

Preaching the Gospel: Mormonism

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Gospel to Mormons Session 3

- ◆ Discuss doctrine of Scripture and Authority
- ◆ Discuss LDS doctrine of salvation
- ◆ Discuss LDS “Apostasy” Doctrine (AD 1 to 1820)
- ◆ Ideas on effective personal evangelism to Mormon people

LDS Doctrine of Scripture & Authority

Recognizes the LDS Four Standard Works as authoritative. These include the Bible "as far as it is translated correctly" (Articles of Faith 1:8). It also includes The Book of Mormon (BOM) which Joseph Smith declared is "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" (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 194).

LDS Doctrine of Scripture & Authority

The LDS church regards The Doctrine and Covenants (D&C) as Scripture. It "is a collection of modern revelations . . . regarding The Church of Jesus Christ as it has been restored in these last days" (GP, p. 54).

The Pearl of the Great Price (PGP) is the fourth book believed to be inspired.

"It clarifies doctrines and teachings that were lost from the Bible and gives added information concerning the creation of the earth" (GP, p. 54).

LDS Doctrine of Scripture & Authority

The church's president is regarded as "a seer, a revelator, a translator, and a prophet" (D&C 107:91-92).

LDS view of the Bible

- In the LDS Articles of Faith we find that Mormons believe “the Bible in so far as it is correctly translated.” While on the surface this seems reasonable, this is not actually what most Mormons believe regarding the veracity of the Bible.
- The Book of Mormon states their stand more correctly:

“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...” 1 Nephi 13:28

LDS view of Apostasy's Effect on the Bible

Position documented

“Satan guided his servant in taking many plain and precious things, and many covenants of the Lord from the Bible, so that men would stumble and fall and lose their souls.” Bruce McConkie (Apostle), The Millennial Messiah, p.160-161

“Add all this imperfection to the uncertainty of translation, and who, in his right mind, could for one moment suppose the Bible in its present form to be a perfect guide. Who knows that even one verse of the whole Bible has escaped pollution, so as to convey the same sense now that it did in the original. Orson Pratt (Apostle), The Bible an Insufficient Guide, p.47

Is the Bible Reliable?



By Dr Dave Geisler

www.meeknessandtruth.org

To Discover Whether the Bible is Reliable, You Need M.A.P.S.!

(The acrostic M.A.P.S. was developed by Hank Hanegraaff)

- Manuscripts
- **Archaeology**
- Prophecy
- Statistical *Probability*



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Establishing The Case For The Reliability Of The New Testament

1. Are the New Testament Documents a Reliable Record of the Things Jesus Said and Did?

Manuscript Evidence

Three Tests:

- **Bibliographical**
- **External evidence**
- Internal evidence

Bibliographical Test

It examines the textual transmission by which documents reach us.

1. The **number** of copies
2. The **time** interval between the original and the existing copies
3. The **degree of accuracy** of the copies

The Number of Copies

Author	Book	(X)	Copies
Caesar	Gallic Wars	1000 yrs	10
Plato		c. 1300 yrs	7
Tacitus	Annals	c. 1000 yrs	20
Pliny	Natural History	c. 750 yrs	7
Thucydides	History	c. 1300 yrs	8
Herodotus	History	c. 1350 yrs	8
Homer	Iliad	c. 400 yrs	643
New Testament		50 yrs 100 yrs 150 yrs 225 yrs	5,686

The Time Test

Author	Book	Written	Earliest Copy	(X)
Caesar	Gallic Wars	100 – 44 BC	c. 900 AD	1000 yrs
Plato		400 BC	c. 900 AD	c. 1300 yrs
Tacitus	Annals	100 AD	c. 1100 AD	c. 1000 yrs
Pliny	Natural History	61 – 133 AD	c. 850 AD	c. 750 yrs
Thucydides	History	460 – 400 BC	c. 900 BC	c. 1300 yrs
Herodotus	History	480 – 425 BC	c. 900 AD	c. 1350 yrs
Homer	Iliad	800 BC	c. 400 BC	c. 400 yrs
New Testament		50 – 100 AD	c. 114 fragments c. 200 books c. 250 most of NT c. 325 completed NT	25-50 yrs 100 yrs 150 yrs 225 yrs



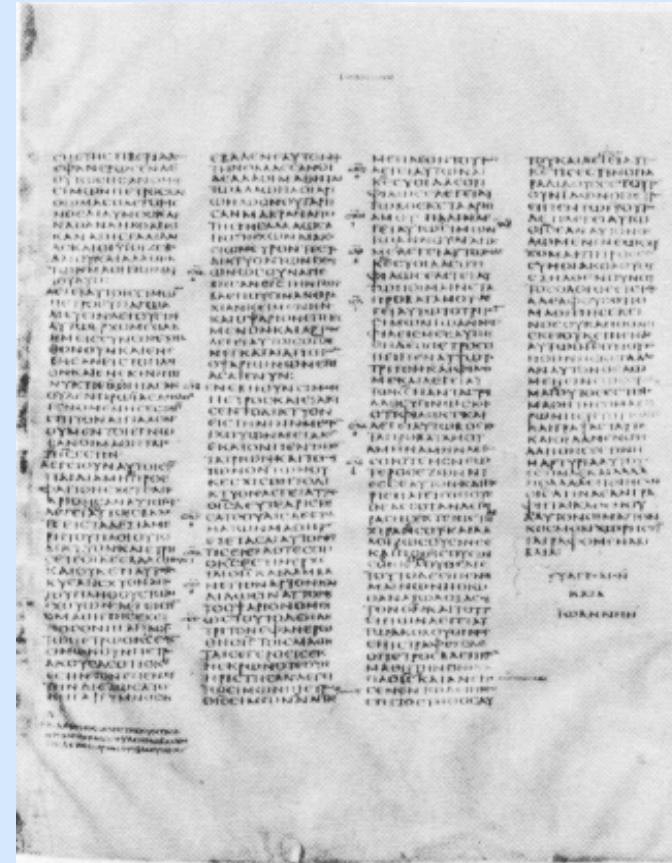
Codex Sinaiticus, 340 AD

Contains half of the Old Testament books and all the N.T. except a few verses such as Mark 16:9-20 and Jn. 7:53-8:11.

Codex Vaticanus

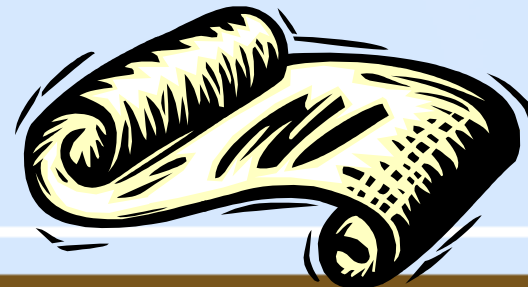
*Contains almost the entire
Bible old and new - A.D.
325-350*

It includes most of the LXX
version of the Old Testament and
most of the New Testament in
Greek. Missing are I Tim. through
Philemon, Heb. 9:14 to the end of
the N.T. and the General Epistles.



What Are The Dead Sea Scrolls and Why are They Important?

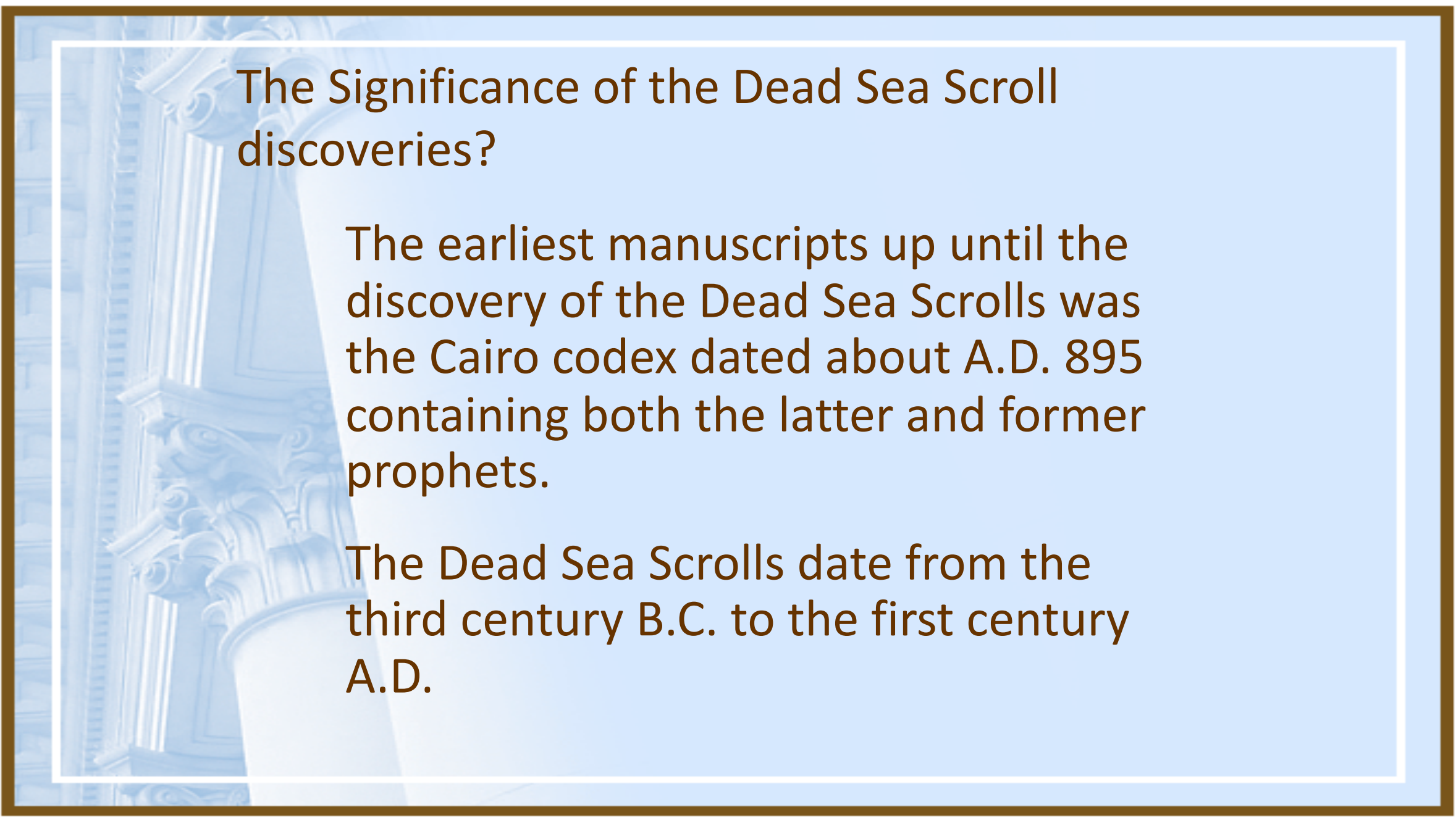
- **In 1947 – A bedouin shepherd boy discovered scrolls in cave** at Qumran (about eight miles south of Jericho)
- The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls affirms the historical reliability of the Old Testament.
- They represent 1100 ancient manuscripts and more than 100,000 fragments
- They were written primarily in Hebrew and Aramaic, written by the Essences.



The Dead Sea Scrolls

- *The Dead Sea Scrolls demonstrated the meticulous care in recording the manuscripts for Jews.*
- *The Dead Sea scrolls attest to textual accuracy*



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The Significance of the Dead Sea Scroll discoveries?

The earliest manuscripts up until the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls was the Cairo codex dated about A.D. 895 containing both the latter and former prophets.

The Dead Sea Scrolls date from the third century B.C. to the first century A.D.

Isaiah 53 in the Great Isaiah Scroll

(A Dead Sea Scroll from 100 B.C.)

A photograph of a fragment of the Great Isaiah Scroll, showing Hebrew text written in black ink on a parchment-like surface. The text is arranged in horizontal lines. Red ink markings, including numbers and symbols, are visible above and to the right of the main text, likely indicating line numbers or specific verses. The fragment shows the beginning of a chapter, with the number '53' clearly visible in red ink on the right side. The text is a translation of Isaiah 53, describing the suffering servant.

1 הַמְשַׁעֵל עֲשָׂה וְיִדְוֶה וְיִשָּׂא וְגִבּוֹר יִשְׂאָהוּדָה יָאֵשֶׁר שִׁבְעָה 1
עֹלֵמָה רִבְיָה עַל עֲשָׂאוֹתָי אֲנִי כִּי אֲדַוֶּה וְהוֹאִדוּ עֲבֹדָה אֵת
15 וְהוֹאִדוּ אֵת רִבְיָה עֲלַי וְדָבְעוּ בְלִבָּי כִּי אֲנִי יָרָה
לֹא מוֹדֵר לְחַפְזָהּ וְאֵךְ לֹא שָׂעִיר מְחַבְּבֵהּ
5 בְּהַמְשַׁעֵל לְעֲצוּמָתוֹ הוֹדִיעַ וְהוֹדִיעַ אֵלַי וְהוֹדִיעַ עֲלַי 5
וְעֲשִׂיתָ עֲמָדָה עֲמָדָה לֹא תִּשָּׂא לִי וְלֹא תִּשָּׂא לִי וְלֹא תִּשָּׂא
וְתִשָּׂא עֲמָדָה וְהוֹדִיעַ אֵת עֲמָדָה וְהוֹדִיעַ אֵת
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נִשָּׂא וְעֲשִׂיתָ עֲמָדָה וְעֲשִׂיתָ עֲמָדָה וְעֲשִׂיתָ עֲמָדָה
10 וְעֲשִׂיתָ עֲמָדָה עֲמָדָה עֲשִׂיתָ עֲמָדָה עֲשִׂיתָ עֲמָדָה
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15 עֲשִׂיתָ עֲמָדָה עֲשִׂיתָ עֲמָדָה עֲשִׂיתָ עֲמָדָה עֲשִׂיתָ עֲמָדָה

The Significance of the Dead Sea Scroll discoveries?

Massoretic Text of Isaiah

916 A.D.

Dead Sea Scrolls text of Isaiah

125 B.C

Isaiah 53 has 166 words

words in question=1

Total variation= < 5%

See A Survey of Old Testament Introduction, p.19 Gleason Archer, Jr.

Significance of the Dead Sea Scrolls?

DSS



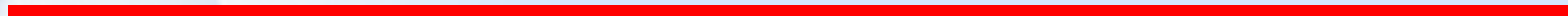
BC 125

Most
complete OT
Manuscript



AD 900

~ 1000 years!



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The Significance of the Dead Sea Scroll discoveries?

The two copies of Isaiah found in the Qumran caves, “proved to be word for word identical with our standard Hebrew Bible in more than 95% of the text. The 5% of variation consisted chiefly of obvious slips of the pen and variations in spelling.”

A Survey of Old Testament Introduction, p.19 Gleason Archer, Jr.

LDS Doctrine of Scripture & Authority

Biblical Response:

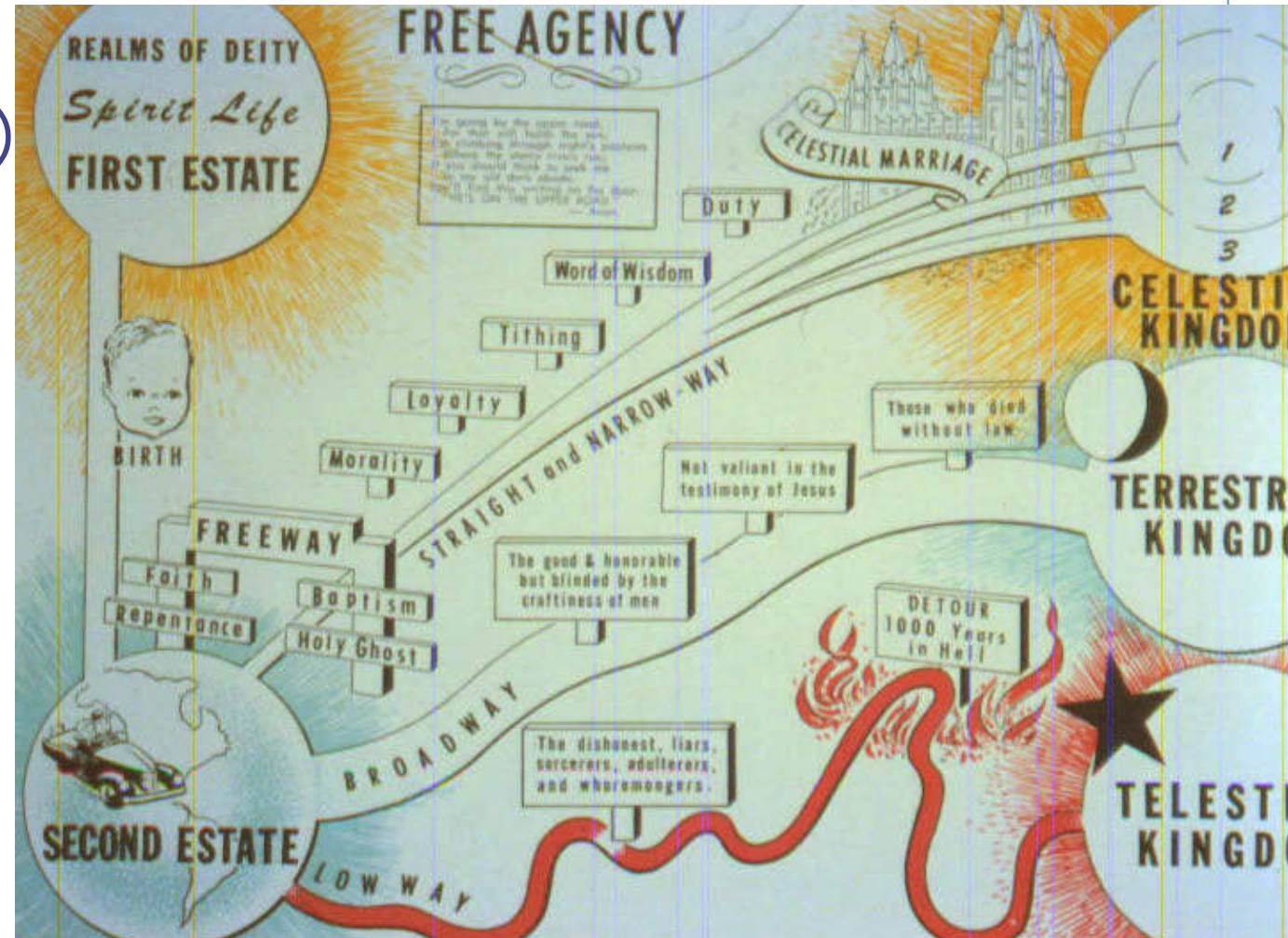
The Bible (Old and New Testaments) is the unique, revealed, and inspired Word of God. It is the sole authority for faith and practice for Christians. The bible has been faithfully translated! (see 2 Tim. 3:15-17; 2 Pet. 1:19-21)

LDS position on the Bible is untenable:

- Many manuscripts predate the Catholic Church (the “great and abominable church” mention in the BOM) by hundreds of years.
- Many writings of early Christians contain copious quotations of the scriptures so as to nearly allow the reassembly of the New Testament from them.
- Although there are many writings chronicling the arguments for and against various errors that were circulating during the first several centuries of the church, none of these elude to anything resembling Mormonism. If Mormonism represents true 1st century Christianity, how could these early writers completely overlooked it.

The Mormon Salvation Scheme

- ◆ Celestial State (D&C 76:50-70)
 - Believe, baptized, cleansed by commandments
- ◆ Terrestrial State (71-80)
 - Received Gospel after death
- ◆ Telestial State (81-90)
 - In hell till last resurrection
- ◆ Hell (25-49)
 - Deny Holy Spirit after having received it



LDS Doctrine of Salvation

Jesus' atonement provided immortality for all people. Exaltation (godhood) is available only to Mormons through obedience to LDS teachings: faith, baptism, endowments, celestial marriage, and tithing. "Wherefore, as it is written, they are gods, even the sons of God-Wherefore, all things are theirs" (D&C, 76:58-59).

These are some of the blessings given to exalted people:

1. They will live eternally in the presence of Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ (see D&C, 76).

LDS Doctrine of Salvation

2. They will become gods.
3. They will have their righteous family members with them and will be able to have spirit children also. These spirit children will have the same relationship to them as we do to our Heavenly Father. They will be an eternal family.
4. They will receive a fullness of joy.
5. They will have everything that our Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ have - all power, glory, dominion, and knowledge (See GP, p. 302).

LDS Doctrine of Salvation

Baptism for the dead provides post-mortem salvation for non-Mormons, and is "by immersion performed by a living person for one who is dead. This ordinance is performed in temples" (GP, p. 375). (See also GP, chapters 18-23.).

Baptism for the dead

◆ 1 Cor 15:29: 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? ³⁰ Why are we in danger every hour?

The Holy Bible: English Standard Version. (2016). (1 Co 15:29–30).
Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

Baptism for the Dead

- ◆ Paul never says he or any other Christian ever baptized the dead.
- ◆ The Bible never commands baptism for the dead. Verse 29 states a fact; it does not give a command.
- ◆ The LDS interpretation of the living being vicariously baptized for the dead violates the biblical teaching that death ends a person's chance to repent and believe.

Baptism for the Dead

- ◆ Hebrews 9:27:²⁷ And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment,
- ◆ Luke 16:19-31: Jesus parable of the rich man and Lazarus

Doctrine of Salvation

Biblical Response:

Salvation is release from the guilt and power of sin through God's gift of grace. It is provided through Christ's atonement and received by personal faith in Christ as Savior and Lord. (see Rom. 3:20; 10:9- 10; Eph. 2:8-10)

Gospel message: Faith Alone, Grace Alone through Christ Alone!

LDS Apostasy Doctrine

Introduction

Mormons teach that the apostasy immediately followed the death of the Apostles, was complete and not only resulted in the corruption of the Bible, but the complete eradication of the true Church:

- Began immediately after the apostles died and proceeded so quickly that the true Church was no longer in existence by the end of the 3rd century.
- The Bible was purposefully changed to erase previous truths regarding the nature of God, the Church and Salvation
- Necessitated “The Restoration” by Joseph Smith in 1820

LDS Apostasy Doctrine

Apostasy's Effect on the Church

- Not partial but complete apostasy and destruction of the true Church
- Aaronic and Melchizedek priesthoods taken away.
- Prophets and Apostles ceased

Position documented

With the passing of the Apostles and the loss of the priesthood keys, corrupt doctrines were introduced into the Church...By the second and third centuries, widespread changes had been made in the pure doctrines and ordinances given by the Savior. The Church that Jesus had established and sanctioned was no longer on this earth” --Ezra Taft Benson (Prophet), Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson, p.86

Galatians 1:6-8

⁶ I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel— ⁷ not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. 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.

[*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](#). (2016). (Ga 1:6–8). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

LDS Apostasy Doctrine

Apostasy's Effect on the Church

Proof Texts

Galatians 1:8

Perhaps in an effort to “beat you to the punch”, Mormons sometimes use this passage to teach that the apostasy ultimately resulted in “another gospel” accepted by all believers. Of course, there were other gospels taught very early on, one of which Paul deals with here in Galatians. In this case it was efforts of Judaizing teachers to require that Gentiles must be circumcised before they could be accepted as Christians. Some other false doctrines dealt with in the NT were Gnosticism, Nicolaitian doctrine, the doctrine of Balaam, etc,... Surely the Mormon would agree that there are false gospels in circulation today (Mormonism is a good example), but none of these preclude the existence of the pure Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Acts 20:29-31

²⁹ I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; ³⁰ and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them. ³¹ Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish every one with tears.

[*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](#). (2016). (Ac 20:29–31). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

LDS doctrine of Apostasy

Proof Texts

Acts 20:30

Paul warns the Ephesian elders that some false teachers would arise from among them and have success deceiving some of the brethren. Mormons use this verse to teach that the entire church would go into complete apostasy and would require the restoration of the church by Joseph Smith, Jr.

1) These elders were forewarned and would have been ready to confront this problem (see II Peter 3:17-18);

2) Why would the Spirit, through Paul warn these men if their efforts were ultimately doomed to fail;

3) These false teachers would be “drawing away disciples” which seems to indicate the faithful brethren would remain;

4) Paul wrote the book Ephesians (about 8 years later) to the same people. Throughout the book he encourages them to be faithful despite deceivers (4:6). He also makes it clear that glory is to be given to God “in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever.” (3:20)

1 Timothy 4:1-2

Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons, ² through the insincerity of liars whose consciences are seared,

[*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](#). (2016). (1 Ti 4:1–2). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

The Apostasy and Its Effect

Proof Texts

I Timothy 4:1-2

Notice that verse 1 states that “some” would depart from the faith. Mormons miss the point of such warnings given by the Holy Spirit, namely, to avoid the destruction of those who would forsake the Lord and fall away into apostasy (see II Peter 3:14, 17-18). In Matthew 28:18-20, Jesus promised to those to whom the great commission was given, “...I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” It is hard to imagine Jesus keeping that promise and yet allowing the church to completely disappear.

LDS Apostasy Doctrine

Inconsistencies in the Mormon Version of the Apostasy

John and the Three Nephites

“And these men that have never tasted death – the three Nephites and the Apostle John -are busy working to bring to pass righteousness and carry out the purposes of God.”

Franklin Dewey Richard (Apostle), Collected Discourses, vol.3

So how could there have been a complete apostasy if these four men have been faithfully attending to the work of the Lord and bringing to pass righteousness?

LDS Apostasy Doctrine

Inconsistencies in the Mormon Version of the Apostasy

Mormon Apostolic Succession

Mormons have always maintained that the LDS Church is identical to the church in the 1st century. One characteristic of the LDS Church is their attentiveness to promptly replacing Apostles as they die. If this was the practice of the 1st century church, why did the Apostles disappear immediately after the 1st century and result in the complete falling away of the church as they assert?

Conclusions on Mormonism

- ◆ Joseph Smith is a false prophet.
- ◆ The Book of Mormon, Doctrines & Covenants, and Pearl of Great Price are false revelations.
- ◆ Mormonism is a false religion.
- ◆ Mormon people need the real Jesus and the true Gospel



Witnessing To Mormons

1. Have a basic and clear understanding of the Christian faith and the gospel.
2. Be aware of the unique Mormon doctrines.
3. Remember, Mormons use Christian vocabulary (gospel, atonement, god), but radically redefine their meanings. Define clearly what you mean when you use biblical words.
4. Present a clear testimony of your faith in **Christ alone** for salvation.
5. Show your Mormon friend that the Bible teaches salvation alone through the cross of Christ (John 14:6; John 3:16; Rom. 10:4,10-13; Eph. 2:8-9).

Witnessing To Mormons

6. Warn the Mormon about trusting in feelings (i.e., the burning in the bosom) for a validation of Mormonism's truth claims. Without historical, objective verification, feelings are useless.

7. When Mormons use a Bible verse, read carefully the verses before and afterward to make clear the exact meaning and purpose of the passage. Don't let them take Bible verses out of context. Read carefully the full reference in the Bible before deciding what any one verse means.

8. Keep the central doctrines of the faith as the focus of your discussion. Who is God and Who is Jesus? Not in name but attributes.

Witnessing To Mormons

9. Share the plan of salvation with your Mormon friend. Emphasize that salvation is a gift to be received, not a merit to be earned. LDS Pascal Wager.

10. Do the basics: pray, trust the Holy Spirit, and be loving, patient, and steadfast.

Witnessing to LDS people

- ◆ See Mormons as victims, not enemies
- ◆ Treat Mormons with genuine love and respect
- ◆ Focus on Mormon Stress points
- ◆ Speak the mormon language
- ◆ Witness Christ rather than debate Mormonism

From: Truth in Love Ministry (TILM.ORG)

Witnessing to LDS people

- ◆ Focus on their stress points rather than on the things in Mormonism which bother you.
- ◆ It is common for Christians to focus on the aspects of Mormonism which demonstrate it is not Christian. These topics, however, don't bother most Mormons. In fact, most view them as strengths of Mormonism. As a result, most Mormons quickly shrug off anything we say.
- ◆ When, however, we talk about things in Mormonism which give them stress, their ears perk up. Topics like forgiveness, living eternally with Heavenly Father, worthiness and perfection. Through pointed use of God's Word, we can ***turn their stress points into rest points in Jesus.***

Witnessing to LDS people

Witness Christ rather than debate Mormonism.

When we show what is wrong with Mormonism, we put the focus on it rather than on Christ. In addition, we are almost guaranteeing that they will become defensive.

God called us to proclaim the wonderful things he has done. This puts the focus on him rather than on Mormonism. Furthermore, it sets a positive rather than a negative tone. Most importantly, we bring to bear ***the most powerful tool in the world, the Gospel***, “the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes” (Romans 1:16).



*NOW TO HIM WHO IS ABLE
TO DO FAR MORE ABUNDANTLY*

THAN ALL THAT WE ASK OR THINK, ACCORDING TO THE POWER AT WORK WITHIN US, TO HIM BE GLORY
IN THE CHURCH AND IN CHRIST JESUS THROUGHOUT ALL GENERATIONS, FOREVER AND EVER. AMEN.

EPHESIANS 3:20-21