

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints **is** **The Church of Jesus Christ (of New Testament Saints)**

CONTENTS:

INTRODUCTION

PART 1 - THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST (ORGANIZATION AND FUNCTION)

PART 2 - THE FALLING AWAY (APOSTASY) – COUNCIL OF NICEA - REFORMATION

PART 3 – RESTORATION

PART 4 – THE BOOK OF MORMON

PART 5 – THE NATURE OF GOD

PART 6 – THE ATONEMENT OF JESUS CHRIST

PART 7 – LIFE AFTER DEATH

PART 8 – TEMPLES AND SALVATION FOR THE DEAD

PART 9 - CHURCH HEADQUARTERS – “Mountain of the Lord’s House”

PART 10 – KEEPING THE COMMANDMENTS

PART 11 – CONCLUSION AND INVITATION

INTRODUCTION

I submit that the same Church that Jesus organized anciently has been **restored** to the earth in these latter days as Peter promised prior to the Second Coming of the Lord...

*21 Whom the heaven must receive until the times of **restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.** (Acts 3:21)*

14 And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come. (Matthew 24:14)

This restoration has included the same organization, the divine priesthood authority and the same true gospel doctrine that was established by the Lord himself. Note that the promise was that there would be a “*restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.*” Another passage refers to “*the times of restitution*” as the “*fullness of times*”:

10 That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him: (Ephesians 1:10)

Included in this presentation are scriptural references defining New Testament Church that are now pretty much exclusively part of the latter-day Church of Jesus Christ in these, the “*fullness of times*”.

Name of the Church: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

*Therefore, whatsoever ye shall do, ye shall do it in my name; **therefore ye shall call the church in my name;** and ye shall call upon the Father in my name that he will bless the church for my sake.*

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

(Book of Mormon | 3 Nephi 27:7 - 8)

Saints = Members of Christ's Church:

Members of the ancient Church of Jesus Christ were called "**saints**". There are a few dozen references, but I will quote a couple:

*1 PAUL, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the **saints** which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus: (Ephesians 1:1)*

*19 Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the **saints**, and of the household of God; (Ephesians 2:19)*

The meaning of that term has obviously been changed in modern Christianity.

PART 1 – THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST (ORGANIZATION AND FUNCTION)

Purpose and Function of the Organization:

The purpose of the organization of the Church of Jesus Christ was to **communicate the gospel to the saints and to the world:**

*11 And he gave some, **apostles; and some, prophets;** and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;*

12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

14 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; (Ephesians 4:11 - 14)

Jesus appeared to his apostles after his resurrection as he was about to ascend to heaven:

15 And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. (Mark 16:15)

Apostles and Prophets Ordained with Priesthood Power and Authority

Jesus called and ordained the twelve apostles and prophets with priesthood power and authority.



Christ Ordaining the Twelve Apostles, by Harry Anderson, © IRU

Jesus said to them:

*16 Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, **and ordained you,** that ye should go and bring forth fruit (John 15:16)*

He told Peter:

*19 And I will give unto thee the **keys of the kingdom of heaven**: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.
(Matthew 16:19)*

The scriptures are clear that the ordinances such as baptism and the bestowing of the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands, must be performed by someone with proper **priesthood keys or authority** to be binding in heaven. According to the scriptures, there are two levels of priesthood: The lessor being the Levitical Priesthood or as it is also called: the priesthood after the order of Aaron or the **Aaronic Priesthood**. The greater priesthood is called: the priesthood after the order of Melchisedec or the **Melchisedec Priesthood**.

11 If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law [of Moses],) what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron?

*12 For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law.
(Hebrews 7:11 - 12)*

We know that John the Baptist was of “priestly descent” and inherited the Levitical or Aaronic Priesthood from his father Zacharias, a descendant of Levi whose worthy posterity were authorized, without ordination, to administer in the temple the sacrifices and such that were part of the Law of Moses. This lessor priesthood authorized the likes of John to baptize but a higher authority was required to bestow the gift of the Holy Ghost as John the Baptist suggested:

11 I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire: (Matthew 3:11)

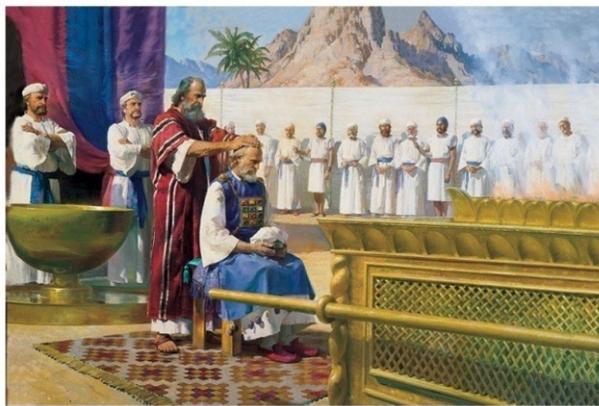
The Lord actually received the higher priesthood from the Father which was called the Priesthood after the Order of Melchisedec or the Melchisedec Priesthood. He passed it on to his disciples by ordaining them and they to others as the church organization grew and others were called and ordained to serve.

*1 FOR every high priest **taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God**, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins:*

2 Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity.

3 And by reason hereof he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins.

4 And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.



5 So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee.

6 As he saith also in another place, **Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.**
(New Testament | Hebrews 5:1 - 6)

It is absolutely clear that Jesus himself operated by virtue of this divine priesthood power and authority as he was...:

10 Called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec. (Hebrews 5:10)

1 AND when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, **he gave them power** against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease.

2 Now the names of the twelve apostles are these; The first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother;

3 Philip, and Bartholomew; Thomas, and Matthew the publican; James the son of Alphæus, and Lebbæus, whose surname was Thaddæus;

4 Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him. (Matthew 10:1 - 4)

The number of twelve, by the way, was significant for after Judas killed himself the remaining prayerfully chose between Barsabas and Matthias and when chosen Matthias was ordained:

22 Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, **must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection.**

23 And they appointed two, Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias.

24 And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen,

25 That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place.

26 And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles. (Acts 1:22 - 26)

The phrases, "...**he gave them power...**" in the verse above (Matthew 10:1) and "...**must one be ordained to be a witness...**" are additional scriptural evidences that priesthood power and authority carries with it the divine right to perform sacred ordinances such as baptism and the laying on of hands to bestow the gift of the Holy Ghost.

14 Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John:

15 Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost:

16 (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.)

17 Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.

18 And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money,

19 Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost.

20 But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. (Acts 8:14 - 20)

Priesthood Offices:

Melchisedec Priesthood Offices:

Apostles and Prophets: *11 And he gave some, **apostles**; and some, **prophets**; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; (Ephesians 4:11)*

*12 For the perfecting of the **saints**, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:*

Evangelists: Now called Stake Presidents who preside over multiple congregations.

Bishops (pastors): Preside over one congregation: *Paul and Timotheus, servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons: (Philippians 1:1)*

Elders: *And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed. (Acts 14:23)*

Seventies: *After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come. (Luke 10:1)*

High Priests: *For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins: (Hebrews 5:1)*

Aaronic Priesthood Offices:

Deacons and Bishops: *Paul and Timotheus, servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons: (Philippians 1:1)*

Teachers: *11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; (Ephesians 4:11)*

Priests: *7 And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith. (Acts 6:7) 5*

He organized his followers to these various offices and commissioned them to teach the gospel, lead in the church according to the authority and responsibility associated with their specific office and to administer the ordinances of the gospel such as baptism, to bestow the gift of the Holy Ghost, administer the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, to heal the sick and to take the gospel to all of the world.

15 And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. (Mark 16:15)

I saw a study once, done by an engineer who was searching for the true Church. He listed the major denominations down one side of the page and the offices of the Priesthood mentioned in the Bible across the top. Only The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints had all nine of these offices functioning in the organization. The most he found in any other denomination was three.

I know of no other Christian denomination that claims to be operating by virtue of either of these Priesthoods and it seems to me, do not even understand what the Aaronic and Melchisedec Priesthoods are, nor the offices within those priesthoods that made up the organization of Christ's Church anciently and that are all functioning in his Church in these latter-days.

Unity:

While the purpose of the organization of Christ's ancient Church included a "*work of the ministry...Till we all come in the unity of the faith*" and not be "*tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine*". The importance of this "*unity*" is emphasized in Christ's prayer during the Last Supper the day prior to his crucifixion:

5 And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.

*11 And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, **that they may be one, as we are.***

20 Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;

*21 **That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.***

*22 And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; **that they may be one, even as we are one:***
(John 17:5; 11; 20 - 22)

This clarifies the passages that are often quoted to support, what to me is a false teaching; that Jesus and the Father are one substance or one being acting in separate roles. We can elaborate on that issue later but this is an example of the sort of thing that is interpreted and taught differently among the thousands of different Christian denominations today. <http://www.philvaz.com/apologetics/a106.htm> One need not look too closely to see that there is a variety of doctrines and practices throughout these various organizations, which is completely different from the ancient Church and teach doctrine contrary to that of the Lord's Church and his will.

The reason for the variety of churches, of course, is that individuals who have organized and who lead these churches have differing interpretations of the scriptures and have felt strongly enough about their views that they went about setting up an organization that would prescribe to their way of thinking. This is exactly what prompted the concern stated in the passage above that we not be "*tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine*". It is the very reason that Jesus appointed apostles and prophets who would receive divine revelation from the Lord in leading his Church and teaching his gospel so that the true followers of the Lord could be unified.

Revelation Through Prophets

The apostles were also called prophets because they received revelation from Christ after his resurrection and ascension to heaven so they could lead His church under His guidance as Paul explains:

11 But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man.

*12 For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the **revelation** of Jesus Christ.*
(Galatians 1:11 - 12)

7 Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets.
(Amos 3:7)

And Peter adds:

20 Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.

21 For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. (2 Peter 1:20 - 21)

The primary role of apostles and prophets is to lead and teach by revelation and that is why Paul referred to them as the "foundation" of the Church with Christ as the "chief corner stone":

19 Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God;

20 And are **built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;** (Ephesians 2:19-20)

PART 2 - THE FALLING AWAY (APOSTASY) – COUNCIL OF NICEA - REFORMATION

The ancient apostles and prophets, who led New Testament Church of Jesus Christ were all killed (but John who was banished to Patmos)

- **Judas** committed suicide after betraying Christ, 34 A.D.
- **Peter** was crucified head down in Rome, 66 A.D.
-



- **Andrew** was bound to death. He preached until his death in 74 A.D.
- **James**, son of Zebedee, was beheaded in Jerusalem by the sword. (Acts 12:1-9).
- **John** was banished to the Isle of Patmos, **96 A.D.** (Rev. 1- 9).
- **Phillip** was crucified at Heirapole, Phryga, 52 A.D.
- **Bartholomew** was beaten, crucified, then beheaded by the command of a king, 52 AD.

- **Thomas** was run through by a lance at Corehandal, East Indies, 52 A.D.
- **Matthew** was slain by the sword in the city of Ethiopia about 60 A.D.
- **James** son of Alphaeus, was thrown from a pinnacle, then beaten to death, 60 A.D.
- **Thaddeus** was shot to death by arrows, 72 A.D.
- **Simon** was crucified in Persia, 74 A.D.

The apostle Paul was martyred in Rome about 65 A.D. and some believe he was beheaded.

Of course, when they were all gone the **divine revelation from the Lord through them ceased and the priesthood authority that was administered through them was lost**. As the leadership of that once divinely led Church of Jesus Christ no longer continued, the confusion and multiplying interpretations of the men who contended for leadership, the Church fell into apostasy, and was lost from the earth. Paul prophesied of this “falling away” prior to the Lord’s Second Coming:

- 1 NOW we beseech you, brethren, by the **coming of our Lord Jesus Christ**, and by our gathering together unto him,*
- 2 That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.*
- 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;** (2 Thessalonians 2:1 - 3)*

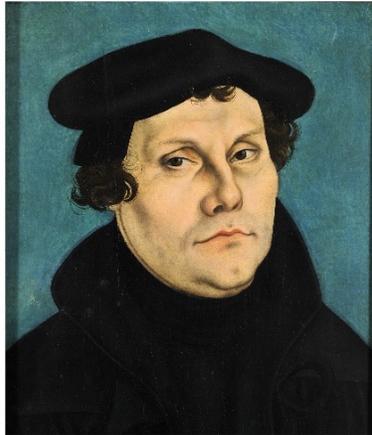
Any reasonable study of history since the last writings in the New Testament, about 96 A.D., will reveal a great deal of contention even a terrible series of wars that ensued over religion. History indicates that the contention increased to the point that the Emperor of Rome, Constantine, called for what is known as the Council of Nicaea. Leaders of the various factions were called together to Nicaea, France where they worked on compromises that would satisfy and unify the various factions. Out of his council came the Nicene Creed, which will be discussed later in this presentation.

The Dark Ages



Much of this period is referred to as the Dark Ages, but even after the Renaissance and the invention of the printing press, making the Bible available to the people, there was still serious persecution for anyone who tried to contest teachings and practices of the ruling churches of that day. Some individuals were even burned at the stake and otherwise punished for trying to publicly express their differences with the doctrine or practices of what had evolved into the **state religions** in the countries in which the Church was prominent. Examples are the Roman Catholic Church, the Church of England (Episcopal), the Russian Orthodox and the Greek Orthodox denominations.

Reformation



History indicates that the first successful Christian reformer was Martin Luther, a Catholic monk, who nailed the 95 Thesis to the Gutenberg, Germany church door contesting matters of doctrine and practices in the Church that he saw were contrary to the Bible. Since his time the **Protestant** (from the word **protest**) movement has resulted in many differing denominations. Persecution, however remained common for those who wished to worship as they saw fit and this prompted a group we call Pilgrims to migrate on three small ships to the eastern shores of what is now called America.

PART 3 - RESTORATION

The early colonists finally secured the establishment of a free land of worship by the ratification the Bill of Rights December 15, 1791. I believe that this land was chosen from the beginning and prepared to be a place where the true gospel and Church could be restored and thrive as predicted by Peter prior to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ:

21 Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began. (Acts 3:21)

Within fifteen years of that ratification a new prophet named Joseph Smith was born in 1805 and who was visited by the Father and the Son as a fourteen year old boy.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R9eB_rF5nb0&feature=youtu.be

He was told that he was to be the prophet of the restoration of Christ's ancient Church as Peter promised leading up to the Second Coming of our Lord, Jesus Christ. The restoration of "*of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began*" was referenced by Paul as "**the fullness of times**":

10 That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him: (Ephesians 1:10)

Isaiah foresaw this “falling away” and the restoration at a time when the “the multitude of all the nations that fight against Ariel (Jerusalem) and the “prophets and seers would be covered”:

7 ¶ And the multitude of all the nations that fight against Ariel, even all that fight against her and her munition, and that distress her, shall be as a dream of a night vision.

8 It shall even be as when a hungry man dreameth, and, behold, he eateth; but he awaketh, and his soul is empty: or as when a thirsty man dreameth, and, behold, he drinketh; but he awaketh, and, behold, he is faint, and his soul hath appetite: so shall the multitude of all the nations be, that fight against mount Zion.

9 ¶ Stay yourselves, and wonder; cry ye out, and cry: they are drunken, but not with wine; they stagger, but not with strong drink.

10 For the LORD hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes: the prophets and your rulers, the seers hath he covered.

14 Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, even a marvellous work and a wonder: for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid. (Isaiah 29:7–10; 14)

We will review Isaiah’s prophecy in more detail later, but to restore “fullness” of the gospel and The Church of Jesus Christ in these latter days with divinely commissioned priesthood authority, involved **a great deal of divine guidance including the appearance of heavenly messengers** to deliver by instruction and the ordination the keys of the priesthood that the Lord once gave Peter and the ancient apostles. Let me list a few of the most well-known of these visitations:

The most significant, of course of all was the appearance of God the Father and his Son, Jesus Christ to young Joseph as described in the video above. The next appearance of a heavenly being was Moroni, an ancient prophet who was the last to write in and bear custody of a set of ancient scriptural records. We will elaborate on that in the section on The Book of Mormon following.

In May of 1829, the Aaronic and Melchisedec Priesthoods were restored as is explained in this video of one of the living apostles of our day, David A Bednar:

<https://www.lds.org/media-library/video/2011-04-24-special-witness-elder-bednar?lang=eng>

April 3, 1836, the Lord, himself appeared to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery recognizing and accepting the newly dedicated temple in Kirtland, Ohio:

11 After this vision closed, the heavens were again opened unto us; and Moses appeared before us, and committed unto us the keys of the gathering of Israel from the four parts of the earth, and the leading of the ten tribes from the land of the north.

*12 After this, **Elias appeared, and committed the dispensation of the gospel of Abraham**, saying that in us and our seed all generations after us should be blessed. (see Mark 9:12)*

*13 After this vision had closed, another great and glorious vision burst upon us; for **Elijah the prophet**, who was taken to heaven without tasting death, stood before us, and said:*

14 Behold, the time has fully come, which was spoken of by the mouth of Malachi—testifying that he [Elijah] should be sent, before the great and dreadful day of the Lord come—

15 To turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the children to the fathers, lest the whole earth be smitten with a curse— (see Malachi 4:5-6)

16 Therefore, the keys of this dispensation are committed into your hands; and by this ye may know that the great and dreadful day of the Lord is near, even at the doors.

(Doctrine and Covenants | Section 110:11 - 16)

We declare that it was the Lord, himself, who directed the restoration of his Church, priesthood authority and true gospel and revealed many things to Joseph and others the details needed to establish the same organization and gospel that he had organized anciently. Many of those revelations are recorded in the Doctrine and Covenants which is accepted by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints along with the Bible and the Book of Mormon as scriptural communication and direction from the Lord.

Of course, the Christian professors have and will continue to deny any such restoration, because to do so would negate their careers and even their specific faith. I have seen none of them who claim a fulfilment of the Biblical prophecies we have quoted concerning the restoration of *“of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.”*

A New Prophet and Quorum of Twelve Apostles in These Latter Days

Well, certainly, an important part of that restoration would be the renewed presence of the apostles and prophets who could receive revelation from Christ to lead His Church. Here is a photo of the apostles and prophets living today.



The Prophet and president of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
Russell M Nelson and his counselors Dallin H Oaks and Henry B. Eyring
(These act in the same role as Peter, James and John in the ancient Church of Jesus Christ)



The Twelve Apostles and Prophets of The Church of Jesus Christ of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Front row, left to right: President M. Russell Ballard and Elders Jeffrey R. Holland, Dieter F. Uchtdorf, David A. Bednar, and Quentin L. Cook. Back row, left to right: Elders D. Todd Christofferson, Neil L. Andersen, Ronald A. Rasband, Gary E. Stevenson, Dale G. Renlund, Gerrit W. Gong, and Ulisses Soares..

Hear the apostles speak to the world: <https://www.lds.org/general-conference?lang=eng/>

Succession of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

As members of the Quorum of the Twelve pass away, the Lord reveals to the remaining members the new men to become apostles just as it was done anciently:

22 Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection.

23 And they appointed two, Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias.

24 And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen,

25 That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place.

26 And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.
(New Testament | Acts 1:22 - 26)

Here is one of the twelve apostles, Neal L Anderson, describing the sacred appointment of these two servants of the Lord. <https://www.lds.org/general-conference/2018/04/the-prophet-of-god?lang=eng>

If you are prayerful and sensitive to the Spirit of Truth you will know that these are true and living apostles and prophets of the Lord, Jesus Christ who operate and lead by virtue of the priesthood keys by which they have been duly ordained. They receive revelation to from the Lord to lead his Church and to preach his true gospel. I have come to know this is true.

PART 4 - THE BOOK OF MORMON - Another Testament of Jesus Christ

8 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. (Pearl of Great Price | Articles of Faith 1:8)

A living apostle, Jeffrey R Holland narrates a brief introduction of The Book of Mormon.

<https://www.lds.org/media-library/video/2011-05-010-book-of-mormon-introduction?lang=eng>

I think one of the most controversial aspect of the restored church and gospel is The Book of Mormon. Christian professors make every effort to discredit The Book of Mormon, ignoring the scriptural references to this additional sacred record of scripture. The most common effort is quoting the following passage in the book of Revelation:

“And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.” (Rev. 22:18–19.)

A modern day apostle Howard W Hunter addresses that effort

<https://www.lds.org/general-conference/1981/04/no-man-shall-add-to-or-take-away?lang=eng>

Following, I will show Biblical references to this sacred record, but first let me summarize the history leading up to, during and after the its writing.

About 600 BC, the prophet Jeremiah and others were warning the people who lived in Jerusalem that their wickedness was going to bring about a destruction of that city and the enslavement of the people. The Bible tells of Jeremiah being imprisoned and of the Babylonians sweeping in about 587 BC and doing just what was warned. You may be familiar with bible stories involving King of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar's dealing with the Jewish prophet, Daniel and how Nebuchadnezzar creates a golden image and commands all men to worship it—The Jewish slave boys, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego refuse and are cast into the fiery furnace—God preserves them, and they come forth unharmed. (Old Testament | Daniel 3)

Back to 600 BC, One of the other prophets called by God to warn the people of Jerusalem contemporary with Jeremiah was a prophet named Lehi. He is not mentioned in the Bible because when the people of that city attempted to kill him, the Lord commanded him to leave Jerusalem with his family and that he would be led to a promised land. As they departed Jerusalem, his son, Nephi, also a prophet of God, began to record their history and especially the Lord's dealings with them. They were instructed by the Lord in building a ship upon which they crossed the ocean landing on the Pacific Ocean side of Ancient America, it is believed down where Mexico and Guatemala now join.

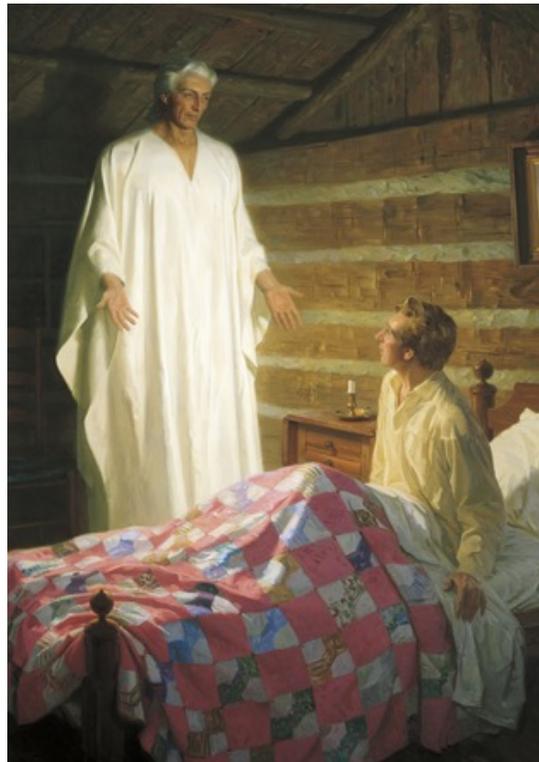
A couple of Nephi's brothers rebelled and there became two separate civilizations of people, one called Nephites after their prophet leader, Nephi. The others were called Lamanites after the oldest of the rebellious sons and they became a ferocious enemy to the Nephites. There were contentions and wars between the two groups off and on throughout the thousand year history that was recorded. The Lord promised the Nephites that as long as they remained a righteous people they would be divinely blessed and preserved from the destructive forces of their enemies.

The prophets who followed Nephi, who wrote in the record, all prophesied of Jesus Christ for the rest of the 600 years leading up to his birth in Bethlehem. They saw the new star and many signs and wonders at the birth of the Savior and were promised that he would visit them. At the time of the Lord's crucifixion, there was a wholesale upheaval in the land of the Nephites and many wicked were destroyed. A few days, however after his

resurrection, Jesus did visit the Nephites and organized his church among them including the calling of twelve disciples whom he ordained with priesthood authority just like the apostles in the Holy Land. There was wonderful peace and prosperity in the land for a few hundred years after the appearance of the Lord, but eventually, pride and evil began to take over the Nephite nation. By the end of the next two hundred years, the wickedness of the Nephites was so intense, that the Lord allowed the Lamanites to completely annihilate them and their record came to an end.

There was a prophet named Mormon during those terrible times, but the Nephites ignored his warnings and leadership. The Lord commanded him to go through the many records that had been written and to create an abridgement or summary with a focus on the Lord's dealings with them. He was survived by his son, Moroni, also a prophet, who wrote the final chapters in the record, which Mormon had engraved on gold sheets or plates and had bound with rings. (The gold was easily engraved and was not a metal that would corrode.) Moroni also wrote and then hid up the plates and eventually placed them in a cement box near what we now call Palmyra, New York. That is where the Lord led the family of young Joseph Smith, whom God and Christ had appointed from before the world was created to be the prophet of the Restoration.

I trust you viewed the video above of the first visitation of God the Father and his Son, Jesus Christ to the young Joseph Smith. After that first vision, it was nearly three and a half years that passed before he received any further divine direction. It was September 1823 that a heavenly messenger appeared and introduced himself as Moroni, the same who had the last custody of the ancient scriptural record of his people and who had now been sent to make this additional "testimony of Jesus Christ" available to the world.



Joseph was led to the spot where the record had been placed in the cement box and covered by a stone at some point during the fourteen hundred years from the time Moroni had finished his writing. After four years of annual meetings, filled with instructions from Moroni at that spot, he was allowed to take the plates and was commanded to seek the inspiration of the Lord in translating the ancient language into English and to arrange to publish it. The entire process was a divine miracle and The Book of Mormon is now published in hundreds of languages and is accepted by millions as the true word of God as revealed to prophets in Ancient America.

I could go into a lot more detail, but one great point is that three men were appointed special witnesses who were visited by the angel Moroni showing them and letting them handle the plates. It is important to realize that Moroni remained and does now remain the custodian of these records as a portion of them were sealed to be brought forth and published at some future time. Eight others were chosen to handle the plates and witness of their existence. Here are their testimonies:

THE TESTIMONY OF THREE WITNESSES

1 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

1 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
HIRAM PAGE
JACOB WHITMER
JOSEPH SMITH, SEN.
PETER WHITMER, JUN.
HYRUM SMITH
JOHN WHITMER
SAMUEL H. SMITH

(Book of Mormon | Preface 3 Witnesses:Heading - 8 Witnesses:1)

Bible References of The Book of Mormon

Passages in the Bible concerning The Book of Mormon do not refer to it by name, but which never-the-less has several references to it.

The following map, pictures and scriptural passages graphically lays out the fulfilment of the word of the Lord to Ezekiel and their “stick” or record (The Book of Mormon) as distinguished from the “stick” or record of the Jews, (the Bible):

15 ¶ The word of the LORD came again unto me, saying,

*16 Moreover, thou son of man, **take thee one stick, and write upon it, For Judah, and for the children of Israel his companions: then take another stick, and write upon it, For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and for all the house of Israel his companions:***

17 And join them one to another into one stick; and they shall become one in thine hand. (Ezekiel 37:15 - 17)

The Bible is what the Lord refers to Ezekiel as the Stick (scrolls = writings) of Judah, particularly, as it recounts the dealings of the Lord with the royal descendants of Judah such as the kings Solomon, Saul and David in the Old Testament and, of course, the King of Kings, Jesus Christ and his disciples in the New Testament.

Where is the “stick” of Joseph? There is no common explanation among Bible scholars on what is meant by the “stick” upon which is written the scriptural record of Joseph and the “*house of Israel his companions*”. The truth is that there was another writing by the descendants of Joseph which is now combined with the Bible in fulfillment of Ezekiel’s prophecy.

The Christian professors do not acknowledge it, of course, as they would have to give up their professions and accept the message of the restoration of the restored gospel and Church of Jesus Christ, which they have nicknamed “Mormons”.

The map below outlines migration of the The Book of Mormon’s initial prophet, Lehi and his family, who were a **branch of Joseph of Egypt’s descendants**. In the book of Genesis, 49th chapter, Joseph’s father Jacob (Israel), gave prophetic blessing to each of his sons and to Joseph he said:

*22 ¶ Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well; **whose branches run over the wall (ocean):***

*26 The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors unto **the utmost bound of the everlasting hills**... (Old Testament | Genesis 49:22 & 26)*

It also makes reference to one passage in the Bible that Christian scholars cannot explain correctly:

16 And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd. (John 10:16)

Some mistakenly think the Lord was referring to the Gentiles, but are apparently not aware of what Jesus said:

24 I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. (Matthew 15:24)

After his resurrection, Jesus appeared to the Israelites who were descendants of Lehi in Ancient America said to them:

- 21 And verily I say unto you, that ye are they of whom I said: Other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.
- 22 And they understood me not, for they supposed it had been the Gentiles; for they understood not that the Gentiles should be converted through their preaching. (Book of Mormon | 3 Nephi 15:21 - 22)

Bible References to the Book of Mormon:

(1) Branch of Joseph to "utmost bound of everlasting hills"

(2) Jesus to visit his "other sheep"

(3) Sticks (records) of Judah (Bible) and Joseph (Book of Mormon)

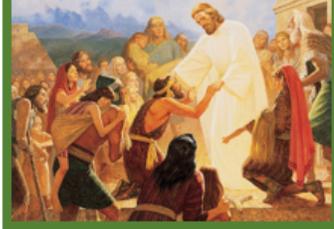
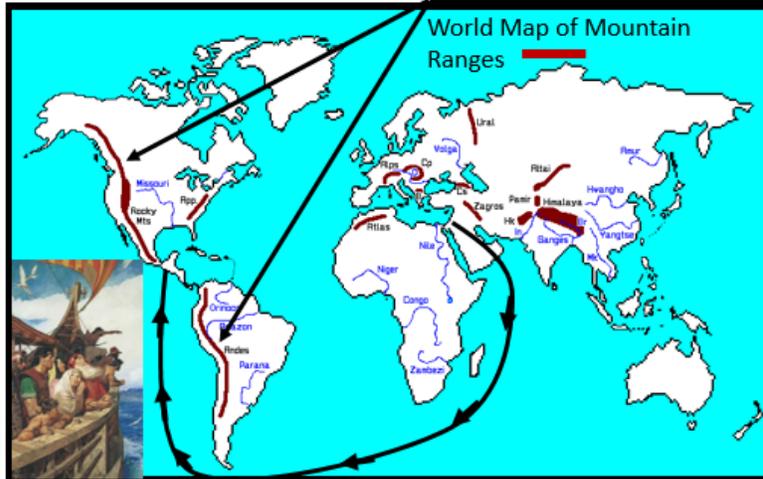
(1)

"...unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills..."

(2)

"...other sheep I have, which are not of this fold...and they shall hear my voice; (John 10:16)

"...ye are they of whom I said: Other sheep I have which are not of this fold..." (Book of Mormon | 3 Nephi 15:21)


"Joseph is a fruitful bough... whose branches run over the wall [ocean]...unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills ...". (Genesis 49:22 - 26)

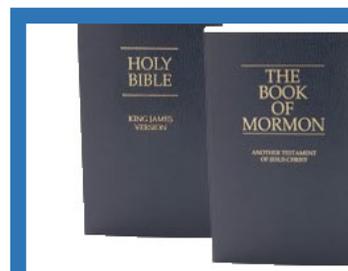
(3)



"...take thee one stick, and write upon it, For Judah [Bible], and for the children of Israel his companions: then take another stick, and write upon it, For Joseph [Book of Mormon]...join them one to another into one stick; and they shall become one in thine hand." (Ezekiel 37:16)

The following are these same passages shown above separated on their own map diagram.

(3)

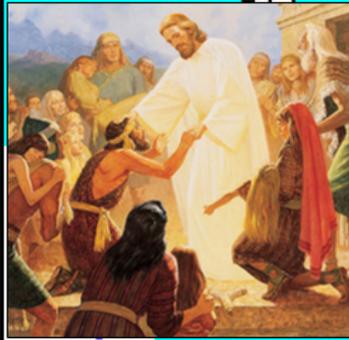
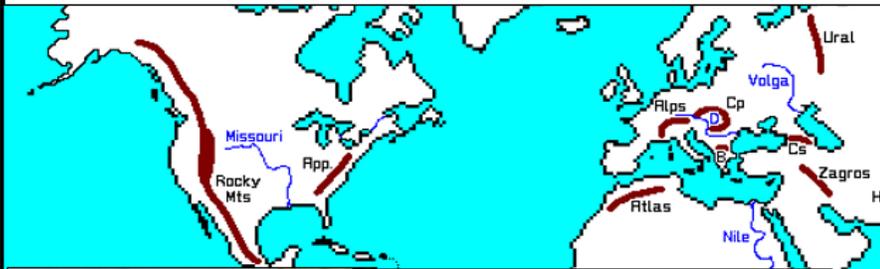


"...take the
Israel his c
[Book of M
become o

“I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” (Matthew 15:24)

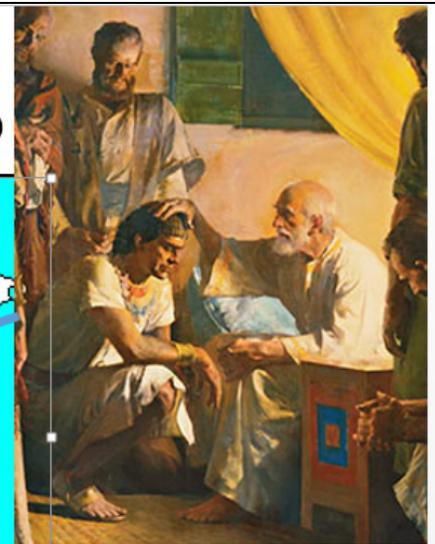


Jesus said to the Jews in the Holy Land:
“other sheep I have, which are not of this fold...and they shall hear my voice.... (John 10:16)

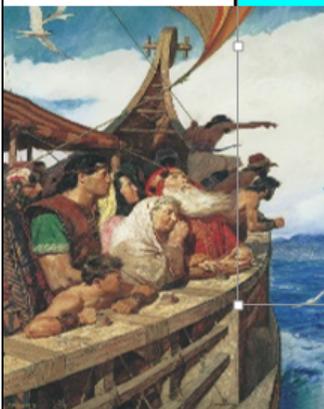
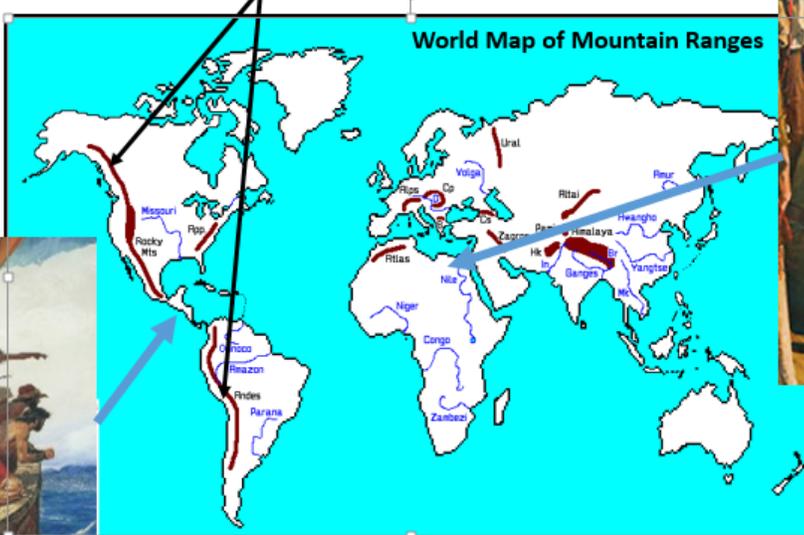


Jesus said to the descendants of Joseph in Ancient America “...ye are they of whom I said: **Other sheep I have which are not of this fold....**”
 (Book of Mormon | 3 Nephi 15:21)

“Joseph is a fruitful bough... whose branches run over the wall [ocean]...unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills ...”. (Genesis 49:22 - 26)



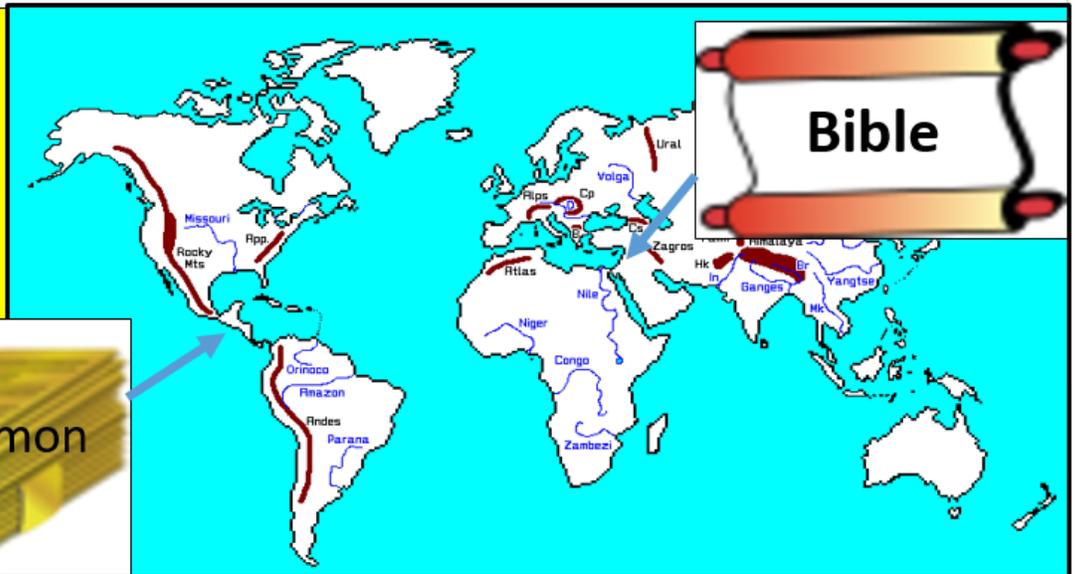
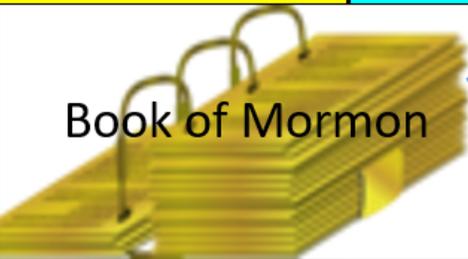
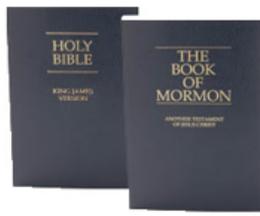
Jacob blessing Joseph



← Lehi, a descendant of Joseph arriving at the promised land.

“...take thee one stick, and write upon it, For Judah [**Bible**], and for the children of Israel his companions: then take another stick, and write upon it, For Joseph [**Book of Mormon**] ...join them one to another into one stick; and they shall become one in thine hand.”
(Ezekiel 37:16)

“one in thine hand”



Isaiah 29

There are other references such as **Isaiah's prophecy** beginning with the destruction of Jerusalem (Ariel) ([my comments in blue](#)).

- 1 *WOE to Ariel, to Ariel, the city where David dwelt! add ye year to year; let them kill sacrifices.*
- 2 *Yet I will distress Ariel, and there shall be heaviness and sorrow: and it shall be unto me as Ariel.*

This is Isaiah style as he jumps ahead a thousand years and prophecies about the destruction of the Nephites who, surrounded by the Lamanites, built mounds with forts on top in their desperate final battles:

- 3 *And I will camp against thee round about, and will lay siege against thee with a mount, and I will raise forts against thee.*



Mounds such as the one shown above are found, not only in Mesoamerica, but in the Ohio Valley. The Nephites, who you will remember had migrated from Jerusalem (Ariel) I submit are those Israelites of which Isaiah prophesied. In the final days of the Nephite nation, their record describes defensive mounds they built in an effort to protect themselves from the attacks of the Lamanites who were set about to annihilate them. They were utterly destroyed about 400 AD and Moroni **put their record in the ground**, a record of the dealings of the Lord with these people for the previous thousand years.

I should note that some believe because of the findings such mounds and other artifacts in Ohio and other Midwestern states that Lehi and his family first came to the eastern part of what we now call the United States. Others show that during great destruction of the Nephites that took place over a two hundred year period, there was a series of retreats over that period these final battles took place in Central America and Southern Mexico where these defensive mounds are also found.. In either case, it is clear to me that the mounds are the ones foreseen by Isaiah.

*4 And thou shalt be brought down, and **shalt speak out of the ground**, and thy speech shall be low out of the dust, and thy voice shall be, as of one that hath a familiar spirit, out of the ground, and thy speech shall whisper out of the dust.*

Then Isaiah begins to speak of the great apostasy which is that the true gospel and Church was lost, taken from the wicked world.

It shall even be as when an hungry man dreameth, and, behold, he eateth; but he awaketh, and his soul is empty: or as when a thirsty man dreameth, and, behold, he drinketh; but he awaketh, and, behold, he is faint, and his soul hath appetite: so shall the multitude of all the nations be, that fight against mount Zion.

9 ¶ Stay yourselves, and wonder; cry ye out, and cry: they are drunken, but not with wine; they stagger; but not with strong drink.

*10 For the **LORD** hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes: **the prophets and your rulers, the seers hath he covered.***

The vision of all refers here to the writings of the Nephite prophets:

*11 And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a **book that is sealed**, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, **I cannot; for it is sealed:***

12 And the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I am not learned.

A transcript of some of the reformed Egyptian characters from the gold plates was shown to a Professor Charles Anthon in New York City, who certified their authenticity. When he asked to see the plates, he was told that part of the record was sealed and could not be shown to him, he tore up the certificate and said: "I cannot read a sealed book." Joseph Smith was the one who was not learned, who translated by revelation, the Book of Mormon.

When the Father and Son appeared to Joseph, he pretty much described the Christian professors of that day in the same language that Isaiah used in this chapter. In the 1820 visitation of God and Christ to the boy, Joseph Smith, Jesus said to Joseph: "...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." (*Pearl of Great Price | JS-History 1:19*)

Isaiah continues predicting exactly what Jesus told Joseph:

13 ¶ Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men:

Isaiah then writes of the restoration of the true gospel and Church organization and of these Christian professors, especially those who are intentionally deceiving the people:

14 Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, even a marvellous work and a wonder: for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid.

15 Woe unto them that seek deep to hide their counsel from the LORD, and their works are in the dark, and they say, Who seeth us? and who knoweth us?

Isaiah then closes this chapter referencing the "book" which is the way that fallen branch of the House of Israel, the branch of Joseph "speaks out of the ground" and would be The Book of Mormon, "Another Testament of Jesus Christ", writings of prophets who dwelt in another nation to whom he ministered who witnessed of his divinity and saving grace, THE EVERLASTING GOSPEL that John promised to be **delivered by an angel in the latter days:**

6 And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people,

7 Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters. (*Revelation 14:6 - 7*)

Isaiah finishes:

18 ¶ And in that day shall the deaf hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity, and out of darkness. (*Old Testament | Isaiah 29:1 - 18*)

Evidences of The Book of Mormon:

Geographical and Historical Evidences

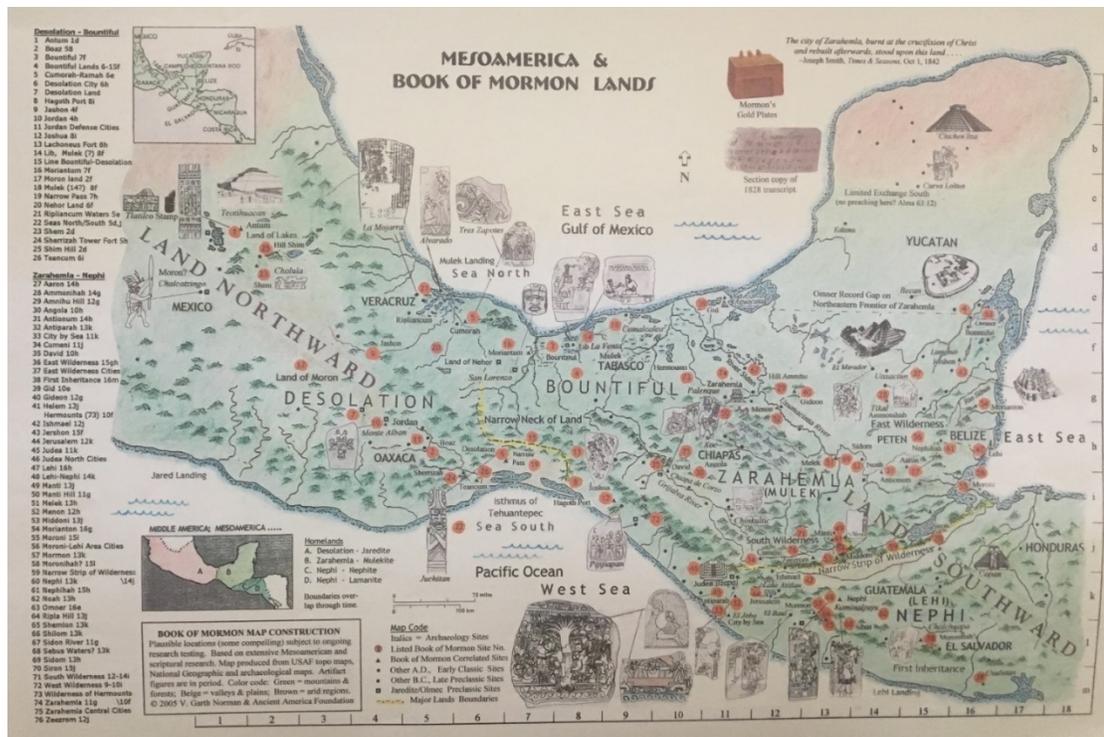
About **ten years after the Book of Mormon was published**, an explorer named John Lloy Stephens, published a book entitled "Incidents of Travel in Central America" in which he lays out the geography that correlates with the descriptions of such in The Book of Mormon. After Joseph had studied the book, he stated in the

publication called *The Times and Seasons* that this was the very land that was inhabited by the Book of Mormon people. He mentioned specifically the narrow neck of land to the south where the Panama Canal is now and in the northern part of the Yucatan. Even until recent times there has been relatively little known about the ruins and geographical layout of that part of the world, but since, as extensive study and research has been done, it has become very evident that the specific geographical layout of this area corresponds exactly with the descriptions of such in *The Book of Mormon*. When Joseph Smith translated the ancient record in 1829, he certainly had no knowledge of this geographical information.

Only in recent years have we begun to discover evidence of huge civilizations previously buried beneath the jungles of Meso-America. Just this last year, Fox news featured a laser camera discovery of a city in northern Guatemala that was over twenty miles wide or the equivalent of our Los Angeles. It is becoming clear, now, that the largest civilizations anciently were in the western hemisphere. And so, I ask: “Why would not God reach out to them as much as he did his children in the old world?”

Garth Norman, an Archeologist and Historian, has spent over 50 years studying the ruins, the time lines and mapping this area and though others have promoted different theories as to where the Book of Mormon people dwelled, Garth’s work, his maps of Mesoamerica **clearly outline numerous evidences of the authenticity of** this ancient record of scripture.

Below is a picture of a map that was developed by Dr. Garth Norman. The descriptions of the geography in *The Book of Mormon* - Alma 22:27-34 for example, corresponds with that of the area now comprising Southern Mexico and Northern Guatemala; the closeness of the eastern and western seas, the narrow necks of land to the north and to the south of that specific location; the rivers, the strip of mountain or “wilderness” that runs between the two seas and other such identifying features.



32 And now, it was only the distance of a day and a half's journey for a Nephite, on the line Bountiful and the land Desolation, from the east to the west sea; and thus the land of Nephi and the land of Zarahemla were nearly surrounded by water, there being a small neck of land between the land northward and the land southward.

(Alma 22:32)



Archeological Evidences

Besides Dr. Norman's publications, other books have been written revealing evidences supporting the validity of the Book of Mormon by archeological findings in the areas he found to be the habitation of its people. **Though none of these findings offer what some would call absolute proof**, I personally am satisfied that the many evidences that do exist definitely substantiate the existence and traditions of the Book of Mormon people.

One significant example is the use of the Cubit which was the unit of measure mentioned in describing the dimensions of Noah's Ark and in the building of the Temple of Solomon in the ancient Holy Land and which is also now found to be that used in the pyramids and temples and other structures that are being discovered in Mesoamerica.



"The Cubit Connection" is the title of Dr. Norman's recent book

15 The length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits. (Genesis 6:15)

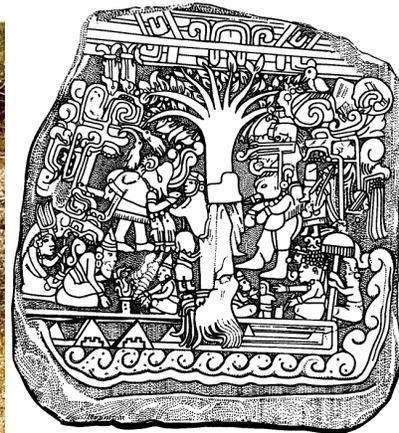
17. And the house, that is, the temple before it, was forty cubits long. (1 Kings 6:17)

Another significant example is a large stone object discovered in Mexico near the Guatemalan border that is an accurate depiction of the **Tree of life**, called the Lehi Stone because it so clearly depicts the vision or dream of Lehi recorded in the 8th chapter of the Book of Mormon, (1 Nephi 8th Chapter) The details in the four foot high

stone depict the tree, Lehi and his family, deity, the filthy river of water and other symbolic representations noted in the dream or vision.



Tree of Life photo



Sketch of the photo

Below is a photo of one of the many pyramids in Mexico, Central and South America, which I believe to be the habitation of the Book of Mormon people. To me it is perfectly logical to believe that those who built these pyramids were descendants of those who built similar structures in Egypt prior to the exodus to the Holy Land which was led by Moses. The Book of Mormon people came from the Holy Land after the exodus. To me, the use of the cubit as the unit of measurement is a clear proof that these people came from the Middle East as The Book of Mormon relates.



KUKULKAN PYRAMID at Chichen Itza on Mexico's Yucatan

Like any other such artifact or archeological structure, these do not nor cannot convince anyone who is otherwise not inclined to believe.

Legends

Quetzalcoatl - “He's that Feathered Serpent of Ancient Mexico”...symbolizing [a bearded, white God] that was suppose to return from the East to reclaim his power, but the Indians [and Montezuma] mistook [the Spanish Conqueror], Cortez for him instead’.” <http://weber.ucsd.edu/~anthclub/quetzalcoatl/quetzal.htm>



Temple of Quetzacoatl

Linguistic Evidences

To me some of the most compelling evidence of the validity of the Book of Mormon relates to the obvious Mid-Eastern linguistics (words and writing styles) embedded throughout this ancient record.

Quoting from an article: Mounting Evidence for the Book of Mormon by Daniel C. Peterson: “*The Book of Mormon claims to have been written in “reformed Egyptian” (Book of Mormon, Mormon 9:32). Most who have studied the subject conclude that this signifies writing the Hebrew language in modified Egyptian characters. In recent years, we have learned that several ancient documents were written in precisely that fashion*

The name of Lehi’s wife, Sariah, previously unknown outside the Book of Mormon, has been found in ancient Jewish documents from Egypt. Likewise, the nonbiblical name Nephi belongs to the very time and place of the first Book of Mormon figure who bears it. The imagery in Nephi’s vision is deeply rooted in ancient Near Eastern symbolism with which Joseph Smith could not have been familiar. Moreover, its predictions are strikingly accurate.

One example of which I am aware is in the Book of Mormon, the honey bee is called **deseret**. The Mormon Pioneers first named the state Deseret and the beehive is still the symbol of the State of Utah. That this was the actual term of the bee in the ancient Arabic languages has only recently been discovered by language experts.

There is no way that Joseph Smith could have known this in the 1830's, as far as I know, it was not known then by anyone. This is a simple example, but it is a strong evidence.

There are other literary styles that only relatively recently, have been found to be common in The Book of Mormon with ancient writings of the Middle East.

The most prominent of these ancient Middle Eastern styles of writing is call Chiasmus. It is defined as the figure of speech in which two or more phrases are presented, then presented again in reverse order to make a larger point. To diagram a simple chiasmus, the phrases are often labelled A B C D C B A.

<https://rsc.byu.edu/archived/book-mormon-authorship-new-light-ancient-origins/2-chiasmus-book-mormon>

It is used often in The Book of Mormon and I ask, "How could have Joseph Smith happened to include this style of writing in 1829 when it was not even known of at that time nor for some time later?"

Culture of Indigenous Native Mayans

Kevin Doman, with his wife, Michele, who are currently presiding over the mission in Chiapas, Mexico, are serving among a large population (approximately one and a half million) of indigenous natives who retreated to the mountains and the Spanish influence when they invaded Mexico. They have their own language and most do not speak nor understand Spanish. These people are pretty much pure Mayans and whom we claim are direct descendants of the Lamanites who inhabited that land in Book of Mormon times. Some of these people who have learned Spanish and who have been able to read The Book of Mormon, report that it reflects their culture, similar names, places and other cultural similarities. To me, this is an important evidence of the validity of this ancient record.

The Book of Mormon was published in 1829

Taking all of these evidences together and considering how much of this was not known in 1829 and in addition seeing the consistency of complicated threads of intricate details that all seamlessly fit throughout the over 500 pages covering over 1000 years, I submit that there is really no possible way that a 21 year old modestly educated Joseph Smith nor anyone else, for that matter, could have concocted The Book of Mormon.

Spiritual Evidence

I bolded and put in blue this heading, because it is the most important, the most sure and convincing evidence of the truth of The Book of Mormon. It is put forth in Moroni's simple promise in the very last chapter:

3 Behold, I would exhort you that when ye shall read these things, if it be wisdom in God that ye should read them, that ye would remember how merciful the Lord hath been unto the children of men, from the creation of Adam even down until the time that ye shall receive these things, and ponder it in your hearts.

4 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, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost.

5 And by the power of the Holy Ghost ye may know the truth of all things.

(Book of Mormon | Moroni 10:3 - 5)

Since early in my life, I have been committed to learning the truth and doing my best to apply it in the way I have lived and taught my family. Though I have fallen way short, I have felt the undeniable power of the Holy Ghost and have learned firsthand it is real. That personal divine revelation has powerfully confirmed to me that

The Book of Mormon is a true record of scripture and that Joseph Smith translated it by the gift and power of God. I have studied it as well as the Bible throughout my life and I have felt many times that quiet but powerful and undeniable conviction that can only come from the Comforter, the Holy Ghost. I know The Book of Mormon is true.

PART 5 - THE NATURE OF GOD

*1 WE believe in God, the Eternal Father, and in His Son, Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost
(Pearl of Great Price | Articles of Faith 1:1)*

There are Christian professors who claim that members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are not Christian because we do not accept in the traditional belief concerning God, the Father and his Son, Jesus Christ and in the Holy Ghost as being “**one in substance**” as taught in the Nicene and other creeds.

It is strange to me that there could be any confusion about our devotion to Jesus Christ, given the official name of our church: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. However, we do not accept the common doctrine that God the Father and his Son, Jesus Christ and the Holy Ghost are all one substance, one God that is manifest in these different roles as some explain it.

To me the scriptures are so very clear on this important subject as the Lord emphasized:

3 And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. (New Testament | John 17:3)

I believe Adam and Eve, our first parents, were created by our Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ together in their image and likeness:

*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 1:26 - 27)



I have seen that Christian professors quote the following , when Jesus' disciples ask him to show them the Father and he answered: *...he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?* (John 14:9) They appear to interpret this passage to support the belief that the Father and the Son are the same substance, but much of the New Testament speaks of the Son praying to the Father and in other ways identifying them as separate individuals. I counted 16 times in just the book of Matthew that Jesus refers to God as "My Father",

The following passage helps us understand the verse above as it makes it clear what Jesus meant when he said *"he that hath seen me hath seen the Father"*:

*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**, when he had by himself purged our sins, **sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high**; (Hebrews 1:1 - 3)*

It also makes it clear that Jesus and God are separate beings and that God has a body, with a right hand.

The testimony of Stephen as he was being stoned also clarifies the nature and being of God:

*55 But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and **Jesus standing on the right hand of God**, 56 And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God. (Acts 7:55 - 56)*



Many believe that God and Christ are the same personage who has manifest himself in different times as the Father, the Son “*of one substance*” as is represented in the Nicene Creed http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/English_versions_of_the_Nicene_Creed_in_current_use .

There are passages that would indicate as much, such as John 10:30: *I and my Father are one*. I believe, however, that the true interpretation of this scripture is made easy by the Lord’s petition where he pleads with the Father that all of his followers will be one as he and the Father are one:

*11 Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, **that they may be one, as we are...** Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; **That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.** (John 17:11, 20- 21)*

Another very powerful scriptural passage on this subject is the response of Jesus when he first met Mary Magdalene near his tomb the morning of the resurrection:

*17 Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; **for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.** (John 20:17)*



I believe it is clear in the Scriptures that God the Father is a perfect and divine immortal and glorified personage in whose image and likeness Jesus and we are. I believe it is very clear that Jesus Christ is the only begotten Son of God, separate and distinct personages with **one** unified purpose.

God is the Father of our spirits:

The scriptures teach that *...we are the offspring of God... (Acts 17:29)* as spirits in a pre-mortal life, where we learned and progressed and even made choices that impacted our lives on this earth. Some had no faith in the plan of the atonement of Christ and chose to follow Satan and rebel. There was a war in heaven and Satan and his followers were overcome and cast out to the earth where they continue to tempt and deceive mankind away from following Christ:

7 And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, 8 And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. 9 And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. (Revelation 12:7 - 9)

I believe the angels who fought with Michael included those of us who have been born into mortality. We obviously had enough faith to be willing to be born and to prove ourselves in a mortal state, face mortal death with the hope of a resurrection. The war in Heaven, I believe was a war of words and testimony concerning the pending atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ:

11 And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death. (Revelation 12: 11)

To me, the scriptures are clear on our relationship with our Heavenly Father:

16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. (Romans 8:16 - 17)

9 Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? (Hebrews 12:9)

These passages help us know who we are and where we came from. They tell us that we were born as a spirit sons and daughters of a Heavenly Father who loves us and who has a plan for us to inherit a place in his kingdom.

Another confirming passage is the Lord's question to Job

- 4 Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding.
5 Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it?
6 Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof;
7 When the morning stars sang together, and **all the sons of God shouted for joy?** (Job 38:4 – 7)*

The Poet Wordsworth wrote: *“We do not suddenly flare into existence, but with trailing clouds of glory, do we come from God, who is our Home”.*

Knowing that we are “*offspring of God*” (Acts 17:29) gives added meaning to the passage:

- 3 And this is **life eternal**, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. (John 17:3).*

I believe that “*life eternal*” means life forever in the presence of our Father in Heaven and that knowing him clarifies our divine purpose, which is if we “*suffer with him*” or “*be in subjection*” to him we can inherit his kingdom as “*heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ... whom he hath appointed heir of all things (Hebrews 1:2)*

- 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 3:21)*

Some say that for us to claim to be in the image of God and that we have faith that by following Christ we can become his heirs, joint heirs with Christ who is heir of all things, and to become like him, belittles or lessens the divinity of an unfathomable God, but I believe that God is not unfathomable. Though he is all-knowing, all-powerful and his influence is everywhere present, he is yet a loving Father and wants us to have all that he has. This will include a resurrected, immortal and celestial, glorified body (see 1 Corinthians 15: 40-42) and eventually a perfected nature:

- 48 Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect. (Matthew 5:48)*

There will be more written on this as it relates to the Temples following.

PART 6 - ATONEMENT OF JESUS CHRIST

- 3 We believe that through the Atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved, by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel. (Pearl of Great Price | Articles of Faith 1:3)*

Another reason the Christian professors are saying the members of the LDS Church are not Christian is because we do not teach the “**grace**” of the Lord according to the scriptures. This is **not** actually the case, because **we know that without the atoning grace of our Savior and Redeemer there is no salvation.** The professors are bothered that we emphasize the need beyond just believing or even strong faith in the Lord, we are required to

repent of our sins, be baptized for the remission of sin, receive the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands and endure to the end.

The following is what we see the scriptures teach about **the Atonement of Jesus and what does it mean to be saved?**

Problem - The Fall of man – God warned Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden that if they partook of the forbidden fruit they would surely die. When Eve then Adam made the choice to partake of the fruit so they could “multiply and replenish the earth” as also commanded they were cast out of the garden and the personal presence of God and thus suffered at that time a spiritual death as explained below. They became subject to growing old and dying a physical death. The introduction of spiritual and physical deaths constituted what is called **the fall or the fall of man.**

1) Physical Death – The separation of the body and the spirit.

2) Spiritual Death – The separation of Adam and Eve and their posterity from the presence of God. Our doctrine teaches, and I believe that no unclean thing can dwell with God; therefore, where this spiritual death was initiated by the transgression of Adam and Eve it will depend upon each individual to determine if this spiritual death will continue after the final judgment, or in other words whether they will receive the full effects of the atonement and be able to dwell back in the presence of our Father in the Kingdom of Heaven.

Solution - The Atonement - Broken down, the word **at-one-ment** simply means overcoming these two deaths or separations to be at one with God. Jesus suffered and died to answer the demands of justice relating to the transgression of Adam and Eve and also the sins of all mankind who will come unto him.



Jesus Christ suffered in the Garden of Gethsemane to the extent that he bled at every pore:

44 And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground. (Luke 22:44)

He then suffered severe pain as he was flogged with a whip that had sharp bone fragments tied to the end of each strand of the whip. He also had a crown of thorns planted on his head. His suffering was excruciating at the hands of his tormentors culminating in being nailed to a cross through his hands and wrists and feet where after several hours of agony he died. In this great sacrifice, he paid for Adam and Eve’s transgression which had brought about physical death and which he subsequently overcame for all, good and bad, in the resurrection. He also answered the demands of justice for the sins of those who would follow him.



After the resurrection, Jesus appeared to his disciples and said:

9 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. (Luke 24:39)



The Lord then led his disciples out as far as Bethany where he ascended to heaven. Two angels appeared to them:

11 Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven. (Acts 1:11)

1) **Resurrection for all – Overcoming physical death**

20 But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. 21 For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. (1 Corinthians 15:20 - 22)

2) **Eternal Life - Life in the Kingdom of God is overcoming spiritual death**

13 For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. (Romans 6:23)

I believe this means that the *wages of sin* is a continuation of **spiritual death** or being separated from our Heavenly Father and his kingdom, which is eternal life.

The scriptures teach that to obtain eternal life, we must:

13 Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction [spiritual death], and many there be which go in thereat: 14 Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto [eternal] life, and few there be that find it. (Matthew 7:13 - 14)

Basic Principles and Ordinances of the Gospel

4 We believe that the first principles and ordinances of the Gospel are: first, Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; second, Repentance; third, Baptism by immersion for the remission of sins; fourth, Laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost. (Pearl of Great Price | Articles of Faith 1:4)

As Peter spoke to a crowd of people, they were “pricked in their hearts” or filled with faith and asked what they needed to do:

*37 Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? 38 Then Peter said unto them, **Repent, and be baptized** every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall **receive the gift of the Holy Ghost**. (Acts 2:37 - 38)*

3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. 4 Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? 5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water [baptized] and of the Spirit [receive the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands; see Acts 8:17-19], he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. (John 3:3-5)

The message of the scriptures, to me, is that to obtain eternal life or to be saved from spiritual death in the eternities, we must acquire enough **faith in Jesus** Christ’s atonement to **repent** of our sins, be **baptized** for the remission of sins and receive the **Holy Ghost** by the laying on of hands. Baptism and the laying on of hands to be acceptable must be performed by those truly authorized who have been appropriately called and ordained with true priesthood authority as we have discussed earlier. The scriptures also make it clear that:

*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**. (Matthew 7:21)*

And 22 “...*he that endureth to the end shall be saved (Matthew 10:22) [from spiritual death]*.”

Salvation to me and according to the doctrine of our church has two meanings: 1) Being saved from physical death in the resurrection **by grace alone** and 2) Salvation from spiritual death **through the grace of Christ** and our following him by living by his teachings, his gospel.

I think it is important to realize, that baptism, when entered into in the Lord’s way, is performed by someone with his true priesthood authority, which we claim was restored to the earth on May 15, 1829 as we outlined above and when one receives the gift of the Holy Ghost also by one holding proper priesthood authority, there is a remission or cleansing of sins. The scriptures promise that when one truly repents and having been “...*born of water and of the Spirit...*” the Lord will remember our sins “no more”.

42 Behold, he who has repented of his sins, the same is forgiven, and I, the Lord, remember them no more. 43 By this ye may know if a man repenteth of his sins—behold, he will confess them and forsake them. (Doctrine and Covenants | Section 58:42 - 43)

18 Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. (Old Testament | Isaiah 1:18)

This promise of our Savior, our Redeemer, is to all people who will come unto him, and is the great message of hope and redemption of his gospel. Regardless of age or of past sins, the Lord suffered and died to answer the “demands of justice” for those who will come unto him. That was the primary purpose of his mortal life.

5 And thus the flesh becoming subject to the Spirit, or the Son to the Father; being one God, suffereth temptation, and yieldeth not to the temptation, but suffereth himself to be mocked, and scourged, and cast out, and disowned by his people.

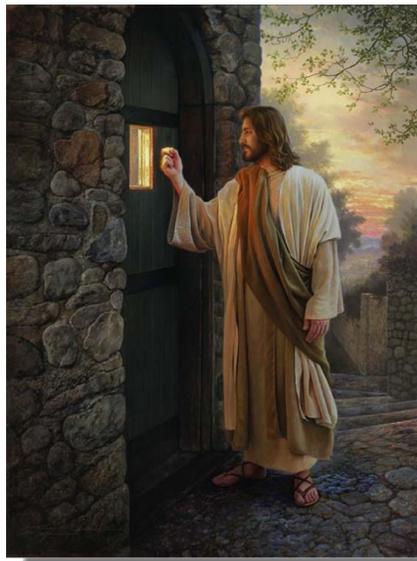
6 And after all this, after working many mighty miracles among the children of men, he shall be led, yea, even as Isaiah said, as a sheep before the shearer is dumb, so he opened not his mouth.

7 Yea, even so he shall be led, crucified, and slain, the flesh becoming subject even unto death, the will of the Son being swallowed up in the will of the Father.

8 And thus God breaketh the bands of death, having gained the victory over death; giving the Son power to make intercession for the children of men—

9 Having ascended into heaven, having the bowels of mercy; being filled with compassion towards the children of men; standing betwixt them and justice; having broken the bands of death, taken upon himself their iniquity and their transgressions, having redeemed them, and satisfied the demands of justice. (Book of Mormon | Mosiah 15:5 - 9)

The Lord said: *28 ¶ Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. (Matthew 11:28 - 30)*



20 Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. (Revelation 3:20)

Saved by Grace Not by Works:

There are many challenged our belief that we must live righteous lives to be saved and they quote:

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. (Ephesians 2:8 - 9)

I understand and accept this teaching, for **without the atonement of Christ, no matter what we did, we could not be saved from spiritual death** (remember that all are resurrected as they are saved from physical death). I do, however, see in the complete scripture clearly taught the things we must do to qualify for the salvation from spiritual death (eternal life with Father). One passage that seems, on the surface to contradict the scripture above is the following:

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? (James 2:17 - 22)

To me, there is no question, that we are required to follow Jesus by living his gospel and keeping his commandments to take full advantage of his grace. I know that he lives and because of him, we shall live again in immortal bodies, never to die again. I know that he loves us and that he suffered and died for our sins if we will follow him.

PART 7 – LIFE AFTER DEATH



As near as I have been able to tell, the common Christian doctrine implies that when we die, we are then consigned to our final destination, **heaven or hell**. This concept, I submit is not supported in the scriptures. Yes, there are verses that imply such, but a careful study will show that the final judgement will occur after the resurrection. Passages we have previously quoted do not support this concept such

To repeat the passages, mention above showing that **paradise is not heaven** is made clear as on the morning of the resurrection when Jesus met Mary Magdalene near his tomb:

*Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for **I am not yet ascended to my Father**: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God. (John 20:17)*

Where was Jesus between his death and resurrection?

*18 For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, **being put to death in the flesh, but quickened [taken] by the Spirit**:*

19 By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; (1 Peter 3:18 - 19)

Resurrection and Final Judgment

We have already covered the resurrection of Christ which opened the door for all to be also raised from the dead and overcome physical death. As near as I can tell, most Christian professors believe in and teach the resurrection as it is very clearly taught in the Bible. What seems to be unclear are their teachings relating to the state of the spirits of the departed before the resurrection and judgment. My question to them is, **“If we go to either heaven or hell at the time we die and that is our final destiny, how do they explain the resurrection and judgment which follows?”**

12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. (Revelation 20:4 - 6; 12 - 13)

I will add a couple of passages here from The Book of Mormon that really helps clarify this doctrine:

11 Now, concerning the state of the soul between death and the resurrection—Behold, it has been made known unto me by an angel, that the spirits of all men, as soon as they are departed from this mortal body, yea, the spirits of all men, whether they be good or evil, are taken home to that God who gave them life.

12 And then shall it come to pass, that the spirits of those who are righteous are received into a state of happiness, which is called paradise, a state of rest, a state of peace, where they shall rest from all their troubles and from all care, and sorrow.

13 And then shall it come to pass, that the spirits of the wicked, yea, who are evil—for behold, they have no part nor portion of the Spirit of the Lord; for behold, they chose evil works rather than good; therefore the spirit of the devil did enter into them, and take possession of their house—and these shall be cast out into outer darkness; there shall be weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth, and this because of their own iniquity, being led captive by the will of the devil.

14 Now this is the state of the souls of the wicked, yea, in darkness, and a state of awful, fearful looking for the fiery indignation of the wrath of God upon them; thus they remain in this state, as well as the righteous in paradise, until the time of their resurrection. (Book of Mormon | Alma 40:11 - 14)

I guess I will add one more Book of Mormon passage that deals with the transition between the spirit world and the resurrection:

10 O how great the goodness of our God, who prepareth a way for our escape from the grasp of this awful monster; yea, that monster, death and hell, which I call the death of the body, and also the death of the spirit.

11 And because of the way of deliverance of our God, the Holy One of Israel, this death, of which I have spoken, which is the temporal, shall deliver up its dead; which death is the grave.

12 And this death of which I have spoken, which is the spiritual death, shall deliver up its dead; which spiritual death is hell; wherefore, death and hell must deliver up their dead, and hell must deliver up its captive spirits, and the grave must deliver up its captive bodies, and the bodies and the spirits of men will be restored one to the other; and it is by the power of the resurrection of the Holy One of Israel.

13 O how great the plan of our God! For on the other hand, the paradise of God must deliver up the spirits of the righteous, and the grave deliver up the body of the righteous; and the spirit and the body is restored to itself again, and all men become incorruptible, and immortal, and they are living souls, having a perfect knowledge like unto us in the flesh, save it be that our knowledge shall be perfect.

14 Wherefore, we shall have a perfect knowledge of all our guilt, and our uncleanness, and our nakedness; and the righteous shall have a perfect knowledge of their enjoyment, and their righteousness, being clothed with purity, yea, even with the robe of righteousness.

*15 And it shall come to pass that when all men shall have passed from this first death unto life, inasmuch as they have become immortal, **they must appear before the judgment-seat of the Holy One of Israel; and then cometh the judgment, and then must they be judged according to the holy judgment of God.***

16 And assuredly, as the Lord liveth, for the Lord God hath spoken it, and it is his eternal word, which cannot pass away, that they who are righteous shall be righteous still, and they who are filthy shall be filthy still; wherefore, they who are filthy are the devil and his angels; and they shall go away into everlasting fire, prepared for them; and their torment is as a lake of fire and brimstone, whose flame ascendeth up forever and ever and has no end.

17 O the greatness and the justice of our God! For he executeth all his words, and they have gone forth out of his mouth, and his law must be fulfilled.

18 But, behold, the righteous, the saints of the Holy One of Israel, they who have believed in the Holy One of Israel, they who have endured the crosses of the world, and despised the shame of it, they shall inherit the kingdom of God, which was prepared for them from the foundation of the world, and their joy shall be full forever. (Book of Mormon | 2 Nephi 9:10 - 18)

Then, here is where the understanding of our eternal futures separate from that of the mainstream Christian professors. Paul, in writing about the resurrection refers to three different degrees of glory:

*40 There are also **celestial bodies**, and **bodies terrestrial**: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another.*

*41 There is **one glory of the sun**, and another **glory of the moon**, and another **glory of the stars**: for one star differeth from another star in glory.*

42 So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption:

43 It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power:

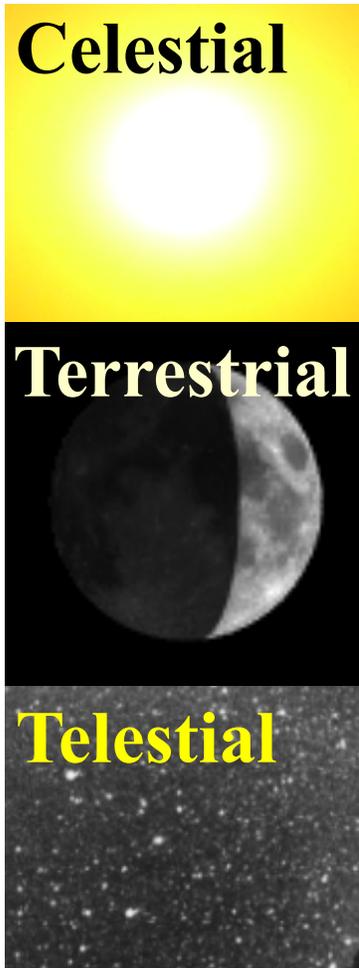
44 It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. (1 Corinthians 15:40 - 44)

Degrees of Glory

“...heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also **glorified together**.”
Romans 8:17

“There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another.”

“There is one glory of the **sun**, and another glory of the **moon**, and another glory of the **stars**: for one star differeth from another star in glory.” 1 Corinthians 15:40-41



To my knowledge, no mainstream Christian professor teaches that the final state of the resurrected souls will be in one of these “degrees of glory”.

Modern revelation names the glory compared to the stars in glory as the **telestial glory** in which the wicked will dwell having been resurrected with telestial bodies. The restored gospel clarifies that the **terrestrial glory**, relatively compared to the moon, is reserved for the good and honorable of the earth who did not accept and follow the fullness of the true gospel of Jesus Christ and the **celestial glory** compared to the sun is the dwelling place of Christ and Heavenly Father. The scriptures refer to this eternal destination as Heaven or The Kingdom of God, which they have promised to those who have enough **faith to repent, be baptized and receive the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands** by someone with the true priesthood and **endure to the end** in righteousness as outlined in the part on the Atonement of Jesus Christ. This is the Kingdom of God and Jesus makes it clear that even not all who use his name will inherit that Kingdom:

4 Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life (eternal life with God and Christ), and few there be that find it.

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. (Matthew 7:14 ; 21)

5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. (John 3:5)

The point of all this is that after the time in the spirit world, where all will suffer for the sins for which they have not truly repented, every son and daughter of our Heavenly Father, except those who have become disciples of Satan, will face an eternity in some degree of glory as **provided through the atonement of Jesus Christ**. Isn't this more in keeping with a plan of salvation of a loving Father? Is it reasonable to believe that every last human would qualify for either heaven or hell? It should be noted, however that only those who make the effort to learn and learn to live by the truth enjoy the full effects of the Atonement of Jesus Christ and will become heirs of God and dwell in his Kingdom in Celestial Glory:

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 [...whom he hath appointed heir of all things... (Hebrews 1:2)]; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. (Romans 8:16 - 17)

In summary:

Hell - A state of darkness and suffering for the wicked in the world of spirits prior to the resurrection and final judgement but also the final destination for Satan and his followers who were cast out of heaven and have fought against the "blood of the Lamb" (see the 12th chapter of Revelation).

Paradise - A state of light, peace and rest for the righteous leading up to the resurrection and final judgement.

Prison - A state of ignorance of the true gospel in the spirit world which can be remedied as the gospel is taught there. This, in reality, includes most who have and do live upon this earth.

Heaven - The kingdom where God and Christ dwell and in which those who seek to learn and live by the truth may dwell after the resurrection and final judgement.

Celestial Kingdom - The eternal destination, Paul compares to the Sun in glory, of those who have sought, accepted and followed the true gospel of Jesus Christ.

Terrestrial Kingdom - The eternal abode, compared to the moon, of those who are good but failed to seek and follow the fullness of the truth.

Telestial Kingdom - A glory compared to the stars, even for the wicked children of our Heavenly Father who have sorely suffered in a hell during their lengthened time in the world of spirits.

PART 8 - TEMPLES – Eternal Families

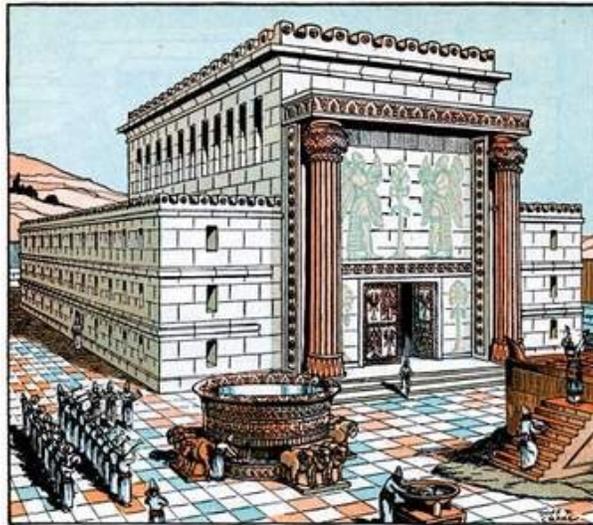


<https://www.lds.org/temples/photo-gallery?lang=eng>

Temples were a part of worship anciently, even when the Israelites were in the wilderness, they constructed a portable edifice, the Arc of the Covenant, in which they could participate in temple worship.



Arc of the Covenant



The Temple of Solomon

Of course, the ancient temple ceremonies featured the sacrifices that were part of the Law of Moses, nevertheless, the building of temples and the reinstatement of temple worship is an important part of the *restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began. (Acts 3:21)* There are at this writing over one hundred and sixty-five temples in operation around the world with many more in the construction or planning stages. <http://www.lds.org/temples/geographical/0,11380,1899-1,00.html>>

We call a temple the House of the Lord and I personally love to attend as I can feel a special spirit of peace there. The dress in temples is all white symbolic to me of purity and cleanliness.

What is the purpose of LDS temples and why can't non-LDS go into operating temples? – This is a common question and the answer is straightforward. Temples are not used for regular Sunday worship services like the other meeting houses of the Church. When a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints participates in the temple ceremony, he or she enters into sacred covenants, or in other words, offers vows to live by specific principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Only those who have demonstrated a willingness and ability to live by these specific principles are invited to enter into such sacred promises. Membership of the Church through baptism is an obvious prerequisite, for example. We believe that it would be detrimental to any individual to enter into temple covenants without being prepared to make such commitments.

Before a temple is dedicated, there is typically an open house for several weeks and the public is invited through. After the dedication, the temples are closed to the public and are reserved for their sacred purposes.

Temple Marriage

A typical marriage covenant is “til death you part” and the scripture implies that there is no marriage after the resurrection:

30 For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven. (Matthew 22:30)

I believe that we will know our loved ones beyond the grave, but there is a marriage relationship that extends into the eternities.



Young Couple Going to the Temple, photo © 1997 JRM

The most sacred and special of the temple covenants we call **eternal marriage** or the **New and Everlasting Covenant of Marriage**. Worthy couples can be married there or if already married can have their marriage bound for eternity. Their children are sealed or bound to them forever. The lofty promises that accompany this most sacred covenant are contingent upon the parties keeping their promises or covenants made with God in the temple. The general priesthood keys needed to perform such binding covenants were given to Peter by the Lord as he said:

19 And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. (Matthew 16:19)

There are more specific priesthood keys relating to eternal families that is generally not understood or are ignored. These special priesthood keys are essential to carry out the work that is mentioned in the very last two verses of the Old Testament:

*5 ¶ Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD:
6 And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse. (Malachi 4:5 - 6)*

The importance of this work is emphasized as it was the very first message delivered by the Angel Moroni to Joseph Smith when he appeared in September of 1823:

*1 BEHOLD, I will reveal unto you the Priesthood, by the hand of Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.
2 And he shall plant in the hearts of the children the promises made to the fathers, and the hearts of the children shall turn to their fathers.
3 If it were not so, the whole earth would be utterly wasted at his coming.
(Doctrine and Covenants | Section 2:1 - 3)*

The turning of the “*heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers*” is clearly so very critical in the eternal plan of our Heavenly Father that without it, the **earth would “be smitten with a curse” or as Moroni said: “If it were not so, the whole earth would be utterly wasted at his coming.”**

So, what are these priesthood keys that were given by the Lord to Peter that would “*bind on earth that which shall be bound in heaven*” and those which were to be delivered by Elijah the Prophet that would “*turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers*”? The prophecy of Elijah’s turning the hearts of fathers to children and children to fathers, is obviously about family, and I submit the keys given to Peter of binding “*on earth shall be bound in heaven*” are not only about the divine sanctioning of gospel ordinances such as baptism and the giving of the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands, but is also the part of or Father’s priesthood authority which can include the specific keys needed for binding families for eternity.

The restoration of these keys held by Peter and by Elijah, according to Malachi and Moroni surely are most essential in the eternal purposes of our Heavenly Father.

We have outlined above, and I declare again that the Melchisidec Priesthood that were given by the Lord to Peter and the other ancient apostles was directly restored to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery by the personal visitation of Peter, James and John in May of 1829 and the specific keys relating to joining of families together for eternity was delivered by Elijah in April of 1836.

It is by virtue of these priesthood keys that duly ordained servants of God can perform, the New and Everlasting Covenant of Marriage in the sacred temples providing that couples and families can be “*bound in heaven*” forever as opposed to the temporal marriage covenant promise “until death they part”.

It really would be difficult, if not impossible for Christian professors to recognize other passages in the bible that relate to the real purpose of this life. It is only because of the restoration of the gospel and modern day revelation, that these passages are fully understood, but consider again the two passages mentioned above that speak of the divine potential of those who will “*suffer with*” in other words follow the Lord:

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. (Romans 8:16 - 17)*

Then what it could mean to be “*joint-heir with Christ*” as Paul touches on the relationship between God, the Father and “*his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things*” (Hebrews 1:2) Consider a couple of other passages that emphasize this divine potential:

*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 3:21)*

Also, this verse, where John speaks of Christ who...

5 “...washed us from our sins in his own blood,

*6 And hath **made us kings and priests unto God and his Father**; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. (Revelation 1:5 - 6)*

Some Christian professors are highly critical of our belief that as children of our Heavenly Father, we can progress to be like him. They do not explain the statement:

48 Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect. (Matthew 5:48)

They do not teach that God is the Father of our Spirits:

*9 Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the **Father of spirits**, and live? (Hebrews 12:9)*

To become “**heirs of all things**” including the potential to be “**kings and priests**” (**queens and priestesses**) to sit with the Father and the Son in their “**thrones**” only makes sense when we understand that we are the “**offspring of God**” (Acts 17:29) as also is mentioned earlier. To inherit all that our Heavenly Father has would mean we could eventually have **all power, all knowledge** and relating to temple marriage, even the **capacity to bear spirit children** as our Heavenly Parents have.

This “mystery of Godliness” (1 Timothy 3:16) is not such a mystery if we can compare it to the way the human race, if fact, all of life, perpetuates, generation after generation. **I believe that family life here is a prototype of eternal family life, generation after generation without end.** Those who do not respond to the invitation to prepare to take part in such a glorious future will be damned according to the scripture. To me this means they will be stopped or held back from such eternal progression. They will abide in a degree of glory mentioned by Paul and as was discussed above, but will be damned or stopped from participating in future generations.

Actually, participation in helping carry on the next generation of Heavenly Father’s family will be quite limited according to the Lord himself:

3 ¶ Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction [damnation], and many there be which go in thereat:

*14 Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto **life**, and few there be that find it. (Matthew 7:13 - 14)*

What Jesus meant by the word **life** was clarified in a revelation given to Joseph Smith in the early 1840’s:

*22 For strait is the gate, and narrow the way that **leadeth unto the exaltation and continuation of the lives**, and few there be that find it, because ye receive me not in the world neither do ye know me. (Doctrine and Covenants | Section 132:22)*

The Lord explained in the previous verses the requirement to enter into that “*strait gate*” and “*narrow way*”:

*19 And again, verily I say unto you, if a man marry a wife by my word, which is my law, and by the new and everlasting covenant, and it is sealed unto them by the Holy Spirit of promise, by him who is anointed, unto whom I have appointed this power and the keys of this priesthood... [their] **glory shall be a fulness and a continuation of the seeds forever and ever.** (Doctrine and Covenants | Section 132:19)*

It is important to note that there are **many devoted individuals who for one reason or another are yet single** and who worry that they will miss out on this eternal progression. I have heard the living apostles and prophets promise those who are thus worried, that if they will personally **stay on the path, that they will sooner or later receive every opportunity, every blessing and every joy that is promised**

I am most grateful to know that I am bound to my eternal companion, forever with our children bound to us as we are sealed or bound to our parents in a patriarchal chain that promises to be an important part of the fullness of joy in the Celestial Kingdom:

*Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is **fulness of joy**; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore. (Psalms 16:11)*

*18 But, behold, the righteous, the saints of the Holy One of Israel, they who have believed in the Holy One of Israel, they who have endured the crosses of the world, and despised the shame of it, they shall inherit the kingdom of God, which was prepared for them from the foundation of the world, and **their joy shall be full forever.** (Book of Mormon | 2 Nephi 9:18)*

It is a serious lifetime effort to be worthy of such a great eternal blessing.

Salvation for the Dead

I have written earlier about the spirit world being divided into Paradise and a place of darkness and misery often referred to as Hell. Spirit Prison is referred to as a state of ignorance of the truth of the gospel. All will remain in this spirit world until the resurrection and judgment following that period of waiting as spirits beings.

Here is that passage again referring to the few days when the Lord's body was in the tomb as he went in the spirit to preach the gospel to those who were in spirit prison:

*18 For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: 19 By which also **he went and preached unto the spirits in prison**; 20 Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. (1 Peter 3:18 - 20)*

Also how the Bible teaches that the gospel is taught to the dead so they can be judged the same as those who receive the gospel in their mortal bodies even though they are spirits.

6 For for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit. (1 Peter 4:6)

Knowing that the gospel is offered to departed spirits answers this great question: "What will happen to those who do not have a chance to hear and accept or reject the gospel during their lives on earth?" Another question is: "Do those who hear and accept the gospel in the spirit world have to be baptized and receive the Gift of the Holy Ghost? A clue to the answer of that question in the Bible is:

*29 Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then **baptized for the dead**? (1 Corinthians 15:29)*

This is the only place in the entire Bible that mentions this sacred act, but with the restoration of temples, the practice of baptism for the dead has been revealed and is practiced.



Names of those who are deceased can be taken to the temple and baptism, the Gift of the Holy Ghost, the temple covenants including eternal marriage can be performed in their behalf. **It is important to understand that all involved realize that the choice to accept the baptism and other ordinances performed for a departed person, remains with that person. If he or she accepts the gospel, which we do not know at this time, they can progress having this essential work completed. If they do not accept the gospel, the work done in their behalf is of no affect.**

As mentioned earlier, the specific priesthood keys for this work was restored in a personal visitation by Elijah the Prophet in fulfilment of the prophecy found in the last two verses of the Old Testament:

*5 ¶ Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD:
6 And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse. (Old Testament | Malachi 4:5 - 6)*

Also, as mentioned earlier, when the angel Moroni appeared to Joseph May 21, 1823 and began his instructions and eventual delivery of the ancient records from which The Book of Mormon was translated, he quoted Malachi with a little different wording:

*1 BEHOLD, I will reveal unto you the Priesthood, by the hand of Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.
2 And he shall plant in the hearts of the children the promises made to the fathers, and the hearts of the children shall turn to their fathers.
3 If it were not so, the whole earth would be utterly wasted at his coming.
(Doctrine and Covenants | Section 2:1 - 3)*

In accordance with the prophecy and expression of such great significance of this work, that is that the Lord would “**smite the earth with a curse**” in the words of Malachi or that “**the whole earth would be utterly wasted**

at his coming” in the words of Moroni, Elijah did return and delivered the keys that were promised. He appeared to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery in the Kirtland, Ohio Temple April 3, 1836. Here is the brief account of the visitation of Elijah the Prophet as promised in Malachi:

13 “...Elijah the prophet, who was taken to heaven without tasting death, stood before us, and said:

14 Behold, the time has fully come, which was spoken of by the mouth of Malachi—testifying that he [Elijah] should be sent, before the great and dreadful day of the Lord come—

15 To turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the children to the fathers, lest the whole earth be smitten with a curse—

16 Therefore, the keys of this dispensation are committed into your hands; and by this ye may know that the great and dreadful day of the Lord is near, even at the doors.” (Doctrine and Covenants | Section 110:13-16)

The turning of the hearts of the “children to the fathers” refers to the family history or genealogical research that is being carried at such an increasing pace now that the internet is available for this great work:

<https://www.familysearch.org/>

The primary purpose in identifying our ancestors is that their names and identifying dates can be submitted for the work in the temple described above. This work will all be completed before the end of the thousand year millennium so that every last soul who lived and died without the chance to accept the true gospel during their mortal lives can hear the gospel to accept or reject and can have the mortal ordinances of baptism and receiving the Holy Ghost performed in their behalf by proxy. It is a work that requires significant effort and resources, but which, if not done, the laws of justice and mercy would not be fairly applied to everyone, and according the scriptures above, the infinite purposes of the Lord would be “**utterly wasted at his coming**”.

So, as mentioned earlier, families are encouraged to search out their ancestors (hearts of the children turn to their fathers) and submit their names to the temple. To support this effort, the Church has the largest genealogical library in the world and is busy microfilming records for this research

It is really interesting to me, that this practice is one that the Christian professors seem to be most anxious to criticize; yet, none to my knowledge, can explain the question by Paul about being “*baptized for the dead*”. Some of them try to get their congregations to believe that we are somehow forcing it upon the departed by ensuring that those who have died without the gospel are baptized and that we are somehow interfering with their free choice. This perception is, of course, not accurate and I submit that this work is of God and is a huge part of his Plan of Salvation that is essential so that his true gospel and its saving ordinances such as baptism are available to all of his children before his work is completed.

It is a work of love and service and carries a beautiful spirit with it. Like the Savior provided something for us through a vicarious act of grace, he has provided a way that we can participate in a small way in helping provide for the salvation from spiritual death of others who did not have the proper chance in their lives if they choose to accept.

Gospel Taught in The Spirit World

That paradise is not heaven is made clear as on the morning of the resurrection when Jesus met Mary Magdalene near his tomb:

*Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for **I am not yet ascended to my Father**: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God. (John 20:17)*

Where was Jesus between his death and resurrection?

*18 For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, **being put to death in the flesh, but quickened [taken] by the Spirit**:*

19 By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; (1 Peter 3:18 - 19)

Modern revelation has clarified that **prison is a state of ignorance** of the true gospel. Honest reasoning will show that by far the majority of those who have lived on this earth have not nor did not have a chance to learn the true gospel of Jesus Christ. Today, for example, there are less than two billion Christians out of more than seven billion people living now. Most who lived since the earthly ministry of Jesus, have lived their mortal lives without the chance to hear the gospel. **For the final judgment to be just, every soul must have had the chance to understand and accepted or reject the gospel.**

6 For for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit. (1 Peter 4:6)

Peter even mentions those who lived in Noah's time whom Jesus taught while he was "quickened by the spirit" after he had been "put to death".

*20 Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the **days of Noah**, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. (1 Peter 3:20)*

I know of no mainstream Christian professor that teaches anything about these passages and how the opportunity to accept or reject the true gospel of Christ will be available to every last son or daughter of our Heavenly Father who have ever or whoever will be born into mortality. We will discuss this in more detail in the section following entitled **Salvation for the Dead**. **The point here is that that the world of spirits where all dwell after death until the resurrection and final judgement, is not heaven or at least not the heaven where God dwells.**

PART 9 - CHURCH HEADQUARTERS - “Mountain of the Lord’s House”

2 And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.

3 And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. (Isaiah 2:1 - 3)

The headquarters of the Church is in Salt Lake City, Utah, USA. The office complex covers a ten acre square with a high rise office building and other administrative office buildings. It also features Brigham Young’s pioneer home.



Temple Square is a popular tourist attraction featuring the Salt Lake City Temple, the Tabernacle, home of the famous Mormon Tabernacle Choir, and two visitors centers.



Across the street north of Temple Square, is the huge 21,000 seat Conference Center. Semiannual conferences are broadcast worldwide featuring talks by the Apostles and Prophets and other general authorities of the

Church. To me, this modern auditorium/broadcast studio designed to help proclaim the gospel to the world with translations to into over one hundred languages, is another part of the fulfillment of the Lord's promise in Matthew 24:14 quoted above.



Why would I mention this relating to the scriptures? Well, the headquarters of the Church, as shown here happens to be in the mountains.

PART 10 - KEEPING THE LORDS COMMANDMENTS

Certainly, the Latter-day Saints, are not perfect by any means, but we believe the Grace of Christ so that if we will be “reborn” and strive to follow the Lord’s commandments, we have hope of eternal life in a state of Celestial Glory with Christ and our Heavenly Father.

The Ten Commandments:

3 Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

4 Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth:

5 Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me;

6 And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

7 Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

8 Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.

9 Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work:

10 But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates:

11 For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

12 ¶ Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.

13 Thou shalt not kill.

14 Thou shalt not commit adultery.

15 Thou shalt not steal.

16 Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

17 Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.

(Exodus 20:3 - 17)

The First Great Commandment:

25 ¶ And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?

26 He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou?

27 And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself.

28 And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live.

29 But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour?

30 And Jesus answering said, A certain *man* went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded *him*, and departed, leaving *him* half dead.

31 And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.

32 And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked *on him*, and passed by on the other side.
33 But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion *on him*,
34 And went to *him*, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him.
35 And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave *them* to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee.
36 Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves?
37 And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.
(Luke 10:25 - 37)

This scriptures make it clear that following the teachings of Jesus Christ in the way we treat each other, is a huge key in showing this great commandment. The Lord's Sermon on the Mount in the 5th, 6th and 7th chapters of Matthew teaches principles that are essential in maintaining an atmosphere of love. In that sermon, the Lord taught:

Sharing the Gospel - Missionary Work

As the restored latter-day version of The Church of Jesus Christ is led by living apostles and prophets, it is under the same directive from the Lord as was the ancient apostles and Church:

15 *And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.*
16 *He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.*
(Mark 16:15 - 16)

In the 24th Chapter of Matthew, where Jesus is speaking about the calamities which shall occur prior to his second coming, he also emphasized:

14 *And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.* (Matthew 24:14)

In response to this divine instruction, the living apostles and prophets travel the earth teaching the gospel and organizing the saints (members) to carry on this work as was and is a major purpose of his organization.



Around thirty thousand young men and women each year are accepting mission calls from the twelve apostles to serve two year missions (eighteen months for the young women) somewhere in the world. To my

knowledge, the Jehovah Witness faith is the only other denomination that has responded so aggressively to the Lord's command in taking the gospel to the world.

There are also around seven thousand senior couples who are serving full time missions around the world. My wife and I have served two missions, one in the UK and the other in Nauvoo and Chicago, Illinois. My oldest son is serving now with his wife as the mission president supervising one hundred sixty missionaries in the southern Mexico state of Chiapas.

The young missionaries are inexperienced, but they go forth with faith and power and are very effective at sharing our beliefs with those who are openly searching for the truth. The missionaries are trained in giving six or so discussions explaining the basics of our faith. Those who are called to foreign speaking missions spend two months in training center studying the lessons and the language. Most become fluent in the foreign languages before their two year missions are completed.

Every Member a Missionary

The prophets who lead The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints ever since the Church was officially organized in 1830 have made it clear that each member has the responsibility to help share the gospel. We are taught in The Book of Mormon that if we want to be baptized and become a member of the Lord's Church, we must be willing to look after each other:

9 Yea, and are willing to mourn with those that mourn; yea, and comfort those that stand in need of comfort, and to stand as witnesses of God at all times and in all things, and in all places that ye may be in, even until death, that ye may be redeemed of God, and be numbered with those of the first resurrection, that ye may have eternal life— (Book of Mormon | Mosiah 18:9)

We are taught:

6 And now, behold, I say unto you, that the thing which will be of the most worth unto you will be to declare repentance unto this people, that you may bring souls unto me, that you may rest with them in the kingdom of my Father. Amen (Doctrine and Covenants | Section 15:6)

This massive effort that is now under way, to take the gospel "to all the world" is a key factor in the fulfilment of Daniel's prophecy as he interprets the dream of King Nebuchadnezzar as he envisioned the day that his great kingdom would ultimately be broken up and finally be divided into ten kingdoms or countries which has now occurred.



Daniel speaks of a stone cut out of the mountain without hands referring to the establishment of the Kingdom of God which would then be set up and would survive the coming of Christ when the kingdoms of the earth will give way to the Kingdom of God and will fill the earth and stand forever:

35 "...and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, **and filled the whole earth.**

44 And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, *but* it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever. (Old Testament | Daniel 2:34 - 44)

Forgiveness:

It is even a part of the Lord's Prayer: **12 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.** **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.** The Lord then expands upon the importance for us to "forgive our debtors": **14 For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you:** **15 But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.** (Matthew 6:12 - 15)

Judge not, that ye be not judged. **2 For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.** **3 And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?** **4 Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye?** (Matthew 7:1 - 4)

Turn the other cheek: ...whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. **40 And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also.** **41 And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.** (Matthew 5:39 - 41) ... *bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;* (Matthew 5:44)

Serving and Helping others:

The Lord also made it clear that his "sheep" would reach out to help others in need:

31 ¶ When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: **32 And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats:** **33 And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.** **34 Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:** **35 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in:** **36 Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.** **37 Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink?** **38 When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee?** **39 Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?** **40 And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you,**

Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me (Matthew 25:31 - 46) C

Humanitarian Aid

Humanitarian aid is a huge part of our faith. We believe first in looking out for our families, other members of our church and then the needy in the world. The members of our church contribute generously so that tons of food, clothing, medicine, and millions of dollars in cash have been provided to those in the world in dire need. It has been reported that the LDS response to major disasters is usually the first both in shipments of needed supplies and in volunteer labor.



The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints conducts humanitarian activities worldwide. From 1985 to 2008 Humanitarian Services provided more than \$1.11 billion in total assistance to needy individuals in 167 countries. Hundreds of service missionaries are serving around the world to manage, for example, the drilling of wells in third world countries and the training of doctors in neonatal care resulting in the saving of many lives of infants who would have otherwise not survived. Doctor missionaries are also teaching the latest practices for removing cataracts, thus preventing blindness for many. Missionaries are helping those in poverty ridden nations to learn how to improve their agriculture. Wheel chairs are provided by the thousand to those in poverty ridden countries who would otherwise remain immobile through their lives. You may see the list of current Humanitarian Projects being carried out in the world on

<http://www.providentliving.org/project/0,13501,4607-1-2008,00.html> .

Welfare Program - We also are organized to look after each other in ways described by the Lord in the passage above. The first Sunday of the month, members fast two meals and donate the financial equivalent or more, much more in many cases, to a welfare fund for the poor in the Church. Members volunteer to work in Church owned farms, granaries, canneries, factories and storehouses that are scattered around the world to which members of the church can turn in times of need.



I do not point these matters out to boast, but to present this aspect of our worship as another evidence of the true church restored to the earth in these latter days.

Chastity – fidelity in marriage.

27 ¶ Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: 28 But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. (Matthew 5:27 - 28)

Our church teaches the law of chastity, which is to have no sexual intimacy before marriage and pure fidelity in marriage. The Church teaches abstinence from pornography and any other activity that may be deemed to be of a prurient interest and which may be harmful to the family relationships. We teach that *...no unclean thing can dwell with God; (Book of Mormon | 1 Nephi 10:21)*

A Proclamation to the World - By The First Presidency and Council of the Twelve Apostles of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

We, the First Presidency and the Council of the Twelve Apostles of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, solemnly proclaim that marriage between a man and a woman is ordained of God and that the family is central to the Creator's plan for the eternal destiny of His children.

All human beings—male and female—are created in the image of God. Each is a beloved spirit son or daughter of heavenly parents, and, as such, each has a divine nature and destiny. Gender is an essential characteristic of individual premortal, mortal, and eternal identity and purpose.

In the premortal realm, spirit sons and daughters knew and worshipped God as their Eternal Father and accepted His plan by which His children could obtain a physical body and gain earthly experience to progress toward perfection and ultimately realize their divine destiny as heirs of eternal life. The divine plan of happiness enables family relationships to be perpetuated beyond the grave. Sacred ordinances and covenants available in holy temples make it possible for individuals to return to the presence of God and for families to be united eternally.

The first commandment that God gave to Adam and Eve pertained to their potential for parenthood as husband and wife. We declare that God's commandment for His children to multiply and replenish the earth remains in force. We further declare that God has commanded that the sacred powers of procreation are to be employed only between man and woman, lawfully wedded as husband and wife.

We declare the means by which mortal life is created to be divinely appointed. We affirm the sanctity of life and of its importance in God's eternal plan.

Husband and wife have a solemn responsibility to love and care for each other and for their children. "Children are an heritage of the Lord" ([Psalm 127:3](#)). Parents have a sacred duty to rear their children in love and righteousness, to provide for their physical and spiritual needs, and to teach them to love and serve one another, observe the commandments of God, and be law-abiding citizens wherever they live. Husbands and wives—mothers and fathers—will be held accountable before God for the discharge of these obligations.

The family is ordained of God. Marriage between man and woman is essential to His eternal plan. Children are entitled to birth within the bonds of matrimony, and to be reared by a father and a mother who honor marital vows with complete fidelity. Happiness in family life is most likely to be achieved when founded upon the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ. Successful marriages and families are established and maintained on principles of faith, prayer, repentance, forgiveness, respect, love, compassion, work, and wholesome

recreational activities. By divine design, fathers are to preside over their families in love and righteousness and are responsible to provide the necessities of life and protection for their families. Mothers are primarily responsible for the nurture of their children. In these sacred responsibilities, fathers and mothers are obligated to help one another as equal partners. Disability, death, or other circumstances may necessitate individual adaptation. Extended families should lend support when needed.

We warn that individuals who violate covenants of chastity, who abuse spouse or offspring, or who fail to fulfill family responsibilities will one day stand accountable before God. Further, we warn that the disintegration of the family will bring upon individuals, communities, and nations the calamities foretold by ancient and modern prophets.

We call upon responsible citizens and officers of government everywhere to promote those measures designed to maintain and strengthen the family as the fundamental unit of society.

This proclamation was read by President Gordon B. Hinckley as part of his message at the General Relief Society Meeting held September 23, 1995, in Salt Lake City, Utah.

*© 1995, 2008 by Intellectual Reserve, Inc. All rights reserved. Printed in the United States of America.
English approval: 5/08. 35602*

The Law of Tithing –



I believe in the law of tithing. I consider it a choice privilege to pay tithing (1/10th of ones earnings) for the support of the Lord's work. I believe I have been greatly blessed when I pay my tithing. Active members of the LDS Church are by and large quite faithful in the payment of tithes and that is the reason the Church is able to keep up with the growth in membership by completing between one and two chapels each day. This is in addition to the building of the one hundred sixty plus temples plus the seventeen plus which are now under construction in different places around the world at this time.

I have found in my own experience and those of others that the Lord's beautiful promise concerning the payment of tithes is a promise upon which the Lord will not default:

10 Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it. (Malachi 3:10)

The Word of Wisdom – A Guide to Health

- 1 *A WORD OF WISDOM, for the benefit of the council of high priests, assembled in Kirtland, and the church, and also the saints in Zion—*
- 2 *To be sent greeting; not by commandment or constraint, but by revelation and the word of wisdom, showing forth the order and will of God in the temporal salvation of all saints in the last days—*
- 3 *Given for a principle with promise, adapted to the capacity of the weak and the weakest of all saints, who are or can be called saints.*
- 4 *Behold, verily, thus saith the Lord unto you: In consequence of evils and designs which do and will exist in the hearts of conspiring men in the last days, I have warned you, and forewarn you, by giving unto you this word of wisdom by revelation—*
- 5 *That inasmuch as any man drinketh wine or strong drink among you, behold it is not good, neither meet in the sight of your Father, only in assembling yourselves together to offer up your sacraments before him.*
- 6 *And, behold, this should be wine, yea, pure wine of the grape of the vine, of your own make.*
- 7 *And, again, strong drinks are not for the belly, but for the washing of your bodies.*
- 8 *And again, tobacco is not for the body, neither for the belly, and is not good for man, but is an herb for bruises and all sick cattle, to be used with judgment and skill.*
- 9 *And again, hot drinks are not for the body or belly.*
- 10 *And again, verily I say unto you, all wholesome herbs God hath ordained for the constitution, nature, and use of man—*
- 11 *Every herb in the season thereof, and every fruit in the season thereof; all these to be used with prudence and thanksgiving.*
- 12 *Yea, flesh also of beasts and of the fowls of the air, I, the Lord, have ordained for the use of man with thanksgiving; nevertheless they are to be used sparingly;*
- 13 *And it is pleasing unto me that they should not be used, only in times of winter, or of cold, or famine.*
- 14 *All grain is ordained for the use of man and of beasts, to be the staff of life, not only for man but for the beasts of the field, and the fowls of heaven, and all wild animals that run or creep on the earth;*
- 15 *And these hath God made for the use of man only in times of famine and excess of hunger.*
- 16 *All grain is good for the food of man; as also the fruit of the vine; that which yieldeth fruit, whether in the ground or above the ground—*
- 17 *Nevertheless, wheat for man, and corn for the ox, and oats for the horse, and rye for the fowls and for swine, and for all beasts of the field, and barley for all useful animals, and for mild drinks, as also other grain.*
- 18 *And all saints who remember to keep and do these sayings, walking in obedience to the commandments, shall receive health in their navel and marrow to their bones;*
- 19 *And shall find wisdom and great treasures of knowledge, even hidden treasures;*
- 20 *And shall run and not be weary, and shall walk and not faint.*
- 21 *And I, the Lord, give unto them a promise, that the destroying angel shall pass by them, as the children of Israel, and not slay them. Amen. (Doctrine and Covenants | Section 89:1 - 21)*

The Word of Wisdom could be and is debated as to the relative advantages to our health of its different aspects in light of all that is known in our day, but to me, it is a spiritual matter with great blessings.

Surely, those who abide by it generally will and do have a good chance to enjoy better, but it reminds me of the story Naaman (2nd Kings 5:5) who was instructed to go to the river and bath himself seven times. His response was to wonder how that would help, but when he went and performed this little test of faith, he was healed. We may not understand all of that is behind all that is in The Word of Wisdom, but if we will exercise faith and follow its precepts, we will and are blessed.

Follow the Prophets

*9 We believe all that God has revealed, all that He does now reveal, and we believe that He will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God.
(Pearl of Great Price | Articles of Faith 1:9)*

We know that the heavens are not closed and that the Lord continues to reveal his will through living apostles and prophets in these latter days.

40 ¶ He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me.

41 He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward. (New Testament | Matthew 10:40 - 41)

This passage, I believe differentiates between following prophets and religious professors (righteous men). Celestial Glory is a prophet's reward and terrestrial glory is a righteous man's reward. I am so grateful to know that we have prophets to guide the Lord's Church under his direction and who can teach us how to deal with life in these turbulent times. Here's where we can listen to the prophet:

<https://www.lds.org/general-conference?lang=eng/>

PART 11 - CONCLUSION AND INVITATION - How can one know the truth?

My faith is the guiding light, the anchor of my life.

I know that Jesus Christ is our Savior and Redeemer. I know that God is our Father and that he loves us and sent us here to see who would prepare to live with him eternally and even more, to participate in future generations. I can even say, by this personal spiritual inspiration, that I know that Joseph Smith was a true prophet and was instrumental in helping restore Christ's original true church to the earth as was promised." I know that **The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is The Church of Jesus Christ of New Testament Saints.**

Each person who sincerely and prayerfully seeks the truth can receive their own personal revelation:

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. (James 1:5 - 6)

The Lord, himself, gave the formula to finding the truth:

7 Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: (Matthew 7:7)

Ask means to **pray**, seek means to **study** and knock means to search and **try it** and the promise is that you will be given the direction you seek.

Here is a promise that Jesus made to his disciples:

15 ¶ If ye love me, keep my commandments.

16 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;

17 Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

26 But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

27 Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. (John 14:15 – 17; 26 - 27)

Paul explains further:

9 But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

10 But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.

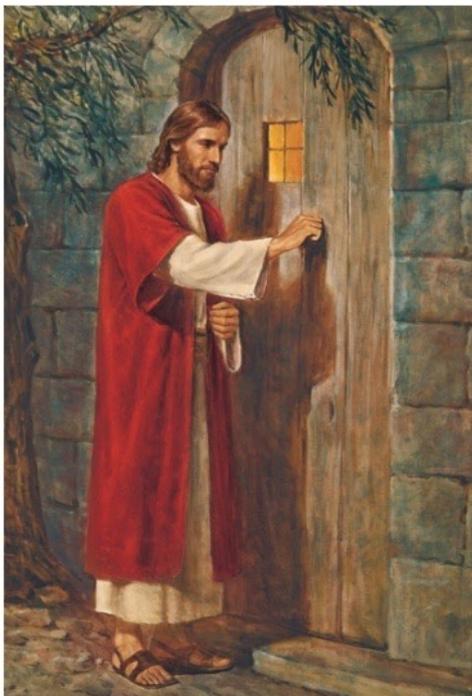
14 But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. (1 Corinthians 2: 9 – 10; 14)

I have studied the scriptures including the Book of Mormon and the Bible and I can see and am convinced that the Jesus Christ taught the same gospel in both hemispheres. I have applied the promise in the last chapter of the Book of Mormon and have come to know it is true:

4 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, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost. 5 And by the power of the Holy Ghost ye may know the truth of all things. (Book of Mormon | Moroni 10:4 - 5)

I have seen the teachings of other faiths and have observed the actions of those of other beliefs, and I have seen no other denomination that even claims to have true and living apostles and prophets nor the orders of Melchisidec nor Aaronic priesthood.

I greatly respect people of all faiths who are devoted to their beliefs and I am certainly aware that what I have written here will not be accepted by everyone. I would like, however, to take this opportunity to invite anyone who is searching for the truth to accept the Lord's invitation.



Jesus Knocking at the Door, by Del Parson, © 1963 RLJ

20 Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and [open](#) the door, I will [come](#) in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

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 3:21)

I urge you to open the door, to investigate, to pray and to try to find the truth. Let me know what you think and ask questions.

Thank you and God Bless!