

Nevertheless, Glory be to the Father

[Jayson S. Kunzler](#)

Nevertheless, Glory be to the Father

This week, as we remember the most sacred time in history, I would like to share with you my testimony of and gratitude for God, the Eternal Father, and *his role* in the events we celebrate this week. When pondering the Atonement and the Resurrection, I wonder if sometimes we focus so much on what happened to Jesus Christ that we forget or discount the role of God the Father in those miraculous events. I hope that in reading this message, each of us will be filled with a reverent gratitude for both the Father and the Son.

The Prophet Joseph Smith taught the following (and I've taken some license to reformat his words into a numbered list for added emphasis):

“The fundamental principles of our religion are the testimony of the Apostles and Prophets, concerning Jesus Christ, that He:

- a) died,
- b) was buried, and
- c) rose again the third day, and
- d) ascended into heaven;

and all other things which pertain to our religion are only appendages to it.”

(Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith*, 49, emphasis added)

Upon careful reading of those words of Joseph Smith, you will note that he does NOT simply say that the fundamental principles of our religion are the death, burial,

resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ. Rather, he says that the fundamental principles of our religion “are the testimony of the Apostles and Prophets” concerning these things. Think of the weight this places on the testimonies of men like Peter, James, John, and the other Apostles who were eyewitness to these sacred events! During my scripture study last Sunday, I found myself re-reading and reflecting on the testimonies of the New Testament apostles concerning these very things. The chief apostle—Peter—left us a most powerful witness on behalf of the others. Please carefully note the role of *God the Father* in his testimony:

38 ...God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.

39 And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree:

40 Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly;

41 Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead.

42 And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead.

43 To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.

44 While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.

(Acts 10:38-44, emphasis added)

In Peter’s testimony—which Joseph Smith declared **to be** the fundamental principle of our religion—he testifies that God the Father “anointed” Jesus; that he “was with him”; that he “raised up” or resurrected his Son; that he “ordained” him to be the Judge of the living and the dead; and that he (the

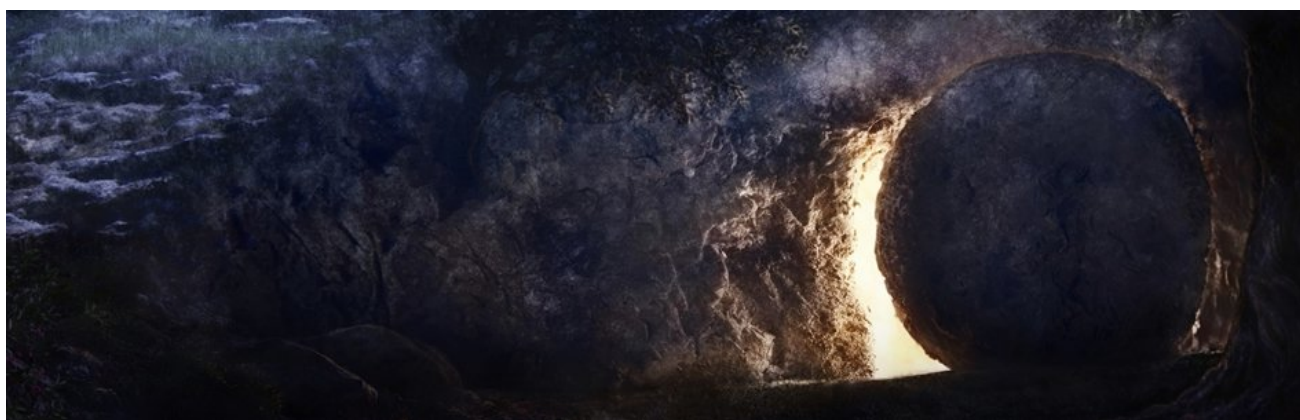
Father) was even the one who “chose witnesses” to whom He (God) “shewed [Christ] openly”. The role of the Father in all of these events is most profound and sacred.

According to the apostle John, Jesus taught:

17 Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again.

18 No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.

(John 10:17-18)



Many have erroneously interpreted verse 18 to mean that Jesus had the power to “resurrect himself”, because he was the begotten Son of God in the flesh. It is true that the Savior was given power over death, as King Benjamin prophesied that “he shall suffer...even more than man can suffer, except it be unto death.” (see Mosiah 3:7). Such power—which also came from the Father—is what enabled Christ to endure all of the sufferings at Gethsemane and Golgotha. None other was worthy or capable of such suffering, for there could “be nothing which is short of an infinite atonement which will suffice for the sins of the world.” (Alma 34:12). Only “God himself [could] come down among the children of men, and...redeem his people.” (Mosiah 15:1).

Notwithstanding, no person—including even God—has the power to resurrect himself. President Spencer W. Kimball, when quoting Brigham Young, taught:

“We have not, neither can we receive here, the **ordinance** and the **keys** of resurrection...[the keys] will be given to those

who have passed off this stage of action and have received their bodies again...They will be **ordained**, by those who hold the keys of the resurrection, to go forth and resurrect the Saints, **just as we receive the ordinance of baptism then receive the keys of authority to baptize others** for the remission of their sins. **This is one of the ordinances** we cannot receive here [on the earth], and there are many more.” (see <https://www.lds.org/ensign/1977/05/our-great-potential?lang=eng>).

As Presidents Kimball and Young taught, resurrection (like baptism, and like the power to create “both spirit and body”) is an “ordinance” that is connected with “keys” of Priesthood. It is contrary to the order of heaven for any person to ever perform an ordinance for himself. As Joseph Smith taught, “God himself could not create himself.” (see <https://www.lds.org/ensign/1971/05/the-king-follett-sermon?lang=eng>). Christ did not (and could not) “beget” or “give birth” to himself; he did not (and could not) “ordain” himself; and, he did not (and could not) “baptize” himself. In all of these things, he was entirely dependent on the Father. Similarly, he did not perform the ordinance of resurrection for himself. Only a resurrected being can resurrect someone—and, as Peter declared above, it was God the Father who “raised up [Christ] on the third day”.

The Master seems to have taught this principle himself:

19 Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.

20 For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth: and he [i.e., the Father] will shew him [i.e., the Son] greater works than these, that ye may marvel.

21 For as the **Father** raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth *them*; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will.

(John 5:19-21)

Two things are interesting to note about John's passage above. First, the Lord said that he "can do nothing of himself." He was only able to do what the Father commanded and what he "seeth the Father do." Verses 20 and 21 are an indication that Jesus was referring to the resurrection when making this statement. The "greater works" than the miracles he performed in mortality had reference to the resurrection, which would cause one to "marvel".



The second thing to note about verse 21 is that the word "them" is italicized in the scriptures. What does it mean when a word in the scriptures is shown in italics? The answer is given from "Abbreviations" section of *Study Helps* in the scriptures: "Following the traditional format, italics in Bible verses indicate words that are not found in the original text (Hebrew, Aramaic, or Greek) but have been added for clarification in the translation." Thus, when a word appears in italics in our scriptures, it means that such a word did not exist in the original text, but was added by the English translators (like William Tyndale, for instance).

So, in the case of verse 21, the word "them" may be, but is not necessarily, an accurate translation—it simply was not spoken by Jesus in the original language. A more literal translation of the verse would read:

21 For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will.

The word "quicken" means to bring life to, or to resurrect. In the context of the surrounding verses (like verses 19 and 20), Jesus could be referring to himself as the one who is to be resurrected, as follows:

21 For as the Father raiseth up the dead [i.e., the Son], and quickeneth [*him*]; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will.

The Lord's reference to the Father "raising up the dead" may be a direct reference to his own upcoming resurrection, especially given that Christ is the "first-fruits" of the resurrection, from all the worlds belonging to the Father. This may come as a surprise to some who (like me) grew up thinking that Christ resurrected himself. However, the New Testament is filled with the "testimonies of the apostles and prophets" that it was God the Father who resurrected his Son, Jesus Christ. The following is a list of some of the scriptural references that contain such testimonies—that Christ was resurrected by his Father. It is a long list, but each reflects a profound and powerful witness:

- Acts 2:22-24—"Jesus of Nazareth...ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death."
- Acts 2:29-33—"God had sworn with an oath...that he would raise up Christ...This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we are all witnesses."
- Acts 3:13-15—"Ye...killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses."
- Acts 3:25-26—"God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities."
- Acts 4:10—"By the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead..."
- Acts 5:29-32—"The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree...and we are his witnesses of these things."
- Acts 10:36-43—"We are witnesses of [Jesus of Nazareth]...whom they slew and hanged on a tree: Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly."
- Acts 13:29-31—"They took [Jesus] down from the tree, and laid him in a sepulchre. But God raised him from the dead."
- Acts 13:32-34—"We declare unto you glad tidings, how...God hath raised up Jesus again."
- Acts 13:35-37—"He [the Holy One], whom God raised again, saw no corruption."
- Romans 4:24-25—"Believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead."

- Romans 6:4—"As Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."
- Romans 8:10-11—"If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies..."
- Romans 10:9—"If thou...shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised [the Lord Jesus] from the dead, thou shalt be saved."
- 1 Corinthians 6:14—"God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by his own power."
- 1 Corinthians 15:12-23—"We have testified of God that he raised up Christ."
- 2 Corinthians 4:13-14—"He which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus."
- Galatians 1:1—"Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead)"
- Colossians 2:12—"Ye are risen with [Christ] through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead."
- 1 Peter 1:18-21—"Believe in God, that raised up [Christ] from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God."

The Book of Mormon prophet Abinadi gave a similar testimony that God (the Father) broke the bands of death:

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

(Mosiah 15:8)

The Prophet Joseph Smith also added his own witness to that of the New Testament apostles. He declared:

"**God** has appointed a day in which He will judge the world, and this He has given an assurance of in that **He raised up His Son Jesus Christ from the dead**—the point on which the hope of all who believe the inspired record is founded for their future happiness and enjoyment;

because, "If Christ be not risen," said Paul to the Corinthians, "your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ have perished" (see 1 Cor. 15). If the resurrection from the dead be not an important point, or item in our faith, we must confess that we know nothing about it; for if there be no resurrection from the dead, then Christ has not risen; and if Christ has not risen He was not the Son of God; and if He was not the Son of God, there is not nor cannot be a Son of God, if the present book called the Scriptures is true; because the time has gone by when, according to that book, He was to make His appearance. On this subject, however, we are reminded of the words of Peter to the Jewish Sanhedrim, when speaking of Christ, **he says that God raised Him from the dead, and we (the apostles) are His witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Ghost, whom God had given to them that obey Him** (see Acts 5). So that after the testimony of the Scriptures on this point, the assurance is given by the Holy Ghost, bearing witness to those who obey Him, that Christ Himself has assuredly risen from the dead; and if He has risen from the dead. He will, by His power, bring all men to stand before Him." (Joseph Smith, *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 2:18-19.)

Importantly, Joseph Smith taught that the doctrine that the Father "raised up His Son Jesus Christ from the dead" is the very "point on which the hope of all who believe the inspired record is founded." In other words, this is perhaps the most glorious and fundamental doctrine of the scriptures. In later years, President Charles W. Penrose of the First Presidency echoed the same testimony in simplicity and plainness. He declared:

"Hallelujah! Praise to God for the resurrection of Jesus Christ, for it was the Father that raised up Christ from the dead!" (President Charles W. Penrose, *Conference Report*, April 1915, Overflow Meeting. 35.)

This doctrine takes on added meaning when we consider the principle of BAPTISM. The apostle Paul taught that baptism is

in similitude of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ:

3 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?

4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

5 For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection.

(Romans 6:3-5)

We know that Christ himself was baptized to “fulfill all righteousness”, but he did not (and could not) baptize himself. Did Christ “bury” himself into the water? No, it was John the Baptist who buried him. After he was buried in the water, did Jesus raise himself up out of the water? No. Again, it was John the Baptist who raised him up out of the watery grave of baptism. Thus, in a most profound manner, John became the very symbol and type of God the Eternal Father, who would later bury His Only Begotten Son into death, and subsequently “raise him up from the dead by the glory of the Father” on the third day. Our own baptism is also a symbol of death and resurrection. No person—of his own power—can lay down his life and then take it up again, any more than he can baptize himself into death and come forth in “newness of life”. Baptism is in similitude of death and resurrection. One cannot accomplish either ordinance alone; baptism (and resurrection) both must be performed by another who is already baptized (or resurrected). The Son of God himself was evidently no exception when he laid down his life and took it up again. It was the power of the Father that enabled him to do these things.

We should be deeply grateful to the Father for the resurrection, even as we are grateful to His Son. It is no wonder that Jesus Christ, in speaking of his own suffering when he drank the bitter cup, exclaimed, “Nevertheless, glory

be to the Father, and I partook and finished my preparations unto the children of men.” (D&C 19:19). He placed all of the glory of his suffering, death, and resurrection onto the Father. Consequently, as we know, Christ was then crowned with the same glory of the Father (of which his baptism was a type):

16 And I, John, bear record that he [Christ] received a fulness of the glory of the Father;

17 And he received all power, both in heaven and on earth, and the glory of the Father was with him, for he dwelt in him.

19 I give unto you these sayings that you may understand and know how to worship, and know what you worship, that you may come unto the Father in my name, and in due time receive of his fulness.

20 For if you keep my commandments you shall receive of his fulness, and be glorified in me as I am in the Father.

(D&C 93:16-17, 19-20)

I am most grateful for this time of year when we remember both the Father and the Son—inseparably—as the “two personages who constitute the great, matchless, governing, and supreme power over all things.” (*Lectures on Faith*, 5:2). Truly, the testimony of the apostles and prophets concerning the reality of the resurrection—that God resurrected his Divine Son who rose triumphant from the tomb—is the fundamental principle of the gospel. All other principles of our religion are only appendages to it. This week and always, may our hearts be full of the same gratitude expressed by the apostle Paul:

“Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

(1 Corinthians 15:57)



A Letter to My Christian Friends

[James F. Stoddard III](#)

In response to what Mormons believe please permit me to add my thoughts. I am a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (sometimes referred to as “Mormons” or “Latter-day Saints”) and my ancestry is through Joseph Smith’s grandfather, Asael Smith and cousins. I have had the privilege of studying the writings of Joseph Smith and his successors for several hours per day on average since my youth. Some opportunities to study Church doctrine have also included serving as an LDS missionary and instructing at the LDS Missionary Training Center as well as working at an LDS high school and as an LDS seminary teacher. ¹ I rehearse this history only to suggest that I feel comfortable claiming a basic understanding of the life and teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith and of the doctrine of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Bible

In my studies I have not found one doctrine taught by the Prophet Joseph Smith that is not firmly grounded in the Bible. The Bible has ever been the test of the truthfulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ. President Brigham Young, successor and personal friend to the Prophet Joseph Smith, taught “Take up the Bible, compare the religion of the Latter-day Saints with it, and see if it will stand the test.” ² The true test of the Book of Mormon is also in its comparison with the teachings of the Bible. ([Moroni 10:3](#)) ³ In addition to the statements of the Prophet Joseph Smith, the general teachings of his successors, the presidents of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, also align with the Biblical Word of God. In fact, the disagreement between “Mormons” and some claiming to be “mainstream” Christians, in my opinion, typically centers on LDS theology being too literalistic in its interpretation of the Bible.

Gifts of the Spirit

Latter-day Saints believe that the gifts of the spirit which were known by the prophets in the Old Testament and then known again to the faithful in the New Testament can also be found among worthy Christians today. This view pertaining to the importance of the Holy Spirit in the lives of the individual was shared by many of the early reformers as well as modern Christians throughout the world. Martin Luther himself believed in justification and sanctification through Christ and the Holy Spirit. He is reported as teaching, “. . . to be born of God is to acquire the nature of God . . .” and “God’s grace makes man deiform and deifies him . . .” ⁴

Later, John Wesley, the founder of Methodism taught:

We seldom hear of them [gifts of the Holy Ghost] after the fatal period, when the emperor Constantine called himself a Christian: From this time they almost totally ceased: The cause of this was not, (as has been vulgarly supposed,) “because there was no more occasion for them” The real cause was, “the love of many” almost of all Christians,

so called, was “waxed cold”. The Christians had no more of the Spirit of Christ, than the other heathens. This was the real cause why extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost were no longer to be found in the Christian church; because the Christians were turned heathens again, and had only a dead form left. ⁵

Not alone were gifts of the Spirit prized throughout the Reformation, but many humble Christians throughout the world in our own day have remarkable experiences. Richard Wurmbrand, founder of Voice of the Martyrs, was given, through the grace of Christ, many sacred experiences while suffering for several years in prison. Before the United States Senate he testified:

For years I have never seen sun, moon, flowers, snow, stars, no man except the interrogator who beat, but I can say I have seen heaven open, I have seen Jesus Christ, I have seen the angels and we were very happy there. ⁶

Another faithful Christian, known throughout the world as Brother Yun, was one of the pioneers of Christianity in modern China. In his autobiography, *The Heavenly Man: The Remarkable True Story of Chinese Christian Brother Yun*, are recorded visions, healings, revelation and miracles including his remarkable escape from Zhengzhou Maximum Security prison.

As I have carefully studied the remarkable lives of modern Christians throughout the world including Brother Andrew, Brother Yun, Richard Wurmbrand and many others I have been impressed in finding their experiences so similar to the lives of faithful members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. One of the 13 Articles of Faith of the LDS Church reads: “We believe in the gift of tongues, prophecy, revelation, visions, healing, interpretation of tongues, and so forth.” ⁷

Creeds

One way the Latter Day Saints differ from some other denominations of Christians centers upon the faith placed in the early creeds and post apostolic councils of Christendom.

These creeds include the Apostles Creed, Athanasian Creed and the Nicene Creed. Joseph Smith taught that these creeds were uninspired and caused confusion in interpreting the Bible.

One example can be found in the Athanasian Creed. The creed announces that, "The Father [is] incomprehensible, the Son [is] incomprehensible, and the Holy Spirit [is] incomprehensible." ⁸ The Athanasian Creed announces that God is incomprehensible. The Bible, however, teaches the reverse. The word of the apostle John teaches, "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." ([John 17:3 King James Version](#)) The Bible teaches that truly knowing God is salvation while the text of the Athanasian Creed declares knowing God impossible. And yet, the Athanasian Creed declares that, "This is the Catholic Faith, which except a man believe faithfully and firmly, he cannot be saved." According to the Athanasian Creed, except a man believes that God is incomprehensible (which is contrary to the teachings of the Bible) that man cannot be saved.

Councils

Another example of confusion caused by these creeds originated in a council at Nicaea in 325 A.D. The council was called as a result of disunity regarding the nature of God and the relation of the Father and the Son to one another. Note that the foundation of the Christian faith, the true nature of God, at this time was largely disputed and unknown. The issues were settled, not by revelation, but by majority in a council claiming no authority from God and overseen by the Emperor Constantine, a ruthless dictator who murdered countless individuals including those of his own family. To students of history possible shortcomings in the outcome of the Nicene Creed should not come as a surprise.

Faithful Latter Day Saints believe that the apostles, seventy and leaders that Christ chose while on earth held authority from God and were true witnesses of Christ and His Gospel on earth. Those that came after often interpreted scripture inaccurately. Therefore, Latter Day Saints hold closely to the word of God in scripture and generally reject post apostolic

philosophers, councils and creeds.

Proposed errors in the early creeds which form the foundation of many denominations of Christians could be debated indeterminately. Rather than attempting this, I will put forward some of the foundational teachings of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and leave the reader to compare these teachings to the Bible.

Doctrine

These are some of the fundamental beliefs of Latter Day Saints:

1. God literally created or better organized this earth through miraculous means using his omnipotent power and wisdom ([Genesis 1](#)). The earth was not created by or through evolution over millions of years. [9](#) [10](#) [11](#)
2. Jesus Christ is literally the Son of God and is Divine ([Matt. 17:5](#); [Mark 1:11](#); [2 Peter 1:17](#)) as taught continually in the Bible. He literally resurrected in a physical body and lives today. ([Acts 1:3](#))
3. The Godhead consists of God the Father, His Son Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit who are all One in perfection and all godly attributes as Christ desired His apostles to be one with Him ([John 17](#)).
4. We must literally be born of water and the spirit to enter into the Kingdom of God ([John 3:5](#)). All mankind must be literally baptized and born again through the Spirit. ([Mark 16:16](#))
5. God is an unchangeable God and therefore priesthood, prophets and miracles will generally exist whenever there is faith in God. ([James 1:16-17](#)) [12](#) The entire history of the Bible includes these fundamentals. ([Amos 3:7](#))
6. The Book of Mormon and other scriptures were given to support and prove to the world that the Bible is true and authentic. ([Doctrine and Covenants 20:11](#)) These other scriptures add additional witnesses that the miracles of the Old and New Testaments literally occurred. The Creation, Fall, dividing of the

continents, patriarchs ages, dividing of the Red Sea by Moses, and miracles of Jesus all literally occurred. ([3 Nephi 23:1-5](#))

7. The covenants made to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph and other prophets were literal, as is the scattering and gathering of the House of Israel. ¹³ ([Jeremiah 3:17-18](#); [Deuteronomy 30:3-6](#))
8. The Second Coming will be a literal event, and Christ will come again to reign upon the earth. ([Revelation 16:15](#))
9. God can literally speak to those of faith today. He answers prayers and performs miracles in our lives. ([Mark 16:17-18](#)) ¹⁴ ¹⁵ ¹⁶
10. All mankind will be judged of their works according to the intents of their heart. ([Revelation 20:12](#); [James 2:14-24](#); [Matthew 5:48](#))

Conclusion

There are no teachings that I am aware of in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints that are not grounded in the words of the Bible. Even the history of polygamy, although not practiced today by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, is rooted in the Bible. The Bible teaches that Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Samuel, David, Solomon, Moses, and other great men of the Bible had plural wives or came from polygamist marriages. Even the great reformer Martin Luther understood this. ¹⁷ ¹⁸ In my opinion, if there are differences between the LDS Faith and other Christians, they are differences in Biblical interpretation. Faithful “Mormons” take the Bible more literally.

The teachings of Joseph Smith, though differing from some creeds, find their foundation in the undeviating Word of God. If the Bible is Christian, members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints should be considered Christian.

Science vs. Religion? The Joseph Smith Forum Science FAQs

[James F. Stoddard III](#)

[Joseph Smith Forum Science FAQs](#)

Why science FAQs? The Joseph Smith Forum Science FAQs contain 40 Frequently Asked Questions which are often asked and widely debated regarding the theories of organic evolution and the age of the earth as they pertain to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Darwinism and Neo-Darwinism are subjects that cause dispute and often uneasiness, but typically are poorly understood. Some research done in the past has attempted to create harmony between evolutionary scientific speculations and the teachings of the Gospel, often making doctrinal assertions not sufficiently supported. At times gospel research has comprised a few statements, typically made out of context, leaving the reader to draw faulty conclusions. In contrast, the Joseph Smith Forum Science FAQs consist of several hundred pages of statements made by the leadership of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, particularly those who became president of the Church.

Should science be discussed with the Gospel of Jesus Christ? Often current scientific philosophies are portrayed as “science” while those drawing conflicting conclusions are viewed as unscientific. Some advance the notion that debate on evolution among the educated has ceased and that Darwinian ideas are established fact. They conclude that the myriad of anti-evolution statements from LDS Church leaders were uneducated and out of date, as are the references in the

standard works. Better to keep “science” and religion in their separate domains to avoid this inevitable conflict, they contend. There is often an attempt to misconstrue the conflict, portraying the issue as misalignment between “science” and religion. Those working on Joseph Smith Foundation projects believe that true science supports the scriptures and will always be in harmony with the revealed word of God. The Joseph Smith Forum Science FAQ compilation consists primarily of scriptural and prophetic statements as these are unchanging. We understand that many in the current scientific establishment reject the literal Creation, literal Fall, literal Flood and literal miracles as taught in the scriptures. In contrast, we feel that it is unwise to follow the current fads of the scientific community in rejecting the word of God. There is, however, “science” (or better scientists) on both sides of this issue, although one side seems to be more in vogue at this time.

Can the Gospel of Jesus Christ be harmonized with Neo-Darwinism? The Joseph Smith Forum Science FAQs present statements from two opposing sides, demonstrating the complete disharmony which exists between the fundamental ideas of those who are classified as “macroevolutionists” and the writings of both latter-day and ancient prophets. Each section begins with the question and then provides contrasting viewpoints. Any comments expressed by the compilers are set off by blue text, most often appearing in the commentary sections. Underlining has been added for quick reference.

Can the revelations of God be trusted? In our exploration of the truth the first question that we must ask could be phrased, “Can the Revelations be trusted?” The Prophet Joseph Smith testified that the Revelations of God were given by God, and do not contain human errors:

“I never told you I was perfect; but there is no error in the revelations which I have taught.” [19](#)

In the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord himself testified:

“Search these commandments, for they are true and faithful . . . What I the Lord have spoken, I have spoken, and I excuse

not myself; . . . whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same.” [20](#)

In recent years, it has become fashionable to dismiss statements contained in the Holy Scriptures as uneducated or perhaps made by individuals who were deficient in scientific understanding. The word of the Lord in this testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith challenges these ideas.

“When I speak as a man it is Joseph only that speaks. But when the Lord speaks through me, it is no longer Joseph Smith who speaks; but it is God, and let all Israel hear.” [21](#)

What should be our ultimate source of truth? The scriptures and revelations of God must remain our constant source of truth. The Joseph Smith Forum Science FAQs were created for individuals who have faith in the revelations as contained in the scriptures and a testimony of latter-day prophets. These FAQs were not prepared for others who are embarrassed by statements made by leaders of the Church of Jesus Christ both anciently and in modern times. The Prophet Joseph Smith explained the seriousness of trifling with the word of God.

“O ye Twelve and all saints, profit by this important Key—that in all your trials troubles &, temptations, afflictions, bonds imprisonment & death See to it that you do not betray heaven, that you do not betray Jesus Christ, that you do not betray your Brethren, & that you do not betray the revelations of God whether in the bible, Book of Mormon, or Doctrine & Covenants or any of the word of God. Yea in all your kicking, & floundering see to it that you do not this thing lest innocent blood be found in your skirts & you go down to hell.” [22](#)

President Harold B. Lee Additionally testified that when the teachings of the world conflict with the revelations of God, we must remain true to the Revelations.

“We [must] measure every teaching to be found in the world of book learning by the teachings of revealed truth, as

contained in the gospel of Jesus Christ. If we find in a school text claims that contradict the word of the Lord as pertaining to the creation of the world, the origin of man, or the determination of what is right or wrong in the conduct of human souls, we may be certain that such teachings are but the theories of men.” ²³

What about the contention caused by discussing Neo-Darwinism?

We have no desire to irritate those who hold to the current scientific philosophy in contrast to the revelations of God and hope that the words of the prophets of God will not cause disharmony and contention. The Presidents of the Church from the days of the Prophet Joseph Smith until today have upheld and supported the witness found in scripture of the true origin of man. Some have sought to discredit these prophetic witnesses. President Benson taught that while subjects like Darwinian Evolution may cause some to become upset with the revelations and prophets of God, we must remain faithful.

“But it is the living prophet who really upsets the world. ‘Even in the Church,’ Why? Because the living prophet gets at what we need to know now, and the world prefers that prophets either be dead or mind their own business. . . . Some would-be authorities on evolution want the prophet to keep still on evolution. . . . How we respond to the words of a living prophet when he tells us what we need to know, but would rather not hear, is a test of our faithfulness.” ²⁴

Are the scriptures and statements of Latter-day prophets consistent?

It will become clear to anyone who reads through the Joseph Smith Forum Science FAQ compilation that those who have held the position of President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints have consistently and unanimously opposed the theories of organic evolution. President Harold B. Lee in a First Presidency Message signified that those who are “fully grounded in the faith” will not attempt to reconcile false scientific principles regarding the Creation and Fall with the word of God:

“I was somewhat sorrowed recently to hear someone, a sister

who comes from a church family, ask, "What about the pre-Adamic people?" Here was someone who I thought was fully grounded in the faith. I asked, "What about the pre-Adamic people?" She replied, "Well, aren't there evidences that people preceded the Adamic period of the earth?" I said, "Have you forgotten the scripture that says, 'And I, the Lord God, formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul, the first flesh upon the earth, the first man also...'" (Moses 3:7) I asked, "Do you believe that?" She wondered about the creation because she had read the theories of the scientists, and the question that she was really asking was: How do you reconcile science with religion? The answer must be, If science is not true, you cannot reconcile truth with error." ²⁵

What of the discord caused by this issue? Do these statements appear harsh or naïve to those who doubt the revelations and desire to mingle the philosophies of men with scripture? We, the compilers, believe they were spoken in love in hope that the followers of Christ would not be led astray in these days of deception. In this work we have attempted to lay forth the facts on this vital subject in a systematic fashion without making accusations. It is hoped that this work will help those who are struggling for understanding on this subject. It is additionally hoped that more scientifically minded individuals, with faith in God, will begin to find the true evidence that supports these prophetic witnesses. To those who disagree with this work we hope that a disagreement in opinion will not embitter and lead to contention. The same First Presidency who denounced evolution in these words:

"It is held by some that Adam was not the first man upon this earth, and that the original human being was a development from lower orders of the animal creation. These, however, are the theories of men."

Also taught:

"Diversity of opinion does not necessitate intolerance of spirit, nor should it embitter or set rational beings against

each other. The Christ taught kindness, patience and charity.” [26](#)

The Joseph Smith Forum Science FAQ compilation is a resource which helps to inform interested individuals of the doctrinal teachings of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints on the subject of Darwinian Evolution.