

EVANGELISM TRAINING: Responding to Mormonism P.4

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

4. _____

Mormon Position —

**Christ's _____ Was Lost Through _____ and
_____ Through Joseph Smith**

- 1. Christ's _____ Fell Into a Great Apostasy
 - **POGP: Joseph Smith, History 1:18-19** — My object in going to inquire of the Lord was to know which of all the sects was right...and which I should join. I was answered that I must join none of them, for they were all wrong; and the Personage who addressed me said that all their creeds were an abomination in his sight; that those professors were all corrupt; that: “they draw near to me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me, they teach for doctrines the commandments of men, having a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof.”
 - **D&C 1:15** — For they have strayed from mine ordinances, and have broken mine everlasting covenant
 - After the death of Christ's apostles, the true church no longer existed
 - **The Restoration of the Gospel of Jesus Christ (2005), “The Great Apostasy”** — The Apostles were killed, and priesthood authority—including the keys to direct and receive revelation for the Church—was taken from the earth. Because the Church was no longer led by priesthood authority, error crept into Church teachings. Good people and much truth remained, but the gospel as established by Jesus Christ was lost. This period is called the Great Apostasy.
 - Good people and some truth remained, but not the true gospel, priesthood authority, and the saving ordinances
- 2. Christ Restored His _____ Through Joseph Smith
 - **D&C 1:29-30** — And also those to whom these commandments were given, might have power to lay the foundation of this church, and to bring it forth out of obscurity and out of darkness, the only true and living church upon the face of the whole earth, with which I, the Lord, am well pleased, speaking unto the church collectively and not individually
 - Through Joseph Smith, God restored the true gospel, Scripture, revelation, priesthood, authority, ordinances, and church organization
- 3. The _____ Possesses God's Priesthood Authority and Saving Ordinances
 - A. Priesthood Authority
 - **POGP Articles of Faith 1:6** — We believe in the same organization that existed in the Primitive Church, namely, apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers, evangelists, and so forth.
 - The first presidency and twelve apostles are all prophets, seers, and revelators, but the President alone may exercise all priesthood keys and receive revelation for the entire Church

- **D&C 13:1** — Upon you my fellow servants, in the name of Messiah I confer the Priesthood of Aaron, which holds the keys of the ministering of angels, and of the gospel of repentance, and of baptism by immersion for the remission of sins; and this shall never be taken again from the earth, until the sons of Levi do offer again an offering unto the Lord in righteousness.
 - Aaronic Priesthood — Lesser/preparatory authority restored through John the Baptist; administers outward ordinances such as baptism
- **D&C 84:19-21** — And this greater priesthood administereth the gospel and holdeth the key of the mysteries of the kingdom, even the key of the knowledge of God. 20 Therefore, in the ordinances thereof, the power of godliness is manifest. 21 And without the ordinances thereof, and the authority of the priesthood, the power of godliness is not manifest unto men in the flesh;
- **LDS General Handbook: Priesthood Principles** — The Melchizedek Priesthood is “the Holy Priesthood, after the Order of the Son of God” (Doctrine and Covenants 107:3). It is the power by which the sons and daughters of God can become like Him (see Doctrine and Covenants 84:19–21; 132:19–20).
 - Melchizedek Priesthood — Higher authority restored through Peter, James, and John; governs the Church and administers spiritual blessings and the ordinances necessary for exaltation are performed
 - Ordination to this priesthood is required of men only for exaltation
- B. The Ordinances
 - **LDS General Handbook: Priesthood Principles** — The ordinances necessary for salvation and exaltation are: Baptism. Confirmation and gift of the Holy Ghost. Conferral of the Melchizedek Priesthood and ordination to an office (for men). Temple endowment. Temple sealing.
 - 1. Baptism (by immersion, age 8 or older, for remission of sins and entry into the church)
 - 2. Confirmation / Gift of the Holy Ghost (confers the gift of the Holy Ghost and confirms membership by the laying on of hands)
 - 3. Melchizedek Priesthood ordination (conferral for the higher priesthood, required before men receive the endowment)
 - 4. Temple endowment (includes initiatory washing and anointing along with sacred instruction, covenants, and promised blessings to prepare members to return to God's presence)
 - 5. Temple sealing (husband and wife are joined for eternity)
 - These ordinances must be administered through the priesthood authority in the restored church
 - Temple ordinances require a temple recommend, granted after worthiness interviews
- C. Saving Ordinances Can be Performed for the Dead
 - **D&C 128:15** — And now, my dearly beloved brethren and sisters, let me assure you that these are principles in relation to the dead and the living that cannot be lightly passed over, as pertaining to our salvation. For their salvation is necessary and essential to our salvation, as Paul says concerning the fathers—that they without us cannot be made perfect—neither can we without our dead be made perfect.

- Living members receive the ordinances by proxy in temple on behalf of the dead, who can accept or reject them in the spirit world
- The church gives a huge emphasis on genealogical / family history work

(LDS public messaging has recently softened its exclusivity language although unchanging doctrine)

Christian Position —

**Christ _____ His Church, _____ His Church, and
_____ His Church Through His Word Until He Returns**

- 1. Christ Established His Church and Will Preserve It _____
 - **Matthew 16:18** — And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.
 - **Matthew 28:20** — teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.
 - **Ephesians 3:21** — to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.
 - A total apostasy means the gates of hell DID prevail and Christ was not “with you always” for roughly 1,700 years
- 2. Christ’s Church is Defined by Faithfulness to _____ and _____
 - **John 10:27** — My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.
 - **Acts 2:42** — And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.
 - Christ’s true people hear his gospel and remain faithful to it
 - **Galatians 1:8** — But 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.
 - Joseph Smith said an angel (Moroni) delivered the BOM
 - **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 church doesn’t determine the true gospel, the true gospel determines the church
- 3. Christ is the _____ of the Church and Permanently _____
His People Need
 - **Colossians 1:18** — And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent.
 - Christ is the head, he is in charge
 - **Hebrews 7:11-12** — Now if perfection had been attainable through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need would there have been for another priest to arise after the order of Melchizedek, rather than one named after the order of Aaron? ¹²For when there is a change in the priesthood, there is necessarily a change in the law as well.
 - The old covenant priesthood has been fulfilled

- **Hebrews 5:5-6, 9-10** — So also Christ did not exalt himself to be made a high priest, but was appointed by him who said to him, “You are my Son, today I have begotten you”; ⁶ as he says also in another place, “You are a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek.”...⁹ And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him, ¹⁰ being designated by God a high priest after the order of Melchizedek.
 - Jesus is the final high priest after the order of Melchizedek
- **Hebrews 7:23-25** — The former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office, ²⁴ but he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever. ²⁵ Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.
 - “Permanently holding” means it is not passed to another
- **Hebrews 10:11-14** — And every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. ¹² But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, ¹³ waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet. ¹⁴ For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.
 - The solution to dying priests was not an endlessly restored priesthood but an undying priest
- **1 Peter 2:5** — you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. (also v.9)
- **Hebrews 4:14, 16** — Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession...¹⁶ Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.
 - Every Christian has direct access to God through Christ

● 4. Christ Gave His Church _____, But They Do Not
 _____ Our Salvation

- Leaders —
 - Elders (also pastors / overseers) & Deacons (1 Timothy 3, Titus 1)
- Ordinances —
 - Baptism
 - **Matthew 28:19** — Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,
 - The Lord's Supper
 - **1 Corinthians 11:24-26** — and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, “This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” ²⁵ In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” ²⁶ For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.
 - The ordinances are the result of being saved by grace through faith, not the gates we must pass through to be saved (Ephesians 2:8-9)

Common Objections & Responses —

#1 — “ _____ ”

- 2 Thessalonians 2:3 — Let no one deceive you in any way. For that day will not come, **unless the rebellion comes first**, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction,
 - Mormons claim the “rebellion” speaks of the Great Apostasy
 - **Response:** The context places this rebellion immediately before the return of Christ and the revelation of the man of lawlessness
 - 2 Thessalonians 2:1-3 — Now concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered together to him, we ask you, brothers, ²not to be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed, either by a spirit or a spoken word, or a letter seeming to be from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come...v.3
 - It is a particular apostasy that is still to come in the end-times
- Amos 8:11-12 — “Behold, the days are coming,” declares the Lord God, “when **I will send a famine on the land**— not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, **but of hearing the words of the Lord**. ¹²They shall wander from sea to sea, and from north to east; they shall run to and fro, to seek the word of the Lord, but they shall not find it.
 - Mormons claim this describes the Great Apostasy when revelation disappeared
 - **Response:** Amos is announcing judgment on Israel
 - Amos 8:2b — The end has come upon my people Israel
 - God’s judgment on rebellious Israel, not that Christ’s church would disappear
- Acts 3:20-21 — **that times of refreshing may come** from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus, ²¹whom heaven must receive until the time **for restoring all the things** about which God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets long ago.
 - Mormons claim this is a promise of a restored church
 - **Response:** This is the consummation of the age when all things are made new (2 Peter 3:13) — not even a hint about total apostasy
 - Read the sentence: heaven “must receive” Jesus UNTIL the restoring of all things
 - The restoration comes when Jesus returns from heaven

#2 — “ _____ ”

- Ephesians 4:11-13 — And **he gave the apostles, the prophets**, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, ¹²to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, ¹³**until we all attain to the unity of the faith** and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,
 - Mormons claim that since Christ’s original church had apostles and prophets — a true church should continue to as well
 - **Response:** The NT distinguishes the foundational role of apostles and prophets from the continuing ministry of the church
 - Ephesians 2:20 — built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone
 - An apostle had to be an eyewitness of the risen Christ (Acts 1:21-22)
 - When the apostle James was martyred (Acts 12:2) — no replacement was chosen

- Nothing in Ephesians 4 tells of twelve apostles governed by a prophet-president possessing restored priesthood keys (as LDS claim)
 - Continuing church leadership (Acts 14:23, 20:17, 28, 1 Timothy 3, Titus 1)
- Psalm 110:4 — The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind, **“You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.”**
 - Mormons claim this shows there is an eternal priesthood that only exists in the Mormon church
 - **Response:** Psalm 110 is a Messianic Psalm (it refers to Christ — Hebrews 5:5-6)
 - Mark 12:36 — Jesus applies Psalm 110 to himself (v.1)
 - Christ’s priesthood is forever (once-for-all — Hebrews 7:27-28, 10:10)
 - Jesus never talked priesthood with his disciples
 - Aaronic priesthood was replaced with something better — Jesus our eternal priest (Hebrews 7:11-12)
 - Additionally, Mormons are not descendants of Aaron (Numbers 3:10) and bear no resemblance of the duties of the OT priesthood
- Matthew 16:19 — **I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven**, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.
 - Mormons claim the “keys” are priesthood authority to administer saving ordinances necessary to get access into God’s kingdom
 - **Response:** The “keys” refer to authority connected with opening and closing access to the kingdom through preaching the gospel
 - The power to grant or deny access based on how people respond to the gospel (John 20:23) — not a separate system of saving ordinances

#3 — “ _____ ”

- 1 Corinthians 15:29 — Otherwise, what do people mean by being **baptized on behalf of the dead**? If the dead are not raised at all, why are people baptized on their behalf?
 - Mormons claim this shows that baptism should be performed for the dead
 - **Response:** Whatever practice Paul is referring to, he uses it to argue for resurrection, not commanding Christians to practice it
 - His point: why are people doing this practice if there is no resurrection? (1 Corinthians 15:12)
 - Notice the pronouns: “people / they” in v.29 — then “we” in v.30
 - Paul distances himself from the practice and never commands it
 - Scripture gives no second chance after death (Hebrews 9:27, Luke 16:26)

Take This With You —

3 Questions for Conversations:

- 1. Where does the Bible teach that Christ’s entire church would disappear from the earth and later need to be restored?
- 2. If Jesus holds His priesthood permanently because He lives forever, why does His church need it restored?
- 3. How can we determine which church is true: by its claim to restored authority, or by whether its teaching agrees with the gospel already delivered by the apostles?

3 Verses to Memorize:

- Matthew 16:18 (preserved) | Hebrews 7:24-25 (permanent priest) | Galatians 1:8 (gospel test)