

EVANGELISM TRAINING: Responding to Mormonism P.3

5 Things to Say to a Mormon — Adapted from Ron Rhodes

3. _____

Mormon Position —

The Bible is Not God's _____; He Restored _____
_____ through Joseph Smith and _____ through Living Prophets

A. The Standard Works: Four Canonized Scriptures

- 1. _____ “as far as it is translated correctly”
 - **POGP: Articles of Faith 1:8** — We believe the Bible to be the word of God as far as it is translated correctly; we also believe the Book of Mormon to be the word of God.
 - **BOM: 1 Nephi 13:28** — Wherefore, thou seest that after the book hath gone forth through the hands of the great and abominable church, that there are many plain and precious things taken away from the book, which is the book of the Lamb of God.
 - **D&C 76 Introduction** — From sundry revelations which had been received, it was apparent that many important points touching the salvation of man had been taken from the Bible, or lost before it was compiled.
 - Original biblical writings were God's Word but errors and losses corrupted the text through transmission, compilation, and translation
 - **General Handbook** — Generally, members should use a preferred or Church-published edition of the Bible in Church classes and meetings...Examples of such translations can be found in the Church's Holy Bible list.
 - LDS Official English Bible: KJV (Latter-day Saint 2013 Edition)
 - Mainly KJV text plus LDS footnotes, cross-references, & JST corrections
 - **Selections from the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible: Introduction** — The Lord inspired the Prophet Joseph Smith to restore truths to the King James Bible text that had become lost or changed since the original words were written.
 - Joseph Smith Translation (JST) — not the church's official Bible
 - Not a translation from Hebrew & Greek manuscripts (Joseph used no manuscripts)
 - Edits and additions to the KJV made by “inspired revision”
 - About 3,400 verses affected in full JST, 600+ selections incorporated as either footnotes or in the appendix (ex: Genesis 50 addition)
 - Some JST material is canonized in POGP (ex: Book of Moses, Joseph Smith—Matthew)
 - **General Handbook** — When members encounter doctrinal discrepancies between Bible translations, they should refer to the Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, Pearl of Great Price, and teachings of latter-day prophets.
 - LDS revelation is used to interpret and correct the Bible

- 2.

 - **BOM Introduction** — The Book of Mormon is a volume of holy scripture comparable to the Bible. It is a record of God’s dealings with ancient inhabitants of the Americas and contains the fulness of the everlasting gospel...Concerning this record the Prophet Joseph Smith said: “I told the brethren that the Book of Mormon was the most correct of any book on earth, and the keystone of our religion, and a man would get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book.”
 - An account of ancient peoples in the Americas (600 BC to AD 421), compiled on gold plated by the prophet Mormon (in the 4th century)
 - Mormon, an ancient Nephite prophet in the 4th century compiled the records onto gold plates and buried by his son Moroni
 - Joseph Smith obtained the plates in 1827 and translated the “Reformed Egyptian” by the power of God into English (becoming the Book of Mormon)
 - **David Whitmer’s Testimony** — Joseph Smith would put the seer stone into a hat, and put his face in the hat, drawing it closely around his face to exclude the light; and in the darkness the spiritual light would shine. A piece of something resembling parchment would appear, and on that appeared the writing. One character at a time would appear, and under it was the interpretation in English. Brother Joseph would read off the English to Oliver Cowdery, who was his principal scribe, and when it was written down and repeated to Brother Joseph to see if it was correct, then it would disappear, and another character with the interpretation would appear.
 - “Translation” did not actually depend on reading the plates
 - The church now openly acknowledges the seer stone in a hat
- 3.

 - **D&C 70 Section Header** — The Prophet Joseph Smith said that the Doctrine and Covenants is “the foundation of the Church in these last days, and a benefit to the world, showing that the keys of the mysteries of the kingdom of our Savior are again entrusted to man.”
 - A collection of revelations given primarily to Joseph Smith and a few other latter-day prophets, first published in 1835
 - Contains doctrines developed beyond the BOM such as:
 - Three kingdoms of glory (D&C 76), humans becoming gods (D&C 132:20), celestial marriage (D&C 132), baptism for the dead (D&C 128)
 - **D&C 21:5** — For his word ye shall receive, as if from mine own mouth, in all patience and faith.
 - Joseph’s words are to be received as from God’s mouth
- 4.

 - Book of Moses: JST revision of Genesis
 - Book of Abraham: claimed inspired translation of Egyptian papyri begun in 1835
 - Joseph Smith—Matthew: JST revision of Matthew 24
 - Joseph Smith—History: Joseph’s account of First Vision and BOM origin
 - Articles of Faith: 13 concise LDS statements of faith
 - **POGP: Articles of Faith 1:9** — We believe all that God has revealed, all that He does now reveal, and we believe that He will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God.

B. Continuing Revelation

- 1. _____
 - **LDS Bible Dictionary: Canon** — Although the decisions were made in the past as to which writings are authoritative, that does not mean that the canon of scripture is complete and that no more can be added. True prophets and apostles will continue to receive new revelation, and from time to time the legal authorities of the Church will see fit to formally add to the collection of scripture.
 - God uses continued prophets and apostles to give divine revelation
 - **President of the Quorum of the Twelve: Ezra Taft Benson, 1980** —
 - First: The prophet is the only man who speaks for the Lord in everything.
 - Second: The living prophet is more vital to us than the standard works.
 - Third: The living prophet is more important to us than a dead prophet.
 - Fourth: The prophet will never lead the Church astray.
 - The living prophet always takes precedence
- 2. _____ (Spiritual Confirmation)
 - **Moroni 10:4-5** — And when ye shall receive these things, I would exhort you that ye would ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true; and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost. 5 And by the power of the Holy Ghost ye may know the truth of all things.
 - The Holy Ghost confirms truth through spiritual impressions
 - **D&C 9:8-9** — But, behold, I say unto you, that you must study it out in your mind; then you must ask me if it be right, and if it is right I will cause that your bosom shall burn within you; therefore, you shall feel that it is right. 9 But if it be not right you shall have no such feelings, but you shall have a stupor of thought that shall cause you to forget the thing which is wrong; therefore, you cannot write that which is sacred save it be given you from me.
 - Mormons use this verse today as a general test for truth (“burning in the bosom”)

Christian Position —

The Bible is God's _____

A. The Bible is God's Trustworthy Word

- 1. The Bible is _____, _____, and _____
 - **2 Timothy 3:16-17** — All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.
 - All Scripture is from God and sufficient for mankind
 - **2 Peter 1:20-21** — knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. ²¹ For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.
 - God used human authors to communicate his words accurately
 - **John 17:17** — Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.
 - **Psalms 119:160** — The sum of your word is truth, and every one of your righteous rules endures forever.

- 2. Jesus Viewed Scripture as _____ and Authoritative
 - **Matthew 5:17-18** — “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished.
 - **John 10:35b** — Scripture cannot be broken
 - **Matthew 4:4** — But he answered, “It is written, “ ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.’ ”
 - **Matthew 24:35** — Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.
 - Jesus trusted the Scriptures of his day — copies, not originals
 - Joseph Smith taught that “plain and precious things” had been lost
 - If we can’t trust the Bible, we can’t trust the BOM which copies whole chapters of the KJV (ex: Is. 2-14 in 2 Nephi 12-24, Matt. 5-7 in 3 Nephi 12-14)
- 3. The Bible Has Been _____ and Can Be _____
 - Manuscript Evidence (gives confidence in biblical transmission / translation)
 - 5,800+ Greek NT manuscripts
 - Plus thousands of early translations and church-father quotations
 - Textual variants are insignificant
 - Most involve: spelling, word order, duplicated words
 - Few meaningful ones are well marked: Mark 16:9-20, John 7:53-8:11
 - No core doctrine depends on a disputed passage
 - Dead Sea Scrolls
 - Discovered near Qumran beginning in 1947 dating 1,000 years earlier than previously held Hebrew manuscripts — and it matches
 - **The result:**
 - No manuscript evidence of the removal of “plain and precious things”
 - The LDS claim has no evidence — where variants exist, we can see them
 - The KJV — good for its time, but translators now have many additional and earlier manuscripts
- 4. The Bible is _____ — We Don’t Need a New Gospel or Revelation
 - **2 Timothy 3:16-17 (above)** — complete, equipped for every good work.
 - **Jude 3** — Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints.
 - The faith is once for all, not being restored or added to
 - **Galatians 1:7b-8** — but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. ⁸But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed.
 - **2 Corinthians 11:4** — For if someone comes and proclaims another Jesus than the one we proclaimed, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or if you accept a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it readily enough
 - A claim of supernatural revelation must be tested against The Bible

- 5. The Bible Must Not be _____, _____, or _____
 - **Genesis 3:1b, 4** — did God actually say...you will not surely die
 - The enemy wants us to doubt, change, and contradict God's words
 - **Deuteronomy 4:2** — You shall not add to the word that I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the Lord your God that I command you.
 - **Proverbs 30:5-6** — Every word of God proves true; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him. ⁶Do not add to his words, lest he rebuke you and you be found a liar.
 - **Revelation 22:18-19** — I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, ¹⁹ and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.
 - It is forbidden to present human words as God's words

B. LDS Scriptures and Revelation are Not from God

- 1. New Claims of Revelation Must Be _____
 - **Acts 17:11** — Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so.
 - The Bible is our barometer of truth
 - **Deuteronomy 13:1-3** — “If a prophet or a dreamer of dreams arises among you and gives you a sign or a wonder, ² and the sign or wonder that he tells you comes to pass, and if he says, ‘Let us go after other gods,’ which you have not known, ‘and let us serve them,’ ³ you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams. For the Lord your God is testing you, to know whether you love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul.
 - A fulfilled sign is not the sole test of a prophet — but one of doctrinal agreement
 - **Deuteronomy 18:20-22** — But the prophet who presumes to speak a word in my name that I have not commanded him to speak, or who speaks in the name of other gods, that same prophet shall die.’ ²¹ And if you say in your heart, ‘How may we know the word that the Lord has not spoken?’— ²² when a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the word does not come to pass or come true, that is a word that the Lord has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously. You need not be afraid of him.
 - A true prophet must be 100% accurate when speaking in God's name
- 2. The LDS Scriptures Must Be _____
- **Test #1 — Does it _____?**
 - LDS Scriptures contradict The Bible
 - **Galatians 1:6–9 / 2 Corinthians 11:4** → the LDS gospel vs the biblical gospel
 - The BOM contradicts later Mormon doctrine
 - Book of Mormon → Later LDS teaching
 - One God (**Alma 11:28-29**) → plurality of Gods (**D&C 132:20**)
 - Binary judgment (**Mosiah 16:10-11**) → three kingdoms of glory (**D&C 76**)
 - Unchangeable God (**Moroni 8:18**) → God was once a man (**D&C 130:22**)
 - No second chance after death (**Alma 34:32-35**) → baptism for the dead (**D&C 128**)
 - The BOM contains little distinctive LDS doctrine — which is why it works as a stepping stone to other LDS Scriptures

- **Test #2 — Does its _____ match the _____ ?**
 - Textual Changes
 - Nearly 4,000 changes between 1830's edition and later editions (Many spelling and grammar but some substantial)
 - **1 Nephi 11:21** — “Behold the Lamb of God, yea, even the eternal Father” → “Behold the Lamb of God, yea even the son of the eternal Father”
 - **1 Nephi 11:18** — “the mother of God” → “the mother of the Son of God” (same in 11:32 and 13:40) — all changed in 1837
 - This is not the same as copying errors in Bible manuscripts
 - The BOM was translated one character at a time with divine confirmation, which does not allow for any errors (especially doctrinal ones)
 - KJV-dependent Language
 - Whole chapters taken directly from the KJV (including italicized words — which were words added by translators to provide clarity)
 - A record supposedly written between 600 BC and 421 AD should not match the wording of a 1611 English translation
 - Proposed Anachronisms
 - Horses and chariots (**Alma 18:9**), steel (**1 Nephi 4:9**), silk (**Alma 1:29**), elephants (**Ether 9:19**) in pre-Columbian America
 - Paraphrases from Jesus & the NT (centuries before the NT was written)
 - Archaeology
 - The Nephite and Lamanite nations, alleged large-scale wars near Hill Cumorah in New York in AD 385, and the New World have no archaeological support
 - Unlike the Bible, whose people and places are repeatedly confirmed by archaeology
 - Native American DNA traces to Northeast Asia, not the ancient Near East (Israel)

● **Test #3 — Is the _____ ?**

- Claimed Translations
 - Book of Abraham gives a test case for Joseph Smith's translation ability
 - Joseph claimed to translate Egyptian records in 1835
 - Some of Joseph's papyri rediscovered in 1967
 - Egyptologists translate the papyri as standard funerary texts from roughly 2,000 years AFTER Abraham NOT the Book of Abraham
 - Shows that he is untrustworthy in translation
- Claimed Prophecies
 - **D&C 84:3–5** — beginning at the temple lot...in the western boundaries of the State of Missouri...which temple shall be reared in this generation...this generation shall not all pass away until an house shall be built unto the Lord”
 - Prophecy in 1832, temple still not built on designated site
 - **D&C 114:1** — “Verily thus saith the Lord... [Patten] may perform a mission unto me next spring, in company with others, even twelve including himself...”
 - Prophecy in April 1838, Patten died in October 1838
 - **Joseph Smith Papers** — “I prophesy in the name of the Lord God of Israel” that unless the United States redressed the wrongs against the Saints, “in a few years the Government will be utterly overthrown and wasted.”
 - Prophecy in 1843, Redress did not occur, US government not overthrown

- Personal Conduct
 - Seer stones, treasure digging (tried in 1826 as a “glass looker”)
 - Numerous wives (Church essay: perhaps as many as 30 or 40), some hidden from his wife Emma, several still married to other men, one as young as 14
 - Polygamy ended in 1890, but D&C 132 remains scripture and men may still be sealed to more than one wife
 - When Joseph engaged in morally wrong conduct, did he acknowledge it as sin (like biblical characters) — or did he claim revelation from God authorizing it?
- 3. Personal Spiritual Experience is _____
 - **1 John 4:1** — Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world
 - **2 Corinthians 11:13-15** — For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. ¹⁴ And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. ¹⁵ So it is no surprise if his servants, also, disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. Their end will correspond to their deeds. **Proverbs 28:26** — Whoever trusts in his own mind is a fool, but he who walks in wisdom will be delivered.
 - **Jeremiah 17:9** — The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?
 - **Isaiah 40:8** — The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever.
 - Subjective experience cannot authenticate a message that contradicts God’s objective Word

Common Objections & Responses —

#1 — “_____”

- Ezekiel 37:15-17 — The word of the Lord came to me: ¹⁶ “Son of man, take a stick and write on it, ‘For Judah, and the people of Israel associated with him’; then take another stick and write on it, ‘For Joseph (the stick of Ephraim) and all the house of Israel associated with him.’ ¹⁷ **And join them one to another into one stick, that they may become one in your hand.**
 - They claim the two sticks are the Bible and Book of Mormon
 - **Response: The Passage Itself Explains What the Two Sticks Are**
 - Ezekiel 37:19 — “the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel associated with him... the stick of Judah...”
 - Ezekiel 37:22 — “I will make them one nation... and they shall be no longer two nations, and no longer divided into two kingdoms.”
 - The sticks are two kingdoms NOT two books
 - God restoring his people to one nation again after the split of the kingdom
- James 1:5 — **If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God**, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.
 - They claim we should pray and ask God if the Book of Mormon is true
 - **Response: Context of James is praying for wisdom during trials (not the veracity of the BOM)**
 - God’s wisdom never contradicts Scripture
 - Don’t need to pray about what God has already made clear (Galatians 1:6-8)
 - Ex: Murder, Adultery, Theft, Etc.

- John 10:16 — And I have **other sheep that are not of this fold**. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd.
 - They claim the “other sheep” are the Nephites (3 Nephi 15:21)
 - **Response:** The NT context points to Gentiles being incorporated with believing Jews into one people of God
 - John 11:51–52 — Jesus gathers God's scattered children into one.
 - Ephesians 2:11–18 — Jew and Gentile made “one” through Christ.
 - Romans 1:16 — Jew first and also Greek.

#2 — “_____”

- The Bible Never Says the Canon is Closed / it Never Teaches “Sola Scriptura”
 - **Response:** Sola Scriptura is Implicitly Taught (Sufficiency of Scripture)
 - **2 Timothy 3:16-17** — ¹⁶ All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.
 - No biblical warrant for there being a secondary source of infallible information or interpretation apart from God's direct revelation in the Bible
 - **Jude 3** — the faith was delivered “once for all”
- God Always Has a Living Prophet
 - Amos 3:7 — “For the Lord God does nothing without revealing his secret to his servants the prophets.”
 - **Response:** The verse doesn’t say there will always be a prophet alive on earth
 - 400 years passed between Malachi and John the Baptist without a prophet
- John 16:12-13 — “I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. ¹³ When the Spirit of truth comes, **he will guide you into all the truth**, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and **he will declare to you the things that are to come**.”
 - **Response:** Jesus is speaking directly to his apostles in the Upper Room
 - Surrounding promises:
 - John 14:26 — The Holy Spirit “will... bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.”
 - This promise fulfilled in the apostles’ unique role in penning Christ’s authoritative teaching (the NT)

Take This With You —

3 Questions for Conversations:

- 1. If God allowed “plain and precious” truths to disappear from the Bible, how do you know which parts you can trust today?
- 2. If a prophet contradicts what God has already revealed, how can we know whether that prophet really speaks for God?
- 3. If two sincere people pray and receive opposite spiritual impressions, how can we know which one is actually from God?

3 Verses to Memorize:

- 2 Timothy 3:16-17 (sufficient) | Galatians 1:8 (revelation test) | 1 John 4:1 (experience test)