

Mormonism

Does It Pass God's 3-Question Test for Truth?

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Attention: The material in this book attempts to accurately describe official Mormon doctrine in certain important areas. Therefore, quotes are included from several authorized sources of Mormon doctrine. However, this book does not claim to be authorized by or endorsed by the Mormon Church.

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Quotations from the Bible are from the King James Version.

Why is this book needed?

Mormonism is a frequently used name describing the doctrines of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Mormonism claims to accurately represent true Christianity as revealed by God. If Mormonism's doctrines are truly from God, then we should follow Mormon teachings and teach them to others. If Mormon doctrines are not from God, we should warn others about their error. How can we accurately determine if Mormonism is God's true religion as it claims?

In the Bible, God provided a simple, three-part test that can be applied to any person or religion. God's test determines if that person or religion really speaks for Him and whether they accurately represent God's truth. The test is easy to apply and produces consistent answers. This book briefly documents the results of the test when it is applied to the doctrines of Mormonism.

Is it intolerant to question the teachings of others?

It is not intolerant. I fully support the right of people to believe anything they choose to believe. However, I have a responsibility to tell people what I learned when I applied God's three-part test to Mormonism. It would be wrong not to share with others what I learned. After a person considers the information in this book, then he or she can decide what they should believe. That is between them and God. All I ask is that they carefully consider the information so that they can make the best decision of what they should believe.

Seek truth, no matter what it costs!

Who would knowingly want to believe a lie? Yet we often do not carefully evaluate our beliefs about truth. Maybe we fear the change that may be necessary if we find that truth is not what we believe. Change is uncomfortable. It may cost us our family, friends, prestige, job, peace or other things we cherish. However, if we love these more than Jesus and His truth, we have become fools. Seek to know truth, no matter what it cost! May God bless you in your search to know Him and His truth.

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Introduction

Mormonism is a name often used to describe the teachings of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (also called “LDS Church” or “Mormon Church”). Mormonism claims that all other religions are false and that man cannot come to true salvation outside of the Mormon Church. If Mormonism is true, then it must be the **only** true religion.

The claim that Mormonism is the only true religion began with Joseph Smith, Junior, the founder of the Mormon Church. He said that all the creeds of the Christian denominations are an abomination to God. This claim was part of the “first vision” of Smith, which is the foundation upon which the Mormon Church is built. Mormon “scripture” contains the following description of that event.

My object in going to inquire of the Lord was to know which of all the sects was right.... I was answered that I must join none of them, for they were all wrong; and the Personage who addressed me said that all their creeds were an abomination in his sight; that those professors were all corrupt....
(*Pearl of Great Price*, 1981, Joseph Smith-History 1:18-19)

Since all the creeds of other religions are supposed to be an abomination, Smith claimed that God restored the true gospel through him. Mormon missionaries use this vision and the claim by Smith of restoration to encourage people to leave their churches and join the Mormon Church. If their claims are true, everyone should become a Mormon.

Joseph Fielding Smith, who later became the Prophet of the Mormon Church, said that there is, “... no salvation without accepting Joseph Smith.” (*Doctrines of Salvation*, by Joseph Fielding Smith, 1954, vol. 1, page 189) He claimed that a person cannot be saved if he does not accept Joseph Smith as a true prophet of God and a restorer of the gospel. Mormon apostle Bruce R. McConkie agreed with this doctrine by declaring that there is no salvation outside the Mormon Church in the following quote.

If it had not been for Joseph Smith and the restoration, there would be no salvation. There is no salvation outside The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. (*Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd Edition, Bruce R. McConkie, 1966, page 670)

If Mormonism is true, we should accept its teachings. If Mormonism is a false religion, we must warn others so they will not be deceived by it. How can we accurately tell if Mormonism is true or false?

The following information explains how Mormonism teaches people to determine if it is true. Following that, the three-part test that God provided for determining if Mormonism is true is applied. The clarity of the answer may surprise you.

Mormon Test For Determining Truth

Mormonism teaches that the Bible, *Book of Mormon*, *Doctrine and Covenants*, and *Pearl of Great Price* are “inspired scriptures” (what they call “Standard Works”). The last three documents are accepted without qualification. However, the accuracy of the Bible translation is questioned.

Mormon “scripture” books (other than the Bible) list two fundamental ways for determining if a person or religion speaks for God. The first method prays for an answer. It is often presented as a valid test of Mormonism. The second method requires a handshake with the person who claims to speak for God. This method for determining truth is seldom mentioned.

Praying to know truth

The primary method taught by Mormonism for determining the truthfulness of someone who claims to speak for God is quoted often. For many Mormons, it is the most important evidence supporting their belief in Mormonism. The method instructs a person to pray and ask God if Mormonism is true. The following quote from the *Book of Mormon* outlines this method.

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. And by the power of the Holy Ghost ye may know the truth of all things. (*Book of Mormon*, 1981, Moroni 10:4-5)

Many Mormons have prayed according to this method and received an answer that they believe proves that Mormonism is true. When a Mormon receives what he believes is a positive response to this prayer, he is said to have a “testimony” of the truth of Mormonism. From time to time, he may express this testimony with words similar to, “I bear you my testimony that I know that Joseph Smith was a true prophet of God and that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the only true church on the earth today.”

On the surface, this method may sound like a valid way to determine truth. However, there are problems with this method. The most serious problem is that this test depends totally upon the *subjective* interpretation of the person who seeks the answer. How does a person know that the feeling he received was from God or just indigestion? This test has no provision for objectively *measuring* the answer received against a known standard of truth.

The contradictory answers received when following this method reveal the serious nature of this problem. When following this method, many people are convinced that God says that Mormonism is true. Many others are equally convinced that God says that Mormonism is false. Both answers cannot be true! This method for determining truth does not provide consistent answers. It is an unreliable method for determining truth.

Mormons sometimes attempt to discredit those who received the “wrong” answer by saying that they were not sincere. This approach assumes that Mormonism is true and attempts to explain why wrong answers are received. That assumption can be dangerous! How can someone judge another person’s sincerity? (This sounds similar to the story of “The Emperor’s New Clothes.” In that story, the emperor was tricked into wearing no clothes. However, people were afraid to say that they could not see the “clothes” because they were told that only people who were pure could see the clothes.)

The contradictory answers that are received when following this method for determining truth are cause for serious concern. This method for testing the truthfulness of Mormonism has some problems and is not reliable for something as important as your eternal life.

How can there be two opposite answers to the same prayer? Praying according to this Mormon method is asking God for a sign to prove that Mormonism is true. God warned us against seeking such signs since there will be many false signs in the last days (see the following Bible quotes). If you ignore the Bible warnings

and use this method to ask for a sign, you may invite false signs meant to deceive those seeking to know the will of God.

Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee. But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. (Matthew 12:38-40)

For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if *it were* possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before. (Matthew 24:24-25)

For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. (1 Corinthians 1:21-24)

Shaking hands to know truth

A second method for determining truth is listed in Mormonism's Standard Works. This method uses a handshake to determine if the person or religion is from God as described in the following quote.

When a messenger comes saying he has a message from God, offer him your hand and request him to shake hands with you. If he be an angel he will do so, and you will feel his hand. If he be the spirit of a just man made perfect he will come in his glory; for that is the only way he can appear — Ask him to shake hands with you, but he will not move, because it is contrary to the order of heaven for a just man to deceive; but he will still deliver his message. **If it be the devil as an angel of light, when you ask him to shake hands he will offer you his hand, and you will not feel anything; you may therefore detect him. These are three grand keys whereby you may know whether any administration is from God.** (*Doctrine and Covenants*, 1981, 129:4-9, emphasis added)

There are some serious problems with this method for determining if a person or religion truly speaks for God. First, suppose a lunatic says he is an angel with a message from God. Applying this test would lead to a false conclusion that he is what he claims. You would then be obligated to obey what the lunatic says.

Another problem in this method is its assumption that the devil is ignorant. If the devil can hear or read, then he is probably aware of this method for determining truth. He can refuse to shake hands when he wants to speak a lie to someone. Applying using method from *Doctrines and Covenants* would obtain a false conclusion that the devil is the "spirit of a just man made perfect" and that his message is truly from God.

The problem with this method makes it totally unacceptable for determining if a person or religion is speaking for God. That is probably why Mormons do not often refer to this method.

If these were the only two methods for determining truth, it would be difficult to accurately know if Mormonism is true. We could never be confident of any answer we received. Fortunately, there are three more ways God gave us for determining the truthfulness of Mormonism.

God's Method For Determining Truth

The Bible includes three major ways to determine if a person or religion speaks for God. If the person or religion fails any one of God's three questions, he and his message are disqualified. However, is it valid to test Mormonism against the standards God gave us in the Bible?

The Bible is one of Mormonism's *Standard Works* (authoritative writings). (Some Mormons have reservations about the quality of the Bible's translation.) Additionally, Mormon leaders have claimed that the teachings of Mormonism agree with the Bible. Therefore, it is correct to apply biblical tests to Mormonism. Brigham Young, the second Mormon Prophet, confirmed this in the following quote.

Take up the Bible, compare the religion of the Latter-day Saints with it, and see if it will stand the test.... With us the Bible is the first book, the *Book of Mormon* comes next.... There is no clash in the principles revealed in the Bible, the *Book of Mormon*, and the *Doctrine and Covenants*.... (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, selected and arranged by John A. Widtsoe, 1978, page 126)

Mormon Apostle LeGrand Richards stated, "We appeal to the Bible to prove that the truths received through the restoration of the gospel are in accord with its teachings." (*A Marvelous Work And A Wonder*, 1976, page 1) Apostle Bruce R. McConkie said the following.

... the Book of Mormon — a volume which contains the fulness of the gospel, the same gospel which is in the Bible.... *Mormonism is Christianity; Christianity is Mormonism; they are one and the same, and they are not to be distinguished from each other in the minutest detail.* (*Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd edition, Bruce R. McConkie, 1966, pages 512-513, emphasis in original)

Mormonism claims to be a later revelation of truth from the same God who inspired the Bible. Since God and truth do not change, all revelation of truth must be evaluated by established prior revelation of truth. Mormonism must be evaluated by the prior revelations contained in the Bible. Based on the preceding quotes, Mormon leaders knew and accepted this rule. Let us take their advice and see how the teachings of Mormonism compare with those of the Bible.

The Bible test

God provided a three-part test to use for determining if a person or revelation is truly from Him. When attempting to determine if a person or religion truly speaks for God, the first question we must ask is, "Does the person or religion teach a different God than the God of the Bible?" (Deuteronomy 13:1-5). Second, we must ask, "Has the person or religion given any revelations which failed?" (Deuteronomy 18:20-22). Finally, we must ask, "Does the person or religion teach a different method of salvation than taught in the Bible?" (Galatians 1:6-9).

If the person or religion that claims to speak for God fails any one of these three questions, he is not from God. We **must** reject his teachings. In the next chapters, we will evaluate official Mormon doctrines using God's three-part test.

Question # 1: A Different God

The first of God's three questions asks what the person or religion teaches about God. If a prophet gives a sign that comes true, yet he preaches a god other than the true God as He revealed Himself in the Bible, he is a false prophet (Deuteronomy 13:1-5). We must not follow him! If Mormonism's God is wrong, Mormonism is a false religion, even if a sign (such as a *burning in the bosom*) seems to say that it is true.

If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, And the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the LORD your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. Ye shall walk after the LORD your God, and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and ye shall serve him, and cleave unto him. And that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams, shall be put to death; because he hath spoken to turn *you* away from the LORD your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed you out of the house of bondage, to thrust thee out of the way which the LORD thy God commanded thee to walk in. So shalt thou put the evil away from the midst of thee. (Deuteronomy 13:1-5)

The Bible teaches that there is only one God. God has always been God. God created all things. The following Bible quotations explain the correct teachings about God for use in testing a prophet or religion.

There is only one God

Ye *are* my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I *am* he: **before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I, even I, am the LORD; and beside me there is no saviour.** I have declared, and have saved, and I have shewed, when *there was* no strange *god* among you: therefore ye *are* my witnesses, saith the LORD, that I *am* God. (Isaiah 43:10-12, emphasis added)

Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts; I *am* the first, and I *am* the last; and **beside me there is no God.** And who, as I, shall call, and shall declare it, and set it in order for me, since I appointed the ancient people? and the things that are coming, and shall come, let them shew unto them. Fear ye not, neither be afraid: have not I told thee from that time, and have declared *it?* ye *are* even my witnesses. **Is there a God beside me? yea, there is no God; I know not any.** (Isaiah 44:6-8, emphasis added)

As concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol *is* nothing in the world, and that **there is none other God but one.** (1 Corinthians 8:4, emphasis added)

Unto thee it was shewed, that thou mightest know that the LORD he *is* God; *there is* none else beside him. (Deuteronomy 4:35)

Know therefore this day, and consider *it* in thine heart, that the LORD he *is* God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath: *there is* none else. (Deuteronomy 4:39)

See now that I, *even I, am* he, and *there is* no god with me.... (Deuteronomy 32:39)

Thus saith the LORD, thy redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb, **I am the LORD that maketh all things; that stretcheth forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself;** (Isaiah 44:24, emphasis added)

I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me: That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that *there is* none beside me. I *am* the LORD, and *there is* none else. (Isaiah 45:5-6, emphasis added)

For thus saith the LORD that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I *am* the LORD; and *there is*

none else. I have not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth ... who hath declared this from ancient time? *who* hath told it from that time? *have* not I the LORD? and *there is* no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour; *there is* none beside me. Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I *am* God, and *there is* none else. (Isaiah 45:18-22)

Remember the former things of old: for **I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me**, (Isaiah 46:9, emphasis added)

There is none holy as the LORD: for *there is* none beside thee: neither *is there* any rock like our God. (1 Samuel 2:2)

Wherefore thou art great, O LORD God: for *there is* none like thee, neither *is there any* God beside thee, according to all that we have heard with our ears. (2 Samuel 7:22)

For who *is* God, save the LORD? and who *is* a rock, save our God? (2 Samuel 22:32)

That all the people of the earth may know that the LORD *is* God, and that *there is* none else. (1 Kings 8:60)

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

For *there is* one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; (1 Timothy 2:5)

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

For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ. (Jude 4)

God has always been God

Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even **from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God**. (Psalms 90:2, emphasis added)

Thy throne *is* established of old: **thou art from everlasting**. (Psalms 93:2, emphasis added)

Doubtless thou *art* our father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not: thou, O LORD, *art* our father, our redeemer; thy name *is* from everlasting. (Isaiah 63:16)

But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, *though* thou be little among the thousands of Judah, *yet* out of thee shall he come forth unto me *that is* to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth *have been* from of old, from everlasting. (Micah 5:2)

Art thou not from everlasting, O LORD my God, mine Holy One? (Habakkuk 1:12)

God as taught by Mormonism

The Bible teaches that there is only one God. God has always been God, and He created the whole universe. The following quotes are Mormonism's teachings about God. Is the God of Mormonism identical to the God of the Bible?

Joseph Smith's teachings about God

I will preach on the plurality of Gods.... **I wish to declare I have always and in all congregations when I have preached on the subject of Deity, it has been the plurality of Gods**. It has been preached by the elders for fifteen years ... we have three Gods anyhow, and they are plural: and who can contradict it? (*Discourses of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, compiled by Alma L. Burton, 1977, page 35, emphasis added)

God himself was once as we are now, and is an exalted man.... We have imagined and supposed that God was God from all eternity. I will refute that idea, and take away the veil, so that you may see ... he was once a man like us; yea, that God himself, the Father of us all, dwelt on an earth, the same as Jesus Christ himself did ... and you have got to learn how to be gods yourselves, and to be kings and priests

to God, the same as all gods have done before you.... (*Discourses of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, compiled by Alma L. Burton, 1977, pages 340-341)

Brigham Young's teachings about God

Gods exist, and we had better strive to be prepared to be one with them. (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, compiled by John A. Widtsoe, 1978, page 227)

He is our Father — the Father of our spirits, and was once a man in mortal flesh as we are, and is now an exalted Being. How many Gods there are, I do not know. But **there never was a time when there were not Gods**.... (*Journal of Discourses*, volume 7, page 333)

The Lord created you and me for the purpose of becoming Gods like Himself.... We are create, we are born for the express purpose of growing up from the low estate of manhood, to become Gods like unto our Father in heaven. (*Journal of Discourses*, volume 3, page 93)

Other Mormon teachings about God

In spite of the opposition of the sects, in the face of direct charges of blasphemy, the Church proclaims the eternal truth: "*As man is, God once was; as God is, man may be.*" (*The Articles of Faith*, James E. Talmage, 1982, page 430, emphasis in original)

Three separate personages — Father, Son, and Holy Ghost — comprise the Godhead. As each of these persons is a God, it is evident, from this standpoint alone, that a *plurality of Gods* exists. To us, speaking in the proper finite sense, these three are the only Gods we worship. But in addition there is an infinite number of holy personages, drawn from worlds without number, who have passed on to exaltation and are thus gods ... there is "a god above the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ...." (*Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd Edition, Bruce R. McConkie, 1966, pages 576-577, emphasis in original)

There is no end to this development: it will go on forever. *We will become gods and have jurisdiction over worlds, and these worlds will be peopled by our own offspring* ... our Father in heaven was once a man as we are now, capable of physical death. By obedience to eternal gospel principles, he progressed from one stage of life to another until he attained the state that we call exaltation or godhood. In such a condition, he and our mother in heaven were empowered to give birth to spirit children whose potential was equal to that of their heavenly parents. We are those spirit children. (*Achieving A Celestial Marriage*, student manual, 1976, page 132, emphasis in original)

Christ Performed His Atonement so That We Could Become Gods (*Achieving A Celestial Marriage*, student manual, 1976, page 136, emphasis in original)

Summary

Mormonism teaches the following false ideas about God. God was originally a man. He became a god later. He is only one god among thousands. Created things existed before the Mormon god became a god; therefore, he did not create all things. People who now live on earth can also become gods in the future. The number of gods continues to increase. Some gods became gods before the Mormon god became a god. Others will become gods after he became a god.

The Bible teachings about God are very different. God has always been God and, therefore, was not a human being before He became God. He created **all** things. There are absolutely no true Gods in addition to the one God of the Bible. There will be no new gods added in the future. (There are many false gods, but only one true God.)

Mormonism teaches a different god than the God of the Bible. This evidence alone proves that Mormonism is a false religion!

Occasionally, you may encounter a Mormon who claims that the Bible teaches that there are many gods. One of the texts used to "prove" this is 1 Corinthians 8:5. The part which says, "... there be gods many ..." is quoted to support Mormonism's polytheistic (i.e., many gods) teachings. However, reading the entire quote proves the error of Mormon teachings about God.

As concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol *is* nothing in the world, and that ***there is none other God but one***. For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,) But to us *there is but one* God, the Father, of whom *are* all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom *are* all things, and we by him. (1 Corinthians 8:4-6, emphasis added)

This passage says that there are many who are called gods (i.e., idols), but there is only **one** true God.

Question #2: Failed Revelations

The second of God's questions for evaluating persons or religions involves prophecies and revelations. If a prophet claims to speak for God but he gives one or more prophecies or revelations that fail, that prophet is a false prophet.

But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die. And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the LORD hath not spoken? **When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him.** (Deuteronomy 18:20-22, emphasis added)

If Joseph Smith or any other Mormon prophet made a false prophecy when speaking for God, then Mormonism is false. If any of the Mormon scriptures (*Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, or Pearl of Great Price*) contain false revelations, then Mormonism is a false religion. It is not correct to pray about its truthfulness if God's evaluation shows that Mormonism is false.

The Mormon Church is built upon the foundation of Joseph Smith. If Smith was not a true prophet of God, there is no legitimate reason for the existence of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Mormon leaders understand this.

[The Mormon] Church Stands or Falls with Joseph Smith. Mormonism, as it is called, must *stand or fall on the story of Joseph Smith*. He was either a prophet of God, divinely called, properly commissioned, or he was one of the biggest frauds this world has ever see. *There is no middle ground.* (*Doctrines of Salvation*, by Joseph Fielding Smith, 1954, vol. 1, page 188, emphasis in original, brackets added)

If his claims to a divine appointment be false, forming as they do the foundation of the Church in this the last dispensation, the superstructure cannot be stable.... (*The Articles of Faith*, James E. Talmage, 1982, page 8)

How many failed prophecies does it take to make a false prophet? Just one! Since God is perfect, all revelations He gives through true prophets will always prove true! A true prophet will not speak something in the name of God if it does not truly come from God. Therefore, if a person gives a revelation in the name of God which fails, that person is a false prophet. God explained this in Deuteronomy 18:20-22 (quoted elsewhere).

Mormons often proclaim some fulfilled prophecies which they affirm were given by Joseph Smith. These are promoted as evidence that Smith was a true prophet. However, successful prophecies are not enough by themselves to prove that a person is a true prophet (see Deuteronomy 13:1-5, quoted elsewhere).

In an earlier chapter we learned that Joseph Smith and Mormonism teach a different god than the God of the Bible. That point alone classifies Smith as a false prophet, even if *all* his revelations were successful. However, Smith gave several prophecies which failed. Following are a few of them.

The Toronto prophecy

One of Smith's false prophecies involved an effort to sell the *Book of Mormon* copyright in Toronto, Canada. The failure of this revelation caused serious confusion among some of the witnesses to the *Book of Mormon*. Maybe this contributed to the cause for six of the eleven witnesses withdrawing from the Mormon Church in about 1838. (See the chapter on the *Book of Mormon* witnesses for more information.)

Joseph Smith and the Mormon Church acknowledged the failure of this prophecy. *A Comprehensive History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (published by the Mormon Church) documents this failed prophecy as follows.

He persuaded Joseph to inquire of the Lord, with the result, as David states it, that he "**received a revelation** that some of the brethren should go to Toronto, Canada, and **they would sell the**

copyright.” Accordingly, Oliver Cowdery and Hiram Page, the latter being one of the eight witnesses, went to Canada to sell the copyright, but failed. David Whitmer represents that **this failure threw the little group of believers into great trouble**, and they went to the Prophet and asked him to account for the failure. The Prophet frankly acknowledged his inability to understand the cause of the failure, and inquired of the Lord. He received for answer — according to Whitmer — this: “Some revelations are of God: some revelations are of man: and some revelations are of the devil.” (*A Comprehensive History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, B.H. Roberts, vol. 1, pages 162-163, emphasis added)

The revelation respecting the Toronto journey was not of God, surely; else it would not have failed; but the Prophet, overwrought in his deep anxiety for the progress of the work, saw reflected in the “Seer Stone” his own thought, or that suggested to him by his brother Hyrum, rather than the thought of God ... in this instance of the Toronto journey, **Joseph was evidently not directed by the inspiration of the Lord.** (*A Comprehensive History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, B.H. Roberts, vol. 1, pages 164-165, emphasis added)

This one failed prophecy is enough to disqualify Smith and Mormonism. Yet there are other revelations which also failed.

Bethlehem or Jerusalem?

Many people that are familiar with the story of the birth of Jesus know that Jesus was born in Bethlehem. Bethlehem was a city located approximately five miles from Jerusalem in the land of Judah (i.e., Judaea). The description of the birth of Jesus and the Bible prophecy of His birth are given in the following Bible quote.

Now when **Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea** in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him. When Herod the king had heard *these things*, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born. And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judaea: **for thus it is written by the prophet**, And thou Bethlehem, *in* the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel. (Matthew 2:1-6, emphasis added)

The *Book of Mormon* missed the birthplace of Jesus by approximately five miles when it said that He would be born at Jerusalem.

... the Son of God cometh upon the face of the earth. And behold, he shall be born of Mary, **at Jerusalem** which is the land of our forefathers, she being a virgin.... (*Book of Mormon*, 1981, Alma 7:9-10, emphasis added)

Apparently, Mormons have not noticed this error or they do not think a five-mile mistake is significant (see the following quote). If the *Book of Mormon* prophecy was a true revelation from God, it would not have named the wrong city or called the land by the wrong name.

In a careful comparison of the prophecies of the Bible with corresponding predictions contained in the Book of Mormon, e.g. those relating to the birth ... of Christ Jesus ... each of the records is corroborative of the other. True there are many predictions in one that are not found in both, but **in no instance has contradiction or inconsistency been pointed out.** Between the doctrinal parts of the two volumes of scripture the same perfect harmony is found to prevail. (*The Articles of Faith*, James E. Talmage, 1982, pages 274-275, emphasis added)

Some Mormons have claimed that Jerusalem was the name of the land and that it contained Bethlehem. However, the name of the land was Judaea (i.e., Judah). Jerusalem and Bethlehem were both cities in the land of Judaea. Bethlehem is about five miles south of Jerusalem. The *Book of Mormon* missed the location by five miles while Micah (in the Bible) was exactly right (Micah 5:2-5; Matthew 2:1-8). God never misses, not even by five miles.

Zion prophecies

Smith proclaimed *by revelation* from God that Zion (the promised land) was in Jackson County, Missouri (USA). He told Mormons that they should settle in that location.

... Missouri, which is the land which I have appointed and consecrated for the gathering of the saints. Wherefore, this is the land of promise, and the place for the city of Zion. And **thus saith the Lord your God**, if you will receive wisdom here is wisdom. Behold, the place which is now called Independence is the center place; and a spot for the temple is lying westward, upon a lot which is not far from the courthouse. (*Doctrine and Covenants*, 1981, 57:1-3, emphasis added)

Additionally, Smith prophesied that a temple would be built in Independence, Missouri, at a specified location. He prophesied that this temple would be completed before all the people of that generation died (those living in 1832).

Which city shall be built, beginning at the temple lot, which is appointed by the finger of the Lord, in the western boundaries of the State of Missouri, and dedicated by the hand of Joseph Smith, Jun., and others with whom the Lord was well pleased. Verily **this is the word of the Lord**, that the city New Jerusalem shall be built by the gathering of the saints, beginning at this place, even the place of the temple, **which temple shall be reared in this generation**. For verily **this generation shall not all pass away until an house shall be built unto the Lord....** (*Doctrine and Covenants*, 1981, 84:3-5, emphasis added)

Besides these, Smith also prophesied that the Mormons who moved to Missouri would rejoice there. They would find protection from the extreme troubles coming upon the rest of the people.

And now **I am prepared to say by the authority of Jesus Christ**, that not many years shall pass away before the United States shall present such a scene of *bloodshed* as has not a parallel in the history of our nation; pestilence, hail, famine, and earthquake will sweep the wicked of this generation from off the face of the land, to open and prepare the way for the return of the lost tribes of Israel from the north country. The people of the Lord, those who have complied with the requirements of the new covenant, have already commenced gathering together to Zion, which is in the state of Missouri; therefore I declare unto you the warning which the Lord has commanded to declare unto this generation, remembering that the eyes of my Maker are upon me, and that to him I am accountable for every word I say ... flee to Zion, before the overflowing scourge overtake you, for **there are those now living upon the earth whose eyes shall not be closed in death until they see all these things which I have spoken, fulfilled**. (*History of the Church*, Joseph Smith, 2nd edition revised, 1978, vol. 1, pages 315-316, emphasis added)

Behold, I, the Lord, have brought you together that the promise might be fulfilled, that the faithful among you should be preserved and rejoice together in the land of Missouri. **I the Lord, promise the faithful and cannot lie**. (*Doctrine and Covenants*, 1981, 62:6, emphasis added)

At the time when Smith gave these prophecies about Zion, non-Mormons controlled the land. According to Smith, that circumstance would soon change with the redemption of Zion. Smith prophesied that Zion's redemption would take place on September 11, 1836, with its rescue from the control of gentiles (non-Mormons).

... use every effort to prevail on the churches to gather to those regions and locate themselves, to be in readiness to move into Jackson county [Missouri] in two years from the eleventh of September next, which is the appointed time for the redemption of Zion. (i.e., September 11, 1836, *History of the Church*, Joseph Smith, 2nd edition revised, 1978, vol. 2, page 145)

Zion's collapse

In obedience to Smith's prophecies in the name of God, many Mormons began to move to the state of Missouri beginning in July, 1831. Joseph Smith told them that Missouri was the *promise land*. Several revelations were given by Smith encouraging Mormons to take up residence there. Even though the prophecies about Zion were an encouragement to them, the Mormon settlers soon found that Smith's revelations were wrong.

With bright prospects before them, the Saints set to with a will to build their Zion. But they soon found themselves in serious difficulties. (*Truth Restored*, Gordon B. Hinckley, 1979, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, page 52)

As the non-Mormons in the state of Missouri began to react against the growing Mormon influence, conflicts began to develop. The Mormon dream of Zion soon collapsed.

The first real indication of trouble occurred one night in the spring of 1832 when a mob broke windows in a number of Mormon homes. In the autumn of that same year, haystacks were burned and houses were shot into. These acts were but the **beginning of a storm of violence that was eventually to sweep the Mormons from the state of Missouri**. (*Truth Restored*, page 52, emphasis added)

On October 31 [1833] a reign of terror commenced. Day and night armed men rode through the streets of Independence setting fire to houses, destroying furniture, trampling cornfields, whipping and assaulting men and women.

Not knowing where to turn, the inhabitants fled north to the desolate river bottoms. Their trail over the frozen sleet-covered ground was marked by blood from their lacerated feet. Some lost their lives as a result of exposure and hunger. Fortunately, their brethren in Ohio, on learning of their troubles, brought aid and comfort as rapidly as possible. By the time they arrived, more than two hundred homes had been destroyed. Even more tragic, **their dream of Zion had been shattered**. (*Truth Restored*, page 54, emphasis added, brackets added)

Finally, the Mormons were driven out of the state of Missouri. Their hopes for Zion were gone. Several promises made in the name of God were also gone. The god of Mormonism was not able to keep the promises as prophesied by Joseph Smith.

Greatly outnumbered and denied any semblance of legal protection, fifteen thousand members of the Church fled their Missouri homes and property then valued at a million and a half dollars. Through the winter of 1838-39 they painfully made their way eastward toward Illinois, not knowing where else to go. Many died from exposure or from illness aggravated by it. Joseph Smith was in prison, and Brigham Young, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, directed this sorrowful migration, which was to prove to be the forerunner to a yet more tragic movement a scant eight years later, and of which he was to serve as leader. (*Truth Restored*, pages 58-59)

Upon leaving Missouri, the Mormons moved to Nauvoo, Illinois. Eventually, they were driven from there and gathered in Salt Lake City, Utah (beginning in July, 1847). According to Smith's prophecy, Missouri was the divinely chosen gathering place. Therefore, the Mormons gathered in the wrong place when they went to Utah.

In 1831, Joseph Smith claimed that God said the Mormons would be preserved in Missouri. He also prophesied that the Mormons would rejoice together in the land of Missouri. History shows that neither happened. This was supposed to be a promise made by God, one which He could not lie about. What happened? Either the god of Mormonism lied or Joseph Smith was a false prophet. In either case, this alone is enough to prove that Mormonism cannot be what it claims to be.

More than 150 years have passed since Smith prophesied that the wicked would be swept off the face of the land. The "wicked" are still in the land and all people who were alive in 1832 have died. Rather than being protected from the "overflowing scourge," the Saints who fled to Missouri were wiped off the face of that land. This prophecy came to pass exactly opposite from the way Smith predicted. This prophecy proved false!

Temple was not built

More than 150 years have passed since Smith prophesied the temple would be built "... in this generation...." It still has not been built on the designated spot in Independence, Missouri. As late as 1874, Mormons still hoped to return to Missouri to fulfill this prophecy. Despite their hopes, they have been totally unable to bring to pass what Smith claims God promised.

God said, in the year 1832, before we were driven out of Jackson County, **in a revelation** which you will find here in this book, that before that generation should all pass away, a house of the Lord should be built in that county, (Jackson County).... This was given forty-two years ago. The generation then living was not only to commence a house of God in Jackson County, Missouri, but was actually to complete the same, and when it is completed the glory of God should rest upon it ... **we Latter-day Saints expect to return to Jackson County and to build a Temple there before the generation that was living forty-two years ago has all passed away.** (*Journal of Discourses*, volume 17, page 111, spoken by Orson Pratt in 1874, emphasis added)

All those living in 1832 are now dead and the prophesied temple is not built. According to Mormon apostle Orson Pratt, this prophecy about the temple is very important. Pratt said,

"The Latter-day Saints have as firm faith and rely upon this promise as much as they rely upon the promise of forgiveness of sins when they comply with the first principles of the Gospel." (*Journal of Discourses*, volume 14, page 275, by Orson Pratt)

According to Pratt, both of these promises (forgiveness of sins for Mormon and building the temple) depend upon the belief that Joseph Smith is a true prophet of the living God. Since Smith proved to be a false prophet concerning the building of this temple, his restored gospel must be false also.

Potsherd prophecy

The Mormons were driven out of Missouri to Nauvoo, Illinois. Since the United States did not help the Mormons against their persecutors in Missouri, Smith prophesied against the government. He said that if the U.S. government did not correct this wrong, that in just a few years, the government would be totally destroyed.

... I prophesy in the name of the Lord God of Israel, unless the United States redress the wrongs committed upon the Saints in the state of Missouri and punish the crimes committed by her officers that **in a few years the government will be utterly overthrown and wasted, and there will not be so much as a potsherd left**, for their wickedness in permitting the murder of men, women and children, and the wholesale plunder and extermination of thousands of her citizens to go unpunished.... (*History of the Church*, Joseph Smith, 2nd edition revised, 1978, vol. 5, page 394, emphasis added)

The wrong was not corrected and the Mormons did not return to their "Zion" in Missouri. Instead, the Mormons were driven out of their new gathering place in Nauvoo, Illinois. They finally settled in Utah after much loss of life and property. More than 150 years later, the U.S. government is bigger than ever.

In the previous sections, there are details of the shameful way the Mormons were driven out of Missouri. The U.S. government did not help them. Later, the Mormons were driven out of Illinois. Again, the government did not help them in their difficulties. Even in Utah, the Mormons had trouble with the U.S. government in what was called the *Mormon War* (1857-1858).

In 1862, the U.S. Congress passed a law which prohibited the Mormon practice of their revelation about polygamy (i.e., being married to more than one wife at the same time). The conflicts between the Mormons and the U.S. government continued to increase until, finally, the Mormon prophet was forced to officially prohibit polygamy.

During the 1880's, federal courts began enforcing federal laws against polygamy. Hundreds of Mormons were fined and sent to prison. A law passed in 1887 permitted the U.S. government to seize church property of the Mormons for use by public schools. In 1890, Wilford Woodruff, the church

president, advised the Mormons to give up polygamy. In October of that year, the church officially prohibited polygamy. (*The World Book Encyclopedia*, 1977 Edition, Volume 20, page 194f)

Rather than correcting the wrongs committed against the Mormons in Missouri, the government did even more “wrong” by forcing the Mormons to give up their doctrine of polygamy. Joseph Smith’s revelations failed again. Concerning the loss of their right to practice polygamy, the following quote of Mormon Apostle Orson Pratt is informative.

... if plurality of marriage is not true or in other words, if a man has no divine right to marry two wives or more in this world, then marriage for eternity is not true, and your faith is all vain, and all the sealing ordinances, and powers, pertaining to marriage for eternity are vain, worthless, good for nothing; for as sure as one is true the other also must be true. (*Journal Of Discourses*, vol. 21, page 296, by Orson Pratt)

According to Pratt, if Mormons do not have a divine right to marry two or more wives (at the same time) in this world, then Mormon temple marriages are worthless.

The white prophecy

The *Book of Mormon* contains another prophecy that failed. This prophecy said that those who were cursed with dark skin would have their curse removed and receive white skin if they accepted the Mormon gospel.

And the gospel of Jesus Christ shall be declared among them; wherefore, they shall be restored unto the knowledge of their fathers, and also to the knowledge of Jesus Christ, which was had among their fathers. And then shall they rejoice; for they shall know that it is a blessing unto them from the hand of God; and their scales of darkness shall begin to fall from their eyes; and many generations shall not pass away among them save they shall be a white and delightsome people. (*Book of Mormon*, 1920, 2 Nephi 30:5-6)

To understand the significance of this prophecy, some background information from the *Book of Mormon* story is required. According to the *Book of Mormon*, both Nephites and Lamanites originally had white skin and they were delightful. The Nephites were godly, but the Lamanites became ungodly. As a result of their ungodliness, God took away the white skin and delightful nature of the Lamanites and gave them a black skin, making them a “dark and loathsome” people.

And it came to pass that I beheld, after they had dwindled in unbelief they became a dark and loathsome, and a filthy people, full of idleness and all manner of abominations. (*Book of Mormon*, 1981, 1 Nephi 12:23)

And he had caused the cursing to come upon them, yea, even a sore cursing, because of their iniquity. For behold, they had hardened their hearts against him, that they had become like unto a flint; wherefore, as they were white, and exceedingly fair and delightsome, that they might not be enticing unto my people the Lord God did cause a skin of blackness to come upon them. And thus saith the Lord God: I will cause that they shall be loathsome unto thy people, save they shall repent of their iniquities. (*Book of Mormon*, 1981, 2 Nephi 5:21-22)

And the skins of the Lamanites were dark, according to the mark which was set upon their fathers, which was a curse upon them because of their transgression and their rebellion against their brethren, who consisted of Nephi, Jacob, and Joseph, and Sam, who were just and holy men. (*Book of Mormon*, 1981, Alma 3:6)

The stated purpose of this curse was to prevent the Lamanites from enticing the godly Nephites into ungodly ways. Theoretically, the white and delightful Nephites would be repulsed by the dark and loathsome appearance of the Lamanites. In the event a Lamanite should turn back to God, the *Book of Mormon* says that God would remove the curse from him (see 2 Nephi 5:22, 2 Nephi 30:6, and Alma 23:15-18).

The *Book of Mormon* contains at least one instance where this curse was removed from certain Lamanites. When the curse was lifted, their skin returned to a white color.

And it came to pass that those Lamanites who had united with the Nephites were numbered among the Nephites; And their curse was taken from them, and **their skin became white like unto the Nephites**; And their young men and their daughters became exceedingly fair.... (3 Nephi 2:14-16, emphasis added)

According to the teachings of Mormonism, the American Indians are descendants of the Lamanites mentioned in the *Book of Mormon*. Therefore, according to the *Book of Mormon*, American Indians who become Mormons should receive white skin before long.

This prophecy demanded a change. Since the skin of Indians (and others) who converted to Mormonism refused to turn white, the passage was changed to read *pure* in the 1981 version of the *Book of Mormon*.

Mormon explanation for the change

Mormons have claimed that the same word has been translated as *pure* and *white* in the Bible. By this, they attempt to justify changing the word in the *Book of Mormon*. If it is true that *white* and *pure* were translated from the same word in the Bible, it still does not excuse or explain the change in the *Book of Mormon*. Mormonism claims that God gave Joseph Smith the correct translation for the *Book of Mormon*. By Mormon claims, God is the one who said it should read *white*.

Mormons have also claimed that the word *white* in this quote did not mean that their skin would literally turn white. They say people have just taken this and twisted it to try to prove the Mormon Church wrong. They claim the 1981 change from *white* to *pure* was simply to make the words agree more with the original intent of the writings.

According to 3 Nephi 2:14-16 in the *Book of Mormon*, the skin of Lamanites who joined the Nephites turned white when the curse of God was removed from them (quoted above). This demonstrates that the original intent of the writings in 2 Nephi 30:6 was that their skin would lose its dark color and become a white color. (See also Alma 23:15-18.)

Summary

In the early Bible days, a person was killed by stoning if he made a false prophecy in the name of God. One failed prophecy was enough to expose him as a false prophet. God is always accurate. Therefore, anything God tells His prophets is always completely accurate. Anything less than perfect accuracy is not from God.

This does not mean that a true prophet has to be completely accurate in everything he says or does. Perfect accuracy is required **only** when the person claims to be speaking for God. As the Bible instructs us, we expect Joseph Smith and Mormonism to be perfectly accurate **every** time they claim to speak for God. Since Smith and Mormon scriptures are guilty of false prophesying and misrepresenting the truth, then the **whole** of Mormonism must be rejected since it **cannot** be from God.

Question #3 — A Different Gospel

The third question provided by God involves the message of the Gospel. If anyone comes with a gospel that is different from the Gospel preached by the disciples as recorded in the Bible, that person or religion is accursed.

I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any *man* preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed. (Galatians 1:6-9)

Does Mormonism teach a gospel that is different than the one taught in the Bible? If so, Mormonism is cursed, even if an angel (Moroni) brought this new gospel. To determine if Mormonism's gospel is different, we must first determine what is the Gospel of the Bible.

Bible teachings on the Gospel

The Bible teaches that no one can be made right with God by keeping the laws of God. Therefore, to bring us into right relationship with God, Jesus died the death we deserved. His sacrificial blood was enough to pay the price for **all** sin. A person is made right with God when he places his or her trust in this payment for sins made by Jesus. Those who trust in their own works will not be right with God since they have rejected the provision by Jesus for their righteousness. See the following Bible quotes for details of this Gospel.

Works cannot make a person right with God

Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; (Titus 3:5, emphasis added)

Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for **by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified**. (Galatians 2:16, emphasis added)

For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, **while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us**. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, **we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son**, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement. (Romans 5:6-11, emphasis added)

For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God: **Not of works, lest any man should boast**. (Ephesians 2:8-9, emphasis added)

Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth *to be* a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, *I say*, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. Where *is* boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith. Therefore **we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law**. (Romans 3:24-28, emphasis added)

For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath *whereof* to glory; but not before God. For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. (Romans 4:2-5)

Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore **by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight**: for by the law *is* the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God *which is* by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: (Romans 3:19-22, emphasis added)

And if by grace, then *is it* no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if *it be* of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work. (Romans 11:6)

I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. I do not frustrate the grace of God: for **if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain**. (Galatians 2:20-21, emphasis added)

What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because *they sought it* not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone; As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. (Romans 9:30-33)

And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness. (Genesis 15:6)

Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, *saying*, In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham. For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed *is* every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. But **that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith**. And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed *is* every one that hangeth on a tree: That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. (Galatians 3:6-14, emphasis added)

And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: (Philippians 3:9)

Salvation and eternal life come through faith in Jesus

And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, **Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved**, and thy house. (Acts 16:30-31, emphasis added)

And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; *and* he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. **These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life**, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God. (1 John 5:11-13, emphasis added)

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. (John 5:24)

That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. (Romans 10:9-11)

Blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin.

But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:7-9, emphasis added)

The gospel of Mormonism

The gospel of Mormonism requires good works. It teaches that righteousness and eternal life are obtained **only** by keeping the entire law of God. Mormonism teaches that the sacrifice of Jesus provided for the resurrection of all people. It did not pay the full price for salvation. Therefore, Mormons must rely upon their own good works to obtain eternal life. The Mormon gospel also teaches that the sacrificial blood of Jesus is not sufficient to cover some sins. In some cases, the sinner must add his own blood to that of Jesus to atone for the sin.

Mormon salvation is obtained by works

Salvation in its true and full meaning is synonymous with *exaltation* or *eternal life* and consists in gaining an inheritance in the highest of the three heavens within the celestial kingdom. With few exceptions this is the salvation of which the scriptures speak.... This full salvation is obtained in and through the continuation of the family unit in eternity, and **those who obtain it are gods**.... If it had not been for Joseph Smith and the restoration, there would be no salvation. **There is no salvation outside The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.** (*Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd edition, Bruce R. McConkie, 1966, page 670, emphasis added)

... to get salvation we must not only do some things, but everything which God has commanded. (*History of the Church*, Joseph Smith, 2nd edition revised, 1978, vol. 6, page 223, emphasis added)

To inherit all the Father has, we must keep the full law of God. "Now if we want to become heirs, joint-heirs with Jesus Christ, possessing the blessings of the kingdom, **there is only one thing required of you and of me, and that is that we keep the whole law, not a part of it only.** (*Achieving A Celestial Marriage*, student manual, 1976, page 273, emphasis added)

Hence the justice of the scriptural doctrine that **salvation comes to the individual only through obedience** ... exaltation is given to those only who by righteous effort have won a claim to God's merciful liberality by which it is bestowed. (*The Articles of Faith*, James E. Talmage, 1982, pages 90-91, emphasis added)

The inadequate blood of the Mormon Christ

But under certain circumstances there are some serious sins for which the cleansing of Christ does not operate, and the law of God is that men must then have their own blood shed to atone for their sins.... If these offenses are committed, then **the blood of Christ will not cleanse them from their sins even though they repent.** Therefore their only hope is to have their own blood shed to atone, as far as possible in their behalf.... This doctrine can only be practiced in its fulness in a day when the civil and ecclesiastical laws are administered in the same hands. (*Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd edition, Bruce R. McConkie, 1966, pages 92-93, emphasis added)

Blood atonement

Suppose you found your brother in bed with your wife, and put a javelin through both of them, you would be justified, and **they would atone for their sins, and be received into the kingdom of God.** I would at once do so in such a case; and under such circumstances, I have no wife whom I love so well that I would not put a javelin through her heart, and I would do it with clean hands.... There is not a man or woman, who violates the covenants made with their God, that will not be required to pay the debt. **The blood of Christ will never wipe that out, your own blood must atone for it;** and the judgments of the Almighty will come, sooner or later, and every man and woman will have to atone for

breaking their covenants. (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 3, page 247, spoken by Brigham Young, emphasis added)

I could refer you to **plenty of instances where men have been righteously slain, in order to atone for their sins**. I have seen scores and hundreds of people for whom there would have been a chance (in the last resurrection there will be) **if their lives had been taken and their blood spilled on the ground as a smoking incense to the Almighty**, but who are now angels to the devil.... I have known a **great many men who left this Church for whom there is no chance whatever for exaltation, but if their blood had been spilled, it would have been better for them**, the wickedness and ignorance of the nations forbids this principle's being in full force, but the time will come when the law of God will be in full force.

This is loving our neighbor as ourselves; if he needs help, help him; and **if he wants salvation and it is necessary to spill his blood on the earth in order that he may be saved, spill it**. Any of you who understand the principles of eternity, if you have sinned a sin requiring the shedding of blood, except the sin unto death, would not be satisfied nor rest until your blood should be spilled, that you might gain that salvation you desire. That is the way to love mankind. (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 4, page 220, spoken by Brigham Young, emphasis added)

Other Mormon teachings on salvation

"Your *endowment* is, to receive all those ordinances in the House of the Lord, which are necessary for you, after you have departed this life, to enable you to walk back to the presence of the Father, passing the angels who stand as sentinels, being enabled to give them the key words, the signs and tokens, pertaining to the Holy priesthood, and gain your eternal exaltation in spite of earth and hell." (Brigham Young in *JD*, 2:31.) (*Achieving A Celestial Marriage*, student manual, 1976, page 203)

We are the only ones on the earth at the present time, that we have any knowledge of, who hold the keys of salvation.... The building of temples, places in which the ordinances of salvation are administered, is necessary to carry out the plan of redemption.... (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, compiled by John A. Widtsoe, 1978, pages 396-397)

To gain salvation after baptism it is necessary to keep the commandments of God and endure to the end.... (*Achieving A Celestial Marriage*, student manual, 1976, page 198)

"If you would become a son or a daughter of God and an heir of the kingdom, then you must go to the house of the Lord and receive blessings which there can be obtained and which cannot be obtained elsewhere; and you must keep those commandments and those covenants to the end." (*Achieving A Celestial Marriage*, student manual, 1976, page 201)

Every boy and girl ... should know that the ordinance of sealing [i.e., temple marriage] is an absolute, and that **without it there can be no salvation in the eternal world, no eternal life**. Therefore, we should move forward with all the power we have to convince young people to ... plan for temple marriage. (*Achieving A Celestial Marriage*, student manual, 1976, page 204, brackets added)

Summary

The Bible teaches that salvation with eternal life is received only by faith (trust) in Jesus. Doing the good works of the law of God cannot earn salvation and eternal life. The blood of Jesus brings forgiveness to everyone who confesses his sins.

Mormonism teaches that faith in Jesus is not enough. To receive salvation and eternal life, a person must perform **all** the works of the law. Mormonism also teaches that some sins cannot be atoned by the blood of Jesus. In such cases, the sinner's own blood must be shed to atone for his sin. Additionally, Mormonism teaches that you must be married in a Mormon Temple (i.e., receive the sealing ordinance) or you cannot have eternal life.

Since Mormonism teaches a different gospel than was taught by Paul and others in the Bible, then Mormonism cannot be true. Therefore, we should not pray to ask if Mormonism is true. God has already given us the answer. The religion of Mormonism is cursed according to Galatians 1:6-9.

Book of Mormon Witnesses

Each copy of the *Book of Mormon* contains a record of eleven witnesses who proclaim its truthfulness. The Mormon Church presents this as evidence that the *Book of Mormon* is true. However, according to the following information, the testimony of the majority of these witnesses is largely invalidated by their actions.

The *Book of Mormon* witnesses were divided into two groups. The first group, called the “three witnesses”, included Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, and Martin Harris. The second group was called the “eight witnesses” and included Christian Whitmer, Jacob Whitmer, Peter Whitmer, Junior, John Whitmer, Hiram Page, Joseph Smith, Senior, Hyrum Smith, and Samuel H. Smith.

Within ten years of the founding of the Mormon Church, all three of the witnesses in the first group withdrew from the Mormon Church. In the same time period, three of the eight witnesses in the second group also withdrew from the Mormon Church. Why did over half of the witnesses to the truth of the *Book of Mormon* withdraw from the church that was founded upon it? When these witnesses left the Mormon Church in about 1838, the only living witnesses who stayed with the church were Joseph Smith’s father and Smith’s two brothers. Christian Whitmer and Peter Whitmer, Junior, were dead by 1838.

There is some dispute over whether those witnesses who withdrew from the church ever denied their testimony to the truthfulness of the *Book of Mormon*. However, six of the eleven witnesses abandoning the Mormon Church is cause for serious doubts about their faith in their own testimonies of its truthfulness. (What would you think if Peter, James, John, and three other apostles of Jesus left the Christian Church within ten years of its founding?)

The Mormon Church admits that the three witnesses in the first group, “... withdrew from the Church, and developed feelings amounting almost to hatred toward Joseph Smith.” (*The Articles of Faith*, James E. Talmage, 1982, page 270) Apparently, the feeling was mutual as shown in the following quote from Joseph Smith, Junior.

Such characters as McLellin, John Whitmer, David Whitmer, Oliver Cowdery, and Martin Harris, are too mean to mention; and we had liked to have forgotten them. (*History of the Church*, Joseph Smith, 2nd edition revised, 1978, vol. 3, page 232)

Occasionally, Mormons claim that most of the witnesses returned to the Mormon Church. However, *The Articles of Faith* (published by the Mormon Church) makes no mention of any of the three witnesses returning. It also admits that, “Three of the eight witnesses died out of the Church...” (*The Articles of Faith*, James E. Talmage, 1982, page 271 - For additional information about the eleven witnesses, refer to page 504 in *The Articles of Faith*.)

Since Smith wanted to forget at least four of the eleven witnesses, it seems that their testimonies should be removed from the *Book of Mormon*. Let’s take Smith’s advice and forget about these witnesses and their claims that Mormonism is true.

Conclusion

If a prophet or religion fails any one of God's three questions, that prophet or religion is not from God.

Mormonism fails all three of God's questions!

Mormons may give their testimony saying that they know that Mormonism is true and that Joseph Smith was a true prophet. However, God gave His testimony by these three questions. He says that Joseph Smith was a false prophet and Mormonism is a false religion.

Since God gave us clear instructions which demonstrate that Mormonism is false, it is wrong to pray to ask if Mormonism is true. To pray about the truthfulness of Mormonism is similar to asking God if it is okay to steal. He has already provided instructions on both these subjects. Any answer received to either of these prayers (about stealing or Mormonism) is irrelevant!

It is dangerous to reconsider an issue after God provides a clear answer. Consider the prophet whom God told not to eat or drink in the city where he prophesied. Another prophet told him that he had new information from God saying that he should eat with him. The prophet ignored God's prior instructions and followed the "new revelation." A lion killed him as a result of his disobedience (see 1 Kings 13:1-25).

Mormons are not ignorant or evil. They are typically very good people who desire to serve God and their families. Unfortunately, they have been sold a very sophisticated lie designed to keep them from experiencing all that God provided for them. Jesus died to set Mormons free from the lies of the enemy. However, that information will not help them if we do not lovingly confront them with the truth.

Frequently Asked Questions and Comments

From time to time, I receive questions and comments concerning the material presented in this book. Some of those have been addressed on this page. It is possible that your particular question or comment has been addressed here. If not, you can contact me at my e-mail address: sbowman@life4square.com. (You may wish to check the online version of this book at <http://www.life4square.com/mormon/default.html>.)

The book, *Mormonism: Does It Pass God's 3-Question Test for Truth?* is presented as a documentation of the evidence invalidating the claims of Mormonism. Therefore, it is fairly concise and to the point. The following responses to questions and comments cover areas that are outside the scope of the book. In the responses, I tried to write as though I was speaking to you face to face. Unfortunately, this written format does not allow you to hear my voice and see my face, thus preventing you from being able to fully judge whether I am really motivated by love (as I claim), or by jealousy and hatred. I pray that you can see my heart through the words and that you will avoid the temptation to assume my motives are wrong and then to ignore the information. Please take the time to check out the material and test its validity. It may be the most important decision you will ever make.

Thank you for taking the time to investigate the claims in *Mormonism: Does It Pass God's 3-Question Test for Truth?* If you still have questions about the material, please contact me. May God bless you in your search to know His Truth!



Sonny Bowman

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Why do you attack Mormons?

I do not attack Mormons! I tried to make that very clear with the following statement in the beginning of the book (after the cover page). Maybe you missed this statement.

“Is it intolerant to question the teachings of others? It is not intolerant. I fully support the right of people to believe anything they choose to believe. However, I have a responsibility to tell people what I learned when I applied God’s three-part test to Mormonism. It would be wrong not to share with others what I learned. After a person considers the information in this book, then he or she can decide what they should believe. That is between them and God. All I ask is that they carefully consider the information so that they can make the best decision of what they should believe.”

As is apparent here, I am not criticizing people for believing Mormonism. I only wish to share what I have learned about Mormonism’s claims. The Internet is an ideal place to do this because people can investigate the material or ignore it as they choose. No one is pressuring them to read the material.

I respect your beliefs and you should respect mine.

If you mean that I should silently let you believe a lie, then you are wrong. I cannot in good conscious before my Lord Jesus Christ let you believe a lie without warning you. If you mean that I should let you believe Mormonism if you want to after I have warned you about its errors, then I do respect your beliefs. I support your right to believe anything you want to believe. I only seek to warn you that Mormonism fails God’s test for truth. You are free to heed or reject the warning. But I cannot be silent (also see the comments in the following sections).

I find people’s attitudes on this matter hard to understand. People take the time to correct what they perceived as my errors. At the same time, they condemn me for doing something similar. I respect a person’s right to express his point of view and to disagree with me. However, there are some who seem to think I should not have the same rights that they freely exercise.

You are seeking to prove others wrong in order to prove you are right. Bearing witness to Christ does not require denouncing the beliefs of others.

First of all, it does not prove I am right even if I proved everyone else was wrong. So what’s the point? I am interested in knowing and experiencing the truth. I am not interested in just thinking I am on the right path. If I am on the wrong path, I want to know it so I can get off and find the right path. How about you?

I do not judge, condemn, or attack the Mormon people. They, like everyone else, will be judged by Jesus Christ concerning whether they have accepted or rejected His provisions for their salvation (Romans 14:10-12). Rather, it is a love for the Mormon people that motivates me to share what I have learned with them.

On the other hand, there is a Scriptural directive to expose the false doctrine and lies of the religion called Mormonism (according to Ezekiel 3:18-19 and other passages noted in the following paragraphs). Mormonism is not an accurate representation of God's truth as demonstrated in the book, *Mormonism: Does It Pass God's 3-Question Test for Truth?*

There are serious conflicts between the teachings of Biblical Christianity and Mormonism. Even Mormonism acknowledges this when it teaches that all other religions are wrong and their creeds are an abomination to God (*Pearl of Great Price*, Joseph Smith--History 1:18-20). (This statement condemning all non-Mormon religions is the foundational vision upon which Mormonism was built.)

People have a right to believe what they want. However, I have an obligation to provide people with accurate information to enable them to make an informed choice. If a person chooses to believe Mormonism when he clearly understands the difference between it and biblical Christianity, I certainly support his right. On the other hand, it is not right for Mormonism to claim that it is Christian and that its teachings are in agreement with the Bible when there are such vast differences between Mormonism and biblical Christianity (see examples of this claim in *Mormon Doctrine*, pp. 512-513; *Discourses of Brigham Young*, p. 126).

The evidence demonstrates that the religion of Mormonism (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints) is a work of Satan and opposed to the true knowledge of God. As such there is Scriptural precedence for warning people. Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil (1 John 3:8, John 8:39-44). Paul worked to cut off opportunity for false apostles to deceive others (2 Corinthians 11:12-15). We are told to reprove and expose the errors of darkness (Ephesians 5:11-13, Titus 2:11-15). We are told to refute those who contradict the truth of the Scripture and to silence deceivers (Titus 1:9-13). We are also told to contend earnestly for the faith (Jude 3).

Have I become your enemy by telling you the truth (Galatians 4:16)? It is a love for Jesus and the people He died for that compels me to alert people to the error of Mormonism. I do not hate the people caught in the deception of Mormonism--I simply seek to alert them.

Suppose you came home late one night and noticed that your neighbor's roof was on fire. You knew the whole family was inside sleeping peacefully. Would you be so rude as to run up to their front door and yell and scream and try to wake them up, or would you let them go on sleeping peacefully? I have seen the "burning roof" and I cannot help but warn the Mormons of the impending danger. They are people Jesus died for. They must be warned!

The Mormon Church does not warn the people in our congregation away from other churches.

The Mormon Church claims that God told Joseph Smith in his first vision not to join any of the churches because they were all wrong and their creeds are an abomination to God (*Pearl of Great Price*, 1981, Joseph Smith-History 1:18-19). The Mormon Church further claims that God restored the true gospel through Joseph Smith since it had been lost and was no longer taught by the other churches. These beliefs are taught by Mormon missionaries who go door to door encouraging people to leave their churches to join the Mormon Church. The Mormon Church *does* warn people away from other churches! Knowing all this, how can you complain when I seek to share the truth I have found?

Jesus taught love. It is not Christ-like to teach against the Mormon Church's doctrines.

It is Christ-like to teach against error when motivated by love. Jesus did this frequently and strongly (see the following passages and others). Since Jesus exposed error, it would not be Christ-like to be silent when error is evident!

(Matthew 16:6-12) Then Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees. (7) And they reasoned among themselves, saying, It is because we have taken no bread. (8) Which when Jesus perceived, he said unto them, O ye of little faith, why reason ye among yourselves, because ye have brought no bread? (9) Do ye not yet understand, neither remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets ye took up? (10) Neither the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many baskets ye took up? (11) How is it that ye do not understand that I spake it not to you concerning bread, that ye should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the

Sadducees? (12) Then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.

(Matthew 23:13-33) But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in. (14) Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation. (15) Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves. (16) Woe unto you, ye blind guides, which say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor! (17) Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifieth the gold? (18) And, Whosoever shall swear by the altar, it is nothing; but whosoever sweareth by the gift that is upon it, he is guilty. (19) Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift? (20) Whoso therefore shall swear by the altar, sweareth by it, and by all things thereon. (21) And whoso shall swear by the temple, sweareth by it, and by him that dwelleth therein. (22) And he that shall swear by heaven, sweareth by the throne of God, and by him that sitteth thereon. (23) Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. (24) Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel. (25) Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. (26) Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also. (27) Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. (28) Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity. (29) Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous, (30) And say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. (31) Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets. (32) Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers. (33) Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?

(John 8:41-44) Ye do the deeds of your father. Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God. (42) Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me. (43) Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word. (44) Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.

Your test for false prophets also invalidates the Bible since some of the prophets in the Bible made false prophecies.

The Bible is a record of historical events as well as a record of God's word to man and His dealings with people. The Bible contains several false prophecies that are identified as such (e.g., Jeremiah 14:13-15). That does not invalidate the Bible.

It is important to understand what constitutes a false prophecy. A prophecy is known to be false only if it proves to be wrong. For a prophecy to be proven wrong, several factors must be considered. Are there any conditions for fulfillment stated or implied with the prophecy? If such conditions are not fulfilled, then the prophecy is not false. Are there time limits placed on the fulfillment? If no time limits are given and the prophecy has not yet taken place, then the prophecy cannot be classified as a true prophecy or a false prophecy. It is simply an unfulfilled prophecy.

It is possible for a prophecy without a stated time limit to be proven false. For example, if a prophecy says a certain thing will not happen, if that thing happens, the prophecy is false (unless there are other qualifying conditions that apply). On the other hand, if a prophecy says something will happen, and it has not

happened, the prophecy is not necessarily false since the event could still happen in the future. However, if the prophecy says that an event will happen before a certain time (as indicated by length or before some other event), then the prophecy is false if the event does not take place within the specified time frame.

Many prophecies contained in the Bible are judgments against people or nations. Unless stated otherwise during the prophecy, all such judgment prophecies are conditional on the response of the recipient. God reserves the right to forgive and to show mercy when people repent or have tender hearts towards His words (as stated in Ezekiel 33:14-16). If a judgment is pronounced, the person or people turn to God, and the judgment is rescinded, that is not a false prophecy. (See Jonah 3:1-5, 10 and 2 Kings 20:1-5 for some of the many examples of this in the Bible.)

In the book, *Mormonism: Does It Pass God's 3-Question Test for Truth?*, the prophecies listed were carefully evaluated for any conditions. Each one was confirmed as a false prophecy. Even the LDS Church admits that the "Toronto prophecy" was a false (i.e., failed) prophecy.

In summary, the Bible is not invalidated by the "false prophecy test" — Mormonism is invalidated by this test.

The Mormon materials you quote are not authorized sources of Mormon doctrine. They do not accurately represent Mormon doctrine.

Fourteen different Mormon documents were quoted in the book. Of those materials, the LDS Church publishes the following six.

Achieving A Celestial Marriage, The Articles of Faith, Book of Mormon (1981 & 1920 editions), Doctrine and Covenants, Pearl of Great Price, and Truth Restored.

If material containing Mormon doctrine published by the Mormon Church does not accurately represent Mormon doctrine, then what material does? Should I believe your opinion of what constitutes Mormon doctrine or should I believe documents published by the Mormon Church? Obviously, documents published by the LDS Church are more trustworthy expressions of true Mormon doctrine than the opinions of general members.

Concerning the other sources quoted in the 3-question test book, the following eight documents include recorded statements made by Mormon prophets and leaders.

A Comprehensive History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (by B.H. Roberts), History of the Church (by Joseph Smith), Discourses of Brigham Young (compiled by John A. Widtsoe), Discourses of the Prophet Joseph Smith (compiled by Alma L. Burton), Doctrines of Salvation (by Joseph Fielding Smith), Journal of Discourses, A Marvelous Work and A Wonder (by LeGrand Richards), and Mormon Doctrine (by Bruce R. McConkie).

People sometimes claim that I am quoting "one person's opinion on a certain topic." If these quoted Mormon prophets and leaders do not accurately understand and state Mormon doctrine, then who does? Surely Mormon upper leadership accurately understands and expresses Mormon doctrines better than anyone else.

In a letter addressed to me, the Copyrights and Permissions Office of the LDS Church in Salt Lake City, Utah, acknowledged that all of the Mormon documents quoted in the book, *Mormonism: Does It Pass God's 3-Question Test for Truth?*, "... are fully covered by copyrights either owned or subject to the control of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints." If the LDS Church controls these documents (as they claimed) and the teachings in them are not representative of correct Mormon doctrine (as individual Mormons have claimed), why do they not remove them from circulation or at least correct them?

With all these facts considered, these fourteen documents surely provide an accurate source of information concerning official Mormon doctrine.

Occasionally, I receive comments that Apostle Bruce R. McConkie's material (i.e., *Mormon Doctrine*) is not representative of Mormon doctrines. However, in a couple of articles in the *Mormon Church News* (April 28, 1985, pp. 3, 13), the following comments were made. "Elder Bruce R. McConkie's writings and speeches qualified him as perhaps the Church's leading contemporary theologian, according to some observers." "...

Mormon Doctrine remains the most definitive encyclopedic work on Church doctrine.” “President Hinckley said ... [about McConkie] His language was clear, its meaning unmistakable.” “President Benson ... spoke of Elder McConkie’s knowledge of the scriptures and said when a doctrinal question came before the First Presidency and the Twelve, Elder McConkie was asked to quote the scripture or to comment on the matter.” Obviously, Mormon leadership valued McConkie’s accurate understanding of Mormon doctrine. Therefore, inclusion of material from *Mormon Doctrine* is appropriate in this study.

Who should I consult when attempting to determine official Mormon doctrine — general Mormon members, Mormon missionaries? No! The most accurate sources of Mormon doctrine are the LDS church publications and teachings of its prophets and leaders. That is the source of material used in the book, *Mormonism: Does It Pass God’s 3-Question Test for Truth?*. There is no better source for accurately determining official Mormon doctrines.

Have you personally looked up the material or did you get it from anti-Mormonism sources? You are taking the quotes out of context.

I reviewed every document referenced in the book, *Mormonism: Does It Pass God’s 3-Question Test for Truth?* I spent many hours in LDS bookstores, used bookstores, and libraries collecting material for the book to ensure that it accurately represented Mormon doctrine and statements in context.

If you understand the idea that God is the only god relatively rather than absolutely, it all makes sense.

Apparently, some Mormons believe that there are many gods in the universe, but they only worship the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. They conclude that, relative to our planet, there is only one God of consequence. However, this does not solve the error of Mormonism’s polytheism (belief in many gods).

In the first place, Joseph Smith taught that we have three Gods (i.e., the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost) (see the following quote). So relatively speaking, we have three gods according to Joseph Smith, not one.

“I have always declared God to be a distinct personage, Jesus Christ a separate and distinct personage from God the Father, and that the Holy Ghost was a distinct personage and a Spirit: and these three constitute three distinct personages and three Gods. If this is in accordance with the New Testament, lo and behold! we have three Gods anyhow, and they are plural: and who can contradict it?” (Recorded in the *Discourses of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, compiled by Alma L. Burton, 1977, page 35.)

That immediately contradicts the often quoted passage from 1 Corinthians 8:6 which says, “But to us there is but one God...” where the emphasis is usually placed on the “to us” portion. That passage actually states that there is only one true God (even though there are many idols, who are false gods).

God did not leave open the option to understand that there is only one God relatively. For example, God stated that no gods were created before or after Him (Isaiah 43:10-12) totally eliminating the possibility of any other gods in the universe. God stated that He does not even know of any other Gods (Isaiah 4:6-8), and surely He would know about them if they existed anywhere. (I cannot imagine the Mormon Church knowing that there are other gods out there when even God said He doesn’t know of any. Surely they do not know more than God!) God created the entire universe and everything in it (Genesis 1:1-19; Isaiah 44:24; Isaiah 45:12, 18). Since He created everything, there can be no additional worlds created by other gods.

The Bible says there are many gods.

This is usually a reference to 1 Corinthians 8:5 which says, “... (as there be gods many, and lords many,)” The comment is usually made to support the Mormon teaching that there are thousands of gods and that the Father, Jesus, and the Holy Ghost are three separate gods.

However, this passage in 1 Corinthians does not support that idea. It actually states that there is only one true God. The many gods mentioned in this passage are all false gods. There are many false gods but only one true God. This is obvious from reading the verse in context.

(1 Corinthians 8:4-6) As concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one. (5)

For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,) (6) But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.

This passage clearly declares that there is only one true God and there are many beings who are called gods, but who are not. The many gods of Mormonism are idols (i.e., false gods) just as this passage in 1 Corinthians explains.

Occasionally, people will quote Psalm 82:6 that says "...Ye are gods...." to prove there are many gods. That passage is talking about Jewish leaders who sat as gods before the people of Israel by speaking God's words to them. However, they were going to find that they were not really gods when they "...die like men...."

(Psalms 82:6-7) I have said, Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the most High. (7) But ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes.

Even Moses was made as god to Pharaoh, but that did not mean that Moses was actually a god.

(Exodus 7:1-2) And the LORD said unto Moses, See, I have made thee a god to Pharaoh: and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet. (2) Thou shalt speak all that I command thee: and Aaron thy brother shall speak unto Pharaoh, that he send the children of Israel out of his land.

Neither of these passages supports the Mormonism teaching that there are many real gods. The Bible is very clear that there is only one true God. That fact is documented in the book, *Mormonism: Does It Pass God's 3-Question Test for Truth?*

The Mormon Church does not teach that there is more than one God.

Joseph Smith, the founder of Mormonism and its first Prophet, taught that we have three Gods.

"I have always declared God to be a distinct personage, Jesus Christ a separate and distinct personage from God the Father, and that the Holy Ghost was a distinct personage and a Spirit: and these three constitute three distinct personages and three Gods. If this is in accordance with the New Testament, lo and behold! we have three Gods anyhow, and they are plural: and who can contradict it?" (Recorded in the *Discourses of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, compiled by Alma L. Burton, 1977, page 35.)

Brigham Young, the second Prophet of the Mormon Church taught that there are Gods (plural, i.e., more than one) and that men can become gods with them.

"Gods exist and we had better strive to be prepared to be one with them." (Recorded in *Discourses of Brigham Young*, compiled by John A. Widtsoe, 1978, page 227 and also recorded in the *Journal of Discourses*, volume 7 page 238.)

The Mormon Apostle Bruce R. McConkie taught that Mormons worship three Gods.

"Three separate personages--Father, Son, and Holy Ghost--comprise the Godhead. As each of these persons is a God, it is evident, from this standpoint alone, that a plurality of Gods exists. To us, speaking in the proper finite sense, these three are the only Gods we worship." (*Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd edition, 1979, page 576) (See the material about authorized sources if you question whether Bruce R. McConkie was representative of the Mormon Church's beliefs, page 26.)

The prophets Joseph Smith, Brigham Young, and the Apostle Bruce R. McConkie were leaders of the LDS Church. As such, surely they accurately understood and taught official Mormon beliefs. They definitely were not teaching the Bible.

The Mormon Church teaches that God was LIKE man, not that he WAS a man.

The following quotes demonstrate that the Mormon Church does not agree with this statement.

"GOD WAS ONCE A MORTAL MAN. (1-2) He Lived on an Earth like Our Own." (*Achieving a Celestial Marriage*, Student Manual, published by the LDS Church in 1976, page 129)

"Less well understood, however, is the fact that God is an exalted man who once lived on an earth and underwent experiences of mortality." (*Achieving a Celestial Marriage*, Student Manual, published by the LDS Church in 1976, page 129)

“As shown in this chapter, our Father in heaven was once a man as we are now, capable of physical death. By obedience to eternal gospel principles, he progressed from one stage of life to another until he attained the state that we call exaltation or godhood.” (*Achieving a Celestial Marriage*, Student Manual, published by the LDS Church in 1976, page 132)

Joseph Smith said that God was not always a God.

“We have imagined and supposed that God was God from all eternity. I will refute that idea, and take away the veil, so that you may see ... that he was once a man like us; yea, that God himself, the Father of us all, dwelt on an earth, the same as Jesus Christ himself did; and I will show it from the Bible.” (Recorded in *Discourses of the Prophet Joseph Smith* compiled by Alma L. Burton, 1977, pages 340-241.)

The Mormon Articles of Faith declares that God used to be a man like those who live on the earth today. It further states that men can become gods like God our Father.

In spite of the opposition of the sects, in the face of direct charges of blasphemy, the Church proclaims the eternal truth: “As man is, God once was; as God is, man may be.” (*The Articles of Faith*, James E. Talmage, published by the LDS Church, 1982, p. 430, emphasis in original)

According to the Mormon Church, God was not LIKE a man, He WAS a man!

The Father, Jesus, and the Spirit are distinct. Jesus is not the same being as the Father. They are one in purpose and conviction, but they are different personages.

The Bible is very clear about the following: There is only one true God, the Father is God, Jesus is God, and the Holy Spirit is God. While the Father, Son, and Spirit are distinct, together they comprise one God. God has clearly declared that there is only one God (see page 5). Therefore, the Father, Son, and Spirit cannot be three separate gods.

In a similar fashion, man is a three-part being — spirit, soul, and body (1 Thessalonians 5:23) — yet he is only one human being. Each part of man is distinct, yet he is still only one man — not three. Man was made in God’s image (Genesis 1:27). Man’s characteristic as a three-part being helps us understand that God can be a three-part being while still only being one God. The fact that the Father, Son, and Spirit are distinct does not contradict the fact that together, they comprise the one and only true God.

Prayer for wisdom is not asking for a sign (James 1:5-6). I can tell the difference between indigestion and God speaking to me.

Asking for wisdom according to James 1:5-6 is not necessarily asking for a sign. However, a person can ask for a sign in the context of asking for wisdom. When a sign is sought (such as a “burning in the bosom”), there is a possibility of deception. Jesus warned against seeking signs (see page 2).

How do you know when God is speaking to you, the devil is speaking to you, or it is just something else? The nature of a counterfeit is that it closely resembles the real. The devil is a master counterfeiter and people must be very careful to avoid being deceived. All I am trying to do is to point out that you must try the spirits when you ask for wisdom. This is the same warning that we find in the following verse.

(1 John 4:1) Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

The primary point in concerning this in the book, *Mormonism: Does It Pass God’s 3-Question Test for Truth?*, is that mutually exclusive answers have been received by people seeking to know if Mormonism is true using the method outlined in Moroni 10:4-5. At least some of the people using that method have been deceived into believing the wrong answer. So how can you be sure that you are one who got the right answer rather than the wrong answer? By applying objective tests to the question. When you receive an answer that is in agreement with God’s word and His nature, then you can be confident that the answer you received is correct. If your answer does not agree with God’s word and His nature, then you received a counterfeit that must be rejected.

Have you ever been in an “anti-gravity” house? These are specially built structures sometimes found at amusement parks or fairs. They are designed to deceive your sense of what is horizontal. While in one of these houses, it looks like water runs up hill. Your senses can be deceived, but if you pull a level out of your pocket and place it on the floor, you will find that what looks to be sloping uphill is actually sloping downhill. The level becomes an objective standard that you can use to validate or invalidate your experience.

The book, *Mormonism: Does It Pass God’s 3-Question Test for Truth?* outlines the objective standard that God provided to help you determine if the answer you received was correct or a counterfeit when you pray about Mormonism (or any religion). This standard was provided by God to help us avoid deception by the devil. It is a wise person who realizes that his senses can be deceived and that he needs to follow God’s instructions to ensure that he is not deceived. Only a foolish person will stubbornly refuse to believe that he needs to heed God’s warnings about protecting against possible deception.

You cannot trust the Bible. Many plain and precious truths have been removed from it.

The Bible demonstrates that Mormon doctrine is in error while Mormon doctrine says the Bible cannot be trusted. If Mormonism were not true, then it would be natural for its leaders to try to counteract the Bible teachings that prove Mormonism is wrong. The real question is, “which is right?”

We have a very accurate record of the Bible’s original text in Hebrew (Aramaic) and Greek. We are surer of the original text of the Bible than we are of the original texts of Shakespeare’s writings. We can also check the accuracy of any translation since we have the original language texts. The original text for the *Book of Mormon* is not available, so how can anyone know for sure that it is accurately translated. (It puzzles me how over 3,000 changes can be made to the text of the *Book of Mormon* when the original is no longer available for validating the changes and when God gave Joseph Smith the “correct translation” in the beginning.)

The Bible has very strong evidence that it is the word of God as it claims to be. It is prophetically accurate, geographically accurate, historically accurate, archaeologically accurate, and scientifically accurate (where it talks about science). Consider geographical and historical accuracy. The Bible describes real people and places. Encyclopedias and history books include information from sources other than the Bible about many of the people mentioned in the Bible. Maps abound showing the lands and times of the Bible with exact locations of many towns, rivers, mountains, and lakes mentioned in the Bible. Encyclopedias and other non-religious books also contain information about these places.

In comparison, the *Book of Mormon* is very weak. Try to find non-Mormon information on Moroni, Nephi, or any Nephite or Lamanite mentioned in the *Book of Mormon*. Where you find them mentioned, you will see statements such as “according to the *Book of Mormon*....” There is no confirmed secular history of these individuals demonstrating that they really existed.

Even more telling is the lack of a map in any *Book of Mormon* that shows where any river, city, or mountain is located from Book of Mormon times. (Some have maps showing sites related to Joseph Smith’s life, but these do not show places mentioned in the *Book of Mormon*.) In spite of what people may say about the confirmed existence of these places, the evidence is that no one knows for sure where any are. Surely the LDS church would publish a map in every *Book of Mormon* if it knew for sure where any *Book of Mormon* river, city, or mountain was located. Since they do not publish such a map, they must not know for sure.

Have you ever seen an actual coin (or replica) mentioned in the *Book of Mormon* that has been positively identified as such? There are many coins mentioned in the Bible that are positively identified by secular scholars.

The evidence is strong in support of the Bible and just as strong against the *Book of Mormon*. The Bible is much more trustworthy than the *Book of Mormon* and Mormonism. The claim that many precious truths have been taken out of the Bible is a ploy to keep people from seeing the clear evidence that Mormonism is not what it claims to be.

By their fruits you shall know them.

From time to time, Mormons make this comment. So far, I have not had any explain exactly how this proves that Mormonism is true. I presume they are implying that since Mormons are good people, their religion (Mormonism) must be true. Whatever the case, this quote actually proves that Mormonism is a false religion of a false prophet. The quote comes from the Book of Matthew as follows.

(Matthew 7:15-20) Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. (16) Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? (17) Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. (18) A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. (19) Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. (20) Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

Note that this passage specifically applies the "fruits" test to prophets to determine if they are false prophets. One of the fruits (not the only one) of a prophet is prophecy. As the 3-Question Test book points out, Joseph Smith produced some bad fruit in that area and was thus exposed as a false prophet. As this passage in Matthew points out, he may appear to have been a sheep, but inwardly, he was a ravening wolf.

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