that evil was good, or that the debt of our sin never mattered.

Hebrews explains the saving offering. We are sanctified through the offering of Christ's body. The repeated sacrifices of the priests could never take away sins, but Christ offered "one sacrifice for sins for ever" and sat down at God's right hand. "For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified."[12] His sacrifice has accomplished what those repeated sacrifices could not.

The body in which the Word came among us was given in this offering. His cross belongs at the center of the gospel because He gave Himself for sinners.

This grace calls us to repentance. The risen Christ declares that repentance and the remission of sins should be proclaimed in His name.[3] To repent is to turn to Him with the sin we need forgiven. Faith receives His gift; it does not pay Him for it. The distinction Paul makes between grace and a wage is essential to our hope.[13] We need the Savior's offering, and He has made it.

He rose from the dead

Luke describes Jesus standing among His disciples after His death. They were afraid and supposed they had seen a spirit. Jesus direc-

ted them to His hands and feet: “it is I myself”. He invited them to handle Him, explaining that a spirit does not have flesh and bones as they could see He had. He then ate before them.[14] Luke presents the risen Lord Himself, alive in the body.

The resurrection is not simply the survival of His influence or the disciples' resolve to carry on His cause. The One who had died stood among them. Their fear, joy and wondering were answered by His presence. The Christian confession includes this bodily resurrection. To deny it would be to depart from the witness we are asking the reader to examine.

Jesus then opened their understanding of the Scriptures. His suffering, His rising on the third day, and the proclamation of repentance and forgiveness among all nations belong together.[3] He gives the message its center and sends it beyond the circle of those who first heard it. We are among the sinners who need to hear that forgiveness is proclaimed in His name.

The agreement we acknowledge and the teaching we test

The church's testimony *The Living Christ*, dated 1 January 2000, says of Jesus: “He gave His life to atone for the sins of all mankind.” It also affirms, “He rose from the grave”.[15] These are real affirmations of His saving death and resurrection. The same testimony identifies Him with Jehovah and places His life before His birth. We must not present these truths as things the church denies.

Those affirmations do not settle every question about Christ or about receiving the benefit of His death. The disagreement must be located where the teaching actually differs. Showing that Jesus existed before His birth does not answer a church that teaches His premortal existence. Showing that the Father and the Son are personally distinct does not answer one that affirms that distinction.

Christians must state their own confession accurately and test the church's actual account.

The 1916 exposition of the First Presidency and the Twelve places Jesus among the Father's spirit children, uniquely preeminent among them. It understands creation as organization. Doctrine and Covenants 93:29 teaches that intelligence "was not created or made".[16] The strongest answer therefore says that Christ is divine and creates and sustains the worlds while the intelligence underlying persons has no beginning. It is a substantial answer. The Father's literal parenthood of spirits does not, by itself, exclude the Son's creative work.

The biblical confession gives us the standard for judging that answer. Isaiah declares the Lord without an equal and directs us to the creation that depends on His power. John identifies the Word as God and Maker; Paul places us among those who live through Him. Acts speaks of our receiving life and breath from God, in whom we have our being.[17] We receive our being from the Creator. The biblical promise brings His creatures into life with Him; it does not teach an uncreated core within us that develops into godhood.

The following chapter tests the organization answer against these passages together. The question is whether that later account preserves what Scripture teaches about God and His creatures. The Son who saves us is the eternal Lord through whom we were made; a later teaching that changes that relation changes the Christ we are asked to trust.

Life in the Son

The gospel calls for a response. John says that those who receive Christ, believing on His name, are given the right to become God's children. Their birth is of God, rather than blood or human will.[18] Religious ancestry does not give this life, and the failings of our

family or community cannot prevent God from giving it. We must receive the Son.

The apostle John returns to the promise in his first letter. God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life. John writes so that believers may know they have it.[19] This is a promise to trust, with a warning we must hear. Our hope rests in the Son Himself.

Good works belong to the life God creates in Christ. Ephesians places them after salvation by grace through faith, as the work for which God has made us anew.[20] They do not become a wage with which we purchase His acceptance. Paul distinguishes the reward owed for work from the righteousness reckoned to the one who believes in the God who justifies the ungodly.[13] We come as sinners who need His grace.

Come to Christ in repentance and faith. Confess the sin you cannot remove and receive the forgiveness proclaimed in His name. The question before us is who this Savior is. We must test the Restoration's answer against the witness God has already given, because the Lord we worship and the gospel we trust are at stake.

Source notes

1. John 1:14, King James Version. Read the passages: John 1 ↑ ↑
2. John 1:1-3, King James Version. Read the passages: John 1 ↑ ↑
3. Luke 24:44-47, King James Version. Read the passages: Luke 24 ↑ ↑ ↑
4. Romans 3:23-28, King James Version. Read the passages: Romans 3 ↑ ↑
5. John 1:1-3, 18, King James Version. Read the passages: John 1 ↑
6. 1 Corinthians 8:6, King James Version. Read the passages: 1 Corinthians 8 ↑
7. Colossians 1:15-18, King James Version. The following chapter examines creation as organization and the proposed exception for uncreated intelligence. Read the passages: Colossians 1 ↑
8. Hebrews 1:1-3, King James Version. Read the passages: Hebrews 1 ↑
9. Philippians 2:5-8, King James Version. Read the passages: Philippians 2 ↑

10. Philippians 2:9-11, King James Version. Read the passages: Philippians 2 ↑
11. John 1:16-17, King James Version. Read the passages: John 1 ↑
12. Hebrews 10:10-14, King James Version. In verse 10 this edition supplies the words for all; the appendix marks them in brackets. Verses 12 and 14 state the completed offering in the wording quoted here. Read the passages: Hebrews 10 ↑
13. Romans 4:3-8, King James Version. Read the passages: Romans 4 ↑ ↑
14. Luke 24:36-43, King James Version. Read the passages: Luke 24 ↑
15. "The Living Christ: The Testimony of the Apostles", First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve, 1 January 2000, paragraphs 2-5. An official testimony, distinguished from a standard work. Its affirmations are not presented as agreement on how a sinner is justified. ↑
16. "The Father and the Son," *Improvement Era* 19, no. 10 (August 1916), pp. 934-935, 940-942; Doctrine and Covenants 93:29, current wording quoted briefly. The appendix gives the corresponding 1833 manuscript passage. The account concerns uncreated intelligence and spirit parenthood, which are kept distinct. Read the passages: Doctrine and Covenants 93:29, manuscript witness (1833) ↑
17. Isaiah 40:25-26; John 1:1-3; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Acts 17:24-28, King James Version. The next chapter develops the cumulative Creator/creature argument and states the proposed restriction to organized things. Read the passages: Isaiah 40 John 1 Acts 17 1 Corinthians 8 ↑
18. John 1:12-13, King James Version. Read the passages: John 1 ↑
19. 1 John 5:11-13, King James Version. Read the passages: 1 John 5 ↑
20. Ephesians 2:8-10, King James Version. Read the passages: Ephesians 2 ↑



CHAPTER 2

The earlier witness and the Restoration

Devotion to family, service to a neighbor and sacrifice for others are good. They cannot establish that a religious message comes from God. Christians face the same test. All have sinned, and justification is given by grace through Jesus Christ; good works follow the life God creates in Him.[1,2] We need the true gospel because we need the Savior it proclaims.

The Bible is part of the claim

The Book of Mormon joins Christ's gospel to two records: its own, and a record that would come from the Jews through the Gentiles. It explains their relationship: “this is written for the intent that ye may believe that”.[3] In the vision recorded in 1 Nephi 13, an angel says later records will establish the earlier apostolic witness and make known things that were taken away. Both sets of records are to be established in one, under one God and one Shepherd.[4]

Article of Faith 8 receives the Bible as God's word "as far as it is translated correctly".[5] Jeffrey R. Holland describes the relationship this way: "Continuing revelation does not demean or discredit existing revelation."[6] The affirmation and qualification can stand together. A true record can be incomplete, and a copy can contain an error. That possibility does not establish a particular error or identify what was lost. Each claim must face the passage and the evidence.

The same applies to interpretation. If a later revelation is allowed to determine in advance what every earlier passage must mean, the later claimant has taken control of its own test. Calling that process restoration does not establish its truth. We must hear what the apostles teach about the Son, then examine the explanation offered for the difference.

The Son and the things He made

John begins with the Word who was with God and was God. He continues: "All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made." The Word became flesh.[7] The One who came among us is the Creator. His coming in flesh brings the Creator among those He made.

The Book of Mormon also calls Christ "the creator of all things, from the beginning" in its first printing.[8] Those words must be tested for their meaning. Using the Bible's titles for Christ does not establish that the same account of Him is being taught.

Paul calls the Son "the firstborn of every creature" and immediately gives the reason: "For by him were all things created," in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, including thrones, dominions, principalities and powers. All were created by Him and for Him; He is before all things, and "by him all things consist." The passage then speaks of His resurrection and preeminence.[9] His supremacy rests on His relation to the whole creation.

The heavenly powers, as well as earthly things, were created by Him and for Him.

The 1916 exposition issued by the First Presidency and the Twelve quotes this passage itself. It explains creation as organization of what already exists. It also places Christ among the Father's spirit children, distinguishing His seniority and unique preeminence. Of the spirits who become human beings, it says “for He is one of them.”[10] This is the church's joint leadership giving a doctrinal account, rather than an isolated speaker's opinion.

FAIR, a Latter-day Saint apologetic source, applies that principle to the heavenly beings. Christ gives them their “status or form” while some aspect of their intelligence exists before that work.[11] This answer includes the heavenly powers; it cannot be answered by pointing out that Paul mentions them. Nor can we infer from the word created alone everything about the material from which something is made. The objection is substantial: perhaps the Son organizes beings whose underlying intelligence never began. It must be answered from the whole passage and the apostles' other testimony.

FAIR also appeals to Paul's statement that unseen things are eternal. The next verse speaks of our earthly dwelling passing away and “a building of God” that is “eternal in the heavens”.[12] The passage contrasts a perishing dwelling with an enduring one. It does not identify an uncreated intelligence. Eternal, in that context, gives no warrant for the claim that our underlying existence was never made.

The question the exception leaves unanswered

Paul's account gathers heaven and earth, the visible and invisible, and every named power under the Son's creative work. All things are by Him and for Him; He is before all things, and “by him all things consist.”[9] In 1 Corinthians he confesses one God, the Father, “of whom are all things, and we in him” and one Lord Jesus Christ,

"by whom are all things, and we by him."[13] Our relation to the Father and the Son belongs within that confession.

The strongest reply is that all things means all organized things. The Son can also sustain what He organizes; sustaining power by itself does not prove that there was no uncreated intelligence. Latter-day Saints affirm Christ's deity and creative work, including the Father addressing Him as God and Lord in Hebrews. They can accept that language while retaining the organization account. We must answer that account, rather than pretend that it denies every biblical title we use.

The proposed exception is not taught in these apostolic passages. Doctrine and Covenants 93:29 says intelligence "was not created or made"; Abraham 3:18 describes spirits without beginning, and 3:19 has the Lord say, "I am more intelligent than they all". The essay connects the uncreated intelligence to the core of each human soul while calling God the Father of each human spirit.[14] The essay locates the beginningless element at the core of the human soul while separately affirming God as Father of each spirit; those claims must be kept distinct. They are supplied by the later revelation and then used to determine the apostles' scope. This shows where the claim needs warrant; the word all, repeated without its context, does not by itself prove the whole doctrine false. The deeper issue is whether Scripture places God and mankind on one scale of eternal divine beings, or distinguishes the Creator from the creatures He brings into His life. We must test the later account at that point.

The God without an equal

The 1916 exposition identifies Jesus with Jehovah.[10] Isaiah's LORD declares, "I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God." He asks, "Is there a God beside me? yea, there is no God; I know not any". He calls Himself the Lord who makes all things, stretching out the heavens alone and spreading abroad the earth

by Himself.[15] The risen Jesus bears the divine title and speaks of His own death.[16] Hebrews records God's address to the Son as God and as the Lord who laid the foundation of the earth, enduring while heaven and earth change.[17] These are the divine identity and creative work which both accounts must explain.

Isaiah does more than tell Israel which god it should worship. The Holy One asks, “To whom then will ye liken me, or shall I be equal?” The next verse directs us to the heavenly host He created and calls by name, none failing through His power. Again He declares, “I am God, and there is none like me”.[18] His uniqueness rests on who He is in relation to what He made. He is their Creator and Lord, not another member of the host who has advanced beyond the others.

Scripture can call others gods without giving them that identity. The question is what the word means in its passage. It cannot mean that every being so named is the eternal Creator, because Isaiah denies an equal while the Bible itself uses the word of others. We must distinguish the Lord's own divine identity from the titles, authority and life He gives His creatures.

The exposition also explains some uses of Father for Christ through divine investiture: the Son speaks with the Father's name, and an angel can speak in Christ's name.[19] That principle may be proposed here as an explanation of represented speech. It cannot change what the represented God claims about Himself. The issue is still His unique identity, rather than which speaker delivers His words. Nor can unity of purpose alone make a family of distinct divine beings the one God without an equal. The biblical confession identifies who God is, not merely whose interests the beings serve.

The promise of godhood

Doctrine and Covenants 132 gives a promise to those who meet its marriage-covenant conditions: “Then shall they be gods”. The

verse describes them as “from everlasting to everlasting” and having “all power”.[20] The church's essay “Becoming Like God” explains every person's divine origin, nature and potential in terms of an eternal core and inherited divine nature that can develop. It also says that this hope is fulfilled by God's grace through Christ's Atonement, with obedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel. The answer must be heard in that form; it does not teach that people save themselves without Christ.

Nor does the essay describe rivals overthrowing their Father. It says, “Our progression will never change His identity as our Father and our God.” It understands Father, Son and Holy Ghost as distinct beings unified in purpose and doctrine.[21] Its account of godhood is a family account, with continuing worship of the Father. Those qualifications matter. They do not settle whether the family shares the Creator's kind of existence or receives life from Him as His creatures.

Latter-day Saints appeal to Psalm 82: “I have said, Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the most High.” But the next verse says, “But ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes.”[22] Whatever interpretation is given to the figures addressed, they stand under God's judgment. The psalm does not promise that they possess His uncreated nature or will develop into eternal Creators. Its use of gods cannot carry that conclusion.

Jesus cites the same words when accused of making Himself God. He speaks of those called gods “unto whom the word of God came”, then asks why they charge Him with blasphemy for saying He is the Son of God, whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world.[23] The passage defends His claim. It does not announce that everyone has the same divine nature as the Son. Calling others gods does not erase the distinction between those who receive God's word and the Word who was God and made all things.

Glory received from God

The biblical promise of glory must be stated fully. Christ grants the one who overcomes a place with Him on His throne, as He sits with His Father. Paul promises that the mortal will put on immortality.[24] The Christian hope is fellowship with God, a share in Christ's reign and life beyond corruption. We must not reduce it to an empty reward in order to make exaltation sound foreign. Nor can the words power, glory or gods, taken alone, prove the later doctrine false.

Yet Revelation keeps the distinction even in that glory: every creature in heaven, on earth, under the earth and in the sea gives blessing, honor, glory and power to the One on the throne and to the Lamb.[25] The Lamb receives creation's worship with God. The redeemed share His reign as those He saves; they remain receivers of His gift. John says those who receive Christ are given power to become God's children and are born of God.[26] This sonship is received in Him. The creature's new life and likeness to God do not make the creature another instance of the eternal God.

The essay also appeals to Paul's description of humanity as God's offspring. In his account of God in Acts 17, Paul describes Him making the world and all things in it, giving everyone life and breath, and making the nations of one blood. In Him we live, move and have our being. Paul then uses offspring to turn his hearers away from gods fashioned by human art.[27] Humanity's dependence on its Maker is the argument. It does not identify an uncreated core or describe the birth of spirits before earthly life. The Creator's offspring in Acts and children born of God through receiving Christ in John are distinct senses; neither establishes the later doctrine of uncreated intelligence.

The Son's own identity is different. John begins by declaring that the Word was God, then describes the creation He made and the flesh He took. Paul speaks of Him as “in the form of God” and “equal with God”.[28] His preeminence belongs to the Creator

through whom all things exist. The Father and the Son are personally distinct; His equality with God is His own divine identity; those He saves receive their life and glory from Him. He belongs to the divine identity which Isaiah distinguishes from the host God made.

Here is the error in the later account. It turns the creature's gift of life, likeness and glory into the development of an inherited divine nature within an eternal family. Keeping the Father at the head of that family does not preserve Scripture's distinction between Him and His creatures. A difference of development among spirit children whose core is held to be uncreated is not the difference between the eternal God and creatures who receive their whole being from Him. The biblical promise is glorious because God gives Himself to those He saves. It does not promise that we will develop into what He is by nature.

This is the context in which the organization answer must be judged. Its exception for an uncreated human core does not come from the apostolic passages it explains. It belongs to the later family account of deity, which changes the Creator-and-creature relation those passages teach. The possible scope of an isolated all does not establish that account as restored revelation. The whole witness identifies the Son as God with the Father, the Creator who became flesh, and places us among those who live through Him. We must reject this later teaching. It replaces that relation with a difference of degree within divine kinship.

The Savior before us

This reaches beyond a dispute over words. Paul says all have sinned, then proclaims justification freely given by God's grace through the redemption in Christ Jesus. God is just and the justifier of the one who believes in Jesus. Abraham's righteousness is reckoned through faith; Paul distinguishes a gift of grace from a

wage owed for work.[1] We cannot earn justification by defending our religious community or winning this argument.

Christ suffered and rose again, and repentance and forgiveness are proclaimed in His name.[29] John says that God has given us eternal life and that this life is in His Son. The one who has the Son has life; the one who does not have the Son does not have life. He writes so that believers may know they have it.[30] The warning is grave because the promise is real. Our hope is the Savior Himself, received through faith.

Paul's warning about another gospel reaches his own party as well as an angel from heaven.[31] A messenger's claimed authority cannot make a changed gospel true. This claim of restoration must be rejected for changing the identity of the Christ the apostles proclaim. Turn from that error to the Lord who made us, became flesh and gave Himself for sinners. Bring Him the sin you cannot remove and the guilt your works cannot pay. Forgiveness and eternal life are found in Him.

Source notes

1. Romans 3:23-28; 4:3-8, King James Version. Read the passages: Romans 3 Romans 4 ↑ ↑
2. Ephesians 2:8-10, King James Version. Read the passages: Ephesians 2 ↑
3. Mormon 7:8-9; *Book of Mormon* (1830), p. 531. Modern verse numbers identify the passage; the original printing uses a different chapter division. Read the passages: Mormon 7:8–9, first edition (1830) ↑
4. 1 Nephi 13:40-41; *Book of Mormon* (1837), p. 35. The appendix prints this edition's complete passage and identifies the changed clause from 1830. Read the passages: 1 Nephi 13:40–41, second edition (1837) 1 Nephi 13:40, first edition (1830) ↑
5. Article of Faith 8; "Church History," *Times and Seasons* 3, no. 9 (1 March 1842), p. 709; compare the current official Articles of Faith. Read the passages: Article of Faith 8, first printing (1842) ↑
6. Jeffrey R. Holland, "My Words ... Never Cease", April 2008 general conference. An apostle's sermon, distinguished here from a standard work. ↑
7. John 1:1-3, 14, King James Version. Read the passages: John 1 ↑
8. Mosiah 3:8; *Book of Mormon* (1830), p. 160. The current wording agrees, with capitalization and punctuation differences. The complete historical verse is in the appendix. Read the passages: Mosiah 3:8, first edition (1830) ↑

9. Colossians 1:15-18, King James Version. The passage grounds the argument about firstborn, creation and continuing dependence. The conclusion is argued from its scope and context together with John, 1 Corinthians and Hebrews; no isolated verb supplies the whole case. Read the passages: Colossians 1 ↑ ↑

10. "The Father and the Son," *Improvement Era* 19, no. 10 (August 1916), pp. 934-942, exposition of the First Presidency and the Twelve dated 30 June 1916. Creation as organization: p. 934; Jesus as Jehovah: p. 935; spirit children, Colossians and preeminence: pp. 940-942. Quotations follow this original printing; compare the church's standardized April 2002 reprint. ↑ ↑

11. FAIR, "Does Colossians 1:16 teach that Jesus created all things out of nothing?", accessed 15 November 2026. Latter-day Saint apologetics, not an official church declaration. The text states its actual organization/intelligence distinction; it does not adopt every lexical or historical claim on the page. Read the passages: Colossians 1 ↑

12. 2 Corinthians 4:18; 5:1, King James Version. FAIR's appeal to unseen eternal things is answered from Paul's adjacent dwelling/hope context. The eternal dwelling is contrasted with the perishing earthly dwelling. Read the passages: 2 Corinthians 4 2 Corinthians 5 ↑

13. 1 Corinthians 8:6, King James Version. Paul's confession includes both creation and our relation to the Father through the Son. The proposed exception for uncreated intelligence is stated and answered in the text. Read the passages: 1 Corinthians 8 ↑

14. Doctrine and Covenants 93:29; Abraham 3:18-19, current text, quoted briefly; "Becoming Like God," paragraph on uncreated intelligence and the Father of human spirits. The appendix identifies the complete corresponding historical passages. The claim concerns the core, not a denial that God is Father of spirits. Read the passages: Doctrine and Covenants 93:29, manuscript witness (1833) Abraham 3:18–19, historical printing (1842) ↑

15. Isaiah 44:6, 8, 24, King James Version. The argument concerns the Lord's unique identity, not the denial that Scripture ever calls others gods. Read the passages: Isaiah 44 ↑

16. Revelation 1:17-18, King James Version. The relation of this title to Isaiah is argued together with the other passages. The title alone does not dispose of the investiture answer. Read the passages: Revelation 1 ↑

17. Hebrews 1:8-12, King James Version. The argument concerns God's address to the Son and its ascription of creation and permanence to Him; personal distinction from the Father is preserved. Read the passages: Hebrews 1 ↑

18. Isaiah 40:25-26; 46:5, 9; Psalm 90:2, King James Version. Isaiah's challenge is read with His creative work and the host that depends on Him. The conclusion distinguishes the Creator from creatures, rather than treating every occurrence of gods as the same claim. Read the passages: Psalms 90 Isaiah 40 Isaiah 46 ↑

19. "The Father and the Son," section 4, particularly *Improvement Era* (August 1916), p. 940. Its represented-speech principle and examples are distinguished here from the proposed application: the exposition does not itself apply it to Isaiah 44 or Hebrews 1:8-12. Read the passages: Isaiah 44 Hebrews 1 ↑
20. Doctrine and Covenants 132:20, current text, quoted briefly. Its promise follows marriage-covenant conditions, not an unconditional promise to all people. The appendix prints the corresponding complete 1843 Kingsbury-copy passage, preserving that witness's typography and punctuation. Read the passages: Doctrine and Covenants 132:20, Kingsbury copy (1843) ↑
21. "Becoming Like God", official Gospel Topics essay, retained 15 November 2026, paragraphs on divine origin and potential, worship of the Father, unity of purpose and doctrine, and grace through Christ. An official publication, distinguished from canon. ↑
22. Psalm 82:6-7, King James Version. The argument does not require choosing between human judges and heavenly beings; it rests on their subjection to God's judgment and the absence of the promised uncreated nature inferred from the title alone. Read the passages: Psalms 82 ↑
23. John 10:33-36, King James Version, read with John 1:1-3, 12-14. Jesus distinguishes those who received God's word from the Son whom the Father sanctified and sent. Read the passages: John 1 John 10 ↑
24. Revelation 3:21; 1 Corinthians 15:53, King James Version. Read the passages: 1 Corinthians 15 Revelation 3 ↑
25. Revelation 5:13, King James Version. Read with John 1:1-3 and Colossians 1:15-18: the Lamb receives the worship of creation with God. Read the passages: John 1 Colossians 1 Revelation 5 ↑
26. John 1:12-14, King James Version. Read the passages: John 1 ↑
27. Acts 17:24-29, King James Version. Compare John 1:12-13 for sonship through receiving Christ. Read the passages: John 1 Acts 17 ↑
28. Philippians 2:6, King James Version; compare John 1:1-3, 14 and Colossians 1:15-18. The Son's deity and the creature's received glory must not be conflated. Read the passages: John 1 Philippians 2 Colossians 1 ↑
29. Luke 24:44-47, King James Version. Read the passages: Luke 24 ↑
30. 1 John 5:11-13, King James Version. Read the passages: 1 John 5 ↑
31. Galatians 1:6-9, King James Version. Its warning is stated after the content has been examined; the appearance of an angel is not itself treated as a disproof. Read the passages: Galatians 1 ↑



CHAPTER 3

What changed, and what a change proves

Books that are copied and printed many times are changed, and a change proves nothing by itself. The Bible comes to us through centuries of hand copying. The Book of Mormon has been revised since its first printing, beginning with its own translator. Christians must judge both books by one standard: what changed, what evidence shows it, and whether the change alters the witness to God and salvation. The Restoration rests on a claim of change: that plain and precious things were taken from the Bible and have now been restored. Yet Christians who knew the apostles, or learned from those who did, still speak, and they confess the gospel the Bible preserves. The change that matters lies elsewhere, in the Restoration's own account of God. Its first scripture calls Jesus “the Eternal God”, and teaches that God is “unchangeable from all eternity to all eternity”.[1,2] Its later scripture describes a Father

with “a body of flesh and bones”, and promises exalted husbands and wives, “Then shall they be gods”.[3,4]

The strongest answer is that God speaks to His servants “in their weakness, after the manner of their language”, and reveals truth line upon line.[5] Biblical prophets also wrote their words a second time and added to them. We grant that a revised text and a fuller revelation are both possible. But a later revelation must agree with what God has already said about Himself. Scripture says that God is spirit, that the Son became flesh, and that God is God from everlasting. At those points the later account does not add to the earlier witness. It says something different. The Bible's words did not change between 1830 and 1921. The teaching did. The Savior we need is the One the apostles proclaimed: “Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.”[6]

One standard for both books

The New Testament comes to us through many handwritten copies, and the copies differ in many small readings. Christians do not claim that every copyist worked without error. We claim that the text preserved through those copies still carries the apostles' witness, so that John's purpose is still served: “these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.”[7] We must apply the same fairness to the Book of Mormon. Most changes to its text since 1830 concern spelling, grammar and punctuation. Counting them is not an argument.

The Book of Mormon does not claim to be free of human error. The title page of its first edition says, “And now if there be fault, it be the mistake of men; wherefore condemn not the things of God”. The current title page reads, “if there are faults they are the mistakes of men”.[8] The second edition, published at Kirtland in 1837, told its readers that the whole had been “carefully re-examined and compared with the original manuscripts, by elder Joseph

Smith, Jr. the translator of the book of Mormon".[9] The Doctrine and Covenants says that the Lord's commandments "were given unto my servants in their weakness, after the manner of their language, that they might come to understanding".[5] Scripture itself records a prophet's words written a second time. After King Jehoiakim burned Jeremiah's scroll, Baruch wrote the words again, "and there were added besides unto them many like words."[10] A revised text is not disproved by its revision.

Was the Bible changed?

The Restoration makes its own claim of change, and it concerns the Bible. In Nephi's vision the apostles' record goes "in purity unto the Gentiles". Then a great and abominable church takes away from the gospel of the Lamb "many parts which are plain and most precious", together with "many covenants of the Lord".[11] Latter-day Saint scholars do not generally picture medieval monks rewriting the Bible. Stephen E. Robinson of Brigham Young University called that picture "bigoted and unfair". He argued that the church Nephi describes "had its origins in the second half of the first century and had essentially done its work by the middle of the second century", a period he called "the blind spot of ecclesiastical history".[12] If the loss came before the copies we have, the copies would not show it. That answer is coherent, and it cannot be answered from manuscripts alone.

But the period is not silent. Christians who wrote within it still speak. Clement of Rome, whom Irenaeus describes as one who "had seen the blessed apostles, and had been conversant with them", told the church at Corinth, "Take up the epistle of the blessed Apostle Paul."[13] Polycarp, who according to Irenaeus "was not only instructed by apostles, and conversed with many who had seen Christ", urged the Philippians to "return to the word which has been handed down to us from the beginning".[14] Ignatius called Christ "God existing in flesh", and wrote of the risen Lord, "I know that after His resurrection also He was still pos-

sessed of flesh".[15] Justin Martyr reports that at the Sunday gathering "the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read, as long as time permits".[16]

These writers do not prove that no word was ever lost. They show what the church inside Robinson's window believed and read. Robinson holds that, to appeal to a wider Gentile audience, Christianity had to "discard the doctrines of an anthropomorphic God and the resurrection of the dead" or reinterpret them. The writers of the period insist on the resurrection. Polycarp calls the one who denies the resurrection and the judgment "the first-born of Satan", and Ignatius confesses the risen Lord in the flesh. When Marcion did cut the Gospel of Luke, the church noticed. Irenaeus wrote that Marcion "mutilates the Gospel which is according to Luke, removing all that is written respecting the generation of the Lord".[17] Irenaeus calls Marcion the only one who dared to do this openly, so his words do not exclude every hidden change. They do show that the apostles' writings were held by many churches, and that an attempt to cut them was seen and named.

A loss can explain a silence. It cannot explain what is still there. The passages on which this book's argument rests, among them John 1, Colossians 1, Isaiah 44 and Romans 3 and 4, stand in the Bible the church itself uses. The disagreements this book examines concern what the Bible says, not what it lacks. When the Restoration's teaching differs from those words, a lost passage cannot account for the difference.

Four readings in Nephi's vision

The revision of 1837 that bears most directly on Christ falls in Nephi's vision. In the first edition the angel says of the virgin that she "is the mother of God, after the manner of the flesh". He then says, "behold the Lamb of God, yea, even the Eternal Father!" Nephi sees the Lamb taken by the people: "yea, the Everlasting God, was judged of the world". The last records are to make known

"that the Lamb of God is the Eternal Father and the Saviour of the world".[18] In the 1837 edition each passage reads "the Son of": "the mother of the Son of God"; "yea, even the Son of the Eternal Father!"; "yea, the Son of the everlasting God was judged of the world"; and "the Son of the eternal Father".[19] The current text follows 1837. The printer's manuscript, from which the first edition was set, has the first-edition readings. The sources establish what changed, when it changed and who re-examined the text. They do not say why, and we will not supply a reason.

The edits do not all point the same way. Two of the first-edition readings confess what Christians confess. Elisabeth greets Mary as "the mother of my Lord", and the One judged by the world was God the Son in the flesh.[20] The first chapter of this book confessed the same: the One who became flesh is the Word who was God. At those two places, the words "the Son of" remove a direct confession that the incarnate Son is God. The other two first-edition readings call the Lamb "the Eternal Father". John distinguishes the Word from the Father with whom He was, and at those places the 1837 wording stands nearer to John.

The church has explained why its scripture calls Christ "Father". In 1916 the First Presidency and the Twelve wrote that "Jesus Christ, being the Creator, is consistently called the Father of heaven and earth". On that reading, "Eternal Father" in the vision is a title of the Creator, and "the Son of" makes plain which person is meant. The Book of Mormon still calls Christ "the very Eternal Father of heaven and of earth".[21] The revision did not remove that language from the book, and we do not treat it as concealment.

A question remains about the kind of text the Book of Mormon is. Its title page says it came forth "by the gift and power of God".[8] To call the Lamb "the Eternal Father" and to call Him "the Son of the eternal Father" are different statements. If the English words were given to Joseph Smith, the 1837 edition changed words that were given. If the English was his own expression of the sense, the

wording at these points is his. The next chapter takes up that question.

What the first edition does show is how high it places Christ. Its title page calls Jesus "the Eternal God", and the current title page still does. Abinadi teaches that "God himself shall come down among the children of men, and shall redeem his people". Amulek calls the Son of God "the beginning and the end, the first and the last", titles Scripture gives to the Lord who has no equal.[1] However its titles for Christ are explained, the Book of Mormon places Jesus on the Creator's side.

The account of God

The Book of Mormon speaks directly about how many Gods there are. Zeezrom asks Amulek, "Is there more than one God? And he answereth No." Nephi ends his teaching on the way of salvation with "the only and true doctrine of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, which is one God, without end."[22] Latter-day Saints read these verses as describing the unity of the Godhead: distinct beings who are one in purpose. Christians confess the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit as one God. The phrase alone cannot decide between the two accounts, and a count of the words "one God" against "Gods" refutes nothing. The question is what kind of being God is, and whether He has always been God.

The Book of Mormon speaks to that question too. Mormon writes that "God is not a partial God, neither a changeable being; but he is unchangeable from all eternity to all eternity." Moroni writes that whoever has imagined "a god who doth vary" has imagined "a god who is not a God of miracles", and declares of God, "he changeth not; if so he would cease to be God".[2] The Doctrine and Covenants confesses God "from everlasting to everlasting the same unchangeable God, the framer of heaven and earth".[23] These agree with the Psalm: "from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God."[24]

God's unchangeability does not forbid Him to make more of Himself known. Nor do these sentences settle the dispute alone. The revelation on marriage says of the exalted, "therefore shall they be from everlasting to everlasting, because they continue", and Latter-day Saints read the earlier phrases in that light.[25] We must look at what the later texts say God is.

In 1835 the church published its first Doctrine and Covenants. Its first part, on the church's doctrine, was a series of seven lectures on faith. The fifth names the Father and the Son as the supreme power over all things: "the Father being a personage of spirit, glory, and power", and the Son, "who was in the bosom of the Father, a personage of tabernacle". A general assembly of the church met on 17 August 1835 to decide whether the book should be approved, "that it may, if approved, become a law unto the church, and a rule of faith and practice unto the same", and accepted it.[26] The editors of the Joseph Smith Papers report, "Modern scholars, however, largely agree that Rigdon authored most or all of the lectures." In 1921 the church removed the lectures, explaining that they "were never presented to nor accepted by the Church as being otherwise than theological lectures or lessons".[27] The lectures were not presented as revelations, and the assembly's acceptance of the book cannot be stretched into a vote on each of their sentences. They show what the church printed as the doctrinal part of its book in 1835.

In 1843 Joseph Smith taught at Ramus, Illinois: "The Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man's; the Son also". That instruction is now section 130 of the Doctrine and Covenants.[3] The Book of Abraham, published in 1842 and now in the Pearl of Great Price, says of the creation, "they, that is the Gods, organized and formed the heavens and the earth". A letter Joseph Smith dictated in Liberty Jail in 1839, now section 121, speaks of "the Council of the Eternal God of all other gods". The revelation on marriage says of those who keep its covenant, "Then shall they be gods".[4] The previous chapter tested that promise.

In April 1844 Joseph Smith preached the sermon later called the King Follett discourse. The church's manual of his teachings prints this line from it: “God Himself was once as we are now, and is an exalted man”. The church's essay “Becoming Like God” says that “the surviving sermon text is not canonized and should not be treated as a doctrinal standard in and of itself”. Of Lorenzo Snow's couplet, “As man now is, God once was”, the essay says, “Little has been revealed about the first half of this couplet, and consequently little is taught.”[28] The sermon is neither canon nor an isolated opinion. The church prints it for study and declines to make it a standard.

Line upon line

The strongest Latter-day Saint answer is that revelation unfolds. Isaiah speaks of “precept upon precept; line upon line”, and Latter-day Saints apply those words to the way God teaches His people.[29] Hebrews says that God spoke “at sundry times and in divers manners” before He spoke by His Son.[30] On this view, God gave Joseph Smith more light as he could receive it. The lectures were Sidney Rigdon's theology rather than revelation. “One God” means the unity of the Godhead, and the Father's body was always true but not yet revealed.

Much of this we grant. Revelation in Scripture unfolds. Hebrews 1 does not deny that the apostles received revelation after Jesus ascended. Jude's charge to “earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” calls the church to keep the faith it received; by itself, it does not settle whether God may speak again.[31] The lectures' authorship and standing are disputed, and their removal does not by itself tell us what standing they once had.

But unfolding has a limit. God may tell His people more about Himself. He does not tell them that what He has already said of

Himself is untrue. The later account must be tested at two points, one in the canon and one in a sermon the church still prints.

The first is the Father's body. Jesus tells the Samaritan woman that the Father will be worshiped neither on her mountain nor at Jerusalem, and gives the reason: “God is a Spirit”.[32] Paul calls the Son “the image of the invisible God”, and speaks of God as the One “whom no man hath seen, nor can see”. John says, “No man hath seen God at any time”, and then tells how the only begotten Son has declared Him.[33] In Scripture, flesh belongs to the Son who took it: “the Word was made flesh”. Latter-day Saints answer that a spirit may dwell in a glorified body, as the risen Son's does; that God made humanity in His image; and that the Lord spoke with Moses face to face. Christians also confess that the risen Son, who is God, has a body. But His body is the flesh He took when He came among us, and the passages heard here say nothing of the Father taking flesh. The image Paul names is the Son, and the God He images is invisible. The chapter of Exodus that says “the LORD spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend” also records the Lord's words, “Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live.”[34] The church's Bible footnote to John 4:24 offers Joseph Smith's revision of the verse: “For unto such hath God promised his Spirit.” A revision cannot serve as the evidence for itself. Taken together, these passages describe the Father as spirit and invisible, and they keep flesh for the Son's coming among us. On the Father, the 1835 lecture stood where these passages stand, calling Him “a personage of spirit”. The later teaching gave Him a body of flesh and bones. That body is not drawn from these passages; it is supplied by the teaching under examination, and it does not fit the witness they give together.

The second concerns God's eternity. The Psalm, Mormon and Moroni say that God is God from everlasting and does not change. Joseph Smith's own account of 1832, which the church's manual prints, describes God as the Being “who was and is and will be from all eternity to eternity”. The sermon of 1844, as printed that

year, says otherwise: “I am going to tell you how God came to be God. We have imagined that God was God from all eternity.” It adds that “God himself; the Father of us all dwelt on an earth the same as Jesus Christ himself did”.[35] The same printed sermon calls God self-existing; the dispute is over Godhood, not merely existence. Latter-day Saints answer that the eternal Son became mortal without ceasing to be divine, and that the sermon may say no more than that of the Father. But the sermon does not say that God was God while He dwelt on an earth. It sets out to tell how God came to be God, against the idea that He was God from all eternity. The church's essay is right that the sermon is not a doctrinal standard. Yet the church does not reject the line its manual prints; its essay says that little has been revealed about it. A restoration of the apostles' faith should be able to say what the apostles said: that God is “the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God”.[36] The earlier witness, Joseph Smith's own account of 1832 among it, answered a question that the later teaching leaves open.

Neither problem comes from a lost Bible. The words of Scripture about God as spirit and about His eternity stand in the edition the church uses, as they stood when the lectures were printed and when they were removed. The teaching changed.

The Christ who does not change

This matters because of who Christ is. The Word who was with God and was God did not grow into deity. He came down from that glory, took the form of a servant and became obedient to death for us.[37] The sermon describes a God who came to be God. The apostles proclaim the eternal God who came down to save those who could not rise.

That is good news for people who change. Our resolutions fail, our understanding grows and falters, and we cannot make ourselves faithful. The Lord says, “I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.”[38] His unchanging faithfulness is

why the guilty are spared. The apostles' Savior is “the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.”[6] Turn from every account of God that changes what He has said of Himself. Bring your changing heart to the Christ who does not change, and trust His one offering for sins.[39]

Source notes

1. Title page, *Book of Mormon* (1830), p. [i], and current title page; Mosiah 15:1, *Book of Mormon* (1830), p. 186; Alma 11:39, *Book of Mormon* (1830), p. 253; Isaiah 44:6; Revelation 22:13, King James Version. The quoted clause of Mosiah 15:1 and the cited part of Alma 11:39 agrees with the first edition, apart from capitalization and punctuation. Read the passages: Isaiah 44 Revelation 22 Title page, first edition (1830) Mosiah 15:1–4, first edition (1830) Alma 11:28–29 and 38–39, first edition (1830) ↑ ↑
2. Moroni 8:18; Mormon 9:10, 19, current text, quoted briefly. Mormon 9:19 belongs to an argument that God still works miracles; the quotation is used for its statement about God. Read the passages: Mormon 9:10 (current text only) Mormon 9:19 (current text only) Moroni 8:18 (current text only) ↑ ↑
3. Doctrine and Covenants 130:22, current text, quoted briefly; section heading dated 2 April 1843. The 1843 report by Willard Richards contains the statement about the Father's body in its own words. Read the passages: Doctrine and Covenants 130:22, 1843 report ↑ ↑
4. Abraham 4:1; Doctrine and Covenants 121:32; 132:20, current text, quoted briefly. Section 121's heading dates the letters to March 1839. ↑ ↑
5. Doctrine and Covenants 1:24, current text, quoted briefly. Read the passages: Doctrine and Covenants 1:24 (1923 printing) ↑ ↑
6. Hebrews 13:8, King James Version. Read the passages: Hebrews 13 ↑ ↑
7. John 20:31, King James Version. Read the passages: John 20 ↑
8. Title page, *Book of Mormon* (Palmyra, 1830), p. [i]; current title page of the Book of Mormon, quoted briefly. The appendix prints the first edition's complete sentence. Read the passages: Title page, first edition (1830) ↑ ↑
9. Preface, *Book of Mormon* (Kirtland, 1837), p. v, signed by the publishers Parley P. Pratt and John Goodson, p. vi. Read the passages: Preface, second edition (1837) ↑
10. Jeremiah 36:32, King James Version. Read the passages: Jeremiah 36 ↑
11. 1 Nephi 13:25-26, current text, quoted briefly. The passage's sequence runs from verse 24 to verse 29. Read the passages: 1 Nephi 13:24–29, first edition (1830) ↑
12. Stephen E. Robinson, “Early Christianity and 1 Nephi 13-14,” in *The Book of Mormon: First Nephi, The Doctrinal Foundation* (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1988), 177-191. Latter-day Saint scholarship, not an official declaration; quoted briefly. ↑

13. 1 Clement 47; Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 3.3.3. *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 1 (Buffalo: Christian Literature, 1887 printing), pp. 18 and 416. The writers in this section are dated broadly, from the end of the first century to the middle of the second. Read the passages: 1 Clement 47 ↑

14. Polycarp, *To the Philippians* 7; Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 3.3.4. *Ante-Nicene Fathers* 1:34 and 1:416. Read the passages: Polycarp, Philippians 7 ↑

15. Ignatius, *To the Ephesians* 7 and *To the Smyrnaeans* 3, shorter recension. *Ante-Nicene Fathers* 1:52 and 1:87. The longer recension, a later expanded text, is not quoted. Read the passages: Ignatius, Ephesians 7, shorter recension ↑

16. Justin Martyr, *First Apology* 67. *Ante-Nicene Fathers* 1:186. ↑

17. Robinson, "Early Christianity and 1 Nephi 13-14"; Polycarp, *To the Philippians* 7, *Ante-Nicene Fathers* 1:34; Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 1.27.2, 4, *Ante-Nicene Fathers* 1:352. Read the passages: 1 Nephi 13:40–41, second edition (1837) 1 Nephi 13:24–29, first edition (1830) 1 Nephi 13:40, first edition (1830) Polycarp, Philippians 7 Irenaeus, Against Heresies 1.27.2 ↑

18. 1 Nephi 11:18, 21, 32; 13:40. *Book of Mormon* (1830), pp. 25, 26 and 32. The printer's manuscript has the same readings, pp. 16, 17 and 22, in the Joseph Smith Papers transcript. The appendix prints the complete verses. Read the passages: 1 Nephi 11:18, 21, 32, first edition (1830) 1 Nephi 13:40, first edition (1830) ↑

19. *Book of Mormon* (1837), pp. 27, 28, 29 and 35. The current text follows these readings, with capitalization and punctuation differences. ↑

20. Luke 1:43, King James Version; compare John 1:1-3, 14 and Philippians 2:6-8. Read the passages: Luke 1 John 1 Philippians 2 ↑

21. "The Father and the Son," *Improvement Era* 19, no. 10 (August 1916), p. 935, section on "Father" as Creator, citing Alma 11:38-39 and Mosiah 15:4; compare the church's April 2002 reprint. Alma 11:39 and Mosiah 15:4, current text, quoted briefly. ↑

22. Alma 11:28-29, *Book of Mormon* (1830), p. 253 (the current text reads "answered"); 2 Nephi 31:21, *Book of Mormon* (1830), p. 120, with the same words in the current text. The appendix prints both passages. Read the passages: 2 Nephi 31:19–21, first edition (1830) Alma 11:28–29 and 38–39, first edition (1830) ↑

23. Doctrine and Covenants 20:17, current text, quoted briefly. Read the passages: Doctrine and Covenants 20:17 (1923 printing) ↑

24. Psalm 90:2, King James Version. Read the passages: Psalms 90 ↑

25. Doctrine and Covenants 132:20, current text, quoted briefly. The verse's conditions are discussed in the previous chapter. Read the passages: Doctrine and Covenants 132:20, Kingsbury copy (1843) ↑

26. "Lecture Fifth," paragraph 2, *Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of the Latter Day Saints* (Kirtland, 1835), lecture beginning p. 52, read in Project Gutenberg eBook #56684, a transcription of the 1835 text by the Mormon Texts Project. The assembly's words are from the minutes of 17 August 1835, as quoted in the Joseph Smith Papers' introduction to the 1835 edition; the minutes were also printed in that edition, pp. 255-257. Read the passages: Lectures on Faith, Lecture 5, paragraph 2 (1835) ↑
27. Joseph Smith Papers, introduction to *Doctrine and Covenants, 1835*, quoted briefly; "Explanatory Introduction," *The Doctrine and Covenants* (Salt Lake City, copyright 1921), read in a 1923 printing. Read the passages: Explanatory Introduction, Doctrine and Covenants (copyright 1921) ↑
28. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2011), chapter 2; "Becoming Like God," Gospel Topics essay, paragraphs on the King Follett discourse and on Lorenzo Snow's couplet. A manual and an official essay, distinguished from canon; quoted briefly. ↑
29. Isaiah 28:10, King James Version. Read the passages: Isaiah 28 ↑
30. Hebrews 1:1-2, King James Version. Read the passages: Hebrews 1 ↑
31. Jude 3, King James Version. ↑
32. John 4:21-24, King James Version. In John 4 the statement grounds worship of the Father that is bound to neither mountain nor city. Read the passages: John 4 ↑
33. Colossians 1:15; 1 Timothy 6:16; John 1:14, 18, King James Version. Read the passages: John 1 Colossians 1 1 Timothy 6 ↑
34. Genesis 1:26-27; Exodus 33:11, 20, King James Version. The church's footnote to John 4:24 in its edition of the King James Version cites the Joseph Smith Translation, John 4:26; quoted briefly. Read the passages: Genesis 1 Exodus 33 John 4 ↑
35. Joseph Smith, History, 1832, pp. 2-3, as quoted in *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2011), chapter 2, with the manual's modernized punctuation; "Conference Minutes," *Times and Seasons* 5, no. 15 (15 August 1844), pp. 614-615, retained primary transcript via the Joseph Smith Papers. The sermon is not canonized; the church's essay "Becoming Like God" says it "should not be treated as a doctrinal standard in and of itself". ↑
36. 1 Timothy 1:17, King James Version. Read the passages: 1 Timothy 1 ↑
37. John 1:1-3, 14; Philippians 2:6-8, King James Version. Read the passages: John 1 Philippians 2 ↑
38. Malachi 3:6, King James Version. Read the passages: Malachi 3 ↑
39. Hebrews 10:12, 14, King James Version. Read the passages: Hebrews 10 ↑



CHAPTER 4

The Book of Mormon's historical claim

The Book of Mormon claims to be history. Its title page presents an abridgment of ancient records that came forth “by the gift and power of God”, and the church's introduction calls it “a record of God’s dealings with ancient inhabitants of the Americas”.[1,2] Eleven men signed testimonies printed with the book. Three said that an angel showed them the plates and that God's voice declared the translation true; eight said that they handled the leaves. Their testimony deserves a full hearing. Yet by the church's own account the plates were returned to the messenger who gave them, and the English book is what remains to be examined.[3] Latter-day Saint scholars who have compared it with the Bible agree that its long Bible passages are built on the King James Version. The church's essay on DNA says that “the evidence is simply inconclusive”, and quotes an apostle's judgment that secular evidence “can neither prove nor disprove” the book.[4] On the church's own statement,

secular evidence cannot establish the history; the claim rests on testimony and on the spiritual witness its readers are asked to seek. Where the text can be compared with ancient Scripture, its base is the English of King James's translators.

Christians also rest their faith on testimony, and testimony must be weighed by what was seen and what was said. The apostles bore witness to the risen Christ, the event that is itself the gospel. The Book of Mormon's witnesses bore witness to plates, an angel and a voice concerning a translation. Their testimony points to the book, and the book must still be tested by the gospel. Paul applied that test even to an angel from heaven.[5] The preceding chapters have tested the later account where it speaks of God and Christ. A reader does not need to settle every question of American history to know whom to trust. The Christ who rose and ate before His disciples is the Savior we need.

What the book claims

The Book of Mormon does not present itself as inspired fiction. Its first edition calls it "an abridgment of the Record of the People of Nephi; and also of the Lamanites", together with "a Record of the People of Jared".[1] The church's introduction describes two civilizations, the destruction of all but the Lamanites, and "the personal ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ among the Nephites soon after His resurrection".[2] These are claims about real peoples, places and events.

The church's essay on the translation describes how the English came. "According to witnesses of the translation, when Joseph looked into the instruments, the words of scripture appeared in English." The essay says that he "read aloud the English words that appeared on the instrument". It also records the testimony of his wife Emma, asked whether he read from a book or manuscript: "He had neither manuscript nor book to read from."[6] We make no claim that Joseph Smith copied from a book. The church's own

account is that the English words were given to him. That is the text we can examine.

The witnesses

The testimony of the Three Witnesses is the book's strongest witness to its origin. They wrote that they "have seen the plates which contain this record". They continued: "And we also know that they have been translated by the gift and power of God, for his voice hath declared it unto us; wherefore we know of a surety that the work is true." They added, "we declare with words of soberness, that an angel of God came down from heaven, and he brought and laid before our eyes, that we beheld and saw the plates, and the engravings thereon". They signed their names: Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer and Martin Harris.[7]

The Eight Witnesses describe an object. Joseph Smith showed them "the plates of which hath been spoken, which have the appearance of gold; and as many of the leaves as the said Smith has translated we did handle with our hands". They saw "the engravings thereon, all of which has the appearance of ancient work, and of curious workmanship", and they wrote, "we have seen and hefted". They too signed their names: "And we give our names unto the world, to witness unto the world that which we have seen."[8]

A Christian must not dismiss testimony because it is testimony. The gospel itself comes through witnesses: Luke wrote from what was delivered by those "which from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word".[9] We will not guess at these men's motives. Their statements are the evidence before us, and we take them as written.

What can that testimony establish? The Eight say that they handled metal leaves with engravings that looked ancient. The Three say that an angel showed them the plates and that God's voice declared the translation true. None of the eleven says that he

read the engravings. By their own account, the Three know that the translation is true because the voice declared it. Their testimony stands on the angel and the voice, and it directs us to the book. It cannot show by itself what the English book is.

Those nearest the work

Two people who were close to the work gave fuller accounts decades later. Both affirmed it, and both should be heard in their own words.

Emma Smith wrote for her husband during the translation. In February 1879 her son, the senior editor of *The Saints' Herald*, the paper of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, put to her questions that its leaders had agreed beforehand, "the answers to which might, so far as she was concerned, settle these differences of opinion". The paper printed her answers on 1 October 1879, after her death. Her son wrote that he read them back to her before he left Nauvoo and that she affirmed them.[10]

She described the work at close range. She "frequently wrote day after day, often sitting at the table close by him, he sitting with his face buried in his hat, with the stone in it, and dictating hour after hour with nothing between us". Asked whether he could have had a book or manuscript without her knowing, she answered, "If he had had anything of the kind he could not have concealed it from me." The plates, she said, "often lay on the table without any attempt at concealment, wrapped in a small linen table cloth, which I had given him to fold them in." Once she traced their outline through the cloth: "They seemed to be pliable like thick paper, and would rustle with a metalic sound when the edges were moved by the thumb, as one does sometimes thumb the edges of a book." She moved them about the table as her work required. But she did not look at them. Asked whether she had not uncovered and examined them, she said, "I did not attempt to handle the

plates, other than I have told you, nor uncover them to look at them. I was satisfied that it was the work of God, and therefore did not feel it to be necessary to do so."

Her conviction was complete: "My belief is that the Book of Mormon is of divine authenticity—I have not the slightest doubt of it." She reasoned from what she had seen. After meals or interruptions, she said, her husband would begin again where he had left off, "without either seeing the manuscript or having any portion of it read to him". In her judgment he "could neither write nor dictate a coherent and well-worded letter; let alone dictating a book like the Book of Mormon."

The interview has to be weighed as a whole. Its questions were drawn up to settle disputed points, and the editor apologized to his mother "for putting the questions respecting polygamy and plural wives". Asked whether Joseph had other wives, she answered, "He had no other wife but me; nor did he to my knowledge ever have." Later she said, "I know that he had no other wife or wives than myself, in any sense, either spiritual or otherwise." The church's own account says otherwise. It publishes the revelation on marriage as section 132 of the Doctrine and Covenants, which chapter 5 examines, and its essay on plural marriage states that "Emma approved, at least for a time, of four of Joseph Smith's plural marriages in Nauvoo, and she accepted all four of those wives into her household." The same essay says, "For Joseph Smith's wife Emma, it was an excruciating ordeal." It also notes that she later joined the Reorganized Church, whose paper put these questions to her.[11] We do not judge her motives, and we do not set aside everything she said. But on the church's own account the interview is mistaken on a matter Emma knew at first hand, and each of its answers has to be weighed for itself. We weigh her account of the translation the same way, by what she was placed to see.

Martin Harris, one of the Three, gave his account in January 1859 to *Tiffany's Monthly*, which printed it that August: "The following narration we took down from the lips of Martin Harris, and read the same to him after it was written". Harris spoke of the plates as a weight in his hands: "I hefted the plates many times, and should think they weighed forty or fifty pounds." He reasoned from the weight: "I knew from the heft that they were lead or gold, and I knew that Joseph had not credit enough to buy so much lead." Asked how the Lord had shown the plates to him, he answered, "I am forbidden to say anything how the Lord showed them to me, except that by the power of God I have seen them." His assurance that the work was God's came in prayer: "He showed this to me by the still small voice spoken in the soul."[12]

One passage in that interview sits uneasily with the Eight. Harris says that the plates "were usually kept in a cherry box made for that purpose, in the possession of Joseph and myself", and that they "were kept from the sight of the world, and no one, save Oliver Cowdrey, myself, Joseph Smith, jr., and David Whitmer, ever saw them." The Eight wrote that they had seen the plates and handled them. The magazine prints no explanation, and we offer none. In this interview Harris does not withdraw his testimony; he says that he saw the plates "by the power of God". The difficulty belongs to one sentence in a report printed some thirty years after the events.

What could these witnesses attest? Royal Skousen, a Latter-day Saint scholar of the Book of Mormon's text and its original manuscript, draws the line himself: "Witnesses of the translation process make two kinds of claims." They "provide valuable evidence of what they actually saw taking place", and "Generally speaking, their observations are consistent with the physical evidence in the original manuscript." But they also "frequently made claims about matters that they themselves could not observe". In his words, "Of course, the witnesses themselves did not see what Joseph saw." He still concludes that "all seemed to believe that Joseph Smith actu-

ally saw words in English, and there is evidence in the original manuscript to support this idea."[13]

We accept that distinction, and we grant what the witnesses observed. Emma saw dictation without a book or manuscript, and she saw her husband take up the work again after interruptions without having it read back to him. This book does not claim that he read from a hidden text. Harris felt the weight of the plates, and the Eight handled them. Harris himself did not rest his conviction on the weight; it came, he said, by the still small voice. What none of the witnesses could observe is where the words came from. None of them saw the words Joseph said he received, and none of them read the engravings.

Some readers treat the stone and the hat as reason enough to dismiss the account. The church's essay answers that "such aids to facilitate the communication of God's power and inspiration are consistent with accounts in scripture". Besides the Urim and Thummim, it lists the rod of Aaron, a brass serpent, holy anointing oils, the Ark of the Covenant, and dirt mixed with saliva to heal a blind man's eyes.[14] The essay argues that such instruments are consistent with scripture, not that the instrument proves the translation, and on that point it is right. God has used ordinary things, and an unfamiliar instrument does not prove a fraud. Nor can an instrument vouch for the words that come through it. Scripture tests a prophet by his message: even when "the sign or the wonder come to pass", the message must still be weighed.[15] The instrument is not the question. The message is, and the preceding chapters have tested it.

The first edition also printed Joseph's own account of a loss. Its preface says that he had translated "one hundred and sixteen pages, the which I took from the Book of Lehi", that "some person or persons have stolen and kept from me" that account, and that the Lord commanded him not to translate it again, because those who held it were "altering the words". Instead, the preface reports

the Lord as saying, “thou shalt translate from the plates of Nephi”, and promising, “I will shew unto them that my wisdom is greater than the cunning of the Devil.”[16] This explanation was printed in 1830, not devised long afterwards, and it carries its own answer to the obvious question. On its account a second translation could not have been compared fairly, because those who held the first had altered its words and would publish them against him. The account is Joseph's own, and neither the lost pages nor an altered copy is before us to test it.

The plates themselves cannot be examined. Joseph Smith's history, now in the Pearl of Great Price, says that when the messenger called for them, “I delivered them up to him; and he has them in his charge until this day”.[3] What remains is the English text the witnesses vouched for. We turn to it.

What the English text shows

Where the Book of Mormon quotes the Bible at length, Latter-day Saint scholars have compared it word by word. Skousen states his first finding about the Bible passages plainly: “The base text for the Isaiah quotations in the Book of Mormon is indeed the King James Version of the Bible.” He reports a student's comparison of readings unique to particular early English Bibles: “in every case except one Stewart found that the Book of Mormon agreed with the unique readings in the King James Version”.[17]

The exception deserves its own hearing. At 2 Nephi 12:16 the Book of Mormon reads, “And upon all the ships of the sea, and upon all the ships of Tarshish”, where Isaiah 2:16 in the King James Version has only the ships of Tarshish. The church's footnote explains that the Greek has the first phrase and the Hebrew the second: “The Book of Mormon has both, showing that the brass plates had lost neither phrase.” Skousen notes that the first phrase also appears in Coverdale's English Bible of 1535, “upon all shippes of the sea”. Latter-day Saint scholars Dana M. Pike and David Rolph Seely,

after weighing the Hebrew, Greek and Dead Sea Scroll evidence, conclude, "We are thus not presently aware of any solution that satisfactorily accounts for all the questions regarding 2 Nephi 12:16 in its relation to the preserved text of Isaiah 2:16."[18] The verse remains an open question among the book's own scholars. It cannot carry the weight of the claim that the Book of Mormon restores what the Bible lost.

The King James wording carries its translators' choices, including renderings that Latter-day Saint apologists themselves count as mistakes. Isaiah 13:21 reads, "owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there", and 2 Nephi 23:21 reads the same. FAIR, the Latter-day Saint apologetics organization, grades this rendering a "Legit Error – No Change in Intent". The error does not change the passage's teaching, and we do not claim that it does.[19] The point is narrower. At such places the Book of Mormon gives the wording of the 1611 translators, not an independent rendering of an ancient text.

The variants follow the same English. Stan Spencer, writing in the Latter-day Saint journal *Interpreter*, finds that "A disproportionate number of these variants are due to the omission or replacement of words italicized in the KJV". The italic words are those the King James translators supplied to make their English read smoothly. Spencer judges that the variants "point to Joseph Smith"; that judgment is his.[20]

Some differences from Isaiah's words arrived after the book was first printed. In the first edition and the second, 1 Nephi 20:1 speaks of those who "are come forth out of the waters of Judah", as Isaiah 48:1 does. The 1840 edition adds "(or out of the waters of baptism,)", and the current text keeps the phrase.[21] No Isaiah text quoted here contains it. It entered the Book of Mormon's Isaiah in its third edition.

The sermon Jesus gives in the Book of Mormon follows the King James form of the Sermon on the Mount. Its prayer reads, "And

lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." In 1831 Joseph Smith's revision of Matthew rendered the same petition, "suffer us not to be led into temptation".[22] Latter-day Saint scholars answer that his revision may restore meaning rather than wording. Granting that, neither form is offered as an independent witness to the words Jesus spoke.

One reading deserves recognition. Where the King James Version has Jesus warn whoever "is angry with his brother without a cause", the Book of Mormon lacks "without a cause". John W. Welch writes, "In one important passage, manuscript evidence favors the Sermon at the Temple, and it deserves recognition." We grant it. Yet English Bibles before the King James Version, among them Tyndale's of 1526 and Coverdale's of 1535, also lacked the phrase, as Latter-day Saint scholars Daniel K. Judd and Allen W. Stoddard document. And the same sermon keeps the closing praise, "For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory", though Welch acknowledges that "the earlier Greek manuscripts have no doxology at the end of the Lord's Prayer". Westcott and Hort judged in 1882 that it "originated in liturgical use in Syria". Welch argues that Jesus would have closed His prayers with praise.[23]

The answer: familiar words

Latter-day Saint scholars have answered this evidence directly. Kent P. Jackson writes, "Because it was the common Bible in the English language in 1830, accepted by virtually all English-speaking believers, God intended the Book of Mormon's Isaiah passages to be in the words of the King James translation." Skousen, as FAIR quotes him, says that "the use of the King James text, warts and all, is not only unsurprising, but it is in fact expected." Robert J. Matthews suggested that Joseph Smith "might have relied upon the language of the King James Version as a vehicle to express the general sense of what was on the gold plates."[24] The Doctrine and

Covenants says that revelation comes to God's servants "after the manner of their language".[25]

There is truth in this answer. Christians should not object in principle to Scripture given in words familiar to its readers. Hebrews quotes Psalm 40 as the Greek translation of the Old Testament reads it, "a body hast thou prepared me", where the Psalm as translated from the Hebrew reads, "mine ears hast thou opened".[26] The apostles could quote the Scriptures their hearers knew without denying that God had spoken.

But this answer cannot do what the Book of Mormon claims for its records. Nephi's angel says that the last records "shall make known the plain and precious things which have been taken away".[27] Where the book quotes the Bible at length, a reader might expect to find them. If God gave those chapters in the words of 1611 for the sake of familiarity, then at those points the book gives the English Bible, its supplied words and its "satyrs" included, and not an independent ancient text. If Joseph Smith used the King James language as a vehicle for the general sense, then the wording is his. Either way, in the passages its scholars have compared, the Book of Mormon offers no independent witness that lost material has been restored, apart from one verse its own scholars leave unresolved and one omission that earlier English Bibles share. That claim rests on the later revelation's own authority, which is the authority under examination. The argument does not show that no plates existed or that no ancient record lies behind the book. It shows what the English text, where it can be tested, bears witness to.

What the church says about the evidence

The church's essay "Book of Mormon and DNA Studies" addresses the book's peoples. It reports that "The evidence assembled to date suggests that the majority of Native Americans carry largely Asian DNA." It concludes that "the evidence is simply inconclusive" and

that “Nothing is known about the DNA of Book of Mormon peoples.” It quotes Elder Dallin H. Oaks: “It is our position that secular evidence can neither prove nor disprove the authenticity of the Book of Mormon.”[4]

The essay also explains a change in the church's own description. The introduction, which the essay says “is not part of the text of the Book of Mormon”, once called the Lamanites the “principal ancestors of the American Indians”. The essay says that “Even this statement, first published in 1981, implies the presence of others”, and that the 2006 wording, “among the ancestors of the American Indians”, “reflects this understanding”. It observes that “most early Latter-day Saints assumed” that the book's peoples “were the first or the largest or even the only groups to settle the Americas”, while “The Book of Mormon itself, however, does not claim that the peoples it describes were either the predominant or the exclusive inhabitants of the lands they occupied.”[4]

We grant that the introduction is not scripture and that DNA studies cannot settle the question. We draw no verdict from them. What follows is the church's own position: secular evidence can neither prove nor disprove the book. Its historical claim then rests on the testimony of its witnesses and on the spiritual witness its readers are asked to seek. This chapter has examined the book's claims, its witnesses' statements, its English text and the church's essays. Arguments from geography, archaeology and language need their own evidence, and this chapter reaches no verdict on them.

Testimony and the risen Christ

The Christian faith is also founded on testimony. Luke wrote so that his reader “mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed.” Paul delivered “first of all” that “Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures”, that He was buried and rose again the third day, and that He “was seen of

Cephas, then of the twelve", then "of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present", then of James and all the apostles, and last of Paul himself.[28] John writes of what "we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life". Peter says, "we have not followed cunningly devised fables", for they "were eyewitnesses of his majesty".[29]

Both sets of witnesses are named, and both published what they claimed. The difference lies in what they testified to. The apostles bore witness to the gospel itself: the crucified Lord alive, who told His disciples, "handle me, and see", and ate before them.[30] The Book of Mormon's witnesses bore witness to plates, an angel and a voice, and through them to a book. That book must be tested by its content, and Paul gives the test: "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."[5] The test applies to the message, not to whether an angel appeared. The preceding chapters have applied it to what the later account teaches about the Creator and His creatures, about the Son, and about God Himself.

The Three Witnesses closed their testimony by giving honor "to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, which is one God."[7] The question for every reader is which account of that God is true. The risen Christ showed His hands and His feet, and He sent His witnesses to proclaim repentance and forgiveness in His name. Hear their message, turn from sin, and trust the Lord who died and rose for you.

Source notes

1. Title page, *Book of Mormon* (Palmyra, 1830), p. [i]. The appendix prints the complete title-page text. Read the passages: Title page, first edition (1830) ↑ ↑
2. Introduction to the Book of Mormon, current official edition, paragraphs 1 and 3, quoted briefly. The introduction is a church publication, not part of the book's text. ↑ ↑

3. Joseph Smith—History 1:59-60, Pearl of Great Price, current text, quoted briefly. Read the passages: Joseph Smith—History 1:59 (current text only) Joseph Smith—History 1:60 (current text only) ↑ ↑
4. "Book of Mormon and DNA Studies," Gospel Topics essay, current official text, quoted briefly, including the quotation of Dallin H. Oaks and the essay's note on the introduction's 1981 and 2006 wording. An official publication, distinguished from canon. ↑ ↑ ↑
5. Galatians 1:8-9, King James Version. The test concerns the content of the message, not the appearance of a messenger. Read the passages: Galatians 1 ↑ ↑
6. "Book of Mormon Translation," Gospel Topics essay, current official text, quoted briefly, including Emma Smith's statement as the essay reports it. An official publication, distinguished from canon. ↑
7. "The Testimony of Three Witnesses," printed with the Book of Mormon since 1830, quoted from Project Gutenberg eBook #17, a digital transcription of a modern Latter-day Saint text whose base printing is not identified. Read the passages: The Testimony of Three Witnesses ↑ ↑
8. "The Testimony of Eight Witnesses," quoted from Project Gutenberg eBook #17, as in the previous note. The eight signers are Christian Whitmer, Jacob Whitmer, Peter Whitmer Jr., John Whitmer, Hiram Page, Joseph Smith Sr., Hyrum Smith and Samuel H. Smith. Read the passages: The Testimony of Eight Witnesses ↑
9. Luke 1:1-4, King James Version. Read the passages: Luke 1 ↑
10. "Last Testimony of Sister Emma," *The Saints' Herald* 26, whole no. 427, no. 19 (Plano, Illinois, 1 October 1879), 289–290, read from the page images of the Internet Archive's scan of the volume. The masthead calls it the official paper of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. The editor's introduction dates the visit to February 1879 and says the questions were agreed beforehand; his closing note says the answers were read back to her and affirmed. The historical-context appendix prints the units quoted. Read the passages: Emma Smith, as printed in The Saints' Herald (1879) ↑
11. "Last Testimony of Sister Emma," *The Saints' Herald* (1 October 1879), p. 289. "Plural Marriage in Kirtland and Nauvoo," Gospel Topics essay, current official text with its notes, quoted briefly. An official publication, distinguished from canon. Read the passages: Emma Smith, as printed in The Saints' Herald (1879) ↑
12. "Mormonism—No. II," *Tiffany's Monthly* 5, no. 4 (New York, August 1859), 163, 166 and 169–170, read from the page images of the scan published by IAPSOP. The article is unsigned; the cover names Joel Tiffany as editor and proprietor. The article says that the narration was taken down in January 1859 and read back to Harris. The historical-context appendix prints the units quoted. Read the passages: Martin Harris, as printed in Tiffany's Monthly (1859) ↑
13. Royal Skousen, "How Joseph Smith Translated the Book of Mormon: Evidence from the Original Manuscript," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 7, no. 1 (1998): 22–31. Latter-day Saint scholarship, quoted briefly; the retained copy's soft hyphen in "themselves" is not reproduced. ↑

14. "Book of Mormon Translation," Gospel Topics essay, current official text, quoted briefly. An official publication, distinguished from canon. ↑
15. Deuteronomy 13:1-3, King James Version. Read the passages: Deuteronomy 13 ↑
16. Preface, *Book of Mormon* (Palmyra, 1830), pp. [iii]–iv, signed "The Author", read from the page images of the Internet Archive's scan. The Restoration appendix prints it complete. Read the passages: Preface, first edition (1830) ↑
17. Royal Skousen, "Textual Variants in the Isaiah Quotations in the Book of Mormon," in *Isaiah in the Book of Mormon*, ed. Donald W. Parry and John W. Welch (Provo, UT: FARMS, 1998), 373 and 376. Latter-day Saint scholarship, quoted briefly. ↑
18. 2 Nephi 12:16, current text, with the church's footnote, quoted briefly; Isaiah 2:16, King James Version; Skousen, "Textual Variants," 376-377; Dana M. Pike and David Rolph Seely, "'Upon All the Ships of the Sea, and Upon All the Ships of Tarshish': Revisiting 2 Nephi 12:16 and Isaiah 2:16," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 14, no. 2 (2005). Latter-day Saint scholarship, quoted briefly. Read the passages: Isaiah 2 2 Nephi 12:16 ↑
19. Isaiah 13:21, King James Version; 2 Nephi 23:21, current text. FAIR, "Book of Mormon/Textual issues/Translation errors from the King James Bible" (retained page), entry for Isaiah 13:21 and 2 Nephi 23:21. Latter-day Saint apologetics, not an official declaration; quoted briefly. Read the passages: Isaiah 13 2 Nephi 23:21 ↑
20. Stan Spencer, "Missing Words: King James Bible Italics, the Translation of the Book of Mormon, and Joseph Smith as an Unlearned Reader," *Interpreter: A Journal of Latter-day Saint Faith and Scholarship* 38 (2020), abstract and conclusion. His conclusion is attributed to him, not adopted as a finding of this book. ↑
21. 1 Nephi 20:1, *Book of Mormon* (1830), p. 52; (1837), p. 56; (1840), p. 53, read from the page image; current text. Isaiah 48:1, King James Version. The appendix prints each unit. Read the passages: Isaiah 48 1 Nephi 20:1, first edition (1830) 1 Nephi 20:1, second edition (1837) 1 Nephi 20:1, third edition (1840) ↑
22. 3 Nephi 13:12, current text; Matthew 6:13, King James Version; New Testament Revision 1, p. 13, Joseph Smith Papers transcript. The view that the revision may restore meaning rather than text is that of Latter-day Saint scholars, including Thomas A. Wayment and FAIR. Read the passages: Matthew 6 Matthew 6:13, New Testament Revision 1 (1831) 3 Nephi 13:12 ↑
23. Matthew 5:22; 6:13, King James Version; 3 Nephi 12:22; 13:13, current text. John W. Welch, *Illuminating the Sermon at the Temple and Sermon on the Mount* (Provo, UT: FARMS, 1999), chapter 9. Daniel K. Judd and Allen W. Stoddard, "Adding and Taking Away 'Without a Cause' in Matthew 5:22," in *How the New Testament Came to Be* (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2006), table 3. B. F. Westcott and F. J. A. Hort, *The New Testament in the Original Greek*, vol. 2, *Introduction and Appendix* (1882), appendix note on Matthew 6:13. Read the passages: Matthew 5 Matthew 6 3 Nephi 12:22 3 Nephi 13:13 Westcott and Hort (1882) ↑

24. Kent P. Jackson, "Isaiah in the Book of Mormon," in *A Reason for Faith* (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2016); Royal Skousen as quoted by FAIR on the retained page named above; Robert J. Matthews, "I Have a Question," *Ensign*, March 1980, answering why the Book of Mormon's Isaiah selections sometimes parallel the King James Version. Latter-day Saint scholarship, quoted briefly. ↑

25. Doctrine and Covenants 1:24, current text, quoted briefly. Read the passages: Doctrine and Covenants 1:24 (1923 printing) ↑

26. Hebrews 10:5; Psalm 40:6, King James Version; Psalm 39:7 in Lancelot C. L. Brenton's English translation of the Septuagint, which numbers the psalm differently. Read the passages: Psalms 40 Hebrews 10 Psalm 39:7, Brenton's English Septuagint ↑

27. 1 Nephi 13:40, *Book of Mormon* (1837), p. 35; the phrase is unchanged from 1830. Read the passages: 1 Nephi 13:40–41, second edition (1837) 1 Nephi 13:40, first edition (1830) ↑

28. Luke 1:4; 1 Corinthians 15:3-8, King James Version. Read the passages: Luke 1 1 Corinthians 15 ↑

29. 1 John 1:1-3; 2 Peter 1:16, King James Version. Read the passages: 2 Peter 1 1 John 1 ↑

30. Luke 24:36-47, King James Version. Read the passages: Luke 24 ↑



CHAPTER 5

A prophet in the light of Christ

God has spoken in His Son. Hebrews says that God, who spoke “at sundry times and in divers manners” by the prophets, “Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son”.[1] Moses promised a Prophet like himself, and Peter declares that Jesus is that Prophet: “him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you.”[2] Every later claim to speak for God must be tested by the Son and the gospel He gave. Joseph Smith claimed that the church should receive his word “as if from mine own mouth”.[3] Scripture gives the tests such a claim must meet. A prophet whose sign comes to pass is not to be heard if he turns God's people toward a god they have not known. A word that does not come to pass was not spoken by the Lord. A gospel other than the apostles' is under a curse, even if an angel brings it.[4] Applied fairly, these tests weigh against Joseph Smith's claim at three points examined here. His founding vision condemned “all their creeds”, and the later teaching denied what those creeds confessed of God as spirit and invisible. The Book of Abraham, which supplies much of the canon's teaching on uncre-

ated intelligences and “the Gods”, claims to translate Abraham's own writing, and the church's essay grants that the surviving papyri do not match it. The revelation on marriage reverses the Book of Mormon's judgment of David and Solomon.

The strongest Latter-day Saint answers deserve a full hearing. The creeds had mixed Scripture with philosophy. The Book of Abraham's truth lies in its teaching, not in its papyri. God may command what He otherwise forbids. Each answer, however, asks us to accept the later revelation on its own authority at the very point where the earlier witness speaks against it. Christ does not ask that of us. He gave His word, sent His Spirit with it, and told His church to test every spirit by the confession of the Son. The Father's voice still says of Jesus, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.”[5]

The Prophet God has given

The question of prophets begins with Christ. Moses told Israel, “The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken”. The apostles proclaimed Jesus as that Prophet.[2] When an angel showed John the visions of Revelation and John fell to worship him, the angel answered, “worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.”[6] All true prophecy bears witness to Jesus and leads to the worship of God.

That does not mean that God fell silent when the last apostle died. Hebrews 1 does not, by itself, rule out every later word from God. It does mean that every later word is measured by the Word God has already spoken in His Son. The question is not whether God may speak, but whether a particular message agrees with what He has said.

The tests Scripture gives

Deuteronomy 13 gives the first test, and it concerns content. A prophet or dreamer may give "a sign or a wonder", and "the sign or the wonder come to pass", yet if he says, "Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them", then "Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams". The reason follows: "for the LORD your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul."[7] A real sign does not validate a message that leads away from the God His people have known.

Deuteronomy 18 gives a second test: "When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD hath not spoken".[8] Paul gives a third: "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."[4] John adds, "try the spirits whether they are of God", and gives a confession to test them by: "Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God".[9] Jesus warns, "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing", and says, "by their fruits ye shall know them."[10]

These tests must be used honestly. Latter-day Saints confess that Jesus Christ came in the flesh, died and rose again. John's confession, taken alone, does not decide the question between us. Many Latter-day Saints live lives of service and sacrifice that put others to shame, and Christians should say so plainly. Jesus' warning about fruit concerns false prophets, whose teaching is part of their fruit; it is not a measure of how kind the members of a church are. The tests that decide this question are those that examine the message.

Joseph Smith did testify of Christ, and his testimony should be heard in his own words. In a vision recorded in 1832 he and Sidney Rigdon wrote: "And now, after the many testimonies which have been given of him, this is the testimony, last of all, which we

give of him: That he lives!" They said that they heard the voice "bearing record that he is the Only Begotten of the Father", and "That by him, and through him, and of him, the worlds are and were created".[11] Latter-day Saints claim the angel's words in Revelation for that witness: "the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." We do not deny that Joseph Smith spoke of Christ. The question is whether the Christ of his later teaching is the Christ of the apostles, and the first chapters of this book have tested that.

Latter-day Saints accept these tests, and the weight of Joseph Smith's claim invites them. A revelation given on the day the church was organized told its members to give heed to all his words: "For his word ye shall receive, as if from mine own mouth, in all patience and faith." The preface to the Doctrine and Covenants says, "whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same."[3] A claim to speak with the Lord's own voice must be held to the Lord's own word.

The founding message

Joseph Smith's account of his first vision, now in the Pearl of Great Price, begins with a revival. "Some were contending for the Methodist faith, some for the Presbyterian, and some for the Baptist." He went to pray to learn "which of all the sects was right". He writes: "I was answered that I must join none of them, for they were all wrong; and the Personage who addressed me said that all their creeds were an abomination in his sight; that those professors were all corrupt; that: "they draw near to me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me, they teach for doctrines the commandments of men, having a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof."""[12] The verdict concerns "all their creeds", not one clause in them.

What did those creeds confess about God? The Methodist Articles of Religion, as printed in 1817, began: "There is but one living and true God, everlasting, without body or parts, of infinite power,

wisdom, and goodness: the maker and preserver of all things, visible and invisible." The Baptists' Philadelphia Confession, as printed in 1818, confessed God as "a most pure Spirit, invisible, without body, parts, or passions, who only hath immortality".[13] These are the formal standards of two of the groups the account names. They do not show what any local preacher said in a particular meeting.

Much in the vision's charge deserves a hearing. Churches in Joseph Smith's day, as in ours, could quarrel over converts and honor God with their lips while their hearts were far from Him. Christians should confess that, and the author of this book stands under the same judgment.

The strongest Latter-day Saint answer is that the creeds had joined Scripture to Greek philosophy. Stephen E. Robinson puts it this way: "Primary prejudices of the Hellenistic world were the "absolute" nature of God (that is, he cannot be bound or limited by anything) and the impossibility of anything material or physical being eternal."[14] On this view, phrases such as "without body, parts, or passions" came from that world, not from the apostles, and the vision corrected them by showing the Father and the Son as distinct beings.

But these confessions rest on Scripture's own words. Jesus says, "God is a Spirit". Paul calls the Son "the image of the invisible God" and calls God "the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God". He speaks of God as the One "Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see".[15] The creeds' "without body" is their reading of these words. The vision's verdict alone does not show which clause it rejected, for those same creeds also confessed things the church affirms. The later teaching shows it, and the third chapter found the Father's body supplied by that teaching, not drawn from these passages.

Christ made a promise to His church: “upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” He told His apostles, “lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.” Paul gives glory to God “in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end.”[16] Latter-day Saints answer that the apostles themselves foresaw a departure: Paul warned that “after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you”, and that the day of the Lord would not come “except there come a falling away first”. A revelation of 1832 says that the church was not destroyed but driven “into the wilderness”.[17] We grant that error entered early, as Paul said it would. The question is whether the gospel itself and its witness were lost. Yet the Christians who wrote within the years Latter-day Saint scholars place the loss still confess Christ as God come in the flesh and risen bodily, and they read the apostles' writings, as the third chapter showed. The promise of Christ's presence with those who teach what He commanded is better kept by that confession than by a teaching that the church which made it had been lost.

A god they had not known

Deuteronomy 13 asks whether a message keeps God's people with the God they have known. The first chapters of this book have compared the later account of God with the apostles' witness. In the canon, that account describes a Father with a body of flesh and bones, a council of gods, creation by “the Gods”, and a promise to the exalted, “Then shall they be gods”. The church's manual also prints the line that God was once as we are now, though the church does not treat that sermon as a doctrinal standard, and the judgment that follows does not rest on it.[18] Latter-day Saints worship the Father in the name of Christ, and they do not ask anyone to serve another god by name. But Deuteronomy's warning concerns “other gods, which thou hast not known”. A God described as these canonical texts describe Him is not the God Israel knew from Moses and the prophets, or the God the apostles proclaimed

in Christ. Deuteronomy also teaches that a sign, even one that comes to pass, cannot validate such a message. The Lord uses it to prove whether His people love Him.

A translation tested

The Book of Abraham first appeared in the church's newspaper in 1842. It was introduced under the heading "A TRANSLATION": "Of some ancient Records that have fallen into our hands, from the Catecombs of Egypt, purporting to be the writings of Abraham, while he was in Egypt, called the Book of Abraham, written by his own hand, upon papyrus."[19] The church's essay states that it "was canonized as part of the Pearl of Great Price in 1880." The book supplies the canon's teaching on "the intelligences that were organized before the world was", and its account of creation by "the Gods".[20]

Fragments of the papyri once in Joseph Smith's possession came to the church in 1967. One of them contains the drawing printed as the book's first facsimile. The church's essay on the book reports the result plainly: "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 Egyptologists agree that the characters on the fragments do not match the translation given in the book of Abraham". It adds that "Scholars have identified the papyrus fragments as parts of standard funerary texts that were deposited with mummified bodies", and that some Egyptologists had long said that Joseph Smith's explanations of the facsimiles "did not match their own interpretations of these drawings."[21]

The essay answers in several ways. Only part of the papyri survives: "It is likely futile to assess Joseph's ability to translate papyri when we now have only a fraction of the papyri he had in his possession." Therefore "the relationship of the papyri to the published text cannot be settled conclusively by reference to the papyri." It

offers another view: “Joseph’s study of the papyri may have led to a revelation about key events and teachings in the life of Abraham”. It names details it judges ancient, such as the god Elkenah and Joseph Smith's reading of four figures as “this earth in its four quarters.” And it concludes, “The veracity and value of the book of Abraham cannot be settled by scholarly debate concerning the book’s translation and historicity.”[21]

We grant that the surviving papyri are fragments, and we reach no verdict about what was written on scrolls that no longer exist. But each answer leads to the same place. The 1842 heading makes a claim about a document: Abraham's own writing, upon papyrus. The papyrus that survives with the book's own first facsimile is, on the essay's account, a funerary text that does not match the translation. If the papyri instead prompted a revelation, then the book is not a translation of Abraham's writing in the sense its heading gives, and its teaching rests on the revelation alone. And if its truth cannot be settled by scholarly debate, it must be tested by the word God has already given. The book's distinctive teachings, intelligences without beginning and the Gods who organized the earth, are the teachings this book has found departing from the apostles' witness. A book whose surviving source does not support its heading gives no ground for changing the God we know in Christ.

David, Solomon and the revelation on marriage

The Book of Mormon meets an excuse directly. Some of Jacob's people justified their conduct “because of the things which were written concerning David, and Solomon his son.” The Lord answers: “Behold, David and Solomon truly had many wives and concubines, which thing was abominable before me, saith the Lord.” He commands, “there shall not any man among you have save it be one wife; and concubines he shall have none”.[22]

The revelation recorded at Nauvoo in 1843 speaks of the same men in the opposite way. It answers Joseph Smith's question about how the Lord "justified" His servants, David and Solomon among them, "as touching the principle and doctrine of their having many wives and concubines". It says, "David's wives and concubines were given unto him of me", and that he sinned in none of these things "save in the case of Uriah and his wife".[23]

The revelation itself offers a harmonization: David, Solomon and others "in nothing did they sin save in those things which they received not of me". Latter-day Saints also answer from Jacob's own words: "For if I will, saith the Lord of Hosts, raise up seed unto me, I will command my people; otherwise they shall hearken unto these things." They point to Nathan's words to David, "I gave thee thy master's house, and thy master's wives into thy bosom". The church's heading to Official Declaration 1 says that "The Bible and the Book of Mormon teach that monogamy is God's standard for marriage unless He declares otherwise".[24] We grant that Jacob 2:30 leaves room for a command, and that the Old Testament records households with many wives without condemning each one as it tells their story.

But Jacob answered an excuse drawn from David and Solomon. The Lord did not say that only the wives He had not given were abominable. He said that the two kings "truly had many wives and concubines, which thing was abominable", and He commanded one wife. An answer that condemned only the part not given would have left the excuse standing for the rest. Section 132 says of the same wives, "given unto him of me". Jacob 2:30 looks forward to what God might command; it does not turn what Jacob has just called abominable in David and Solomon into a gift. The Law had warned Israel's king, "Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away", and of Solomon the record says, "his wives turned away his heart after other gods".[25] Nathan's words recount what God gave David from Saul's house, and his next words rebuke David for Uriah. They do not repeal the Law's

warning. One revelation, given in the Lord's name, calls the many wives and concubines of David and Solomon abominable. The other, given in the same name, says the Lord justified them and gave David his. Both cannot be the Lord's judgment of the same men.

A disputed prediction

Christians often cite a revelation of 1832, which said that the temple of the New Jerusalem "shall be reared in this generation", and that "this generation shall not all pass away until an house shall be built unto the Lord".[26] Deuteronomy 18 gives the test of fulfillment. Latter-day Saints answer from a revelation of 1841: when God commands a work and enemies hinder it, "it behooveth me to require that work no more at the hands of those sons of men, but to accept of their offerings." Scripture also teaches that God's announced purposes can depend on a people's response.[27] That answer has real force, and this book does not rest its case on this prediction. The decisive questions concern who God is and what gospel saves.

Hear Him

The test of every prophet is the Son. The disciples on the mountain heard the Father say, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him."[5] Peter warned that "every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people."[2] The Son confessed the Father as spirit. He took flesh for us, gave Himself for sinners and rose again. He promised to be with His people always.

Hearing a later prophet is not the same as hearing Christ when the later message changes what Christ has said. Do not let any messenger, however sincere or however attested, stand between you and the Son. Come to Him, confess your sin, and trust His word. He will not change it, and He will not fail you.

Source notes

1. Hebrews 1:1-2, King James Version. Read the passages: Hebrews 1 ↑
2. Deuteronomy 18:15-19; Acts 3:22-23, King James Version. Read the passages: Deuteronomy 18 Acts 3 ↑ ↑ ↑
3. Doctrine and Covenants 21:4-5, with its heading dated 6 April 1830; 1:38, current text, quoted briefly. ↑ ↑
4. Deuteronomy 13:1-5; 18:20-22; Galatians 1:8-9, King James Version. Galatians applies to the content of a message, not to whether a messenger appeared. Read the passages: Deuteronomy 13 Deuteronomy 18 Galatians 1 ↑ ↑
5. Matthew 17:5, King James Version. Read the passages: Matthew 17 ↑ ↑
6. Revelation 19:10, King James Version. Read the passages: Revelation 19 ↑
7. Deuteronomy 13:1-3, King James Version. Read the passages: Deuteronomy 13 ↑
8. Deuteronomy 18:20-22, King James Version. Read the passages: Deuteronomy 18 ↑
9. 1 John 4:1-3, King James Version. Read the passages: 1 John 4 ↑
10. Matthew 7:15-20, King James Version. Read the passages: Matthew 7 ↑
11. Doctrine and Covenants 76:22-24, with its heading dated 16 February 1832, current text, quoted briefly; Revelation 19:10, King James Version. Read the passages: Revelation 19 ↑
12. Joseph Smith—History 1:5, 18-19, Pearl of Great Price, current text, quoted briefly. Read the passages: Joseph Smith—History 1:5 (current text only) Joseph Smith—History 1:18 (current text only) Joseph Smith—History 1:19 (current text only) ↑
13. *The Doctrines and Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church* (New York, 1817), Articles of Religion, Article I, p. 7; *A Confession of Faith* (Philadelphia, 1818), chapter 2, paragraph 1, pp. 17-18. Both were read from page images of the printed originals by two independent readers. The Presbyterians' Westminster Confession is not quoted here. Read the passages: Methodist Articles of Religion, Article I (1817) Philadelphia Baptist Confession, chapter 2, paragraph 1 (1818 printing) ↑
14. Stephen E. Robinson, "Early Christianity and 1 Nephi 13-14," in *The Book of Mormon: First Nephi, The Doctrinal Foundation* (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1988). Latter-day Saint scholarship, quoted briefly. ↑
15. John 4:24; Colossians 1:15; 1 Timothy 1:17; 6:16, King James Version. Read the passages: John 4 Colossians 1 1 Timothy 1 1 Timothy 6 ↑
16. Matthew 16:18; 28:20; Ephesians 3:21, King James Version. Read the passages: Matthew 16 Matthew 28 Ephesians 3 ↑
17. Acts 20:29-30; 2 Thessalonians 2:3, King James Version; Doctrine and Covenants 86:3, current text, quoted briefly; the section heading dates it to 6 December 1832. Read the passages: Acts 20 2 Thessalonians 2 ↑

18. Doctrine and Covenants 130:22; 121:32; 132:20; Abraham 4:1; *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2011), chapter 2, with the church's essay "Becoming Like God". The previous two chapters give the texts and their status. ↑

19. "The Book of Abraham," *Times and Seasons* 3, no. 9 (1 March 1842), p. 704, retained primary transcript via the Joseph Smith Papers. The printing's spelling, Catecombs, is kept. ↑

20. "Translation and Historicity of the Book of Abraham," Gospel Topics essay, current official text, quoted briefly; Abraham 3:18-19, 22; 4:1, current text, quoted briefly. Read the passages: Abraham 3:18–19, historical printing (1842) Abraham 4:1, historical printing (1842) Abraham 3:22–26, historical paragraph 22 (1842) ↑

21. "Translation and Historicity of the Book of Abraham," Gospel Topics essay, quoted briefly. An official publication, distinguished from canon. ↑ ↑

22. Jacob 2:23-24, 27, current text, quoted briefly. The first edition has the same words, with spelling and punctuation differences (*Book of Mormon* [1830], pp. 126-127); the appendix prints it. Read the passages: Jacob 2:23–24, 27, 30, first edition (1830) ↑

23. Doctrine and Covenants 132:1, 38-39, current text, quoted briefly; the heading says the revelation was recorded on 12 July 1843 and that some of its principles were known earlier. The appendix prints the corresponding passage of the 1843 Kingsbury copy. Read the passages: Doctrine and Covenants 132:38–39, Kingsbury copy (1843) ↑

24. Jacob 2:30, current text; 2 Samuel 12:7-9, King James Version; heading to Official Declaration 1, current text, an editorial heading rather than canon; quoted briefly. The church's essay "Plural Marriage in Kirtland and Nauvoo" calls monogamy "the Lord's standing law of marriage". Read the passages: 2 Samuel 12 Jacob 2:23–24, 27, 30, first edition (1830) Official Declaration 1: current editorial heading ↑

25. Deuteronomy 17:17; 1 Kings 11:3-4, King James Version. Read the passages: Deuteronomy 17 1 Kings 11 ↑

26. Doctrine and Covenants 84:4-5, with its heading dated 22-23 September 1832, current text, quoted briefly. ↑

27. Doctrine and Covenants 124:49, 51, with its heading dated 19 January 1841, current text, quoted briefly; Jeremiah 18:7-10, King James Version. Read the passages: Jeremiah 18 ↑



CHAPTER 6

Honest things in the sight of men

When the apostle Paul administered a gift from the churches, he took care over how it was handled. He did not carry it alone. With it travelled a brother “chosen of the churches to travel with us with this grace”, and Paul gave his reason: “Avoiding this, that no man should blame us in this abundance which is administered by us: Providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men.”[1] Paul knew that a large gift could bring suspicion on those who handled it, and he met that danger with openness. A church that claims to restore the church of the apostles invites comparison with the apostles' conduct, and the handling of money is one place where that conduct can be examined plainly.

The findings of the United States Securities and Exchange Commission in 2023 describe the opposite course. For almost twenty years, the Commission found, the investment manager of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints filed required reports in the names of other entities, created to prevent public disclosure

of the church's holdings, and those reports misstated who controlled the investments. It found that the church's senior leadership, which it defines as the First Presidency and the Presiding Bishopric, approved the approach and its expansion. The church settled the case without admitting or denying the findings.[2] The size of the church's investments is not the charge here. The charge concerns honest dealing, which the church's own Articles of Faith confess as a duty. Beneath it lies a question for every reader: what money can and cannot do before God. No one is redeemed with silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ.[3]

What the Commission found

The order is a settlement, and its limits belong beside its findings. The church and its investment manager, Ensign Peak Advisors, consented to it "without admitting or denying the findings herein", admitting only the Commission's jurisdiction over them and the subject matter of the proceedings. The order states that its findings bind no other person or entity in that or any other proceeding.[4] What follows are the Commission's findings, which the church neither admitted nor denied.

Ensign Peak was created in 1997 to manage what the church calls its reserves. The order says that these include securities bought with "excess tithing", income and returns generated by Ensign Peak, and the assets of the church's other integrated auxiliaries.[5] Federal law requires a manager with investment discretion over at least $100 million in listed securities to report them every quarter, and those reports are public. By at least 1998 Ensign Peak's senior managers knew of the requirement and had told the church's senior leadership.[6]

The order then states the reason for what followed: "The Church was concerned that disclosure of the assets in the name of Ensign Peak, a known Church affiliate, would lead to negative consequences in light of the size of the Church's portfolio." Ensign

Peak could not adopt its plan without the First Presidency's approval, and the church approved it.[7] Beginning in 2001, the church and Ensign Peak created thirteen entities, which the order calls limited liability corporations, "for the sole purpose of filing Forms 13F and preventing public disclosure by Ensign Peak of the Church's equity securities holdings." The entities were given addresses in other states, where they did no business beyond receiving mail. In 2005 the church learned that the public might link the first entity to it, because the person signing its reports was listed in a public directory as a church employee. The senior leadership then approved a new reporting entity, to be created with "better care being taken to ensure that neither the 'Street' nor the media [could] connect the new entity to Ensign Peak." It approved further entities in 2011 and 2015.[8]

The reports filed in these entities' names said that each entity had sole investment and voting discretion over the securities it listed. The Commission found that Ensign Peak "at all times retained discretion over all investment decisions." The order says that the church and Ensign Peak "understood that Ensign Peak continued to make investment and voting decisions relating to the portfolio, and that the LLC Structure was created for the sole purpose of filing Forms 13F." The business managers who signed the reports were given too little information to make the representations they signed. The order adds that Ensign Peak could not file in its own name without the unanimous approval of the church's senior leadership.[9]

The church's own auditors reviewed the arrangement in 2014 and again in 2017. They did not recommend specific changes, but in discussions with Ensign Peak's senior management they "highlighted the risk that the SEC might disagree with the approach." In May 2018 a public website reported that entities apparently tied to the church had filed reports showing about $32 billion of holdings. Two of the business managers then resigned, "voicing concerns about what they had been asked to do", and two others were

assigned in their place. On 14 February 2020 Ensign Peak filed a single report in its own name for the last quarter of 2019. It disclosed 1,659 securities worth about $37.8 billion.[10]

The Commission found that Ensign Peak violated the securities reporting law and that the church caused those violations. It ordered both to cease and desist, and it imposed civil penalties of $4 million on Ensign Peak and $1 million on the church.[11]

What the order does not show

The order is narrow, and it should be kept narrow. It is a civil settlement about securities reports. It makes no finding of theft or of tax fraud. Apart from saying that the reserves include securities bought with excess tithing, it says nothing about how tithing is spent, and it does not measure the church's charity. It gives no figure for the church's total wealth, income or spending.

Nor would the absence of an annual information return prove wrongdoing by itself. American tax law excuses churches, and some organizations affiliated with churches, from the annual information return that most charities must file. That exception did not remove the separate duty to report securities, which is the duty the order concerns.[12]

Ensign Peak now reports in its own name. Its filing for the quarter that ended on 30 September 2026 lists 1,709 entries of reportable securities with a total value of $60,611,728,144, about $60.61 billion.[13] That figure is easily misused. It covers the listed securities the form requires, not everything the church owns. It is not the church's total wealth, reserves, income or spending, and the Commission's acceptance of a filing does not certify that the filing is accurate. This book draws no argument from the size of the number.

The standard

Paul's care with the gift was not a point of etiquette. He was a man who knew that God sees, and so he wanted his handling of other people's gifts to bear inspection by men as well.

The church confesses the same standard in its own scripture. The twelfth Article of Faith says, "We believe in being subject to kings, presidents, rulers, and magistrates, in obeying, honoring, and sustaining the law." The thirteenth begins, "We believe in being honest, true, chaste, benevolent, virtuous, and in doing good to all men".[14] Both were first printed in 1842, and both stand in the Pearl of Great Price today.

Measured by either standard, the conduct the order describes fails. A report that names an entity as the sole manager of investments it never managed is not honest. The Commission found that the reports said exactly that, and that the church understood who was making the decisions. The entity approved in 2005 was to be created so that neither the "Street" nor the media could connect it to Ensign Peak. An arrangement designed that way was designed so that the filings would not be traced to the church. According to the order, the church's senior leadership approved the approach and approved its expansion. It continued after the church's auditors had raised the risk that the Commission might disagree, and after two of those asked to sign had resigned with concerns.

The strongest case on the other side

A thoughtful Latter-day Saint can answer with a serious case, and it should be heard as fully as the order allows. What follows is not the church's own statement. The church's own account of these events remains an open question, which this chapter does not examine. This is the case a faithful member could build from the order itself.

The order finds no theft, and it makes no charge about how tithing was spent; the money remained invested for the church. Ensign Peak charges the church no management fees, and the order notes that it is exempt from registering as an investment adviser because it is a charitable organization advising only charitable organizations. The law in question governs reports, and the penalties were civil. The church did not admit the findings. The order itself records a reason for confidentiality: the church feared negative consequences if a large portfolio were disclosed, and a prudent steward may keep a reserve quiet. The church's own auditors did not recommend specific changes. And Ensign Peak reported in its own name from February 2020, three years before the order.[15]

Much of this is true, and this book grants it. The order finds no theft, and this book alleges none. A reserve is not a sin, and its size is not an argument. The penalties were civil, the findings were neither admitted nor denied, and the reporting was corrected before the order.

But the defense explains a reason; it does not change the act. Like Paul's, the concern the order reports arose from abundance: the church feared negative consequences in light of the size of its portfolio. Paul answered the danger of abundance with more light, sending with the gift a brother chosen by the churches. The arrangement the order describes answered its concern with less light: entities with distant addresses, reports that credited the investments to entities that did not manage them, and signers who could not know whether what they signed was true. Keeping one's affairs private can be honest. Telling the public what is not so is not. The auditors' warning does not show that anyone believed the arrangement unlawful. It shows that the risk was raised inside the church, and that the arrangement went on. The church chose to settle, and the findings stand as the Commission's findings. This book treats them as findings, not admissions, and asks what they describe.

Why it matters before God

This is not the gravest question in this book. A church could keep perfect accounts and still preach another gospel, and a church that preaches the true gospel can still sin with its money. Christians have no ground for boasting here. Second Corinthians 8:21 judges every church that handles gifts, including the churches of this book's readers and of its author, and every Christian who handles money that belongs to others.

But the question bears on the claim this book has been testing. The church claims to restore the church the apostles led. Paul's handling of the gift shows what apostolic authority looked like when it held other people's money: it accepted scrutiny, providing for honest things in the sight of the Lord and of men. When a church, through its senior leadership, approves filing in other names, understands that the named entities make no investment decisions, and keeps that arrangement for almost twenty years where the law requires disclosure, the conduct is not apostolic, whatever the motive. The motive is God's to judge. The deeds can be weighed, and they are set out in a public order that the church chose to settle.

Many Latter-day Saints give faithfully, often at real cost, out of love for God. That devotion is real, and nothing here mocks it. The question is not the sincerity of those who give. It is the honesty owed to them, and to everyone else, by those who administer what they give.

The riches of Christ

Paul grounds giving in Christ. In the same chapter, before he speaks of honest handling, he writes: “For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.”[16] The Son of God, through whom all things were made, became poor to

make sinners rich in Him. Christian giving answers that grace. It does not purchase it.

No reserve, however large, and no gift, however faithful, can pay for one sin. Peter writes, “ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot”.[3] Paul handled the gift with care because he served a greater treasure: the gospel of a Savior who gives Himself freely to all who come to Him.

Hold every church, and every Christian, to the apostles' standard: honest things, in the sight of the Lord and in the sight of men. Then do not look to any church's reserves, or to your own record of giving, for what only Christ can give. He became poor for sinners, and through His poverty all who trust Him are made rich.

Source notes

1. 2 Corinthians 8:18-21, King James Version. Read the passages: 2 Corinthians 8 ↑
2. Securities and Exchange Commission, *In the Matter of Ensign Peak Advisors, Inc., and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, Exchange Act Release No. 96951, Administrative Proceeding File No. 3-21306 (21 February 2023), §II, p. 1; Summary and ¶1, p. 2; ¶8, p. 3; ¶¶9-16, p. 4. The paragraphs this chapter quotes are printed complete in the public-records appendix. Read the passages: Order of 21 February 2023, Exchange Act Release No. 96951 Section II (p. 1) Summary (p. 2) Paragraph 1 (p. 2) Paragraph 8 (p. 3) Paragraph 11 (p. 4) ↑
3. 1 Peter 1:18-19, King James Version. Read the passages: 1 Peter 1 ↑ ↑
4. SEC order, §II, p. 1; p. 2, n. 1. Read the passages: Order of 21 February 2023, Exchange Act Release No. 96951 Section II (p. 1) Footnote 1 (p. 2) ↑
5. SEC order, ¶¶2-3, pp. 2-3. The order names the sources of the reserves. It gives no annual tithing amount and no current total. Read the passages: Order of 21 February 2023, Exchange Act Release No. 96951 Paragraph 3 (p. 3) ↑
6. SEC order, ¶4 and ¶7, p. 3. Read the passages: Order of 21 February 2023, Exchange Act Release No. 96951 ↑
7. SEC order, ¶8, p. 3, with the Summary, p. 2. Read the passages: Order of 21 February 2023, Exchange Act Release No. 96951 Summary (p. 2) Paragraph 8 (p. 3) ↑

8. SEC order, Summary, p. 2; ¶¶9-16, p. 4; ¶23, p. 5. The first entity dates from 2001. The order counts thirteen in all, twelve of them similar "Clone LLCs". Paragraph 11 does not name the document whose words it quotes. Read the passages: Order of 21 February 2023, Exchange Act Release No. 96951 Summary (p. 2) Paragraph 11 (p. 4) ↑

9. SEC order, Summary, p. 2; ¶¶27-28 and 30, p. 6; ¶31, pp. 6-7. Paragraph 30 is printed complete in the public-records appendix. Read the passages: Order of 21 February 2023, Exchange Act Release No. 96951 Summary (p. 2) Paragraph 30 (p. 6) ↑

10. SEC order, ¶¶32-35, p. 7. Read the passages: Order of 21 February 2023, Exchange Act Release No. 96951 Paragraph 32 (p. 7) Paragraph 34 (p. 7) ↑

11. SEC order, ¶¶36-37, p. 7; §IV.A-D, p. 8. The order required payment within ten days; no record of payment is examined here. Read the passages: Order of 21 February 2023, Exchange Act Release No. 96951 ↑

12. Internal Revenue Service, "Filing Requirements for churches and religious organizations," retained 16 November 2026. The exception concerns the annual information return. It does not settle the obligations of any particular entity. ↑

13. Ensign Peak Advisors, Inc, Form 13F-HR, accession 0001454984-26-000011, signed and filed 12 November 2026, for the period ending 30 September 2026: summary page, 1,709 table entries, total value 60611728144 dollars. SEC Division of Investment Management staff, "Frequently Asked Questions About Form 13F," updated 6 March 2026, Question 36 (values reported to the nearest dollar since 3 January 2023) and Question 30 (an acceptance message does not address a filing's accuracy). The SEC order, ¶¶4-5, p. 3, describes the securities the form covers. The values are reported by the filer; the separate holdings table was not summed for this book. Read the passages: Order of 21 February 2023, Exchange Act Release No. 96951 Form 13F-HR filed 12 November 2026 ↑

14. Articles of Faith 1:12-13, current official text, quoted briefly. First printed in "Church History," *Times and Seasons* 3, no. 9 (1 March 1842), p. 710, where Article 12 reads "honoring and sustaining" without the later comma. The restoration-passages appendix prints both articles from that printing. ↑

15. SEC order, ¶¶2-3, pp. 2-3; ¶8, p. 3; ¶¶32 and 35, p. 7. Read the passages: Order of 21 February 2023, Exchange Act Release No. 96951 Paragraph 3 (p. 3) Paragraph 8 (p. 3) Paragraph 32 (p. 7) ↑

16. 2 Corinthians 8:9, King James Version. Read the passages: 2 Corinthians 8 ↑



CHAPTER 7

Faith, testimony and conscience

Faith in Jesus Christ does not require us to believe every claim made in His name. The apostles call us to trust Him, and they warn us about false prophets. John writes, “believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God”.[1] Taking that warning seriously is an act of faithfulness to God.

The question may be personal long before it becomes an argument. You may have prayed about the Book of Mormon, received an answer you understood as God's witness, and built your life around it. An author cannot truthfully tell you that you experienced nothing. Nor can the strength of that experience, by itself, settle whether every conclusion drawn from it is true. We must distinguish the experience, its interpretation and the message it is being asked to establish.

Prayer and the promised witness

Moroni's invitation is more substantial than a request to look for a pleasant feeling. It directs the reader to ask God, the Eternal Father, in Christ's name, “with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ”. The promised manifestation is “by the power of the Holy Ghost”.[2] Those conditions and that claimed source belong in any fair account of the invitation.

Doctrine and Covenants 9 also joins thought to prayer. In a revelation addressed to Oliver Cowdery about translating, the instruction is to study the matter in his mind and then ask whether it is right. The text describes a burning in the bosom for what is right and a stupor of thought for what is wrong.[3] It allows a negative answer. A criticism that represents the whole claim as thoughtless emotion, or says the canon provides no possibility of a no, has missed what the texts say.

Christians should gladly affirm that it is right to ask God for wisdom. James tells the person who lacks it to ask the God who gives generously, and to ask in faith.[4] Prayer and careful examination belong together. We need not choose between depending on God and attending to the words before us.

But a command to pray does not establish in advance the truth of the claim being examined. Nor does the sincerity of the one who prays make every interpretation of an answer correct. The question remains: has God borne witness to this message? We must not answer it simply by repeating our conviction that He has.

Christians also depend on the Spirit

There is a serious objection here. Paul says, “The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God”.[5] If Christians depend on an inward witness, why should they dismiss a Latter-day Saint's witness merely because it is inward?

They should not. The presence of inward conviction is not the difference that establishes one teaching as true and another as false. The Christian must submit his own convictions to God's judgment. A confidence held by this book's author has no exemption from the test applied to the reader's confidence.

Paul's witness has a stated content: adoption as God's children, through the Spirit by whom we cry to the Father. It belongs within his proclamation of life in Christ. John likewise joins the witness within the believer to God's testimony concerning His Son and to the eternal life God gives in Him.[5,6] These passages are not a grant of infallibility to every conviction a believer subsequently forms.

A Latter-day Saint may rightly reply that Moroni's promise also has content: the truth of the record, and the truth of all things. John likewise writes that believers have an anointing and know all things. The difference cannot be established by pretending that only the Christian witness concerns truth. John's context supplies the test. He tells believers, “Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning”, and says he is writing about those who seduce them. The anointing keeps them in that first message; it does not authorize a later message to reverse it.[7] A claimed witness to the Book of Mormon must therefore be examined beside the message it asks us to receive. Calling that witness divine cannot settle the disagreement before the messages are compared.

God is able to make truth known. Our need to test a claimed revelation does not deny His power to reveal. It distinguishes His truthful witness from our claim to have understood or received it. Jesus says that the Spirit of truth will testify of Him.[8] The Spirit's work does not give us permission to replace the Christ whom the apostles proclaim with a conflicting account and then appeal to the strength of our assurance.

This applies equally to Christians. A person can quote the Bible while using it badly. A church can defend its traditions instead of

hearing Christ. We must examine what is actually being taught and how the passages are being read. Calling an interpretation Christian does not relieve its author of that duty.

Try the message

First John does not tell us to accept every spirit that claims divine authority. It directs us to the confession of Jesus Christ come in the flesh, and then to hearing the apostolic witness: "he that knoweth God heareth us".[1] John identifies that witness at the beginning of the letter: those who heard, saw and handled the Word of life declare what they saw and heard.[9] A later body claiming apostolic office must be tested by that original testimony. A later office, however it is received, does not make its holders the witnesses John names. The test concerns Christ as those first witnesses make Him known.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints affirms that Jesus came in flesh. We must acknowledge that rather than treating the bare words of John's incarnation test as an automatic disproof of the church. The examination must consider the whole testimony about Him: who He is, His relation to the Father, His creating work, His saving death and the life He gives. Chapters 1 and 2 have set out that witness and tested the proposed exception for an uncreated human core.

Paul makes the same demand when he warns against another gospel. His warning reaches even his own party and an angel from heaven.[10] An impressive messenger does not make a changed gospel true. Equally, the mere claim that an angel appeared does not make the message false. Its content must be examined before Paul's judgment is applied.

The earlier chapters have argued that the later account changes the relation between God and His creatures. A personal assurance cannot make that change a restoration of the apostolic witness. This is why the doctrinal examination matters to the testimony

question. The Christian reply is an argument from the message, rather than a claim to possess stronger feelings than the reader.

Moroni's own invitation calls for faith in Christ. That brings us back to the question of whom we trust. We cannot settle Christ's identity by first accepting the later account of Him and then using our confidence in that account to decide what the apostles must have meant. The earlier witness must be allowed to speak.

Receive the word and examine it

Acts describes people in Berea who received Paul's message readily and searched the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so. Many believed.[11] Readiness to hear and willingness to examine were joined. Their examination was not portrayed as hostility to God.

The point is especially important because the messenger was Paul. A claim to apostolic authority did not turn examination of the Scriptures into disobedience. The church's appeal to the Bible, and the Book of Mormon's appeal to the earlier record, likewise give the reader reason to compare the actual messages. The translation qualification must be considered, as Chapter 2 explains; it cannot be allowed to remove every possible test of a later claim.

Paul tells Timothy that the holy Scriptures can make him wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. They instruct, reprove and correct, equipping God's servant for good works.[12] Correction is part of their good work. We do not honor Scripture by protecting our reading from correction.

This passage does not, by itself, prove that no further revelation could ever be given. It establishes Scripture's place in forming and correcting faith. A later message that claims to restore the apostolic gospel must face the earlier testimony it professes to confirm. The test is not evaded by insisting that only someone who already accepts the later authority can understand it.

Bring the difficult passages into the examination. A Christian reply must answer the actual argument, including its strongest form. Where we have misunderstood a source, we must correct ourselves. Where a question remains unanswered, repeating the conclusion more loudly is no answer. Seeking the truth requires patience as well as conviction.

Conscience before God

Article of Faith 11 claims the privilege of worship according to conscience and says to "allow all men the same privilege", letting them worship how, where or what they may.[13] That profession should leave room for the reader to examine a claim honestly. Freedom to examine is not proof that every conclusion is equally true. It is freedom to seek the truth without pretending to believe what one does not believe.

Paul says that each of us will give account of himself to God. When the apostles were commanded to stop their witness to Jesus, they answered, "We ought to obey God rather than men."[14] Human approval cannot take God's place. Neither a church's demand nor an author's demand can relieve us of responsibility before Him.

A decision can carry pain where family, friendship and years of service are involved. Do not turn that pain into contempt for those you love. Tell the truth about what they teach and do. Do not invent motives or repeat an allegation because it would help your argument. Christian wrongdoing faces the same standard. Faithfulness to Christ gives no permission for cruelty.

Yet affection cannot make a false teaching true. If the message changes the God we worship or the gospel we receive, we must reject the error even when doing so costs us the approval of people we love. We need mercy before God, and we owe our neighbor a truthful witness to the Savior.

Jesus joins knowing the truth and being made free to continuing in His word.[15] Keep praying as you examine. Ask for wisdom, read the passages, hear the strongest answer and follow what is true. Bring your fear and sin to Christ. The goal is to know Him and receive His life, with a conscience that answers to God.

Source notes

1. 1 John 4:1-6, King James Version. The confession of the incarnation is read with the letter's appeal to the apostolic witness; it is not treated as a denial that the church confesses Christ's coming in flesh. Read the passages: 1 John 4 ↑ ↑
2. Moroni 10:4-5, current wording quoted briefly. The complete corresponding 1830 passage, p. 586, appears in the appendix with its additional and before he will manifest identified. Read the passages: Moroni 10:4–5, first edition (1830) ↑
3. Doctrine and Covenants 9:7-9, current text. Its heading places the instruction in Oliver Cowdery's attempt to translate. The complete corresponding units are printed from the disclosed 1923 reading transcription, with the uncertain page numeral identified. Read the passages: Doctrine and Covenants 9:7 Doctrine and Covenants 9:8 Doctrine and Covenants 9:9 ↑
4. James 1:5-8, King James Version. Read the passages: James 1 ↑
5. Romans 8:15-17, King James Version. Read the passages: Romans 8 ↑ ↑
6. 1 John 5:9-13, King James Version. God's witness to the Son and eternal life supplies the content of the passage. Read the passages: 1 John 5 ↑
7. 1 John 2:20-27, King James Version. The promise to teach all things is read with the command to remain in what was heard from the beginning and the warning about seduction. Read the passages: 1 John 2 ↑
8. John 15:26, King James Version. Read the passages: John 15 ↑
9. 1 John 1:1-3, King James Version. Read the passages: 1 John 1 ↑
10. Galatians 1:6-9, King James Version. Read the passages: Galatians 1 ↑
11. Acts 17:10-12, King James Version. Read the passages: Acts 17 ↑
12. 2 Timothy 3:14-17, King James Version. The passage's use of Scripture for salvation, correction and good works is distinguished from a separate argument about when the canon closed. Read the passages: 2 Timothy 3 ↑
13. Article of Faith 11; “Church History,” *Times and Seasons* 3, no. 9 (1 March 1842), p. 710. The full historical statement and its small wording differences from the current edition are given in the appendix. Read the passages: Article of Faith 11, first printing (1842) ↑
14. Romans 14:12; Acts 5:29, King James Version. Read the passages: Acts 5 Romans 14 ↑
15. John 8:31-32, King James Version. Read the passages: John 8 ↑



CHAPTER 8

Grace and assurance

The sinner's hope is Jesus Christ. He offered Himself for sins, rose from the dead and lives to save those who come to God by Him. We do not complete His sacrifice or supply what His blood lacked. Paul says that God justifies the ungodly who believe, and counts their faith for righteousness. The works that follow are the fruit of the life He gives.[1] This is why the difference between receiving Christ and adding another basis for acceptance before God matters so much. Our answer to it determines where the guilty are told to rest.

A fair examination must begin by hearing what the church says about grace. The Book of Mormon speaks of “relying wholly upon the merits of him who is mighty to save”. Doctrine and Covenants 20 affirms justification and sanctification through Christ's grace.[2] In 2015 Dieter F. Uchtdorf said, “Salvation cannot be bought with the currency of obedience; it is purchased by the blood of the Son of God.”[3] These are substantial affirmations. An argument against

a church that simply denies grace would miss the church before us.

The question is what those affirmations mean within the whole account of salvation. Who is the Savior? What does He give? What is required for its fullness, and on whose authority? The earlier chapters have tested the account of God and the claim to restore His gospel. Here we must distinguish the grace the apostles proclaim from the later system of exaltation, without turning every command to obey into a denial of grace.

The God who justifies the ungodly

Paul places the guilty before God without a claim to wages. “Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.” He then describes the person who does not work for that standing but believes on the God who justifies the ungodly: “his faith is counted for righteousness.”[4] God does not wait until the ungodly have supplied the righteousness their justification requires. He gives the righteous standing they cannot establish for themselves.

This does not make faith a payment of another kind. Faith receives the promise. Its confidence rests in the One who promises and in what Christ has done. Paul says that sinners are justified freely by God's grace through the redemption in Christ Jesus. The ground is Christ's saving work; boasting is excluded.[5]

Abraham makes the order plain. His faith was counted for righteousness before he was circumcised. Circumcision followed as a sign and seal of the righteousness of the faith he already had.[6] The sign did not create a debt that God then discharged by accepting him. The promise came through faith.

Latter-day Saints can agree that obedience does not purchase salvation. Uchtdorf's sermon explicitly rejects that account. He also rejects the thought that the words “after all we can do” mean that

grace arrives because of our efforts.[3] We should receive that correction wherever it is needed, including among Christians who speak as though their best efforts made God their debtor.

The Bible Dictionary's entry on grace nevertheless says that "grace cannot suffice without total effort on the part of the recipient." Its surrounding account describes Christ's enabling power, faith and repentance, and help beyond our best efforts.[7] That wording must be read alongside Uchtdorf's. We cannot fairly make the harsher possible reading the belief of every member. But if total effort is made a contribution that must first establish our acceptance, Paul's answer is decisive: grace justifies the ungodly who believe. Our effort does not make His grace sufficient. Christ is sufficient.

A living faith obeys

There is an objection that must not be evaded. Jesus warns that calling Him Lord while doing evil is no refuge. James says that faith without works is dead, and writes, "by works a man is justified, and not by faith only."[8] If we turn justification by faith into permission to remain in sin, we have changed the gospel we claim to defend.

James describes a profession that leaves a brother or sister without needed food and clothing. He asks whether that faith can save. His example of Abraham is the offering of Isaac: faith worked with his works, and by works faith was made perfect. He then says that the Scripture about Abraham believing God was fulfilled.[9] Paul asks how the ungodly are counted righteous before God; James exposes a claimed faith that produces nothing. James's own account joins Abraham's obedience to the faith already spoken of in Scripture. It does not say that Abraham purchased the righteousness Paul locates before circumcision.

We must keep both truths. A claim to trust Christ that refuses His lordship is empty. Yet our obedience is not the price of His justifying verdict. Ephesians places good works after salvation by grace

through faith: we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for them.[10] Titus says that the grace bringing salvation teaches us to deny ungodliness and live godly lives. Paul tells believers to work out their salvation because God works in them both to will and to do His good pleasure.[11] Grace changes those it saves.

The Book of Mormon's call to deny ungodliness should therefore be heard without caricature. Moroni 10:32 joins denying ungodliness and loving God to His grace; the next verse grounds sanctification in Christ's blood.[12] Christians also call sinners to repentance and love for God. A condition, considered merely as a condition, is not proof that someone believes he can buy salvation. The question is whether the condition belongs to receiving and living in Christ, or supplies another ground on which we stand before God.

What salvation means

The church distinguishes several senses of salvation. In his 2008 sermon, Russell M. Nelson described resurrection as a gift to all and said, “Eternal life, or celestial glory or exaltation, is a conditional gift.” His account includes faith, repentance, baptism, the Holy Ghost, and remaining faithful to temple ordinances and covenants.[13] The Gospel Topics entry on salvation likewise distinguishes its meanings. When it says that “no one is saved in mortality”, it is speaking of final exaltation, following judgment.[14]

That sentence must not be used as though the church denied every present assurance. Christians also await the redemption of the body. Paul describes believers who possess the firstfruits of the Spirit and still groan, waiting for that redemption.[15] Present adoption and future fulfillment belong together. Quoting a verse about present life against a statement about future glory would not, by itself, establish a contradiction.

Nor does the church's canon offer only uncertainty. Doctrine and Covenants 131:5 describes a person knowing that he is sealed to eternal life through revelation and the power of the Holy Priest-

hood.[16] The difference cannot truthfully be stated as Christians having assurance while Latter-day Saints have none. We must ask how assurance is grounded and what salvation is held to include.

John writes to believers so that they may know they have eternal life. Its ground is God's testimony concerning His Son: God has given eternal life, and that life is in the Son. Whoever has the Son has life.[17] Jesus says that the one who hears His word and believes the Father who sent Him has everlasting life and has passed from death to life.[18] This promise is addressed to faith in Him. A reader does not have to establish another revelation about his own standing before he may trust what Christ says.

What is added to the way

The Book of Mormon ends its account of Christ's way with a striking promise. Those who press forward with steadfastness in Christ, feast on His word and endure to the end are promised eternal life. Nephi calls this the only way and names the Father, Son and Holy Ghost as one God.[19] The same book is described in Doctrine and Covenants 20:9 as containing the fullness of the gospel.[20]

Doctrine and Covenants 131 places another requirement at the highest degree of celestial glory: entry into the new and everlasting covenant of marriage. Without it, the section says, a man cannot obtain that highest degree; it limits his kingdom and increase.[21] The church's later account of exaltation must be heard beside Nephi's promise, rather than allowing the word salvation to conceal the difference.

The strongest answer is that the Book of Mormon gives the gospel's foundational principles, while continuing revelation supplies further covenants and ordinances. On this account, those ordinances are gifts made possible by grace, not payments that buy it. Christians themselves baptize and teach obedience; the mere presence of an ordinance settles nothing. Nor would silence

about marriage in one passage prove that marriage was forbidden or that God could reveal nothing further.

But these concessions do not establish the later claim. Paul makes Abraham the father of believing people by faith, before the covenant sign. He commends unmarried devotion to the Lord; he does not present marriage as entrance to the highest saving gift. His statement elsewhere that man and woman are not without each other in the Lord affirms their mutual dependence, with all things from God. It does not make a marriage covenant the additional gate to the inheritance.[22,6,23] Hebrews locates our access to God's presence in Jesus' blood and His priesthood. Believers are told to draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith.[24] The apostolic warrant is Christ's offering and promise. The warrant for the added temple covenant as the way to the highest glory is the later revelation whose authority this book has tested.

Paul's argument also reaches the inheritance itself. Circumcision was a covenant token God had given Abraham. Yet Paul says, “if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise.” He tells believers that they are all God's children by faith in Christ, and therefore heirs according to the promise. Having sent His Son to redeem, God gives the Spirit of His Son to their hearts: “if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.”[25] The objection cannot be answered merely by moving the added requirement from the first verdict to the inheritance, or by calling it a gracious covenant. Paul does not divide Christ's children into heirs by promise and those who still need a further covenant rite to obtain the highest saving inheritance. A later revelation imposing that distinction needs authority to change the apostolic account; it cannot find that authority in the language of gift alone.

Its promised goal also matters. Doctrine and Covenants 132:20 promises godhood to those who keep its marriage covenant. Chapter 2 examined that promise beside the difference between

the Creator and His creatures. The dispute is therefore greater than whether Christians use the word grace or whether believers must obey. It concerns the God to whom we come and the end for which we are saved. A later promise that changes that relation cannot be established by calling its conditions gracious. It must answer the apostolic witness it claims to restore.

The Christian conclusion is that the later system does not restore what the apostles delivered. They proclaim creatures reconciled to their Maker through His Son, justified freely and brought near by His blood. They do not direct believers to a restored temple marriage covenant as the path into a family of beings whose core is uncreated. That account requires the later scripture, and the earlier chapters have shown why its claim to revise the witness fails. The apostolic promise and that later system teach different accounts of the saving gift. This is a judgment about the teaching, not a claim that every member consciously trusts his obedience instead of Christ.

Rest in His finished work

This is where Paul's warning must be heard. Galatians addresses people drawn toward circumcision and obligation to the law. He tells those justified by the law, “ye are fallen from grace.”[26] The church does not teach that Christians must keep the law of Moses, and that difference must be stated. The wider principle follows from Paul's argument about works and faith: if we add our obedience as a basis for justification, we leave the ground on which grace receives the ungodly. Repentance, baptism, love and the good works God commands must never be turned into a righteousness that supplements Christ's.

Christ's completed offering is our confidence. Hebrews says that by one offering He has perfected forever those who are sanctified. He lives to intercede and is able to save to the uttermost those who come to God by Him.[27] Our hope is His faithfulness, rather than a

calculation that we have at last supplied enough effort for grace to suffice.

That confidence bears fruit. God promises a new heart and His Spirit, moving His people to walk in His ways.[28] The Spirit of adoption teaches believers to cry to the Father; their hope is to be with Christ and share His glory.[29] Sin is no longer something to excuse, and obedience is no longer an attempt to buy a Father's welcome. The One who receives the ungodly makes His children new.

Come to Him with the guilt you cannot remove. Confess the sin, abandon the claim to establish your own righteousness, and believe His promise. The Son who gave Himself for you is alive. His blood is sufficient, His priesthood does not fail, and the life He gives is eternal.

Source notes

1. Hebrews 7:23-28; 10:10-14; Romans 4:4-5; Ephesians 2:8-10, King James Version. Read the passages: Romans 4 Ephesians 2 Hebrews 7 Hebrews 10 ↑
2. 2 Nephi 31:19; Doctrine and Covenants 20:29-32. Current wording quoted briefly; corresponding historical units appear in the appendix. Read the passages: 2 Nephi 31:19–21, first edition (1830) Doctrine and Covenants 20:29 Doctrine and Covenants 20:30 Doctrine and Covenants 20:31 Doctrine and Covenants 20:32 ↑
3. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, "The Gift of Grace," April 2015 general conference, especially the passages on the currency of obedience and on after not meaning because. A conference sermon, quoted briefly. Compare 2 Nephi 25:23, 26; the appendix identifies the 1830 wording after all that we can do and the current after all we can do. Read the passages: 2 Nephi 25:23 and its enclosing sentence (1830) 2 Nephi 25:26 and its enclosing sentence (1830) ↑ ↑
4. Romans 4:1-5, King James Version. Read the passages: Romans 4 ↑
5. Romans 3:21-28, King James Version. Read the passages: Romans 3 ↑
6. Romans 4:9-12, King James Version. Read the passages: Romans 4 ↑ ↑
7. Bible Dictionary, "Grace," paragraphs on the enabling power of Christ and total effort. An official study aid, distinguished from canon; quoted briefly. ↑
8. Matthew 7:21-23; James 2:24, King James Version. Read the passages: Matthew 7 James 2 ↑
9. James 2:14-26, King James Version. The difference between Paul's question and James's question is the book's reading of their arguments, not a replacement of James's words. Read the passages: James 2 ↑

10. Ephesians 2:8-10, King James Version. Read the passages: Ephesians 2 ↑
11. Titus 2:11-14; Philippians 2:12-13; 1 John 2:3-6, King James Version. Read the passages: Philippians 2 Titus 2 1 John 2 ↑
12. Moroni 10:32-33. Verse 32 is printed from the 1830 edition, p. 587. Verse 33 is identified separately as current wording: the retained 1830 page does not contain its complete ending. Read the passages: Moroni 10:32, first edition (1830) Moroni 10:33, current edition ↑
13. Russell M. Nelson, "Salvation and Exaltation," April 2008 general conference, passage distinguishing resurrection and exaltation. A conference sermon, quoted briefly. ↑
14. "Salvation," Gospel Topics, section on eternal life or exaltation, quoted briefly. The statement about mortality concerns this final sense of salvation. ↑
15. Romans 8:23-25, King James Version. Read the passages: Romans 8 ↑
16. Doctrine and Covenants 131:5. The section's description of knowing eternal life is stated, without a claim that every member receives this assurance or that only one kind of assurance is allowed. Read the passages: Doctrine and Covenants 131:5 ↑
17. 1 John 5:9-13, King James Version. Read the passages: 1 John 5 ↑
18. John 5:24, King James Version. Read the passages: John 5 ↑
19. 2 Nephi 31:19-21; complete corresponding 1830 text, p. 120, in the appendix. Read the passages: 2 Nephi 31:19–21, first edition (1830) ↑
20. Doctrine and Covenants 20:9. Read the passages: Doctrine and Covenants 20:9 ↑
21. Doctrine and Covenants 131:1-4. The explanatory marriage phrase is bracketed in the current edition and the 1923 printing. Read the passages: Doctrine and Covenants 131:1 Doctrine and Covenants 131:2 Doctrine and Covenants 131:3 Doctrine and Covenants 131:4 ↑
22. 1 Corinthians 11:11-12, King James Version. Read the passages: 1 Corinthians 11 ↑
23. 1 Corinthians 7:7-8, 32-35, King James Version. Paul's counsel concerns devotion and the present life; it is not offered as a separate proof about every circumstance after death. Read the passages: 1 Corinthians 7 ↑
24. Hebrews 10:19-22; Romans 5:1-2, King James Version. Read the passages: Romans 5 Hebrews 10 ↑
25. Genesis 17:10-11; Galatians 3:18, 26-29; 4:4-7, King James Version. Baptism into Christ in Galatians 3:27 is retained within the complete unit; the argument does not equate every ordinance with the circumcision Paul opposes. It concerns the claimed need for an additional covenant as the gate to the saving inheritance beyond being Christ's. Read the passages: Genesis 17 Galatians 3 Galatians 4 ↑
26. Galatians 5:1-4; Romans 4:4-5; 11:6; Ephesians 2:8-10, King James Version. The circumcision context is distinguished from the stated application to works as a basis for justification. Read the passages: Romans 4 Romans 11 Galatians 5 Ephesians 2 ↑

27. **Hebrews 7:23-28; 10:10-14, King James Version.** Read the passages: Hebrews 7 Hebrews 10 ↑
28. **Ezekiel 36:25-27, King James Version.** Read the passages: Ezekiel 36 ↑
29. **Romans 8:1-4, 15-17, King James Version.** Read the passages: Romans 8 ↑



CONCLUSION

Come to Christ

The question before us has been greater than the reliability of a translation or the explanation of an old document. It is whom we worship, whose word we trust and where we bring our guilt. A religious life can contain sacrifice, affection and years of sincere service while resting on a teaching that needs correction. Those good things do not make the correction unkind. If the teaching changes who God is and what His Son gives, the correction concerns eternal life.

The Bible's witness has remained before us throughout. The Word was with God and was God. Everything that was made was made by Him. He became flesh, offered Himself for sins and rose bodily from the dead. The Father and the Son are distinct, and the Son belongs on the Creator's side of the difference between God and His creatures.[1] His becoming man is the grace of the eternal Son coming to save us.

The strongest answers offered for the Restoration have been heard. A translation may use familiar language. A text may be revised without its message becoming false. Revelation unfolds. Christians depend on the Spirit and have no right to ridicule another person's testimony. Grace does not excuse dead faith. None of those truths establishes a later teaching's authority to change the earlier witness. Each requires us to examine what is actually being claimed.

That examination has reached a conclusion. The later account of an uncreated human core, the Son's place among spirit children and the promise of godhood changes the relation between the Maker and those He made. The appeal to continuing revelation supplies the authority for that change; it does not demonstrate the change from the apostles' words. The restoration claim must therefore stand before the message it professes to confirm. Where it revises that message, we must reject the revision.

This judgment concerns teaching. It gives us no permission to invent motives or to treat a neighbor as an enemy to be humiliated. A person's inward convictions are known fully to God. Our task is to tell the truth about words, actions and doctrines, and to submit our own lives to the same judgment. A Christian who uses another person's error to hide his own sin has not heard the gospel he quotes.

You may still have questions. Keep the difficult ones present. Read the passages in their context, ask whether the strongest answer has been heard, and seek correction where an argument has gone wrong. An unanswered question should be pursued. It should not become a reason to pretend that what has been shown is still unknown.

Above all, do not let the controversy displace Christ. The apostolic promise is that God justifies the ungodly who believe. The one offering of Jesus Christ is complete, and His priesthood does not fail. He is able to save to the uttermost those who come to God by

Him.[2] Your hope need not wait until you have made yourself acceptable. Mercy receives the guilty who come to the Savior.

Repentance is a real turning. It does not mean protecting a cherished teaching after seeing that it changes His word. It does not mean keeping a respectable profession while refusing His lordship. Bring Him the sin, the misplaced trust, the fear of losing approval and the desire to establish your own righteousness. Believe the Son who died and rose. His grace gives the new life that obedience cannot buy.

John writes so that those who believe on the name of the Son of God may know they have eternal life. Its ground is the Son Himself. The Spirit of adoption teaches God's children to cry to their Father, and the hope of glory rests in Christ.[3] Serve the people you love. Tell them the truth with patience. Confess your own wrongdoing without excuse. Let the faith that receives His mercy bear the good fruit He gives.

The Savior is alive. The words written about Him call us to believe, and believing, to have life through His name. Come to Him.

Source notes

1. John 1:1-3, 14; Colossians 1:15-18; Luke 24:36-47, King James Version. The detailed argument and the strongest opposing reading are given in Chapters 1-2. Read the passages: Luke 24 John 1 Colossians 1 ↑
2. Romans 4:4-5; Hebrews 7:23-28; 10:10-14; Ephesians 2:8-10, King James Version. Read the passages: Romans 4 Ephesians 2 Hebrews 7 Hebrews 10 ↑
3. 1 John 5:9-13; Romans 8:15-17; John 20:31, King James Version. Read the passages: John 20 Romans 8 1 John 5 ↑

APPENDIX

A quick guide

Begin with the passages themselves. Read the complete units in the cited-passages appendix, including the surrounding argument. The short answers below summarize the book's conclusions; the chapters supply the evidence and meet the strongest replies.

Question	The argument	Where to read
Who is Jesus?	The Word who was with God and was God became flesh. He creates, sustains, dies for sinners and rises bodily. These affirmations are shared in substantial part; the disagreement concerns His relation to everything else.	Chapters 1-2; John 1:1-3, 14; Colossians 1:15-18; Hebrews 1:1-12.
Does all things mean only organized things?	That reading can be proposed, but the exception for uncreated intelligence comes from the later revelation. It is not an exception stated by John or Paul. The chapter argues the cumulative Creator/creature distinction rather than resting on one word.	Chapter 2; Acts 17:24-29; Doctrine and Covenants 93:29; Abraham 3:18-19.
Can people become gods by grace?	Sharing Christ's life and glory does not erase the difference between the eternal Maker and His creatures. Biblical adoption and the later account of beings with an uncreated core require comparison, even when both use the language of grace.	Chapters 2 and 8; Isaiah 40:25-26; Revelation 5:13; Doctrine and Covenants 132:20.
Does a change in wording disprove a scripture?	No. Ask what changed, which edition shows it and whether the teaching changed. The same standard applies to both books.	Chapter 3; Jeremiah 36:32; the material-changes table.

Question	The argument	Where to read
Was the apostolic gospel lost before our surviving copies?	That possibility cannot be settled from manuscript silence alone. Early Christian writings preserve the apostolic witness within the proposed period of loss. The particular disagreements examined here concern words the church still receives in its Bible.	Chapter 3; John 20:31; the early-Christian extracts.
What about the Book of Mormon's witnesses?	Hear their full claims, including the Three's voice declaring the translation true. Emma Smith described the dictation at close range and Martin Harris the weight of the plates, yet no witness saw the words Joseph said he received. Their testimony points to the book; its message must still be tested. Its English Bible passages and the explanations of Latter-day Saint scholars can be examined directly.	Chapter 4; the two witness statements; Galatians 1:6-9.
How should a prophet be tested?	Christ is the measure. The messenger's claim cannot establish a different God or gospel. The founding claims and later teachings must face the earlier revelation they profess to restore.	Chapter 5; Deuteronomy 13:1-5; Galatians 1:6-9.
Does the church's handling of money bear on its claims?	The size of its investments is not the argument. A 2023 federal order, settled without admission or denial, found that the church's investment manager filed misstated reports in other entities' names to prevent public disclosure of the church's holdings, with the approval of the church's senior leadership. Scripture and the church's own Articles of Faith require honest dealing before men. No money redeems; Christ became poor for sinners.	Chapter 6; 2 Corinthians 8:9, 18-21; Articles of Faith 12-13; 1 Peter 1:18-19; the public-records appendix.
What if I have received a spiritual witness?	Do not pretend the experience did not happen. Distinguish it from its interpretation and test the message it is asked to establish. Christians' convictions face the same test.	Chapter 7; 1 John 1:1-3; 2:20-27; 4:1-6.
Does grace remove the need to obey?	No. Living faith bears works, while works do not purchase justification. Christ's offering is the ground of acceptance; the new life He gives produces obedience.	Chapter 8; Romans 4:1-12; James 2:14-26; Ephesians 2:8-10.

Question	The argument	Where to read
Can I know I have eternal life?	John directs believers to God's testimony concerning His Son. The church also speaks of knowing eternal life; the comparison concerns the ground and promised content of that assurance.	Chapter 8; 1 John 5:9-13; John 5:24; Doctrine and Covenants 131:5.

The church's introduction presents Mormon as an ancient prophet-historian who abridged other prophets' writings. It says that he passed his account to his son Moroni. When this book names Mormon as a speaker, it means that figure; the Book of Mormon means the scripture as a whole.

The Bible is the earlier scripture the church receives as God's word. The Book of Mormon is the additional record whose claim to confirm and restore that witness the book examines. The Doctrine and Covenants collects revelations and instructions associated with the Restoration. The Pearl of Great Price includes Abraham, Joseph Smith's history and the Articles of Faith among its works. These four standard works have a different standing from an official manual, a conference sermon or an apologist's argument. The notes identify which kind of source is being used.

If a quotation or account of the church's teaching is wrong, correct it from the named source. If an argument is difficult, keep it in view and pursue it. The purpose is to know the truth and receive the life God gives in His Son.

APPENDIX

Bible passages and context

King James Version, from the pinned eBible/CrossWire witness identified in the edition credits. Complete cited verses and nearby context are given in biblical order. Supplied-word brackets, nested brackets and paragraph marks follow the retained TXT exactly; the prose uses ordinary type from its paired XML. Gaps are visible in the verse numbers.

Genesis 1

26 ¶ And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

27 So God created man in his [own] image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

Genesis 17

10 This [is] my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised.

11 And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you.

Exodus 33

11 And the LORD spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend. And he turned again into the camp: but his ser-

vant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, departed not out of the tabernacle.

20 And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live.

Deuteronomy 13

1 If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder,

2 And the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them;

3 Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the LORD your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.

4 Ye shall walk after the LORD your God, and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and ye shall serve him, and cleave unto him.

5 And that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams, shall be put to death; because he hath spoken to turn [you] away from the LORD your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed you out of the house of bondage, to thrust thee out of the way which the LORD thy God commanded thee to walk in. So shalt thou put the evil away from the midst of thee.

Deuteronomy 17

17 Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away: neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold.

Deuteronomy 18

15 ¶ The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken;

16 According to all that thou desiredst of the LORD thy God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not.

17 And the LORD said unto me, They have well [spoken that] which they have spoken.

18 I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him.

19 And it shall come to pass, [that] whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require [it] of him.

20 But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die.

21 And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the LORD hath not spoken?

22 When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that [is] the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, [but] the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him.

2 Samuel 12

7 ¶ And Nathan said to David, Thou [art] the man. Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul;

8 And I gave thee thy master's house, and thy master's wives into thy bosom, and gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah; and if [that had been] too little, I would moreover have given unto thee such and such things.

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

1 Kings 11

3 And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines: and his wives turned away his heart.

4 For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, [that] his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as [was] the heart of David his father.

Psalms 40

6 Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened: burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required.

Psalms 82

6 I have said, Ye [are] gods; and all of you [are] children of the most High.

7 But ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes.

Psalms 90

2 Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou [art] God.

Isaiah 2

16 And upon all the ships of Tarshish, and upon all pleasant pictures.

Isaiah 8

20 To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, [it is] because [there is] no light in them.

Isaiah 13

21 But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there.

Isaiah 28

10 For precept [must be] upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, [and] there a little:

Isaiah 40

25 To whom then will ye liken me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One.

26 Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these [things], that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that [he is] strong in power; not one faileth.

Isaiah 43

1 But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called [thee] by thy name; thou [art] mine.

7 [Even] every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him.

10 Ye [are] my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I [am] he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me.

11 I, [even] I, [am] the LORD; and beside me [there is] no saviour.

Isaiah 44

2 Thus saith the LORD that made thee, and formed thee from the womb, [which] will help thee; Fear not, O Jacob, my servant; and thou, Jesurun, whom I have chosen.

6 Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts; I [am] the first, and I [am] the last; and beside me [there is] no God.

7 And who, as I, shall call, and shall declare it, and set it in order for me, since I appointed the ancient people? and the things that are coming, and shall come, let them shew unto them.

8 Fear ye not, neither be afraid: have not I told thee from that time, and have declared [it]? ye [are] even my witnesses. Is there a God beside me? yea, [there is] no God; I know not [any].

10 Who hath formed a god, or molten a graven image [that] is profitable for nothing?

24 Thus saith the LORD, thy redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb, I [am] the LORD that maketh all [things;] that

stretcheth forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself;

Isaiah 46

5 ¶ To whom will ye liken me, and make [me] equal, and compare me, that we may be like?

9 Remember the former things of old: for I [am] God, and [there is] none else; [I am] God, and [there is] none like me,

Isaiah 48

1 Hear ye this, O house of Jacob, which are called by the name of Israel, and are come forth out of the waters of Judah, which swear by the name of the LORD, and make mention of the God of Israel, [but] not in truth, nor in righteousness.

Jeremiah 18

7 [At what] instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy [it;]

8 If that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them.

9 And [at what] instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant [it;]

10 If it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good, wherewith I said I would benefit them.

Jeremiah 36

32 ¶ Then took Jeremiah another roll, and gave it to Baruch the scribe, the son of Neriah; who wrote therein from the mouth of Jeremiah all the words of the book which Jehoiakim king of Judah

had burned in the fire: and there were added besides unto them many like words.

Ezekiel 36

25 ¶ Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you.

26 A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.

27 And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do [them].

Malachi 3

6 For I [am] the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.

Matthew 5

22 But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the coun-

cil: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.

Matthew 6

13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

Matthew 7

15 ¶ Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.

16 Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?

17 Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.

18 A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither [can] a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

19 Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

20 Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

21 ¶ Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?

23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

Matthew 16

18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

Matthew 17

5 While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.

Matthew 28

18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, [even] unto the end of the world. Amen.

Luke 1

1 Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us,

2 Even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word;

3 It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus,

4 That thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed.

43 And whence [is] this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?

Luke 24

36 ¶ And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace [be] unto you.

37 But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit.

38 And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts?

39 Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.

40 And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them [his] hands and [his] feet.

41 And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here any meat?

42 And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb.

43 And he took [it], and did eat before them.

44 And he said unto them, These [are] the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and [in] the prophets, and [in] the psalms, concerning me.

45 Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures,

46 And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day:

47 And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

John 1

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

2 The same was in the beginning with God.

3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men.

5 And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

6 ¶ There was a man sent from God, whose name [was] John.

7 The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all [men] through him might believe.

8 He was not that Light, but [was sent] to bear witness of that Light.

9 [That] was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

10 He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.

11 He came unto his own, and his own received him not.

12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, [even] to them that believe on his name:

13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

15 ¶ John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me.

16 And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.

17 For the law was given by Moses, [but] grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

18 No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared [him.]

John 4

21 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father.

22 Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews.

23 But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.

24 God [is] a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship [him] in spirit and in truth.

John 5

24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

John 8

31 Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, [then] are ye my disciples indeed;

32 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

John 10

33 The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God.

34 Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods?

35 If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken;

36 Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?

John 15

26 But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, [even] the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:

John 17

3 And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

John 20

31 But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.

Acts 3

22 For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you.

23 And it shall come to pass, [that] every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people.

Acts 5

29 ¶ Then Peter and the [other] apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men.

Acts 17

10 ¶ And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming [thither] went into the synagogue of the Jews.

11 These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.

12 Therefore many of them believed; also of honourable women which were Greeks, and of men, not a few.

24 God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands;

25 Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things;

26 And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation;

27 That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us:

28 For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring.

29 Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device.

Acts 20

29 For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.

30 Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.

Romans 3

21 But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets;

22 Even the righteousness of God [which is] by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:

23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:

25 Whom God hath set forth [to be] a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;

26 To declare, [I say], at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

27 Where [is] boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith.

28 Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.

Romans 4

1 What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found?

2 For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath [whereof] to glory; but not before God.

3 For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.

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

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

6 Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works,

7 [Saying], Blessed [are] they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.

8 Blessed [is] the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.

9 [Cometh] this blessedness then upon the circumcision [only], or upon the uncircumcision also? for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness.

10 How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision.

11 And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which [he had yet] being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also:

12 And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which [he had] being [yet] uncircumcised.

Romans 5

1 Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:

2 By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

Romans 8

1 [There is] therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

3 For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:

4 That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

15 For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with [him], that we may be also glorified together.

23 And not only [they], but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, [to wit], the redemption of our body.

24 For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?

25 But if we hope for that we see not, [then] do we with patience wait for [it].

Romans 11

6 And if by grace, then [is it] no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if [it be] of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.

Romans 14

12 So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.

1 Corinthians 7

7 For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that.

8 I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they abide even as I.

32 But I would have you without carefulness. He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord:

33 But he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please [his] wife.

34 There is difference [also] between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit: but she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please [her] husband.

35 And this I speak for your own profit; not that I may cast a snare upon you, but for that which is comely, and that ye may attend upon the Lord without distraction.

1 Corinthians 8

6 But to us [there is but] one God, the Father, of whom [are] all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom [are] all things, and we by him.

1 Corinthians 11

11 Nevertheless neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord.

12 For as the woman [is] of the man, even so [is] the man also by the woman; but all things of God.

1 Corinthians 15

3 For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;

4 And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:

5 And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve:

6 After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep.

7 After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles.

8 And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.

53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal [must] put on immortality.

2 Corinthians 4

18 While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen [are] temporal; but the things which are not seen [are] eternal.

2 Corinthians 5

1 For we know that if our earthly house of [this] tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

2 Corinthians 8

9 For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.

18 And we have sent with him the brother, whose praise [is] in the gospel throughout all the churches;

19 And not [that] only, but who was also chosen of the churches to travel with us with this grace, which is administered by us to the glory of the same Lord, and [declaration of] your ready mind:

20 Avoiding this, that no man should blame us in this abundance which is administered by us:

21 Providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men.

Galatians 1

6 I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel:

7 Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.

8 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.

9 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.

Galatians 3

18 For if the inheritance [be] of the law, [it is] no more of promise: but God gave [it] to Abraham by promise.

26 For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

27 For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

29 And if ye [be] Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Galatians 4

4 But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,

5 To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

6 And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.

7 Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

Galatians 5

1 Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

2 Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing.

3 For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law.

4 Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.

Ephesians 2

1 And you [hath he quickened], who were dead in trespasses and sins;

2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:

3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

4 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,

5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)

6 And hath raised [us] up together, and made [us] sit together in heavenly [places] in Christ Jesus:

7 That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in [his] kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: [it is] the gift of God:

9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.

10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

Ephesians 3

21 Unto him [be] glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

Philippians 2

5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:

7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:

10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of [things] in heaven, and [things] in earth, and [things] under the earth;

11 And [that] every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ [is] Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

12 Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

13 For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of [his] good pleasure.

Colossians 1

15 Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature:

16 For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether [they be] thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:

17 And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.

18 And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all [things] he might have the preeminence.

2 Thessalonians 2

3 Let no man deceive you by any means: for [that day shall not come], except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;

1 Timothy 1

17 Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, [be] honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

1 Timothy 6

16 Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom [be] honour and power everlasting. Amen.

2 Timothy 3

14 But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned [them];

15 And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

16 All scripture [is] given by inspiration of God, and [is] profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

17 That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.

Titus 2

11 For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men,

12 Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;

13 Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;

14 Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

Hebrews 1

1 God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,

2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by [his] Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;

3 Who being the brightness of [his] glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;

4 Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.

5 For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?

6 And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him.

7 And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire.

8 But unto the Son [he saith], Thy throne, O God, [is] for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness [is] the sceptre of thy kingdom.

9 Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, [even] thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.

10 And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands:

11 They shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment;

12 And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.

Hebrews 7

23 And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death:

24 But this [man], because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood.

25 Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

26 For such an high priest became us, [who is] holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens;

27 Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself.

28 For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, [maketh] the Son, who is consecrated for evermore.

Hebrews 10

5 Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me:

10 By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once [for all].

11 And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins:

12 But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God;

13 From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool.

14 For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.

19 Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus,

20 By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh;

21 And [having] an high priest over the house of God;

22 Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.

Hebrews 13

8 Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.

James 1

5 If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all [men] liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

6 But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.

7 For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.

8 A double minded man [is] unstable in all his ways.

James 2

14 What [doth it] profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?

15 If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food,

16 And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be [ye] warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what [doth it] profit?

17 Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.

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

19 Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.

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

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

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

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

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

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

26 For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

1 Peter 1

18 Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, [as] silver and gold, from your vain conversation [received] by tradition from your fathers;

19 But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:

2 Peter 1

16 For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty.

1 John 1

1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life;

2 (For the life was manifested, and we have seen [it], and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;)

3 That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship [is] with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

1 John 2

3 And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.

4 He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

5 But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him.

6 He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.

20 But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.

21 I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth.

22 Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son.

23 Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: [[but] he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also].

24 Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father.

25 And this is the promise that he hath promised us, [even] eternal life.

26 These [things] have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you.

27 But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.

1 John 4

1 Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

2 Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God:

3 And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that [spirit] of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.

4 Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.

5 They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them.

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

1 John 5

9 If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son.

10 He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.

11 And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.

12 He that hath the Son hath life; [and] he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.

13 These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

Jude 1

3 Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort [you] that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.

Revelation 1

17 And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last:

18 I [am] he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.

Revelation 3

21 To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.

Revelation 5

13 And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, [be] unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.

Revelation 19

10 And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See [thou do it] not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

Revelation 22

13 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.

APPENDIX

Restoration passages and their editions

These quotations identify their historical editions. Modern verse numbers locate the passages and do not imply that the older printings used the same divisions. Capitals, spelling and punctuation follow the named historical witnesses; page line breaks are joined.

Article of Faith 8, first printing (1842)

"Church History," *Times and Seasons* 3, no. 9 (1 March 1842), p. 709. The current Article 8 retains these words, with Bible capitalized.

> We believe the bible to be the word of God as far as it is translated correctly; we also believe the Book of Mormon to be the word of God.

Mormon 7:8-9, first edition (1830)

Book of Mormon (1830), p. 531. The current text retains the wording apart from spelling, capitals and punctuation, including the modern marvelous for marvellous.

> Therefore repent, and be baptized in the name of Jesus, and lay hold upon the Gospel of Christ, which shall be set before you, not only in this record, but also in the record which shall come unto the Gentiles from the Jews, which record shall come from the Gentiles unto you. For behold, this is written for the intent that ye may believe that; and if ye believe that, ye will believe this also; and if ye believe this, ye will know concerning your fathers, and also the marvellous works which were wrought by the power of God among them;

Mosiah 3:8, first edition (1830)

Book of Mormon (1830), p. 160. The current text has the same words, with capitalization and punctuation differences, including Creator capitalized and no comma after things.

> And he shall be called Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Father of Heaven and Earth, the creator of all things, from the beginning; and his mother shall be called Mary.

1 Nephi 13:40-41, second edition (1837)

Book of Mormon (1837), p. 35. The confirming phrase is unchanged from 1830. In the clause describing the Lamb, the first edition, p. 32, reads “the Eternal Father and the Saviour of the world”; this edition reads “the Son of the eternal Father, and the Savior of the world”. The current text follows the latter wording, with capitalization and punctuation differences. The wording change alone does not establish its reason or an account of the Godhead.

> And the angel spake unto me, saying, these last records which thou hast seen among the Gentiles, shall establish the truth of the first, which are of the twelve apostles of the Lamb, and shall make known the plain and precious things which have been taken away from them; and shall make known to all kindreds, tongues and people, that the Lamb of God is the Son of the eternal Father, and the Savior of the world; and that all men must come unto him, or they cannot be saved; and they must come according to the words which shall be established by the mouth of the Lamb: and the words of the Lamb shall be made known in the records of thy seed, as well as in the records of the twelve apostles of the Lamb; wherefore, they both shall be established in one; for there is one God and one Shepherd over all the earth;

Doctrine and Covenants 132:20, Kingsbury copy (1843)

Revelation dated 12 July 1843, Joseph Kingsbury copy, p. 3, retained primary transcript via the Joseph Smith Papers. The promise follows marriage-covenant conditions in the preceding passage. The current canonical verse retains this wording with modern capitalization and punctuation. This historical transcription does not imply that the copy was divided into the current verses.

> Then Shall they be Gods, because they have no End. Therefore, Shall they be from everlasting to Everlasting because they Continue Then Shall they be above all because all things are Subject unto them. Then Shall they be Gods because they have all power and the angels are Subject unto them

Doctrine and Covenants 93:29, manuscript witness (1833)

Retained transcript of the revelation dated 6 May 1833, manuscript page [3], via the Joseph Smith Papers. The page number is editorially supplied. This quotation follows the expanded documentary transcript: neith[er] marks the editors' supplied ending, while begining and inteligence preserve the witness's spelling. The current verse has the same words, with corrected spelling, capitalization and punctuation. There is no terminal punctuation in this manuscript unit.

> man was also in the begining with God, inteligence or the Light of truth was not created or made neith[er] indeed can be

Abraham 3:18-19, historical printing (1842)

Times and Seasons, 1842, p. 720, retained primary transcript via the Joseph Smith Papers. Modern verse references identify the complete corresponding units within longer original paragraphs. Original paragraph number 21 between them is omitted. The historical text has yet they before have no beginning; the current text omits those two words. Other differences are capitalization and punctuation.

> Howbeit that he made the greater star, as, also, if there be two spirits, and one shall be more intelligent than the other, yet these two spirits, notwithstanding one is more intelligent than the other, yet they have no beginning, they existed before; they shall have no end, they shall exist after, for they are Gnolaum, or Eternal.

> And the Lord said unto me, these two facts do exist, that there are two spirits, one being more intelligent than the other, there shall

> be another more intelligent than they: I am the Lord thy God, I am more intelligent than they all.

Moroni 10:4-5, first edition (1830)

p. 586. Historical and he will manifest is current he will manifest; the full corresponding sentence follows.

> And when ye shall receive these things, I would exhort you that ye would ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true; and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, and he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost; and by the power of the Holy Ghost, ye may know the truth of all things.

Moroni 10:32, first edition (1830)

p. 587. Historical no wise is current nowise. The complete next verse follows separately in its current wording.

> Yea, come unto Christ, and be perfected in him, and deny yourselves of all ungodliness; and if ye shall deny yourselves of all ungodliness, and love God with all your might, mind and strength, then is his grace sufficient for you, that by his grace ye may be perfect in Christ; and if by the grace of God ye are perfect in Christ, ye can in no wise deny the power of God.

Moroni 10:33, current edition

Current Gospel Library wording retained 15 November 2026, quoted as one complete verse for the argument's context. The retained 1830 page ends before its conclusion; no historical ending is reconstructed.

> And again, if ye by the grace of God are perfect in Christ, and deny not his power, then are ye sanctified in Christ by the grace of God, through the shedding of the blood of Christ, which is in the covenant of the Father unto the remission of your sins, that ye become holy, without spot.

2 Nephi 25:23 and its enclosing sentence (1830)

p. 105. The complete historical sentence includes the lead-in before the modern verse boundary. After all that we can do is current after all we can do.

> Wherefore, these things shall go from generation to generation, as long as the earth shall stand; and they shall go according to the will and pleasure of God; and the nations which shall possess them, shall be judged of them according to the words which are written; for we labor diligently to write, to persuade our children, and also our brethren, to believe in Christ, and to be reconciled to God; for we know that it is by grace that we are saved, after all that we can do.

2 Nephi 25:26 and its enclosing sentence (1830)

p. 105. The full enclosing sentence includes modern verses 24-26; no claim is made that 1830 used those divisions.

> And notwithstanding we believe in Christ, we keep the law of Moses, and look forward with steadfastness unto Christ, until the law shall be fulfilled; for, for this end was the law given; wherefore, the law hath become dead unto us, and we are made alive in Christ, because of our faith; yet we keep the law because of the commandments; and we talk of Christ, we rejoice in Christ, we preach of Christ, we prophesy of Christ, and we write according to our prophecies, that our children may know to what source they may look for a remission of their sins.

2 Nephi 31:19-21, first edition (1830)

p. 120. Two complete historical paragraphs. Historical straight and got are preserved.

> And now, my beloved brethren, after that ye have got into this straight and narrow path, I would ask, If all is done? Behold, I say unto you, Nay; for ye have not come thus far, save it were by the word of Christ, with unshaken faith in him, relying wholly upon the merits of Him who is mighty to save; wherefore, ye must press forward with a steadfastness in Christ, having a perfect brightness

> of hope, and a love of God and of all men. Wherefore, if ye shall press forward, feasting upon the word of Christ, and endure to the end, behold, thus saith the Father: Ye shall have eternal life.

> And now, behold, my beloved brethren, this is the way; and there is none other way nor name given under heaven, whereby man can be saved in the Kingdom of God. And now, behold, this is the doctrine of Christ, and the only and true doctrine of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, which is one God, without end. Amen.

Article of Faith 11, first printing (1842)

"Church History," Times and Seasons 3, no. 9 (1 March 1842), p. 710. Current wording has worshiping, our own conscience and a comma after the second privilege.

> We claim the privilege of worshipping Almighty God according to the dictates of our conscience, and allow all men the same privilege let them worship how, where, or what they may.

Articles of Faith 12-13, first printing (1842)

"Church History," Times and Seasons 3, no. 9 (1 March 1842), p. 710. Current wording adds a comma after honoring in Article 12. In Article 13 the 1842 printing italicizes all men; the current text does not. The current text also adds commas after indeed, after we believe all things and after endured many things, puts a dash and a capital We in place of the quotation marks, and writes anything and praiseworthy as single words, followed by a comma. Chapter 6 quotes Article 12 and the opening of Article 13 in their current wording; within those words the differences are the comma after honoring and the 1842 italics.

> We believe in being subject to kings, presidents, rulers, and magistrates, in obeying, honoring and sustaining the law.

> We believe in being honest, true, chaste, benevolent, virtuous, and in doing good to *all men;* indeed we may say that we follow the admonition of Paul "we believe all things we hope all things," we

> have endured many things and hope to be able to endure all things. If there is any thing virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praise worthy we seek after these things.

Doctrine and Covenants, 1923 printing

The following complete units follow a reading transcription of retained OCR from the 1923 printing, copyright 1921. Line wrapping, eight line-ending hyphens, interleaved page headings and study notes are removed; eight apparent footnote-callout tokens are separately documented in the source record. No substantive word is silently replaced from the current edition. These resulting units agree with the retained current text, including the bracketed explanation in 131:2. The printed superscript glyphs and the corrupt page numeral for section 9 have not been collated with page images. This is a reading transcription, not a facsimile transcription.

Doctrine and Covenants 9:7

> Behold, you have not understood; you have supposed that I would give it unto you, when you took no thought save it was to ask me.

Doctrine and Covenants 9:8

> But, behold, I say unto you, that you must study it out in your mind; then you must ask me if it be right, and if it is right I will cause that your bosom shall burn within you; therefore, you shall feel that it is right.

Doctrine and Covenants 9:9

> But if it be not right you shall have no such feelings, but you shall have a stupor of thought that shall cause you to forget the thing which is wrong; therefore, you cannot write that which is sacred save it be given you from me.

Doctrine and Covenants 20:9

> Which contains a record of a fallen people, and the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles and to the Jews also;

Doctrine and Covenants 20:29

> And we know that all men must repent and believe on the name of Jesus Christ, and worship the Father in his name, and endure in faith on his name to the end, or they cannot be saved in the kingdom of God.

Doctrine and Covenants 20:30

> And we know that justification through the grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is just and true;

Doctrine and Covenants 20:31

> And we know also, that sanctification through the grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is just and true, to all those who love and serve God with all their mights, minds, and strength.

Doctrine and Covenants 20:32

> But there is a possibility that man may fall from grace and depart from the living God;

Doctrine and Covenants 131:1

> In the celestial glory there are three heavens or degrees;

Doctrine and Covenants 131:2

> And in order to obtain the highest, a man must enter into this order of the priesthood [meaning the new and everlasting covenant of marriage];

Doctrine and Covenants 131:3

> And if he does not, he cannot obtain it.

Doctrine and Covenants 131:4

> He may enter into the other, but that is the end of his kingdom; he cannot have an increase.

Doctrine and Covenants 131:5

> (May 17th, 1843.) The more sure word of prophecy means a man's knowing that he is sealed up unto eternal life, by revelation and the spirit of prophecy, through the power of the Holy Priesthood.

Book of Mormon, named editions

Each unit below names its own printing or transcription.

Title page, first edition (1830)

Book of Mormon (Palmyra, 1830), p. [i]. The current title page keeps the substance, with modern punctuation and the plural wording "if there are faults they are the mistakes of men".

> Wherefore it is an abridgment of the Record of the People of Nephi; and also of the Lamanites; written to the Lamanites, which are a remnant of the House of Israel; and also to Jew and Gentile; written by way of commandment, and also by the spirit of Prophesy and of Revelation. Written, and sealed up, and hid up unto the Lord, that they might not be destroyed; to come forth by the gift and power of God unto the interpretation thereof; sealed by the hand of Moroni, and hid up unto the Lord, to come forth in due time by the way of Gentile; the interpretation thereof by the gift of God; an abridgment taken from the Book of Ether.

> Also, which is a Record of the People of Jared, which were scattered at the time the Lord confounded the language of the people when they were building a tower to get to Heaven: which is to shew unto the remnant of the House of Israel how great things the Lord hath done for their fathers; and that they may know the covenants of the Lord, that they are not cast off forever; and also to the convincing of the Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God, manifesting Himself unto all nations. And now if

> there be fault, it be the mistake of men; wherefore condemn not the things of God, that ye may be found spotless at the judgment seat of Christ.

Preface, first edition (1830)

Book of Mormon (Palmyra, 1830), pp. [iii]–iv, read from the page images in the Internet Archive's scan. “PREFACE.” is set in italic display capitals, and the other display lines in capitals and small capitals.

> PREFACE.

> To the Reader—

> As many false reports have been circulated respecting the following work, and also many unlawful measures taken by evil designing persons to destroy me, and also the work, I would inform you that I translated, by the gift and power of God, and caused to be written, one hundred and sixteen pages, the which I took from the Book of Lehi, which was an account abridged from the plates of Lehi, by the hand of Mormon; which said account, some person or persons have stolen and kept from me, notwithstanding my utmost exertions to recover it again—and being commanded of the Lord that I should not translate the same over again, for Satan had put it into their hearts to tempt the Lord their God, by altering the words, that they did read contrary from that which I translated and caused to be written; and if I should bring forth the same words again, or, in other words, if I should translate the same over again, they would publish that which they had stolen, and Satan would stir up the hearts of this generation, that they might not receive this work: but behold, the Lord said unto me, I will not suffer that Satan shall accomplish his evil design in this thing: therefore thou shalt translate from the plates of Nephi, until ye come to that which ye have translated, which ye have retained; and behold ye shall publish it as the record of Nephi; and thus I will confound those who have altered my words. I will not suffer that they shall destroy my work; yea, I will shew unto them that my wisdom is greater than the cunning of the Devil. Wherefore, to

> be obedient unto the commandments of God, I have, through his grace and mercy, accomplished that which he hath commanded me respecting this thing. I would also inform you that the plates of which hath been spoken, were found in the township of Manchester, Ontario county, New-York.
>
> The Author.

Preface, second edition (1837)

Book of Mormon (Kirtland, 1837), p. v, preface signed by Parley P. Pratt and John Goodson, p. vi.

> Individuals acquainted with book printing, are aware of the numerous typographical errors which always occur in manuscript editions. It is only necessary to say, that the whole has been carefully re-examined and compared with the original manuscripts, by elder Joseph Smith, Jr. the translator of the book of Mormon, assisted by the present printer, brother Oliver Cowdery, who formerly wrote the greatest portion of the same, as dictated by brother Smith.

1 Nephi 11:18, 21, 32, first edition (1830)

Book of Mormon (1830), pp. 25-26. The 1837 readings follow in the next unit. For 13:40 the appendix already prints the 1837 verse, with the 1830 clause in its note. The printer's manuscript has the same readings in the Joseph Smith Papers transcript: “the Mother of God” (p. 16), “yea even the eternal Father” (with “God” written and struck through before “Father”) and “yea the everlasting God was Judged of the world” (p. 17), and “the Lamb of God is the eternal Father & the saviour of the world” (p. 22).

> And he said unto me, Behold, the virgin which thou seest, is the mother of God, after the manner of the flesh.

> And the angel said unto me, behold the Lamb of God, yea, even the Eternal Father! Knowest thou the meaning of the tree which thy father saw?

> And it came to pass that the angel spake unto me again, saying, look! And I looked and beheld the Lamb of God, that he was taken by the people; yea, the Everlasting God, was judged of the world; and I saw and bear record.

1 Nephi 11:18, 21, 32, second edition (1837)

Book of Mormon (1837), pp. 27-29. Verse 18 also changes "which thou seest" to "whom thou seest". The current text follows these readings, with capitalization and punctuation differences.

> And he said unto me, behold, the virgin whom thou seest, is the mother of the Son of God, after the manner of the flesh.

> And the angel said unto me, behold the Lamb of God, yea, even the Son of the Eternal Father! Knowest thou the meaning of the tree which thy father saw?

> And it came to pass that the angel spake unto me again, saying, look! And I looked and beheld the Lamb of God, that he was taken by the people; yea, the Son of the everlasting God was judged of the world; and I saw and bear record.

Mosiah 15:1-4, first edition (1830)

Book of Mormon (1830), p. 186. The current text has the same words, with "said" for "saith" and modern capitalization and punctuation.

> And now Abinadi saith unto them, I would that ye should understand that God himself shall come down among the children of men, and shall redeem his people; and because he dwelleth in flesh, he shall be called the Son of God: and having subjected the flesh to the will of the Father, being the Father and the Son; the Father, because he was conceived by the power of God; and the Son, because of the flesh; thus becoming the Father and Son: and they are one God, yea, the very Eternal Father of Heaven and of Earth;

Alma 11:28-29 and 38-39, first edition (1830)

Book of Mormon (1830), p. 253. The current text reads “said” and “answered”, and verse 39 has “which in them are” for “which in them is”.

> Now Zeezrom saith, Is there more than one God? And he answereth No.

> Now Zeezrom saith again unto him: Is the Son of God the very Eternal Father? And Amulek saith unto him, Yea, he is the very Eternal Father of Heaven and of Earth, and all things which in them is; he is the beginning and the end, the first and the last;

Abraham 4:1, historical printing (1842)

Times and Seasons 3, no. 10 (15 March 1842), p. 720. Retained primary transcript via the Joseph Smith Papers. The prose quotes the current verse, which reorders the clause: “and they, that is the Gods, organized and formed the heavens and the earth”.

> And then the Lord said, let us go down; and they went down at the beginning, and they organized and formed, (that is, the Gods,) the heavens and the earth.

Doctrine and Covenants 130:22, 1843 report

Instruction of 2 April 1843, as reported by Willard Richards, journal pp. [42]-[43]. Retained primary transcript via the Joseph Smith Papers. The page numbers are supplied by the editors. The canonical verse expands this report: the clauses “has not a body of flesh and bones” and “Were it not so, the Holy Ghost could not dwell in us” are not in it. The prose quotes only the canonical statement about the Father and the Son.

> the Father has a body of flesh & bones as tangible as mans the Son also, but the Holy Ghost is a personage of spirit.—

1 Nephi 20:1, first edition (1830)

Book of Mormon (1830), p. 52.

> Hearken and hear this, O house of Jacob, which are called by the name of Israel, and are come forth out of the waters of Judah, which swear by the name of the Lord, and make mention of the God of Israel; yet they swear not in truth, nor in righteousness.

1 Nephi 20:1, second edition (1837)

Book of Mormon (1837), p. 56.

> Hearken and hear this, O house of Jacob, who are called by the name of Israel, and are come forth out of the waters of Judah, who swear by the name of the Lord, and make mention of the God of Israel; yet they swear not in truth, nor in righteousness.

1 Nephi 20:1, third edition (1840)

Book of Mormon (1840), p. 53, read from the retained page image; the Joseph Smith Papers give no transcript for this page. The current text keeps the added phrase, without the parentheses.

> Hearken and hear this, O house of Jacob, who are called by the name of Israel, and are come forth out of the waters of Judah, (or out of the waters of baptism,) who swear by the name of the Lord, and make mention of the God of Israel; yet they swear not in truth, nor in righteousness.

Matthew 6:13, New Testament Revision 1 (1831)

New Testament Revision 1, p. 13, the Joseph Smith Papers transcript of the manuscript. The unit is the petition and its doxology as the manuscript joins them, without punctuation.

> and suffer us not to be led into temptation but deliver us from evil for thine is the Kingdom and the power and the glory forever and forever Amen

The Testimony of Three Witnesses

Project Gutenberg eBook #17, "The Book of Mormon" (release 25 June 2008; updated 11 October 2025), a digital transcription of a modern Latter-day Saint text whose base printing is not identified.

Retained file SHA-256 ac4bbea7d6f19905cf10d21465e0f491a41e2dd3c-c2a64e9ee622b1f4a7a6882. This is not a verified 1830 printing. The statement was first printed in the 1830 edition, but that printing's pages [589]-[590] are not retained.

> Be it known unto all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people, unto whom this work shall come: That we, through the grace of God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, have seen the plates which contain this record, which is a record of the people of Nephi, and also of the Lamanites, their brethren, and also of the people of Jared, who came from the tower of which hath been spoken. And we also know that they have been translated by the gift and power of God, for his voice hath declared it unto us; wherefore we know of a surety that the work is true. And we also testify that we have seen the engravings which are upon the plates; and they have been shown unto us by the power of God, and not of man. And we declare with words of soberness, that an angel of God came down from heaven, and he brought and laid before our eyes, that we beheld and saw the plates, and the engravings thereon; and we know that it is by the grace of God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, that we beheld and bear record that these things are true. And it is marvelous in our eyes. Nevertheless, the voice of the Lord commanded us that we should bear record of it; wherefore, to be obedient unto the commandments of God, we bear testimony of these things. And we know that if we are faithful in Christ, we shall rid our garments of the blood of all men, and be found spotless before the judgment-seat of Christ, and shall dwell with him eternally in the heavens. And the honor be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, which is one God. Amen.
>
> Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, Martin Harris

The Testimony of Eight Witnesses

The same digital transcription.

> Be it known unto all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people, unto whom this work shall come: That Joseph Smith, Jun., the translator of this work, has shown unto us the plates of which hath

> been spoken, which have the appearance of gold; and as many of the leaves as the said Smith has translated we did handle with our hands; and we also saw the engravings thereon, all of which has the appearance of ancient work, and of curious workmanship. And this we bear record with words of soberness, that the said Smith has shown unto us, for we have seen and hefted, and know of a surety that the said Smith has got the plates of which we have spoken. And we give our names unto the world, to witness unto the world that which we have seen. And we lie not, God bearing witness of it.
>
> Christian Whitmer, Jacob Whitmer, Peter Whitmer, Jun., John Whitmer, Hiram Page, Joseph Smith, Sen., Hyrum Smith, Samuel H. Smith

English parallels, named digital transcription

The following five complete verses follow Project Gutenberg eBook #17, whose base printing is unidentified and whose retained metadata declares the text public domain in the USA. They match the retained current official wording. They are not represented as an independently collated 1830 edition.

2 Nephi 12:16

> And upon all the ships of the sea, and upon all the ships of Tarshish, and upon all pleasant pictures.

2 Nephi 23:21

> But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there.

3 Nephi 12:22

> But I say unto you, that whosoever is angry with his brother shall be in danger of his judgment. And whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council; and whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.

3 Nephi 13:12

> And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

3 Nephi 13:13

> For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

1 Nephi 13:24-29, first edition (1830)

Book of Mormon (1830), printed p. 30, retained Joseph Smith Papers transcript. This is the **complete corresponding historical passage**, which the 1830 printing does not divide into today's verse numbers. It is supplied as one unit rather than relabeled as modern verse text. The historical punctuation and capital letters are retained, with page line breaks joined. It reads plainness at the location now numbered 13:24 and foundation at 13:26. The complete present-day equivalents are not identical.

> And the angel of the Lord said unto me, Thou hast beheld that the Book proceeded forth from the mouth of a Jew; and when it proceeded forth from the mouth of a Jew, it contained the plainness of the Gospel of the Lord, of whom the twelve apostles bear record; and they bear record according to the truth which is in the Lamb of God; wherefore, these things go forth from the Jews in purity, unto the Gentiles, according to the truth which is in God; and after that they go forth by the hand of the twelve apostles of the Lamb, from the Jews unto the Gentiles; behold, after this, thou seest the foundation of a great and abominable church, which is the most abominable above all other churches; for behold, they have taken away from the Gospel of the Lamb, many parts which are plain and most precious; and also, many Covenants of the Lord have they taken away; and all this have they done, that they might pervert the right ways of the Lord; that they might blind the eyes and harden the hearts of the children of men; wherefore, thou seest that after the Book hath gone forth through the hands of the great and abominable church, that there are many plain and precious things taken away from the Book, which is the Book

> of the Lamb of God; and after that these plain and precious things were taken away, it goeth forth unto all the nations of the Gentiles; and after it goeth forth unto all the nations of the Gentiles, yea, even across the many waters which thou hast seen with the Gentiles which have gone forth out of captivity; and thou seest because of the many plain and precious things which have been taken out of the Book, which were plain unto the understanding of the children of men, according to the plainness which is in the Lamb of God; and because of these things which are taken away out of the Gospel of the Lamb, an exceeding great many do stumble, yea, insomuch that Satan hath great power over them;

Further Doctrine and Covenants units, 1923 printing

These complete units follow the same disclosed OCR reading method. Study callouts, line-end hyphens and interleaved apparatus are removed; the source record enumerates each repair. The comma after asleep in 86:3 is an uncertain OCR reading, retained here; the saved current text has no comma there. No punctuation comparison with page images is claimed.

Doctrine and Covenants 1:24 (1923 printing)

> Behold, I am God and have spoken it; these commandments are of me, and were given unto my servants in their weakness, after the manner of their language, that they might come to understanding.

Doctrine and Covenants 20:17 (1923 printing)

> 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, the framer of heaven and earth, and all things which are in them;

Doctrine and Covenants 121:32 (1923 printing)

> According to that which was ordained in the midst of the Council of the Eternal God of all other gods before this world was, that should be reserved unto the finishing and the end thereof, when

> every man shall enter into his eternal presence and into his immortal rest.

Doctrine and Covenants 130:22 (1923 printing)

> The Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man's; the Son also; but the Holy Ghost has not a body of flesh and bones, but is a personage of Spirit. Were it not so, the Holy Ghost could not dwell in us.

Doctrine and Covenants 1:38 (1923 printing)

> What I the Lord have spoken, I have spoken, and I excuse not myself; and though the heavens and the earth pass away, my word shall not pass away, but shall all be fulfilled, whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same.

Doctrine and Covenants 21:4 (1923 printing)

> Wherefore, meaning the church, thou shalt give heed unto all his words and commandments which he shall give unto you as he receiveth them, walking in all holiness before me;

Doctrine and Covenants 21:5 (1923 printing)

> For his word ye shall receive, as if from mine own mouth, in all patience and faith.

Doctrine and Covenants 76:22 (1923 printing)

> And now, after the many testimonies which have been given of him, this is the testimony, last of all, which we give of him: That he lives!

Doctrine and Covenants 76:23 (1923 printing)

> For we saw him, even on the right hand of God; and we heard the voice bearing record that he is the Only Begotten of the Father—

Doctrine and Covenants 76:24 (1923 printing)

> That by him, and through him, and of him, the worlds are and were created, and the inhabitants thereof are begotten sons and daughters unto God.

Doctrine and Covenants 84:4 (1923 printing)

> Verily this is the word of the Lord, that the city New Jerusalem shall be built by the gathering of the saints, beginning at this place, even the place of the temple, which temple shall be reared in this generation.

Doctrine and Covenants 84:5 (1923 printing)

> For verily this generation shall not all pass away until an house shall be built unto the Lord, and a cloud shall rest upon it, which cloud shall be even the glory of the Lord, which shall fill the house.

Doctrine and Covenants 84:31 (1923 printing)

> Therefore, as I said concerning the sons of Moses—for the sons of Moses and also the sons of Aaron shall offer an acceptable offering and sacrifice in the house of the Lord, which house shall be built unto the Lord in this generation, upon the consecrated spot as I have appointed—

Doctrine and Covenants 86:3 (1923 printing)

> And after they have fallen asleep, the great persecutor of the church, the apostate, the whore, even Babylon, that maketh all nations to drink of her cup, in whose hearts the enemy, even Satan, sitteth to reign—behold he soweth the tares; wherefore, the tares choke the wheat and drive the church into the wilderness.

Doctrine and Covenants 124:49 (1923 printing)

> Verily, verily, I say unto you, that when I give a commandment to any of the sons of men to do a work unto my name, and those sons of men go with all their might and with all they have to perform that work, and cease not their diligence, and their enemies come

> upon them and hinder them from performing that work, behold, it behooveth me to require that work no more at the hands of those sons of men, but to accept of their offerings.

Doctrine and Covenants 124:51 (1923 printing)

> Therefore, for this cause have I accepted the offerings of those whom I commanded to build up a city and a house unto my name, in Jackson county, Missouri, and were hindered by their enemies, saith the Lord your God.

Doctrine and Covenants 132:1 (1923 printing)

> Verily, thus saith the Lord unto you my servant Joseph, that inasmuch as you have inquired of my hand to know and understand wherein I, the Lord, justified my servants Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as also Moses, David and Solomon, my servants, as touching the principle and doctrine of their having many wives and concubines—

Current-edition context

These complete scripture units follow the official current text retained 15 November 2026. They are quoted with attribution for comment. No public-domain printing of these exact units was collated, and historical reports are not substituted for them.

Joseph Smith—History 1:5 (current text only)

> Some time in the second year after our removal to Manchester, there was in the place where we lived an unusual excitement on the subject of religion. It commenced with the Methodists, but soon became general among all the sects in that region of country. Indeed, the whole district of country seemed affected by it, and great multitudes united themselves to the different religious parties, which created no small stir and division amongst the people, some crying, “Lo, here!” and others, “Lo, there!” Some were contending for the Methodist faith, some for the Presbyterian, and some for the Baptist.

Joseph Smith—History 1:18 (current text only)

> My object in going to inquire of the Lord was to know which of all the sects was right, that I might know which to join. No sooner, therefore, did I get possession of myself, so as to be able to speak, than I asked the Personages who stood above me in the light, which of all the sects was right (for at this time it had never entered into my heart that all were wrong)—and which I should join.

Joseph Smith—History 1:19 (current text only)

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

Joseph Smith—History 1:59 (current text only)

> At length the time arrived for obtaining the plates, the Urim and Thummim, and the breastplate. On the twenty-second day of September, one thousand eight hundred and twenty-seven, having gone as usual at the end of another year to the place where they were deposited, the same heavenly messenger delivered them up to me with this charge: that I should be responsible for them; that if I should let them go carelessly, or through any neglect of mine, I should be cut off; but that if I would use all my endeavors to preserve them, until he, the messenger, should call for them, they should be protected.

Joseph Smith—History 1:60 (current text only)

> I soon found out the reason why I had received such strict charges to keep them safe, and why it was that the messenger had said that when I had done what was required at my hand, he would call for them. For no sooner was it known that I had them, than the most strenuous exertions were used to get them from me. Every

> stratagem that could be invented was resorted to for that purpose. The persecution became more bitter and severe than before, and multitudes were on the alert continually to get them from me if possible. But by the wisdom of God, they remained safe in my hands, until I had accomplished by them what was required at my hand. When, according to arrangements, the messenger called for them, I delivered them up to him; and he has them in his charge until this day, being the second day of May, one thousand eight hundred and thirty-eight.

Mormon 9:9 (current text only)

> For do we not read that God is the same yesterday, today, and forever, and in him there is no variableness neither shadow of changing?

Mormon 9:10 (current text only)

> And now, if ye have imagined up unto yourselves a god who doth vary, and in whom there is shadow of changing, then have ye imagined up unto yourselves a god who is not a God of miracles.

Mormon 9:19 (current text only)

> And if there were miracles wrought then, why has God ceased to be a God of miracles and yet be an unchangeable Being? And behold, I say unto you he changeth not; if so he would cease to be God; and he ceaseth not to be God, and is a God of miracles.

Moroni 8:18 (current text only)

> For I know that God is not a partial God, neither a changeable being; but he is unchangeable from all eternity to all eternity.

Further historical printings and manuscripts

Each unit below names its own printing or manuscript copy.

Jacob 2:23-24, 27, 30, first edition (1830)

Book of Mormon 1830, pp 126-127. The complete opening sentence of verse 23 is included. Burthens is current burdens; modern verse numbers locate the corresponding historical text.

> But the word of God burthens me because of your grosser crimes. For behold, thus saith the Lord: This People begin to wax in iniquity; they understand not the Scriptures: for they seek to excuse themselves in committing whoredoms, because of the things which were written concerning David, and Solomon his Son. Behold, David and Solomon truly had many wives and concubines, which thing was abominable before me, saith the Lord.

> Wherefore, my brethren, hear me, and hearken to the word of the Lord: for there shall not any man among you have save it be one wife; and concubines he shall have none:

> For if I will, saith the Lord of Hosts, raise up seed unto me, I will command my people: otherwise, they shall hearken unto these things.

Doctrine and Covenants 132:38-39, Kingsbury copy (1843)

Revelation dated 12 July 1843, Joseph Kingsbury copy, p 5, retained reading transcript. Historical as also Solomon is current and also Solomon; spelling, capitals and punctuation also differ. These are complete corresponding units, not modern verse divisions asserted of the manuscript.

> David also received many wives and Concubines as also Solomon and Moses my Servents; as also many others of my Servents from the begenning of creation untill this time and in nothing did they Sin Save in those things which they received not of me. Davids wives and Concubines were given unto him of me by the hand of Nathan my Servent and others of the prophets who had the Keys

> of this power; and in none of these things did he Sin against me Save in the case of Uriah and his wife and therefore he hath fallen from his exaltation and received his portion and he Shall not inherit them out of the world for I gave them unto another Saith the Lord,

Book of Abraham heading (1842)

Times and Seasons 3, no 9, 1 March 1842, p 704. Catecombs preserves this printing's spelling. The claim is identified as the 1842 printed heading.

> A TRANSLATION

> Of some ancient Records that have fallen into our hands, from the Catecombs of Egypt, purporting to be the writings of Abraham, while he was in Egypt, called the Book of Abraham, written by his own hand, upon papyrus.

Abraham 3:22-26, historical paragraph 22 (1842)

Times and Seasons 1842, p 720, retained reading transcript. The complete original paragraph corresponds to modern 3:22-26. Its shewn is current shown, and forever is current for ever; capitals and punctuation also differ. Original paragraph number 22 is retained.

> 1. Now the lord had shewn unto me, Abraham, the intelligences that were organized before the world was; and among all these there were many of the noble and great ones, and God saw these souls that they were good, and he stood in the midst of them, and he said, these, I will make my rulers; for he stood among those that were spirits, and he saw that they were good; and he said unto me, Abraham, thou art one of them, thou wast chosen before thou wast born. And there stood one among them that was like unto God, and he said unto those, who were with him, we will go down, for there is space there, and we will take of these materials, and we will make an Earth whereon these may dwell; and we will prove them herewith, to see if they will do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them; and they, who keep their

> first estate, shall be added upon; and they, who keep not their first estate, shall not have glory in the same kingdom, with those who keep their first estate; and they, who keep their second estate, shall have glory added upon their heads forever and ever.

1 Nephi 13:40, first edition (1830)

Book of Mormon 1830, p 32, retained reading transcript. This is the complete corresponding modern verse 40 within a longer historical sentence, retaining its ending semicolon. Compared with 1837, which is becomes which are, the Son of is added before eternal Father, and Saviour becomes Savior; capitals and punctuation also differ.

> And the angel spake unto me, saying: These last records which thou hast seen among the Gentiles, shall establish the truth of the first, which is of the twelve apostles of the Lamb, and shall make known the plain and precious things which have been taken away from them; and shall make known to all kindreds, tongues, and people, that the Lamb of God is the Eternal Father and the Saviour of the world; and that all men must come unto Him, or they cannot be saved;

APPENDIX

Historical and translation context

These selections identify their historical English witnesses. A translation, a report of a sermon and a formal confession have different standing; none is presented as another book of Scripture.

Lectures on Faith, Lecture 5, paragraph 2 (1835)

Doctrine and Covenants (Kirtland, 1835), Lecture Fifth, which begins on p. 52. Read in Project Gutenberg eBook #56684, the Mormon Texts Project's transcription of the 1835 text. No 1835 page image is retained. The paragraph also says that the Father and the Son possess “the same mind”, and that the three “are one”, which the Latter-day Saint unity reading may cite.

> There are two personages who constitute the great, matchless, governing, and supreme power over all things--by whom all things were created and made, that are created and made, whether visible or invisible: whether in heaven, on earth, or in the earth, under the earth, or throughout the immensity of space--They are the Father and the Son: the Father being a personage of spirit, glory, and power: possessing all perfection and fullness: the Son, who was in the bosom of the Father, a personage of tabernacle, made, or fashioned like unto man, or being in the form and likeness of man, or, rather, man was formed after his likeness, and in his image;--he is also the express image and likeness of the personage of the Father: possessing all the fullness of the Father, or the same fulness with the Father; being begotten of him, and ordained from before the foundation of the world to be a propitiation for the sins of all those who should believe on his name, and is called the Son because of the flesh--and descended in suffering below that which man can suffer, or, in other words, suffered greater sufferings, and was exposed to more powerful contradictions than any man can be. But notwithstanding all this, he kept the law of God, and remained without sin: Showing thereby that it

> is in the power of man to keep the law and remain also without sin. And also, that by him a righteous judgment might come upon all flesh, and that all who walk not in the law of God, may justly be condemned by the law, and have no excuse for their sins. And he being the Only Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth, and having overcome, received a fullness of the glory of the Father--possessing the same mind with the Father, which mind is the Holy Spirit, that bears record of the Father and the Son, and these three are one, or in other words, these three constitute the great, matchless, governing and supreme power over all things: by whom all things were created and made, that were created and made: and these three constitute the Godhead, and are one: the Father and the Son possessing the same mind, the same wisdom, glory, power, and fullness: Filling all in all--the Son being filled with the fulness of the Mind, glory, and power, or, in other words, the Spirit, glory, and power, of the Father--possessing all knowledge and glory, and the same kingdom: sitting at the right hand of power, in the express image and likeness of the Father--a mediator for man--being filled with the fullness of the mind of the Father, or, in other words, the Spirit of the Father: which Spirit is shed forth upon all who believe on his name and keep his commandments: and all those who keep his commandments shall grow up from grace to grace, and become heirs of the heavenly kingdom, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ; possessing the same mind, being transformed into the same image or likeness, even the express image of him who fills all in all: being filled with the fullness of his glory, and become one in him, even as the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are one.

King Follett sermon, as printed in 1844

"Conference Minutes," *Times and Seasons* 5, no. 15 (15 August 1844), p. 614, retained primary transcript via the Joseph Smith Papers. The sermon is not canonized. The church's essay says the text "should not be treated as a doctrinal standard in and of itself". The two quoted sentences are printed here with their sentence context.

> In order to understand the subject of the dead, for the consolation of those who mourn for the loss of their friends, it is necessary they should understand the character and being of God, for I am going to tell you how God came to be God. We have imagined that God was God from all eternity. These are incomprehensible ideas to some, but they are the simple and first principles of the gospel, to know for a certainty the character of God, that we may converse with him as one man with another, and that God himself; the Father of us all dwelt on an earth the same as Jesus Christ himself did, and I will show it from the Bible.

Explanatory Introduction, Doctrine and Covenants (copyright 1921)

The Doctrine and Covenants (Salt Lake City, copyright 1921), Explanatory Introduction, read in the OCR text of a 1923 printing (archive.org item doctrinecovenant0000jose_n3n7). No page image is retained. A 1921 copyright and a 1923 printing are in the United States public domain.

> Certain lessons, entitled "Lectures on Faith," which were bound in with the Doctrine and Covenants in some of its former issues, are not included in this edition. Those lessons were prepared for use in the School of the Elders, conducted in Kirtland, Ohio, during the winter of 1834-1835; but they were never presented to nor accepted by the Church as being otherwise than theological lectures or lessons.

Psalm 39:7, Brenton's English Septuagint

Lancelot C. L. Brenton's English translation of the Septuagint, retained eBible digital witness, whose metadata gives publication in 1851. The underlying translation is in the public domain in the United States. The Septuagint numbers this psalm 39; it corresponds to Psalm 40 in the Hebrew numbering.

> Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not; but a body hast thou prepared me: whole-burnt-offering and [sacrifice] for sin thou didst not require.

Westcott and Hort (1882)

B. F. Westcott and F. J. A. Hort, *The New Testament in the Original Greek*, vol. 2, *Introduction and Appendix* (1882), appendix note on Matthew 6:13. The text is retained as archive.org OCR, with page images n 370-n 371. It is in the public domain. The chapter quotes only this clause.

> There can be little doubt that the Doxology originated in liturgical use in Syria, and was thence adopted into the Greek and Syriac Syrian texts of the N. T.

Early Christian witnesses

The following selections follow The Ante-Nicene Fathers, volume 1, Buffalo 1887 printing. Original footnote callouts are omitted; printed square brackets are retained. Ignatius follows the shorter recension. The Polycarp continuation is separately identified as the retained New Advent revision, because the printed page containing its ending is not held.

1 Clement 47

> Take up the epistle of the blessed Apostle Paul. What did he write to you at the time when the Gospel first began to be preached? Truly, under the inspiration of the Spirit, he wrote to you concerning himself, and Cephas, and Apollos, because even then parties had been formed among you.

Polycarp, Philippians 7

> "For whosoever does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh, is antichrist;" and whosoever does not confess the testimony of the cross, is of the devil; and whosoever perverts the oracles of the Lord to his own lusts, and says that there is neither a resurrection nor a judgment, he is the first-born of Satan.

The following complete sentence is from New Advent's retained revised transcription of Polycarp 7, translated by Alexander

Roberts and James Donaldson, edited by Kevin Knight. Inline Bible-reference links are omitted; their words are not treated as part of Polycarp's sentence.

> Wherefore, forsaking the vanity of many, and their false doctrines, let us return to the word which has been handed down to us from the beginning; watching unto prayer, and persevering in fasting; beseeching in our supplications the all-seeing God not to lead us into temptation, as the Lord has said: The spirit truly is willing, but the flesh is weak.

Ignatius, Ephesians 7, shorter recension

> There is one Physician who is possessed both of flesh and spirit; both made and not made; God existing in flesh; true life in death; both of Mary and of God; first possible and then impossible,—even Jesus Christ our Lord.

This printing reads possible and impossible. New Advent's revised text reads passible and impassible. The printed note says the clause is absent in the Greek and supplied from the ancient Latin version; the present quotation identifies the English printing rather than adjudicating that textual question.

Ignatius, Smyrnaeans 3, shorter recension

> For I know that after His resurrection also He was still possessed of flesh, and I believe that He is so now. When, for instance, He came to those who were with Peter, He said to them, “Lay hold, handle Me, and see that I am not an incorporeal spirit.” And immediately they touched Him, and believed, being convinced both by His flesh and spirit. For this cause also they despised death, and were found its conquerors. And after his resurrection He did eat and drink with them, as being possessed of flesh, although spiritually He was united to the Father.

Justin, First Apology 67

> And on the day called Sunday, all who live in cities or in the country gather together to one place, and the memoirs of the apostles

> or the writings of the prophets are read, as long as time permits; then, when the reader has ceased, the president verbally instructs, and exhorts to the imitation of these good things.

Irenaeus, Against Heresies 3.3.3

> To him succeeded Anacletus; and after him, in the third place from the apostles, Clement was allotted the bishopric. This man, as he had seen the blessed apostles, and had been conversant with them, might be said to have the preaching of the apostles still echoing [in his ears], and their traditions before his eyes. Nor was he alone [in this], for there were many still remaining who had received instructions from the apostles.

Irenaeus, Against Heresies 3.3.4

> But Polycarp also was not only instructed by apostles, and conversed with many who had seen Christ, but was also, by apostles in Asia, appointed bishop of the Church in Smyrna, whom I also saw in my early youth, for he tarried [on earth] a very long time, and, when a very old man, gloriously and most nobly suffering martyrdom, departed this life, having always taught the things which he had learned from the apostles, and which the Church has handed down, and which alone are true.

Irenaeus, Against Heresies 1.27.2

> Besides this, he mutilates the Gospel which is according to Luke, removing all that is written respecting the generation of the Lord, and setting aside a great deal of the teaching of the Lord, in which the Lord is recorded as most clearly confessing that the Maker of this universe is His Father. He likewise persuaded his disciples that he himself was more worthy of credit than are those apostles who have handed down the Gospel to us, furnishing them not with the Gospel, but merely a fragment of it. In like manner, too, he dismembered the Epistles of Paul, removing all that is said by the apostle respecting that God who made the world, to the effect that He is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and also those passages from the prophetical writings which the apostle quotes, in

> order to teach us that they announced beforehand the coming of the Lord.

Irenaeus, Against Heresies 1.27.4: New Advent context

This complete sentence follows New Advent's retained revised transcription of the Roberts and Donaldson translation. Its first portion agrees with the retained printed page 352; that page ends before the sentence is complete, so the continuation is identified from this revised transcription rather than from an unheld page image.

> But since this man is the only one who has dared openly to mutilate the Scriptures, and unblushingly above all others to inveigh against God, I purpose specially to refute him, convicting him out of his own writings; and, with the help of God, I shall overthrow him out of those discourses of the Lord and the apostles, which are of authority with him, and of which he makes use.

Formal confessions

These are the groups' printed formal standards, not a record of what any particular local preacher said.

Methodist Articles of Religion, Article I (1817)

The Doctrines and Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church, New York, 1817, p 7. Superscript reference letters and print line divisions are omitted.

> I. Of Faith in the Holy Trinity. There is but one living and true God, everlasting, without body or parts, of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness: the maker and preserver of all things, visible and invisible.— And in unity of this God-head, there are three persons of one substance, power and eternity;—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

Philadelphia Baptist Confession, chapter 2, paragraph 1 (1818 printing)

A Confession of Faith, Philadelphia: Anderson and Meehan, 1818, pp 17-18. The complete paragraph follows, including its account of mercy and judgment. Superscript reference letters are omitted.

> 1. The Lord our God is but one only living, and true God; whose subsistence is in and of himself, infinite in being and perfection, whose essence cannot be comprehended by any but himself; a most pure Spirit, invisible, without body, parts, or passions, who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto, who is immutable, immense, eternal, incomprehensible, almighty, every way infinite, most holy, most wise, most free, most absolute, working all things to the counsel of his own immutable and most righteous will, for his own glory, most loving, gracious, merciful, long suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin, the rewarder of them that diligently seek him, and withal most just, and terrible in his judgments, hating all sin, and will by no means clear the guilty.

Official Declaration 1: current editorial heading

This complete paragraph is current study context, distinguished from the historical declaration. It follows the official text retained 15 November 2026, with nonbreaking spaces normalized, and is quoted with attribution for comment. Its historical account is the publication's statement.

> The Bible and the Book of Mormon teach that monogamy is God's standard for marriage unless He declares otherwise (see 2 Samuel 12:7–8 and Jacob 2:27, 30). Following a revelation to Joseph Smith, the practice of plural marriage was instituted among Church members in the early 1840s (see section 132). From the 1860s to the 1880s, the United States government passed laws to make this religious practice illegal. These laws were eventually upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court. After receiving revelation, President Wil-

> ford Woodruff issued the following Manifesto, which was accepted by the Church as authoritative and binding on October 6, 1890. This led to the end of the practice of plural marriage in the Church.

Witnesses to the translation

Both interviews were printed long after the events they describe. Each is quoted as printed, with its own spelling and misprints.

Martin Harris, as printed in Tiffany's Monthly (1859)

"Mormonism—No. II," *Tiffany's Monthly* 5, no. 4 (New York, August 1859), read from the page images of the scan published by IAPSOP. The article is unsigned; the cover names Joel Tiffany as editor and proprietor.

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> The following narration we took down from the lips of Martin Harris, and read the same to him after it was written, that we might be certain of giving his statement to the world. We made a journey to Ohio for the purpose of obtaining it, in the latter part of January, 1859. We did this that the world might have a connected account of the origin of Mormonism from the lips of one of the original witnesses, upon whose testimony it was first received. For it will be remembered that Martin Harris is one of the three witnesses selected to certify to the facts connected with the origin of that revelation.

> Mr. Harris says: "Joseph Smith, jr., found at Palmyra, N. Y., on the 22d day of September, 1827, the plates of gold upon which was recorded in Arabic, Chaldaic, Syriac, and Egyptian, the Book of Life, or the Book of Mormon. I was not with him at the time, but I had a revelation the summer before, that God had a work for me to do. These plates were found at the north point of a hill two miles north of Manchester village. Joseph had a stone which was dug from the well of Mason Chase, twenty-four feet from the surface. In this stone he could see many things to my certain know-

> ledge. It was by means of this stone he first discovered these plates.

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> "These plates were usually kept in a cherry box made for that purpose, in the possession of Joseph and myself. The plates were kept from the sight of the world, and no one, save Oliver Cowdrey, myself, Joseph Smith, jr., and David Whitmer, ever saw them. Before the Lord showed the plates to me, Joseph wished me to see them. But I refused, unless the Lord should do it. At one time, before the Lord showed them to me, Joseph said I should see them. I asked him, why he would break the commands of the Lord? He said, you have done so much I am afraid you will not believe unless you see them. I replied, 'Joseph, I know all about it. The Lord has showed to me ten times more about it than you know.'"—Here we inquired of Mr. Harris—How did the Lord show you these things? He replied, "I am forbidden to say anything how the Lord showed them to me, except that by the power of God I have seen them."

> Mr. Harris continues: "I hefted the plates many times, and should think they weighed forty or fifty pounds.

Pages 169–170

> "While at Mr. Smith's I hefted the plates, and I knew from the heft that they were lead or gold, and I knew that Joseph had not credit enough to buy so much lead. I left Mr. Smith's about eleven o'clock and went home. I retired to my bedroom and prayed God to show me concerning these things, and I covenanted that if it was his work and he would show me so, I would put forth my best ability to bring it before the world. He then showed me that it was his work, and that it was designed to bring in the fullness of his gospel to the gentiles to fulfill his word, that the first shall be last and the last first. He showed this to me by the still small voice spoken in the soul. Then I was satisfied that it was the Lord's work, and I was under a covenant to bring it forth.

Emma Smith, as printed in The Saints' Herald (1879)

"Last Testimony of Sister Emma," *The Saints' Herald* 26, whole no. 427, no. 19 (Plano, Illinois, 1 October 1879), pp. 289–290, read from the page images in the Internet Archive's scan of the volume. The questions were put by her son, the paper's senior editor, and the bracketed remark in one answer is his. The mark after his signature is indistinct in the scan.

Page 289: the masthead and the editor's introduction

> The Saints' Herald.
>
> Official Paper of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.
>
> Vol. 26.—Whole No. 427. PLANO, ILLINOIS, OCTOBER 1, 1879. No. 19.
>
> LAST TESTIMONY OF SISTER EMMA.
>
> In a conversation held in the Herald Office during the early days of the present year, between Bishop Rogers, Elders W. W. Blair, H. A. Stebbins and a few others, leading minds in the Church, it was thought advisable to secure from Mother Bidamon, (Sister Emma Smith), her testimony upon certain points upon which various opinions existed; and to do this, it was decided to present to her a few prominent questions, which were penned and agreed upon, the answers to which might, so far as she was concerned, settle these differences of opinion. In accordance with this understanding the Senior Editor of the Herald visited Nauvoo, in February last, arriving on the 4th and remaining until the 10th. Sister Emma answered the questions freely and in the presence of her husband, Major Lewis C. Bidamon, who was generally present in their sitting-room where the conversation took place. We were more particular in this, because it had been frequently stated to us: "Ask your mother, she knows." "Why don't you ask your mother; she dare not deny these things." "You do not dare to ask your mother!"

> Our thought was, that if we had lacked courage to ask her, because we feared the answers she might give, we would put aside that fear; and, whatever the worst might be, we would hear it. The result is given below; it having been decided to give the statements to the readers of the Herald, in view of the death of Sister Emma having occurred so soon after she made them, thus giving them the character of a last testimony.

> It is intended to incorporate these questions and answers in the forthcoming history of the Reorganization.

> We apologized to our mother for putting the questions respecting polygamy and plural wives, as we felt we ought to do.

Page 289: plural marriage

> *Q.* What about the revelation on Polygamy? Did Joseph Smith have anything like it? What of spiritual wifery?

> *A* There was no revelation on either polygamy, or spiritual wives. There were some rumors of something of the sort, of which I asked my husband. He assured me that all there was of it was, that, in a chat about plural wives, he had said, "Well, such a system might possibly be, if everybody was agreed to it, and would behave as they should; but they would not; and, besides, it was contrary to the will of heaven."

> No such thing as polygamy, or spiritual wifery, was taught, publicly or privately, before my husband's death, that I have now, or ever had any knowledge of.

> *Q.* Did he not have other wives than yourself?

> *A.* He had no other wife but me; nor did he to my knowledge ever have.

> *Q.* Did he not hold marital relation with women other than yourself?

> *A.* He did not have improper relations with any woman that ever came to my knowledge.

> *Q.* Was there nothing about spiritual wives that you recollect?

> *A.* At one time my husband came to me and asked me if I had heard certain rumors about spiritual marriages, or anything of the kind; and assured me that if I had, that they were without foundation; that there was no such doctrine, and never should be with his knowledge, or consent. I know that he had no other wife or wives than myself, in any sense, either spiritual or otherwise.

Page 289: the translation

> *Q.* What of the truth of Mormonism?

> *A.* I know Mormonism to be the truth; and believe the Church to have been established by divine direction. I have complete faith in it. In writing for your father I frequently wrote day after day, often sitting at the table close by him, he sitting with his face buried in his hat, with the stone in it, and dictating hour after hour with nothing between us.

> *Q.* Had he not a book or manuscript from which he read, or dictated to you?

> *A.* He had neither manuscript nor book to read from.

Page 290: the plates

> *Q.* Could he not have had, and you not know it?

> *A.* If he had had anything of the kind he could not have concealed it from me.

> *Q.* Are you sure that he had the plates at the time you were writing for him?

> *A.* The plates often lay on the table without any attempt at concealment, wrapped in a small linen table cloth, which I had given him to fold them in. I once felt of the plates, as they thus lay on the table, tracing their outline and shape. They seemed to be pliable like thick paper, and would rustle with a metalic sound when the

> edges were moved by the thumb, as one does sometimes thumb the edges of a book.
>
> *Q.* Where did father and Oliver Cowdery write?
>
> *A.* Oliver Cowdery and your father wrote in the room where I was at work.
>
> *Q.* Could not father have dictated the Book of Mormon to you, Oliver Cowdery and the others who wrote for him, after having first written it, or having first read it out of some book?
>
> *A.* Joseph Smith [and for the first time she used his name direct, having usually used the words, "your father," or "my husband"] could neither write nor dictate a coherent and well-worded letter; let alone dictating a book like the Book of Mormon. And, though I was an active participant in the scenes that transpired, and was present during the translation of the plates, and had cognizance of things as they transpired, it is marvelous to me, "a marvel and a wonder," as much so as to any one else.
>
> *Q.* I should suppose that you would have uncovered the plates and examined them?
>
> *A.* I did not attempt to handle the plates, other than I have told you, nor uncover them to look at them. I was satisfied that it was the work of God, and therefore did not feel it to be necessary to do so.
>
> Major Bidamon here suggested: Did Mr. Smith forbid your examining the plates?
>
> *A.* I do not think he did. I knew that he had them, and was not specially curious about them. I moved them from place to place on the table, as it was neccessary in doing my work.

Page 290: her belief, and the editor's close

> *Q.* Mother, what is your belief about the authenticity, or origin of the Book of Mormon?

> *A.* My belief is that the Book of Mormon is of divine authenticity—I have not the slightest doubt of it. I am satisfied that no man could have dictated the writing of the manuscripts unless he was inspired; for, when acting as his scribe, your father would dictate to me hour after hour; and when returning after meals, or after interruptions, he would at once begin where he had left off, without either seeing the manuscript or having any portion of it read to him. This was a usual thing for him to do. It would have been improbable that a learned man could do this; and, for one so ignorant and unlearned as he was, it was simply impossible.

> These questions, and the answers she had given to them, were read to my mother by me, the day before my leaving Nauvoo for home, and were affirmed by her. Major Bidamon stated that he had frequently conversed with her on the subject of the translation of the Book of Mormon, and her present answers answers were substantially what she had always stated in regard to it.

> Joseph Smith

APPENDIX

Material changes in the passages examined

A change is evidence about a text. It is not, by itself, proof that the book is false or that an editor acted dishonestly. This table records the differences used in the argument, with the edition limits kept visible. The chapters explain their significance.

Passage or publication	Earlier witness	Later witness	What the comparison establishes
1 Nephi 11:18	1830, p. 25: mother of God	1837, p. 27, and current: mother of the Son of God	The added words change a direct designation of the incarnate One. The current text also changes which to whom. No motive is inferred.
1 Nephi 11:21	1830, p. 25: the Eternal Father	1837, p. 28, and current: the Son of the Eternal Father	A distinction is made explicit. The church's explanation of Father as a title for Christ the Creator is heard in Chapter 3.
1 Nephi 11:32	1830, p. 26: the Everlasting God was judged	1837, p. 29, and current: the Son of the everlasting God was judged	The designation of the One judged changes. Capitals and punctuation also differ.
1 Nephi 13:40	1830, p. 32: the Lamb of God is the Eternal Father	1837, p. 35, and current: the Lamb of God is the Son of the eternal Father	The added words are established in named editions. The preface says Joseph Smith re-examined the book with Oliver Cowdery; it does not give a motive for this change.
1 Nephi 20:1	1830, p. 52, and 1837, p. 56: waters of Judah	1840, p. 53, adds or out of the waters of baptism	The baptism explanation entered this printed passage in 1840. The current text retains it.

Passage or publication	Earlier witness	Later witness	What the comparison establishes
2 Nephi 25:23	1830, p. 105: after all that we can do	1920, p. 92, and current: after all we can do	The wording changed between these witnesses. The first edition containing the change is not established here. Chapter 8 hears Uchtdorf's reading.
Moroni 10:4	1830, p. 586: and he will manifest	1920, p. 520, and current: he will manifest	The extra and is absent by 1920. No change of doctrine is claimed from it.
Lecture 5 on faith	Published in the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants; Father described as a personage of spirit	Omitted in the 1921 edition, whose introduction calls the lectures theological lessons	The publishing history and explanation are stated. The lectures' authorship and standing are distinguished from canon.
Doctrine and Covenants 130:22	Richards's 1843 report states the Father's body and distinguishes the Holy Ghost's personage and gift	The canonical text includes further clauses on the Holy Ghost not found in the two retained 1843 reports	Textual formation is established; no motive is assigned. The personage/gift harmonization is heard.
Book of Mormon introduction	1981: principal ancestors of the American Indians	2006 update: among the ancestors	The church's DNA essay supplies the dating and explains the change. The introduction is not the Book of Mormon's narrative text. No independent DNA or geography verdict follows.

Several smaller differences are also disclosed where their passages appear: historical spelling and capitals; the 1842 Abraham 3:18 words yet they; the word order in Abraham 4:1; and the editorially supplied letters in the retained 1833 D&C 93:29 transcript. These details prevent an older witness from being mistaken for

the current edition. They are not separate arguments against revelation.

At 1 Nephi 11:21 the retained printer's-manuscript transcript marks God deleted before Father. The table reports the corrected reading, the eternal Father, without treating the deletion as a statement of motive.

APPENDIX

Public records

The 2023 order of the Securities and Exchange Commission is a work of the United States government. The paragraphs quoted in Chapter 6 are printed complete below from the Commission's nine-page PDF, retained 16 November 2026, SHA-256 fae9e265b5db58e1349ed108070b6a7fed22c9c35154500ed3aaac438234cc0b. Wording, capitals and punctuation follow that PDF, including the order's own brackets; line breaks are joined. The Commission publishes the whole order at https://www.sec.gov/files/litigation/admin/2023/34-96951.pdf. As its section II states, the respondents consented to it without admitting or denying its findings.

Order of 21 February 2023, Exchange Act Release No. 96951

Section II (p. 1)

> In anticipation of the institution of these proceedings, Respondents have submitted Offers of Settlement (the "Offers") which the Commission has determined to accept. Solely for the purpose of these proceedings and any other proceedings brought by or on behalf of the Commission, or to which the Commission is a party, and without admitting or denying the findings herein, except as to the Commission's jurisdiction over them and the subject matter of these proceedings, which are admitted, Respondents consent to the entry of this Order Instituting Cease-and-Desist Proceedings Pursuant to Section 21C of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, Making Findings, and Imposing a Cease-and-Desist Order ("Order"), as set forth below.

Summary (p. 2)

> From 1997 through 2019, Ensign Peak Advisors, Inc. ("Ensign Peak"), an entity which manages the assets, including the invest-

> ment securities, of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (the "Church"), failed to file with the Commission certain required forms ("Forms 13F") that would have disclosed the size of the Church's equity portfolio to the Commission and the public. Instead, the Church and Ensign Peak created thirteen limited liability corporations ("LLCs"), including twelve similar LLCs (the "Clone LLCs") with addresses located throughout the U.S., for the sole purpose of filing Forms 13F and preventing public disclosure by Ensign Peak of the Church's equity securities holdings. The Forms 13F that Ensign Peak filed in the names of these LLCs misstated, among other things, that they had sole investment and voting discretion over the listed securities, when Ensign Peak at all times retained discretion over all investment decisions.

> Ensign Peak developed its approach to filing Forms 13F in the names of these LLCs with the knowledge and approval of the Church, which sought to avoid disclosure of the amount and nature of its assets. Through their institutionalized use of this approach for almost twenty years, Ensign Peak's significant role in the securities markets as an institutional investment manager was not disclosed to the Commission, the markets, and the investing public as required by Section 13(f) of the Exchange Act and Rule 13f-1 thereunder.

Footnote 1 (p. 2)

Its marker follows "the Commission finds" at the head of section III, so it governs the Summary and every later finding.

> The findings herein are made pursuant to Respondents' Offers of Settlement and are not binding on any other person or entity in this or any other proceeding.

Paragraph 1 (p. 2)

> The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is a Utah corporation sole, headquartered in Salt Lake City, Utah, which was organized and operated to carry out the purposes of the faith known as The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The Church has

> over 16 million members in more than 30,000 congregations across 160 countries. As referenced in this Order, "senior leadership of the Church" consists of the Church's First Presidency and Presiding Bishopric.

Paragraph 3 (p. 3)

> The Church created Ensign Peak in 1997 as an integrated auxiliary of the Church to manage the Church's investment securities. Ensign Peak has no shareholders or members. The securities portfolio managed by Ensign Peak consists of what the Church calls "reserve funds" or "reserves," which include U.S. equity and debt securities purchased with excess tithing, income and returns generated by Ensign Peak, and the assets of other Church integrated auxiliaries. Ensign Peak does not charge the Church management fees.

Paragraph 8 (p. 3)

> To prevent disclosure of the securities portfolio managed by Ensign Peak, the Church approved Ensign Peak's plan of using other entities, instead of Ensign Peak, to file Forms 13F. The Church was concerned that disclosure of the assets in the name of Ensign Peak, a known Church affiliate, would lead to negative consequences in light of the size of the Church's portfolio. Ensign Peak did not have the authority to implement this approach without the approval of the Church's First Presidency.

Paragraph 11 (p. 4)

> On March 15, 2005, the Church became aware that the public might link this first LLC to the Church because the person signing the Forms 13F was listed in a public directory as a Church employee. To address this issue, on March 21, 2005, the senior leadership of the Church approved a new reporting entity to be created with "better care being taken to ensure that neither the 'Street' nor the media [could] connect the new entity to Ensign Peak."

Paragraph 30 (p. 6)

> The Church and Ensign Peak understood that Ensign Peak continued to make investment and voting decisions relating to the portfolio, and that the LLC Structure was created for the sole purpose of filing Forms 13F.

Paragraph 32 (p. 7)

> The Church and Ensign Peak continued to take the same approach to filing Forms 13F through the Clone LLCs despite two Church Audit Department ("CAD") internal audits of Ensign Peak – one in 2014 and one in 2017—that reviewed the LLC Structure. In discussions with Ensign Peak's senior management, although CAD did not recommend specific changes to the LLC Structure, CAD highlighted the risk that the SEC might disagree with the approach.

Paragraph 34 (p. 7)

> After the website reported this information, two Business Managers resigned their roles, voicing concerns about what they had been asked to do. Rather than changing the LLC Structure, two new Business Managers were assigned to replace the two who resigned.

Form 13F-HR filed 12 November 2026

Ensign Peak Advisors, Inc filed this report, and its figures are the filer's own, not the Commission's. The values below are from the cover and summary of accession 0001454984-26-000011, retained from the Commission's EDGAR system on 16 November 2026 (decompressed SHA-256 966973572c90a69c5c21b12-fa291cee63ba4e2174ad3c56855eeec711055281c). Since 3 January 2023 the form reports values to the nearest dollar. The separate holdings table was not summed for this book.

Field	Value
Filing manager	Ensign Peak Advisors, Inc
Report type	13F HOLDINGS REPORT

Field	Value
Period of report	09-30-2026
Signature date	11-12-2026
Other included managers	0
Table entry total	1709
Table value total	60611728144
Confidential information omitted	false

APPENDIX

Sources, editions and corrections

The book begins with the church's four standard works. Its notes distinguish those scriptures from official declarations, publications, conference sermons and scholarship. A manual's inclusion of a sermon does not canonize it. An apologist's explanation is attributed to that author or organization. The Christian conclusions are the book's arguments from the passages, rather than words put into a source's mouth.

Bible

Bible quotations follow the retained eBible/CrossWire King James Version digital text, described by its distributor as the standardized 1769 text. The prose uses its ordinary-type XML wording; the Bible appendix preserves the corresponding TXT witness's supplied-word brackets and paragraph marks. Both witnesses have been compared for the cited units. The archive is identified by SHA-256 00d2b622b528b42604c23fddf21fe707a1c79d0b5b2ea480c4b96359b0c9eac3.

The source-text profile of this edition is for United States distribution. The King James Version's printing and import rights in the United Kingdom have not been cleared.

Restoration texts

The complete historical selections identify their own editions: the Book of Mormon's 1830, 1837 and 1840 printings; the 1842 Times and Seasons; the 1833 revelation manuscript, the 1843 Kingsbury copy and the Richards report; and the 1923 printing of the Doctrine and Covenants, copyright 1921. Other historical witnesses include the 1916 Improvement Era exposition, the 1844 Times and Seasons printing of the King Follett sermon, the Joseph Smith

Papers transcript of the printer's manuscript, and the 1817 Methodist and 1818 Philadelphia Baptist confessions. The Lectures on Faith are read in Project Gutenberg's named transcription of the 1835 text. The Book of Mormon's witness statements are read in Gutenberg eBook #17, whose base printing is not identified. That digital witness is never passed off as an independently collated 1830 printing.

Current-edition comparisons use the official texts retained on 15 November 2026. Current wording is identified as current, and material differences from the older witness are stated. A retained transcript is distinguished from a page image. The 1923 D&C selections use a disclosed OCR reading transcription: line wrapping, study callouts and interleaved apparatus are removed with a record of the changes; uncertain page numerals are identified. No claim of facsimile collation follows from an OCR comparison. Editorially supplied letters or page numbers in manuscript transcripts remain visible.

Underlying public-domain texts supply the extended historical selections where a retained witness is available. Brief current passages needed for context are identified separately. Modern official publications and scholarship are quoted briefly with attribution, rather than reproduced as complete articles. Scan images are not reproduced. Edition-specific reproduction questions remain separate from whether a quotation is accurate.

Other witnesses

The early Christian passages follow The Ante-Nicene Fathers, volume 1, in its Buffalo 1887 printing; the notes identify work, chapter and printed page. Ignatius is quoted from the shorter recension. Broad dates are used where no modern critical dating reference has been pinned.

The Septuagint comparison uses the retained English Brenton witness described by its distributor as published in 1851. Its Psalm 39

corresponds to Psalm 40 in the Hebrew numbering. Westcott and Hort are quoted from their 1882 Introduction and Appendix. Latter-day Saint scholars' views are heard in their own words, including the arguments that do not favor this book's conclusion.

The public-records appendix follows the Securities and Exchange Commission's PDF of its order of 21 February 2023, Exchange Act Release No. 96951, a work of the United States government (SHA-256 fae9e265b5db58e1349ed108070b6a7fed-22c9c35154500ed3aaac438234cc0b). The 2026 Form 13F-HR figures are Ensign Peak's own filing, retained from the Commission's EDGAR system. The Commission staff's answers about Form 13F and the Internal Revenue Service's guidance for churches are cited as guidance, not as rulings about any particular entity. Each was retained on 16 November 2026.

The witness interviews follow their original printings: *Tiffany's Monthly* for August 1859, in the scan published by IAPSOP, and *The Saints' Herald* for 1 October 1879, in the Internet Archive's scan of its volume, whose page images carry a LatterDayTruth.org watermark. The 1830 preface is read from the Internet Archive's scan of a first-edition copy. The scans were used for reading; the book prints the public-domain text, not the images. Two readers read each unit from the page images independently, and their texts were compared word for word. The printed spellings, such as "metalic" and "neccessary", are kept.

Corrections

A criticism of a false quotation or an unfair account of the church's teaching should identify the sentence, the named edition and the passage that corrects it. The same standard applies when a Christian source has been overstated. A correction should say what

changed and when; it should not silently preserve an argument after the evidence supporting it has failed.

Some questions remain open without being used as accusations: the precise motives for textual changes, a global account of ancient American archaeology, unheld manuscript evidence, the church's own account of the matters in the 2023 SEC order, and the disputed prediction discussed in Chapter 5. The book's conclusions rest on the arguments it actually makes. A missing answer is not replaced by an allegation.

AI assistance

AI systems assisted in research, source comparison, drafting and review. Quotations were checked against named retained witnesses by independent readers before integration. That process verifies the words of those witnesses; it does not make an interpretation infallible or turn a historical assertion into an established event. The argument remains open to correction from Scripture and accurately represented sources.

This edition

This is the first edition, dated 17 November 2026. It is offered free as a website, a PDF and an EPUB, all made from the same text. The illustrations are AI-generated thematic images made for this edition. They are not photographs of historical places, people or documents, and they are not evidence for any claim in the book. The PDF is set in Source Serif 4, Libre Caslon Display and DM Sans, which are distributed under the SIL Open Font License.