THE NEW TESTAMENT

Study Guide

TABLE OF CONTENTS

JANUARY

WEEK 1 · DECEMBER 28–JANUARY 3
“Be It unto Me According to Thy Word”
Matthew 1; Luke 1

WEEK 2 · JANUARY 4–10
“We Have Come to Worship Him”
Matthew 2; Luke 2

WEEK 3 · JANUARY 11–17
“We Have Found the Messiah”
John 1

WEEK 4 · JANUARY 18–24
“Prepare Ye the Way of the Lord”
Matthew 3; Mark 1; Luke 3

WEEK 5 · JANUARY 25–31
“The Spirit of the Lord Is upon Me”
Matthew 4; Luke 4–5

FEBRUARY

WEEK 6 · FEBRUARY 1–7
“Ye Must Be Born Again”
John 2–4
WEEK 7 · FEBRUARY 8–14
“Blessed Are Ye”
Matthew 5; Luke 6

WEEK 8 · FEBRUARY 15–21
“He Taught Them as One Having Authority”
Matthew 6–7

WEEK 9 · FEBRUARY 22–28
“Thy Faith Hath Saved Thee”
Matthew 8; Mark 2–4; Luke 7

MARCH

WEEK 10 · MARCH 1–7
“These Twelve Jesus Sent Forth”
Matthew 9–10; Mark 5; Luke 9

WEEK 11 · MARCH 8–14
“I Will Give You Rest”
Matthew 11–12; Luke 11

WEEK 12 · MARCH 15–21
“What Is the Kingdom of God Like?”
Matthew 13; Luke 8; 13

WEEK 13 · MARCH 22–28
“O Grave, Where Is Thy Victory?”
Easter Week

WEEK 14 · MARCH 29–APRIL 4
“Be Not Afraid”
Matthew 14; Mark 6; John 5–6

APRIL

WEEK 15 · APRIL 5–11
“Thou Art the Christ”
Matthew 15–17; Mark 7–9

WEEK 16 · APRIL 12–18
“What Shall I Do to Inherit Eternal Life?”
Matthew 18; Luke 10

WEEK 17 · APRIL 19–25
“I Am the Good Shepherd”
John 7–10

WEEK 18 · APRIL 26–MAY 2
“Rejoice with Me; for I Have Found My Sheep Which Was Lost”
Luke 12–17; John 11

MAY

WEEK 19 · MAY 3–9
“What Lack I Yet?”
Matthew 19–20; Mark 10; Luke 18

WEEK 20 · MAY 10–16
“Behold, Thy King Cometh”
Matthew 21–23; Mark 11; Luke 19–20; John 12

WEEK 21 · MAY 17–23
“The Son of Man Shall Come”
Joseph Smith—Matthew 1; Matthew 24–25; Mark 12–13; Luke 21

WEEK 22 · MAY 24–30
“In Remembrance”
Matthew 26; Mark 14; John 13

WEEK 23 · MAY 31–JUNE 6
“Continue Ye in My Love”
John 14–17

JUNE

WEEK 24 · JUNE 7–13
“Not My Will, but Thine, Be Done”
Luke 22; John

WEEK 25 · JUNE 14–20
“It Is Finished”
Matthew 27; Mark 15; Luke 23; John 19

WEEK 26 · JUNE 21–27
“He Is Risen”
Matthew 28; Mark 16; Luke 24; John 20–21

WEEK 27 · JUNE 28–JULY 4
“Ye Shall Be Witnesses unto Me”
Acts 1–5

JULY

WEEK 28 · JULY 5–11
“What Wilt Thou Have Me to Do?”
Acts 6–9

WEEK 29 · JULY 12–18
“The Word of God Grew and Multiplied”
Acts 10–15

WEEK 30 · JULY 19–25
“The Lord Had Called Us for to Preach the Gospel”
Acts 16–21

WEEK 31 · JULY 26–AUGUST 1
“Be of Good Cheer…: Thou Hast Testified of Me”
Acts 22–28

AUGUST

WEEK 32 · AUGUST 2–8
“The Power of God unto Salvation”
Romans 1–6

WEEK 33 · AUGUST 9–15
“Overcome Evil with Good”
Romans 7–16

WEEK 34 · AUGUST 16–22
“Be Perfectly Joined Together”
1 Corinthians 1–7

WEEK 35 · AUGUST 23–29
“Ye Are the Body of Christ”
1 Corinthians 8–13

WEEK 36 · AUGUST 30–SEPTEMBER 5
“In Christ Shall All Be Made Alive” 1
Corinthians 14–16

SEPTEMBER

WEEK 37 · SEPTEMBER 6–12
“Be Ye Reconciled to God”
2 Corinthians 1–7

WEEK 38 · SEPTEMBER 13–19
“God Loveth a Cheerful Giver”
2 Corinthians 8–13

WEEK 39 · SEPTEMBER 20–26
“Walk in the Spirit”
Galatians

WEEK 40 · SEPTEMBER 27–OCTOBER 3
“Gather Together in One All Things in Christ”
Ephesians

OCTOBER

WEEK 41 · OCTOBER 4–10
“I Can Do All Things Through Christ Which Strengtheneth Me”
Philippians; Colossians

WEEK 42 · OCTOBER 11–17
“Perfect That Which Is Lacking in Your Faith”
1 and 2 Thessalonians

WEEK 43 · OCTOBER 18–24
“Be Thou an Example of the Believers”
1 and 2 Timothy; Titus; Philemon

WEEK 44 · OCTOBER 25–31
“Come Boldly unto the Throne of Grace”
Hebrews 1–6

NOVEMBER

WEEK 45 · NOVEMBER 1–7
“An High Priest of Good Things to Come”
Hebrews 7–13

WEEK 46 · NOVEMBER 8–14
“Be Ye Doers of the Word, and Not Hearers Only”
James

WEEK 47 · NOVEMBER 15–21
“Rejoice with Joy Unspeakable and Full of Glory”
1 and 2 Peter

WEEK 48 · NOVEMBER 22–28
“God Is Love”
1–3 John; Jude

DECEMBER

WEEK 49 · NOVEMBER 29–DECEMBER 5
“Glory, and Power, Be unto . . . the Lamb for Ever”
Revelation 1–5

WEEK 50 · DECEMBER 6–12
“They Overcame . . . by the Blood of the Lamb”
Revelation 6–14

WEEK 51 · DECEMBER 13–19
“He That Overcometh Shall Inherit All Things”
Revelation 15–22

WEEK 52 · DECEMBER 20–26
“Good Tidings of Great Joy”
Christmas

Week 1: December 28–January 3 “BE IT UNTO ME ACCORDING TO THY WORD” Matthew 1; Luke 1

Quote: “And from Mary, the mother of Jesus, came this humble testimony: ‘Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word.’ Believing and heeding the word of God will draw us closer to Him. President Russell M. Nelson has promised, ‘If you will study His words, your ability to be more like Him will increase.’”

https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2024/04/41rasband?lang=eng&id=p12-p13#p12

Image link:
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/media/image/annunciation-mary-bible-video-angel-fb42a46?lang=eng

Q: What is the purpose of Matthew’s genealogy, especially considering how different it is from Luke’s?

A: Generally, the purpose of genealogies in the Bible is to provide a righteous or prominent pedigree for the individual whose genealogy is being listed. This is probably one of the functions of the old-aged patriarchs of Genesis 1-11. As for the gospels, the two genealogies are simply *different*; they’re not accounts of carefully recorded ancestors that are meant to be harmonized. They teach us several different things about Jesus and how he was perceived by his early followers.

This may also be true especially of Matthew’s genealogy for Jesus. In fact, the purpose of this genealogy is stated outright in Matthew 1:1, in order to confirm that Jesus is the heir to Davidic royalty, an heir to the promise/covenant to Abraham, and the promised messiah. This is further emphasized by Matthew’s note about there being fourteen generations each between Abraham, David, the Babylonian Exile, and Jesus. Something significant for Israel happens every fourteen generations, and Jesus is one of these events.

Luke, on the other hand, is doing something different with Jesus’s lineage. Rather than tie Jesus explicitly to David and Abraham, Luke brings Jesus’s genealogy all the way to the beginning of Biblical history, and straight to God himself (Luke 3:38). Moreover, Luke’s genealogy for Jesus is placed right between his baptism and temptation in the wilderness. This makes the genealogy stand out in Luke as a kind of qualifier for Jesus’s identity for the rest of the gospel, further legitimizing his power, authority, and emphasizing his triumph over the trials posed to him and his disciples.

Sources:

https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/answers/Question:_Does_the_Bible_condemn_genealogical_research%3F

https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/answers/Virgin_birth_of_Jesus_Christ_in_the_Book_of_Mormon#The_Genealogies

https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/scripture-helps-new-testament/02-matthew-1-luke-1?lang=eng

Q: Is the prophecy about a virgin that Matthew cites from Isaiah 7:14 actually just a “young woman” (NRSV)?

A: This controversy arrives because of the difference in semantic range between the Greek Septuagint and the Hebrew traditions. Matthew, who identifies Isaiah 7:14 as a prophecy of Jesus (Matthew 1:23), is using the Septuagint, so the word in Greek is *parthenos*/παρθένος. *Parthenos* refers specifically to a virgin. It’s a little more specific than the Hebrew *‘almah*/עַלְמָה , which can mean virgin; however, *‘almah* more generally applies to young women of marriageable age.

Since the words have different levels of specificity, one might say that Matthew is mistaken about the nature of Isaiah’s prophecy. But on the linguistic level, it's probable (if not preferable) that Isaiah has in mind an actual virgin, since the other usages of *‘almah* in the Old Testament do not refer to any women who have had sexual relations. Isaiah’s prophecy is an example of a dual fulfillment of prophecy, or at least an authorized reinterpretation/recontextualization by a servant of God (apostle, prophet, etc.). Isaiah probably has a specific *‘almah* in his immediate context in mind (though who is very debated), but he may also have an eschatological *‘almah* in mind: the mother of the Savior Jesus Christ.

Latter-day Saint scripture and teaching is consistent that Mary was a virgin and conceived Jesus Christ without having had sexual relations, fulfilling the messianic prophecy of Isaiah 7 and 1 Nephi 11:13-18.

Sources:

https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/answers/Jesus_Christ/Jesus_as_the_Jewish_Messiah#Isaiah_7_and_Christ_as_Born_of_a_Virgin

https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/answers/Jesus_Christ/Jesus_as_the_Jewish_Messiah#A_Few_Interpretive_Considerations
https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/answers/Virgin_birth_of_Jesus_Christ_in_the_Book_of_Mormon

https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/broadcasts/first-presidency-christmas-devotional/2016/12/prophetic-announcements-of-christs-birth?lang=eng

Q: When Luke describes the Angel Gabriel's visit to Mary, what is the meaning of the nature of Jesus's birth when he tells Mary, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee"?

A: Critics will occasionally poke fun at Mormonism based on false claims about Jesus's conception. The argument is often that if Mormons believe that Heavenly Father has a physical body, and Jesus is the son of Heavenly Father and Mary, then they had physical sex. No matter what earlier leaders of the LDS Church might have speculated, the only scripture that has anything to do with *how* Jesus was conceived is Luke 1:35. Any reader will notice that this language is very inspecific. What does it mean for the Holy Ghost to come upon Mary? What's the power of the Highest in this context? How does it overshadow Mary and result in conception? The text doesn't make any of this clear.

Both Latter-day Saints and their scripture affirm the virgin birth (1 Nephi 11:20), that Mary was both a virgin before and after birth. James E. Talmage stated in Jesus The Christ that Mary's child was begotten of "the Eternal Father, not in violation of natural law but in accordance with a higher manifestation thereof."

Sources:

https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/answers/Question:_Do_Mormons_believe_that_Mary_was_still_a_virgin_when_Jesus_was_born%3F

https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/ensign/2019/01/mary-the-mother-of-jesus?lang=eng

https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/jesus-the-christ/chapter-7?lang=eng

Week 2: January 4–10 We Have Come to Worship Him Matthew 2; Luke 2

Quote: We can see an important purpose and symbol in the divine announcement of the birth of God's Only Begotten Son…The announcements of the birth of the Christ child in the eastern hemisphere were made to three different groups, each with very different characteristics. Those who received the heavenly announcement of the birth

were the very humble, the very holy, and the very wise.

https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/broadcasts/christmas-devotional/2022/12/14oaks?lang=eng&id=p13#p13

Image link:
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/media/image/nativity-scene-mary-joseph-baby-jesus-35a6461?lang=eng

Q: In Luke 2:49, Joseph and Mary were confused when the young Jesus stated “How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father’s business”. Was Jesus talking about Joseph or someone else?

A: In trying to decipher the Lord's words in this context, we must first ask a clarifying question. Who are we able to consider as “our father”? The Bible has been translated many times, but the essence of the word “father” in English is, as stated by Merriam-Webster Dictionary: a man who has begotten a child. In the Book of Mormon, the Prophet Alma states in chapter 5 verse 48 of the book titled with the same name that “I (Alma) know that Jesus Christ shall come, yea, the Son, the Only Begotten of the Father, full of grace, and mercy, and truth”(Alma 5:48).

Having established that Jesus is the “only begotten” of the Father(God), the question that remains is whether he is talking about God the Father, or Joseph. We know that Joseph and Mary were unaware of Jesus' whereabouts during this event given their stated confusion is Luke chapter 2 verse 43, therefore Jesus likely was talking about God.

Sources:
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/ensign/2002/04/the-father-and-the-son?lang=eng

https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/father

https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/scriptures?lang=eng

Q: In Matthew 2:12 the Wise Men are warned in a dream that they shouldn’t return to King Herod. Does God still talk to people in their dreams today, or are there any other ways to receive revelation?

A: The story of the Wise Men avoiding Herod after visiting Jesus has long been a story that illustrates the protective nature of God’s revelations. Many wonder if that same protection will be offered to them in these modern times. When discussing the possibility of receiving revelation, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has long supported the idea that God will speak to those who ask in faith, no matter the era.

This revelatory power does indeed extend to dreams, as it did in ancient times. Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles discussed in a 2014 magazine titled the “New Era”, “The Lord uses individuals for whom we have great respect to teach us truths in a

dream…" Elder Scott isn't the only authority figure receiving revelation in their dreams.

A book titled "Dreams as Revelation", and authored by three BYU Church Historians stands as an additional testament to the power of revelation through the dreams of the saints. Many dreams, both of everyday saints and those in leadership, are included in the book. Highlighting these revelatory dreams is an incredible facet of this book, as well as incredibly helpful in showcasing that revelation by dream is still a method that God uses to communicate today.

Sources:
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/new-era/2014/10/to-the-point/dreams-have-a-meaning-or-just-random?lang=eng

https://fairlatterdaysaints.org/store/product/dreams-as-revelation/

https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2012/04/how-to-obtain-revelation-and-inspiration-for-your-personal-life?lang=eng&id=p16#p16

Q: When Christ was born, many who saw him went about and proclaimed that he was the Son of God, the Savior, and many other things. Shepherds ran about, proclaiming his birth; Simeon exclaimed with great joy, "...mine eyes have seen thy salvation…"(Luke 2:30) and Anna "...spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem"(Luke 2:38). How can we do the same, given that we have not seen the savior in person as the people of Israel did in ancient times?

A: The Gospel of Jesus Christ is a gospel of joy. An Angel of the Lord stated in Luke 2:10 "...Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people." Unfortunately that joy has yet to reach all people, but that is all the more reason to spread the joy of the Gospel to all you meet. Dallin H. Oaks, currently the President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, spoke in a 2001 talk about sharing the gospel.

President Oaks discusses three aspects of sharing the gospel that are needed to complete this mission from the Lord. The last aspect discussed is, as he puts it, "knowing what to do…" continually changes with time. In ancient Israel, the most effective method available to many was the same as what the shepherds did on the night of His birth, which is running around proclaiming the truth of the Gospel, but in the modern world of technology things are not as simple.

The FAIR Conference in 2024 presented an amazing speaker who taught one side of how we can potentially tackle this concept. How are we, as modern day saints, able to spread this joy to others? Becky Squire uses the internet to share the joy that she has found.

Sources:
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2001/10/sharing-the-gospel?lang=eng

https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/conference_home/2020-2024-fair-conferences/august-2024-f air-conference/squire_sharing-goodness-online#Transcript

Week 3: January 11–17 “We Have Found the Messiah” John 1

Quote: Let me suggest that holding fast to the word of God entails (1) remembering, honoring, and strengthening the personal connection we have with the Savior and His Father through the covenants and ordinances of the restored gospel and (2) prayerfully, earnestly, and consistently using the holy scriptures and the teachings of living prophets and apostles as sure sources of revealed truth.

https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2022/04/14bednar?lang=eng&id=p26#p26

Image link:
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/media/image/jesus-fulfillment-isaiahs-prophecy-3854728?lang=eng

Q: Does John 1:1 teach the creedal Christian doctrine of the ontological Trinity?
A: No, it does not. The doctrine of the Trinity wouldn’t be properly articulated in the way it’s understood today until centuries after the Gospel of John was written. However, Latter-day Saints would absolutely agree with the language of John 1:1, since we believe that Jesus Christ is God (see the Book of Mormon title page). What it means for Jesus to be God was the subject of several Early Christian debates and councils, but for Latter-day Saints, we rely on modern revelation to clarify the doctrine. The grammar of the verse is essential for determining the overall meaning of the author, outside of any later theological construct.

When the second third of the text states that **ὁ λόγος** ἦν πρὸς **τὸν θεόν** (**the Word** was with **the God**), it’s using the accusative case and showing who the subject (the Word) was physically with: the object (the God). Here the definite article is used to indicate clearly that the Word is with the God of the Jews. In the last third of John 1:1, which states καὶ **θεὸς** ἦν **ὁ λόγος** (and **the Word** was **God**), the definite article is notably absent in front of θεὸς. This tells us that a

more qualitative understanding of θεὸς is intended by the author, or in other words, he's stating that the quality of ὁ λόγος is godly, or divine; with the Father from the beginning (as implied by the overt reference to Gen 1:1), but he's not stating that they're persons of the same substance.

Because of the lack of technical language necessary to define the Trinity, the Creedal Christian doctrine cannot be concluded based on this verse alone.

Sources:

https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/answers/Question:_What_is_the_historic_church%27s_concept_of_the_Trinity_and_why_do_Mormons_reject_it%3F

https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/blog/2023/01/16/come-follow-me-with-fair-faithful-answers-to-new-testament-questions-john-1

https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2007/10/the-only-true-god-and-jesus-christ-whom-he-hath-sent?lang=eng

https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2017/04/the-godhead-and-the-plan-of-salvation?lang=eng

Q: What does this "Light" that resides in everyone as spoken of by John in chapter one do? Is it still there?

A: God and Jesus Christ have filled us with many things. Nephi proclaims that "He [God] hath filled me with his love, even unto the consuming of my flesh." (2 Ne 4:21) This light may very well be of a similar aspect, brought to us by Christ and God to shine in us. 2nd Corinthians chapter 4 verse 6 states that "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness… to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." out of all these "lights" which God and Jesus have enlightened us with, none have ceased from the earth. The same beings who first brought them into the world are still bringing them to us.

Sources:
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2024/10/53rasband?lang=eng

https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/scriptures/nt/2-cor/4?lang=eng&id=p6#p6

Q: John talks about how the people would refuse to recognize Christ. Where else may it have been stated that Christ would be rejected?

A: Christ came to save his people, but as President George Q. Cannon stated, "[He] was

rejected because he did not come according to the ideas, the preconceived notions of the people—that is of his own kindred unto whom he was sent." In Isaiah chapter 53 verse 3 Christ is described as "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief," Isaiah says that the world will metaphorically turn their faces from him in his grief. John states that "...the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not."

Sources:
https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/answers/Journal_of_Discourses/22/22

https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/scriptures/ot/isa/53?lang=eng&id=p3#p3

https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/scriptures/nt/john/1?lang=eng

Week 4: January 18–24 "Prepare Ye the Way of the Lord" Matthew 3; Mark 1; Luke 3

Quote: Nothing is more liberating, more ennobling, or more crucial to our individual progression than is a regular, daily focus on repentance. Repentance is not an event; it is a process. It is the key to happiness and peace of mind. When coupled with faith, repentance opens our access to the power of the Atonement of Jesus Christ.

https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2019/04/36nelson?lang=eng&id=p6#p6
Image link:
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/media/image/john-baptizes-jesus-74b6d22?lang=eng

Q: Did the Holy Ghost actually transform into the shape of a dove for Jesus' baptism; as noted in Matthew 3:16, Mark 1:10, and Luke 3:22?

A: The Prophet Joseph Smith explained that the Holy Ghost did not appear as a dove after the baptism of Jesus Christ. Rather, the descending dove was a sign that the Holy Ghost was present at that time. He stated "The Holy Ghost is a personage, and … cannot be transformed into a dove" but that because the dove is a symbol, emblem, or token of truth and innocence it cannot be a form of the devil. This very real bird was sent from God as a sign to John, and subsequently all people, that the Holy Ghost was present.

We believe that the Holy Ghost is a personage with the form of a man, but "…a body of

flesh and bones…"(D&C 130:22). The Holy Ghost appeared to Nephi, a prophet in the Book of Mormon, to discuss and question him about his faith. President Marion G. Romney, in the April 1974 General Conference, quoted Dr James E. Talmage saying, ""That the [Holy Ghost] is capable of manifesting Himself in the form and figure of man is (shown)... between the Spirit and Nephi, in which He revealed Himself to the prophet, questioned him concerning his desires and belief, instructed him in the things of God, speaking face to face with the man. 'I spake unto him,' says Nephi, 'as a man speaketh; for I beheld that he was in the form of a man; yet nevertheless, I knew that it was the Spirit of the Lord; and he spake unto me as a man speaketh with another.'" (Discourses on the Holy Ghost, comp. N. B. Lundwall, Bookcraft, Inc., 1959, p. 13.)

Later on in his talk, President Romney discusses that, "Statements in the scriptures such as "the Holy Ghost fell on [him]" (Acts 11:15)... do not always refer to his person, but to his power, influence, and gifts". Which showcases that, like the dove at Jesus' baptism, these events in the scriptures are not always as literal as they appear.

Sources:
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/scripture-helps-new-testament/05-matthew-3-mark-1-luke-3?lang=eng&id=title6-p4#title6

https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/1974/04/the-holy-ghost?lang=eng

https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/scriptures/dc-testament/dc/130?lang=eng&id=p22#p22

Q: In Luke 3:9 John the Baptist threatens those who "Bring (not) forth… fruits worthy of repentance…" that they shall be cut off, like the "…root of a tree therefore which bringeth not forth good fruit…" to be destroyed. How is God able to cut off entire lineages yet still have the seed and blessings he promised to Abraham continue into the modern day?

A: In the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints we believe that there was a Great Apostasy, where the true gospel was taken from the Earth before being brought back. In accordance with this belief, we believe that we are able to receive a fullness of the Gospel and all its blessings through the Abrahamic Covenant.

This covenant was given to Abraham and promises that all of his seed, even those that have been adopted into the lineage, are eligible to receive the full blessings entitled to them, as long as they are faithful. Joseph Smith, the prophet who restored the gospel to the Earth, reestablished the lineage of Abraham in the modern day, when he was adopted via a method known in the scriptures where a "...person who is of non-Israelite lineage becomes a member of the house of Israel through faith in Jesus Christ when it is accompanied by baptism in water and the reception of the Holy Ghost." when he received the Priesthood from John the Baptist (JSH 1:68-72). Joseph then became the link to the Abrahamic line for which we are all able to once again become "Children of the Covenant" and partake in the blessings of Salvation.

Sources:

https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/scriptures/nt/luke/3?lang=eng

https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/liahona/2024/10/come-follow-me/17-we-are-the-children-of-the-covenant?lang=eng

https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/scriptures/bd/adoption?lang=eng

https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/blog/2018/02/14/alike-unto-god-special-promises-reserved-abrahams-seed-gospel-doctrine-old-testament-lesson-7a

Q: If salvation comes through Jesus Christ, how do Latter-day Saints understand the role of our actions and good works especially in regards to the necessity of repentance as discussed in Luke 3?

A: Our good works do not replace or compete with the grace of Jesus Christ. In fact, salvation is ultimately possible only because of His Atonement. The Church's Gospel Study Guide explains that we cannot earn grace, and that Christ's grace makes it possible for us to repent, receive forgiveness, and receive strength to do good.
At the same time, grace does not mean that our response to Christ is irrelevant. Church teachings describe faith, repentance, baptism, receiving the Holy Ghost, and striving to keep God's commandments as ways we come unto Christ and receive His grace.

This helps explain John's teaching in Luke 3. The "fruits" John describes are not a way of purchasing salvation from God. Rather, they are evidence that repentance and faith are producing a real change in a person's life. Latter-day Saints do not believe that we can "work our way into heaven." Faith in Jesus Christ should lead us to keep His commandments and live differently because of our relationship with Him.

Christ's grace makes salvation possible, while faith, repentance, obedience, and good works are our response to that grace. Our works do not save us independently of Christ, but genuine faith in Christ should produce the kind of changed life that John describes in Luke 3.

Sources:

https://fairlatterdaysaints.org/answers/Mormonism_and_Christianity/Grace_and_works/Salvation_by_faith_alone#Question:_Do_Mormons_believe_that_salvation_is_based_upon_works?

https://fairlatterdaysaints.org/answers/Mormonism_and_Christianity/Grace_and_works/Neglect_grace

https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/gospel-topics/grace-study-guide

Week 5: January 25–31 “The Spirit of the Lord Is upon Me” Matthew 4; Luke 4–5

Quote: I do not suggest that the road will be easy. But I will give you my witness that those who, in faith, leave their nets and follow the Savior will experience happiness beyond their ability to comprehend.

https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2002/04/follow-me?lang=eng&id=p44#p44

Image link:
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/media/image/peter-and-andrew-fishing-2e4295f?lang=eng

Q: Were the temptations of the devil in Matthew 4 before or after the 40 days of fasting?

A: The temptations of the devil in Matthew 4 occurred after Jesus completed His forty days of fasting and communing with Heavenly Father, according to the Joseph Smith Translation (JST) and official Church teaching.

Matthew 4:1–3 describes Jesus being led into the wilderness, fasting for forty days and forty nights, and then being tempted by the devil. Verse 2 says that Jesus was hungry after His fast, and verse 3 begins, “And when the tempter came to him.” Read on its own, this passage suggests that Satan's temptations followed the forty-day fast.

The Joseph Smith Translation makes the sequence even clearer. JST Matthew 4:1 explains that Jesus was led into the wilderness “to be with God,” rather than specifically to be tempted by the devil. JST Matthew 4:2 states that after Jesus had fasted for forty days and communed with God, He “was afterwards an hungered, and was left to be tempted of the devil.” This clarification emphasizes that Jesus went into the wilderness for spiritual preparation and communion with His Father before facing Satan's temptations.

The Church's New Testament Seminary Teacher Manual reinforces this interpretation, explaining that after Jesus had communed with God for forty days, Satan came to tempt Him. Elder Howard W. Hunter also taught that Jesus spent forty days preparing for His mortal ministry and that, after completing His fast, He was left to be tempted by the devil.

Therefore, the best-supported answer is that the three temptations recorded in Matthew 4:3–10

came after Jesus's forty-day fast. The account also teaches that Jesus's time spent fasting and communing with His Father prepared Him spiritually to resist temptation and fulfill His divine mission.

Sources:

JST Matthew 4:2
New Testament Seminary Teacher Manual: Matthew 4:1–11, Part 1
Elder Howard W. Hunter, "The Temptations of Christ"

Q: How does being a "fisher of men" correlate with preaching the gospel?

A: Here is a revised response of approximately 300 words that incorporates Ross Baron's FAIR article while keeping the focus on how being a "fisher of men" relates to preaching the gospel. The phrase "fishers of men" comes from Matthew 4:18–19, when Jesus Christ called Peter and Andrew, who were fishermen, to follow Him. He promised to make them "fishers of men." Instead of catching fish, they would now help bring people to Jesus Christ and His gospel.

Being a fisher of men correlates with preaching the gospel because both involve inviting others to come unto Christ. Just as fishermen gather fish in their nets, disciples of Jesus Christ share His teachings to help gather people into His Church and bring them closer to Him. This includes teaching about faith, repentance, baptism, and the blessings of following the Savior.

Ross Baron explores this principle in his FAIR conference presentation, "Feeding the Multitudes: Being Fishers of Men". His presentation emphasizes the importance of finding meaningful ways to share the gospel with others and responding to their questions and concerns. His experience
organizing public presentations about Latter-day Saint beliefs demonstrates that missionary work can involve creating opportunities for people to learn, ask questions, and better understand the Church. Being a fisher of men requires more than simply telling people what we believe. It also involves reaching out to them and helping address their sincere questions.

Sharing the gospel is not limited to full-time missionaries. Every disciple can be a fisher of men through personal testimony, service, invitations to church, and Christlike example. We cannot force anyone to accept the gospel, but we can lovingly invite others to learn about Jesus Christ.

Being a fisher of men means answering the Savior's invitation to follow Him and participate in His work. As we share the gospel with love, preparation, and a willingness to listen, we can help others discover the hope, peace, and joy that come through Jesus Christ.

Sources:

Matthew 4:18–23, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
Ross Baron, “Feeding the Multitudes: Being Fishers of Men,” FAIR

Q: In Matthew 4, Jesus repeatedly refers to God as someone distinct from Himself. Traditional Christianity teaches that Jesus and God the Father are one God in the Trinity, how do members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints reconcile these passages with the belief that the Father and the Son are distinct beings?

A: In Matthew 4, Jesus refers to God as distinct from Himself, particularly when He responds to Satan’s temptations by quoting scripture and declaring that we should worship and serve God alone. Latter-day Saints understand these passages in the context of their belief in the Godhead, which differs from the traditional Christian doctrine of the Trinity.

God the Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost are three distinct beings who are perfectly united in purpose, love, and will. We believe that Jesus Christ is the divine Son of God and our Savior, while Heavenly Father is the Father to whom Jesus prayed and whom He obeyed. Therefore, when Jesus speaks of the Father as distinct from Himself, we understand this as a real distinction between two divine beings, not simply different manifestations of one being.

This understanding is supported by other biblical passages. At Jesus’s baptism in Matthew 3:16–17, Jesus is baptized, the Spirit of God descends like a dove, and the Father speaks from heaven, declaring Jesus to be His Beloved Son. Latter-day Saints see this account as evidence that the members of the Godhead are distinct while working together in unity.

The Church’s official explanation of the Godhead teaches that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost have distinct identities and roles but are one in purpose. FAIR also discusses biblical evidence for the separate nature of the Father and Son in its article on Jesus Christ’s divine Sonship.

We believe that Jesus Christ is fully divine and one with the Father in purpose and will. Although this differs from the traditional Trinitarian understanding of one God in three persons, our belief emphasizes the divine relationship between the Father and the Son and their united work to bring salvation to God’s children.

Sources:

FAIR Mormonism and the Nature of God
Matthew 4:1–11, Bible text
Godhead, Gospel Topics
FAIR: What scriptures explain the Latter-day Saint view of Jesus Christ's divine Sonship?
Do Latter-day Saints Believe in the Trinity?

Week 6: February 1–7 "Ye Must Be Born Again" John 2–4

Quote: "God so loved us that He sent His Only Begotten Son—not to condemn us, but to save us." — Michael T. Ringwood, "For God So Loved Us," April 2022 General Conference

Image link:
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/media/image/jesus-cleanses-temple-24c4cb1?lang=eng&collection=teachings-bible-images

Q: Was Jesus violent/unchristlike in the temple? (John 2:15–17) What's the difference between sinful anger and righteous defense of sacred worship?

A: This question arises because it doesn't match the gentle, forgiving Jesus we usually imagine. But if you read the scriptures carefully, Jesus isn't losing His temper in a sinful way—He's acting calmly and on purpose, not out of control or with anger.

Sinful anger and righteous defense are different because of *why* and *how* you act. Sinful anger is rooted in pride, personal offense, or a desire for retaliation, while righteous defense is motivated by love for God and concern for what is right.

Throughout His ministry, Jesus responded to personal mistreatment with patience and forgiveness, yet He acted firmly when sacred things were being dishonored. The cleansing of the temple is an example of Christ's divine authority and His commitment to preserving the sanctity of worship. Rather than justifying angry outbursts, this account teaches that disciples can be firm in defending truth and holiness while remaining guided by love and God's purposes.

Sources:

https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/new-testament-student-manual/introduction-to-the-gospel-according-to-st-john/chapter-22-john-2-4?lang=eng&id=p4&utm_source=chatgpt.com

https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/conference_home/2009-2005-fair-conferences/august-2008-f air-conference/the-israelite-temple-and-the-early-christians

https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/blog/2025/02/09/following-christ-choosing-peace-in-a-content i ous-world

Q: If God “so loved the world” why does He allow such bad things to still happen? (John 3:16)

A: God’s love (and sending His son Jesus Christ) does not mean that He will remove all the “hard” from mortality. He uses this life to help us learn, grow, and be sanctified — and He promises to make all things right through Jesus Christ. A lot of suffering in our world today happens because people misuse their agency, and agency is something that Heavenly Father will not take away. However, God gives us trials for our gain and can bring goodness out of what was evil.

Jesus Christ is the ultimate proof that God hasn’t abandoned us, and that he loves the world. He didn’t send Christ to prevent every pain and heartbreak this world has to offer; He sent Him to rescue us from sin and death and to ultimately heal every wrong. So while life is hard and can seem unfair sometimes, we find lasting peace in knowing that because of Heavenly Father and the gift of His Only Begotten Son, we can find joy even in the midst of our trials.

Sources:
https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/blog/2022/03/08/come-follow-me-week-11-genesis-37-41
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/comeuntochrist/email/lifes-big-questions/why-does-god-allow-bad-things-to-happen
https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/blog/2025/01/13/come-follow-me-with-fair-joseph-smith-history-11-26-autumn-dickson
https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/blog/2022/02/06/come-follow-me-thoughts-to-keep-in-mind-the-covenant

Q: John 4:24 says that God is a spirit. Does that contradict Latter-day Saint belief?

A: In this verse, Jesus is answering a question about where to worship (Gerizim vs. Jerusalem.) His point is that Heavenly Father should be worshipped “in spirit and in truth,” not that God is a spirit Himself.

Latter-day saint doctrine is one of the only Christian religions that believes that God possesses a body in human form. In Moses 6:8-9 we learn, “in the image of his own body, male and female, created he them.” Latter-day revelation also clarifies, “The Father has a body of flesh and bones… the Son also; but the Holy Ghost… is a personage of Spirit.” (Doctrine and Covenants 130:22)

Thus, John 4:24 is best read as an invitation to sincere, Spirit-led worship, rather than a statement that God doesn't have a body.
Sources:
https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/answers/Question:_Why_do_the_Latter-day_Saints_believe_God_has_a_body%3F
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/ensign/2005/07/the-body-a-sacred-gift?lang=eng
https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/answers/Mormonism_and_the_nature_of_God/God_is_a_Spirit/Lecture_of_Faith_5_teaches_the_Father_is_%22a_personage_of_spirit%22

Week 7: February 8–14 "Blessed Are Ye" Matthew 5; Luke 6

Quote: "Each of us came to earth having been given the Light of Christ. As we follow the example of the Savior and live as He lived and as He taught, that light will burn within us and will light the way for others." —Thomas S. Monson, "Be an Example and a Light," October 2015 General Conference

Image link:
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/media/image/bible-pictures-sermon-on-the-mount-91e8c2a?lang=eng

Q: Jesus taught divorce was not acceptable unless fornication had occurred. (Matthew 5:31-32) Why does the Church allow divorce when not for this reason?

A: God's will is faithful, enduring marriage with no casual divorce. Divorce is a tragic concession in a fallen world, not a moral "upgrade," and Heavenly Father will judge righteously case by case. The Church can uphold Jesus' standard and still allow divorce in other serious circumstances, as noted in the Church handbook.

Jesus' teaching in Matthew 5:31–32 is a strong witness that divorce is spiritually serious. At the same time, the Church recognizes we live in a fallen world where some marriages become unsafe or irreparably broken. So the Church doesn't promote divorce, but it does acknowledge it can be the least harmful option in some situations and keeps that decision with the individuals involved.

In Matthew 5, Jesus is tightening the law and condemning the common practice of casual "putting away" a spouse. In Matthew 19, Jesus again teaches God's ideal ("let not man put asunder," v. 6) but also acknowledges that divorce was sometimes allowed "because of the

hardness of your hearts" (v. 8). That signals He's teaching the highest standard, while recognizing real-world brokenness.
Sources:
https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/answers/Mormon_ordinances/Marriage/Divorce/Scriptural_interpretation
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/general-handbook/31?lang=eng#sec20
https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/conference_home/2019-2015-fair-conferences/august-2015_fair_conference/joseph-smiths-polygamy-toward-a-better-understanding

Q: How do I reconcile Matthew 6:1-3 ("do not your alms before men") with Matthew 5:16 ("let your light so shine")? When is visibility good vs. spiritually dangerous?

A: Matthew 6:1–3 isn't a command to never be seen doing good—it's a warning against doing good *in order to be seen*. Visibility can be a blessing when it points people to God; it becomes spiritually dangerous when it shifts the spotlight onto us. Christ is inviting us in these verses to bring others unto Him through our acts, and warns against doing our alms (or acts of religious devotion) because we want others to see us.

President Dallin H. Oaks summed it up perfectly, "Some may serve for hope of earthly reward. Such a man or woman might serve in Church positions or in private acts of mercy in an effort to achieve prominence or cultivate contacts that would increase income or aid in acquiring wealth. Others might serve in order to obtain worldly honors, prominence, or power. … In contrast, those who serve quietly, even 'in secret,' qualify for the Savior's promise that 'thy Father, who seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.'"

So while it is important to "let our light shine and glorify our Father in heaven," we should be mindful of the intent behind those actions. Are we doing it to truly glorify God and bring others to Christ or are we worried about what others think of us? Visibility becomes spiritually dangerous when we focus only on ourselves and the opinions of others.

Sources:
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/new-testament-student-manual/introduction-to-matthew/chapter-3?lang=eng
https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/blog/2015/08/08/best-of-fairmormon-conference-2015-michael-otterson-on-the-record
https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/answers/Journal_of_Discourses/24/18

Q: In Luke 6:24, Jesus cautions the rich. How does that warning apply to the Church's billion dollar worth?

A: Luke's "woe" to the rich isn't a blanket statement that being rich is bad, or that you will be condemned if you have/are worth a lot of money. It's a warning to those who are already rich
and are "consoled" —satisfied, self-sufficient, and uninterested in coming unto Christ or serving others.

In Jacob 2:18-19 we read, "Before ye seek for riches, seek ye for the kingdom of God… and… ye will seek them for the intent to do good—to clothe the naked, and to feed the hungry…" We learn from this verse to seek God first, and if riches come, use them to bless others.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is a great follower of this principle in Jacob. Yes, the Church is worth a lot of money, but they also use that money for the greater good of those around them. In 2025 alone, they spent more than 1 billion on humanitarian efforts. That figure covers a wide range of efforts, including global philanthropy, the Church's welfare programs, and other social services like adoption services.

The Church also spends significant money building temples and chapels to increase worship around the world. Luke condemns the rich, but only the rich who are already satisfied and not coming closer to Christ. The Church uses their money to wisely invest, help those all over the world (members or not) and increase accessibility to temples and churches for current and prospective members.

Sources:

https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/serve/caring/report?lang=eng
https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/conference_home/2020-2024-fair-conferences/august-2024-fair-conference/church-finances-recent-controversies-and-broader-perspectives
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nKjoQYjZ-8s&list=PLw_Vkm1zYbIGAlDy8sjxjAkmo4wzxVfA8&index=1&t=5s

Week 8: February 15–21 "He Taught Them as One Having Authority" Matthew 6–7

Quote: "So I believe that Jesus did not intend His sermon on this subject to be a verbal hammer for battering us about our shortcomings. No, I believe He intended it to be a tribute to who and what God the Eternal Father is and what we can achieve with Him in eternity. In any case, I am grateful to know that in spite of my imperfections, at least God is perfect—that at least He is, for example, able to love His enemies, because too often, due to the "natural man" and woman in us, you and I are sometimes that enemy." —Jeffrey R. Holland, "Be Ye Therefore Perfect—Eventually," October 2017 General Conference

Image link:
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/media/image/christ-teaching-the-people-31eb3e7?lang=eng

Q: Matthew 6:7 warns against vain repetitions in prayers. How can we justify scripted prayers in ordinances such as the sacrament prayer, baptism, and other temple ordinances where the words are the exact same every time?

A: Matthew 6:7 doesn't necessarily condemn against repeating words, it condemns against empty or mindless repetition done to, "be heard for… much speaking" (Matthew 6:7.) One example of this kind of vain repetition can be found in Alma 31 when we read about the Zoramites praying on the Rameumpton. They went up to a high tower and said the exact same scripted prayer - for the purpose of being seen by others, and not because they wanted to communicate with Heavenly Father. These are the kind of "vain repetitions" Matthew 6 warns against.

Some ordinances are scripted because they are revealed by the Lord and tied to priesthood authority. The baptism and sacrament ordinances are both given in the Doctrine and Covenants, where it is very clear that the Lord wants a very specific prayer to be said. Exact wording protects the ordinances, and they are redone if they aren't spoken clearly and accurately.

"Vain repetitions" are not only about the physical repeating of the words, but also about the intentions of one's heart. Elder Dallin H. Oaks taught that we should avoid "vain repetitions" and that prayers should be "simple, direct, and sincere," even while pointing out that the sacrament prayers are given by revelation.

So, Matthew 6:7 is really a warning about empty, prideful, and mindless prayer — not a ban on repeated words, especially when they are revealed to us by Heavenly Father. The Zoramites repeated a prayer to be seen, which made their repetition vain. On the other hand, the Lord's ordinances prayers are repeated intentionally, because He revealed them, and they are attached to priesthood authority and covenant promises. While it's important to be mindful of vain repetitions in our personal prayers, there are times and places when repeated prayers are necessary.

Sources:
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/family-guidebook/priesthood-ordinances-and blessings?lang=eng
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/1993/04/the-language-of-prayer?l ang=eng
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/gospel-principles/chapter-23-the-sacrament? l ang=eng
https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/blog/2024/07/13/come-follow-me-with-fair-alma-30-31-autum n-dickson
Q: If the way is "narrow," (Matthew 7:13-14) why do Church missionary efforts emphasize

numbers, growth, and measurable outcomes?

A: The phrase “the way is narrow” is more about the kind of discipleship, not God wanting only a few to be invited. Christ commands broad outreach, even if only some choose it. The gate may be “strait” and the way “narrow,” but the invitation is for everyone. The “way is narrow” because Christ clearly defines what it takes to be His disciple.

In Church teachings, the aim isn’t to get the highest numbers, but to help souls make covenants. Measuring “key indicators” is more about accountability and having measurable ways to track, than it is about winning. In Preach My Gospel chapter 8 we read that key indicators are meant to, “help you focus on the spiritual progress of individuals,” while also warning, “Be careful… Do not use goal achievement as a quota… Be careful not to make comparisons with others.”

Church leaders have also explicitly cautioned against a transactional mindset. Elder Uchtdorf taught that if we interact with people “with the sole expectation” they’ll quickly get baptized, “we’re doing it wrong,” and that some may join later or not at all—and we keep loving them.

To sum it up, the path of discipleship is “narrow,” but the work of sharing the gospel is wide. Invite everyone, trust agency and timing, and use goals only as simple tools to help missionaries stay focused on people.

Sources:
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/preach-my-gospel-2023/16-chapter-8?lang=eng
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2019/04/14uchtdorf?lang=eng
https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/blog/2024/04/06/come-follow-me-with-fair-jacob-5-7-autumn dickson

Q: Why does Matthew 7:1 say “judge not,” but in other scriptures (including some in this same chapter) give us instructions on how to judge others?

A: To answer this question, it’s important to look at the Joseph Smith Translation of the verse. The original verse says, “Judge not, that ye be not judged.” The JST says, “Judge not unrighteously, that ye be not judged; but judge righteous judgment.” The Savior isn’t telling us not to judge, He’s telling us to judge righteously.

Judgement is a vital part of our agency, but we have to be mindful and intentional about how we do it. All of our judgements should be righteous and guided by holy standards. Because Heavenly Father knows our thoughts and hearts, He is the only one who can make final judgments.
In Matthew 7:15-16 we read, “Beware of false prophets. … Ye shall know them by their fruits.”

There are times in our lives, such as choosing friends or a spouse, when it's important to exercise righteous judgement. However, we are advised to judge people's situations, rather than the people themselves. We are to approach any judgement with care and compassion.

Jesus isn't telling us we should never judge people, and the JST of that verse makes that an important distinction. We are told to judge, but only righteously. And we should always be sensitive to what the Holy Ghost is telling us. Unrighteous judgement is petty and hypocritical, while righteous judgement will always lead us to keeping God's commandments.

Sources:
https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/scripture-study-resources/nt/come-follow-me-fair-new-testament-nt09
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/gospel-topics/judging-others?lang=eng
https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/answers/Clarifying_Latter-day_Saint_Teachings

Week 9: February 22–28 "Thy Faith Hath Saved Thee" Matthew 8; Mark 2–4; Luke 7

Quote: "Rather than fear the sacrifices of discipleship, we should welcome the opportunity to grow in spiritual power, to experience deeper joy, and to find, each of us, real meaning in our life." —D. Todd Christofferson, "Choice and Commitment," Worldwide Devotional for Young Adults January 2020

Image link:
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/media/image/miracles-of-jesus-the-widow-son-dcbe07c?lang=eng

Q:Why does the Church ask members to prioritize discipleship and make so many sacrifices?

A: The Church asks for discipleship first and real sacrifice to invite people into a covenant relationship with God — one where you don't just believe in Him, you follow Him, bind yourselves to Him, and let Him change you. Covenants are meant to be a joy-filled, transforming relationship, not just an obligation. Sacrifice is what shapes hearts and helps you become more like the Savior.
Jesus Christ asks for commitment because no neutral path exists in eternal things. D. Todd Christofferson taught that delaying or avoiding commitment itself is a voice, and that while discipleship can require sacrifice, it leads to deeper joy and real meaning.

Giving (including tithing) is one concrete way disciples can put Christ first. It's meant to be worship, trust, and covenant loyalty not just fundraising or meaningless sacrifice. Giving time, money, and talents can sometimes feel overwhelming or like too much but in the end it helps us draw closer to Jesus Christ and become more like him.

Sources:
https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/blog/2026/08/09/the-joy-of-a-covenant-relationship-with-god
https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/scripture-study-resources/dc-ch/week-10-learn-of-me
https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/blog/2026/04/26/tithing-putting-god-first
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/broadcasts/worldwide-devotional-for-young-adults/2020/01/12christofferson?lang=eng

Q: In the accounts of faith healings in Matthew 8:2–3, 8:5–13, and 8:14–17, why did Jesus heal some people—but not everyone?

A: Jesus could heal everyone, but in the gospel accounts He doesn't treat mortality like something to be instantly erased — He heals according to Heavenly Father's will, the people's readiness to come unto Him, and God's bigger purposes for mortality. As Dallin H. Oaks taught, the Savior's healing is real and complete, but it often comes in different forms: sometimes a person is cured, and other times they're "healed" by receiving strength, peace, patience, and spiritual rest to carry a burden until the Lord's timing brings full relief.

FAIR also emphasizes that in a world where bad things happen to good people, God doesn't always prevent every pain right now. Agency, living in a fallen world, and growth through trials are part of His plan. He is still present, purposeful, and redeeming in our suffering and we can always turn to Him.

Even when bodies aren't immediately restored, Christ can make us spiritually whole in Him. We are on this Earth to learn and grow, and often experiencing heartache and trials is the way we learn to come unto Him. He can work miracles in our lives as we keep trusting, praying, and staying close to Him, but ultimately it is up to Christ to decide what those miracles are.

Sources:
https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/blog/2025/07/20/spiritually-whole-in-him
https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/cfm_home/abqmain/abq-bad-things-happen
https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/blog/2026/08/11/come-follow-me-with-fair-job-1-3-12-14-19-21-24-38-40-42-jennifer-roach-lees
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/ensign/2006/11/he-heals-the-heavy-laden?lang=eng
Q: If parables can be misunderstood, why use them at all?

A: Parables can be misunderstood, but Jesus used them because they pass on more than just

facts — they invite spiritual growth. In Matthew 13, Jesus explains that the people's ability to understand parables depends a lot on the conditions of their hearts. Parables can open the hearts of sincere learners, or leave the indifferent without understanding. They are meant to be understood through the Spirit, not just through quick listening.

Parables also tend to stick with us. Stories and metaphors can sometimes stick easier in our brain than just straight doctrine or scriptures. Stories teach us more and more every time we go back to read them; we don't just learn one thing one time. As noted by FAIR, parables are a powerful teaching tool because they draw listeners in, encourage reflection, and help disciples ask better questions as they seek understanding from the Lord.

Sources:

https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/conference_home/2019-2015-fair-conferences/august-2019_fair_conference/parables-of-jesus
https://www.churchofjesuschristorg/study/ensign/2003/01/parables-of-jesus-the-priceless-parables?lang=eng
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/new-testament-student-study-guide/the-gospel-according-to-saint-matthew/matthew-13?lang=eng

Week 10: March 1–7 "These Twelve Jesus Sent Forth" Matthew 9–10; Mark 5; Luke 9

Quote: "My dear friends, the healing power of Jesus Christ is not absent in our day. The Savior's healing touch can transform lives in our day just as it did in His. If we will but have faith, He can take our hands, fill our souls with heavenly light and healing, and speak to us the blessed words, 'Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.'" —Dieter F. Uchtdorf, "Bearers of Heavenly Light," October 2017 General Conference

Image link:
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/media/image/bible-pictures-woman-issue-of-blood-ff0d6c5?lang=eng

Q: If Jesus is loving, why does He allow years of suffering like the woman with the issue of blood (Mark 5:25–26)?

A: Jesus is loving! But He doesn't take away all suffering right now. Mortality is meant to include real opposition, agency, and a fallen world where bodies break and people make imperfect choices.

In the woman's story, it's clear she had suffered a long time: she "had suffered…twelve years" and "grew worse" (Mark 5:25–26). But Jesus didn't dismiss her pain—He ended it and

recognized her faith: “Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace” (Mark 5:34).

Christ doesn’t just watch suffering—He enters it. He took upon Him “pains and afflictions… and sicknesses” so He would know “how to succor his people” (Alma 7:11–12). God can turn affliction into growth and eventual healing, even when it’s delayed. “He shall consecrate thine afflictions for thy gain” (2 Nephi 2:2).

Jesus’s love doesn’t mean we’re spared long seasons of pain, it means we’re not alone in them. The woman’s years of suffering were real, but in the end she found that Christ noticed her and had power to heal her. In our own long trials, we can trust that He understands perfectly, strengthens us in the waiting, and will ultimately make things right through His Atonement.

Sources:
https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/blog/2022/03/08/come-follow-me-week-11-genesis-37-41
https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/blog/2024/08/31/come-follow-me-with-fair-helaman-7-12-autumn-dickson
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/ftsoy/2022/08/questions-and-answers/15-why-bad-things?lang=eng

Q: Why does Jesus allow the swine to be destroyed (Mark 5:13)? Is that “collateral damage,” and what does that say about His priorities?

A: In Mark’s account, the devils request permission: “Send us into the swine” (Mark 5:12) and Jesus “gave them leave” (Mark 5:13.) Jesus didn’t directly destroy anything, He healed a person and then the demons destroyed the pigs. The drowning isn’t Jesus commanding the pigs to die; it’s the natural outcome of what the unclean spirits do once they enter the herd. It teaches us the destructive nature of the devil.

This also teaches us Jesus’ priorities: souls over material loss. The man with the devils ends up in his right mind. That’s the miracle! Doctrine and Covenants 18:10 teaches that, “the worth of souls is great in the sight of God.” Jesus lives this principle by healing the man.

There is real loss here, but this account is less about Jesus being careless and more like a deliberate contrast between good and evil. Jesus Christ restores and liberates, and the adversary harms and ruins. The drowned herd is a visual reminder of what those unclean spirits were doing to the man, and would keep doing to anyone they could. It doesn’t say animals or property don’t matter, it teaches that a person being reclaimed from bondage matters more to the Savior.

Sources:
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/new-testament-student-study-guide/the-gospel-according-to-saint-mark/mark-5?lang=eng
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/new-testament-student-manual/introduction-to-mark/chapter-12?lang=eng

https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/blog/2025/03/02/i-am-he-the-power-of-christs-divine-love-and-obedience
https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/blog/2025/10/26/recognizing-the-worth-of-every-soul

Q: In Matthew 10, Jesus personally selects and names the Twelve—and they're all men. If Jesus values women equally, why exclude them from the foundational governing quorum?

A: In the restored church, the Quorum of the Twelve apostles is directly tied to priesthood authority, and while both men and women can access priesthood power, only men can hold the keys. Thus, men are the only ones who will, and have ever been, called to serve as apostles.

President Gordon B. Hinckley explained that "it was the Lord," not man, "who designated that men in His Church should hold the priesthood" and who endowed women with "capabilities to round out this great and marvelous organization, which is the Church and kingdom of God." The Lord has not revealed why He has organized His Church as He has.
Women may not be ordained to priesthood offices or serve as prophets/apostles, but that certainly doesn't mean Jesus doesn't value women equally. Women receive and exercise priesthood power/authority in real ways, including in temple worship and in callings under priesthood keys. They lead major Church organizations, sit on councils, teach doctrine, do missionary work, and officiate ordinances in the temple for other women.

While the reason behind a male-only Twelve has not been fully revealed, the Lord's pattern of governance does not signify inequality or sexism. Heavenly Father loves and cares for each of His children, regardless of gender, and entrusts them with different —yet equally essential— responsibilities and gifts in building His kingdom.

Sources:
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/ensign/2014/09/men-and-women-and-priesthood-power?lang=eng
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/gospel-topics-essays/joseph-smiths-teachings-about-priesthood-temple-and-women?lang=eng
https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/answers/Women_and_the_priesthood
https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/answers/Question:_Why_do_women_not_hold_priesthood_offices_in_the_Church_of_Jesus_Christ_of_Latter-day_Saints%3F
https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/scripture-study-resources/nt/come-follow-me-fair-new-testament-nt13

Week 11: March 8–14 "I Will Give You Rest" Matthew 11–12; Luke 11

Quote: “The Savior’s invitation to come unto Him is an invitation to all not only to come unto Him but also to belong to His Church.” —M. Russell Ballard, “Hope in Christ,” April 2021 General Conference

Image link: https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/scriptures/nt/luke/11?lang=eng

Q: Did Jesus break the Law of Moses by healing on the Sabbath?

A: In Matthew 12, Jesus shows that healing on the Sabbath wasn’t breaking God’s law; He was actually doing what the Sabbath is for. When the Pharisees accuse Him of breaking the law of Moses, Christ points them back to the Lord’s priorities: “I will have mercy, and not sacrifice.” (Matthew 12:7) He also teaches that, “The Son of Man is Lord even of the sabbath day,” (Matthew 12:8) and then goes on to say in Matthew 12:12-13, “It is lawful to do well on the Sabbath days,” after healing a man with a withered hand.

The Pharisees were so focused on rule-keeping and checking every box that they missed the entire point of God’s law. They were quick to police what they viewed as Christ working on the
Sabbath, but slow to rejoice in a suffering person being healed. Jesus teaches that the Sabbath isn’t just a checklist of rules to be followed, it’s about your attitude, mindset, and serving those around us.

This can be applied to today when we look at the recent changes in the “For the Strength of Youth” guidebook. While the book used to outline very specific rules about modesty, language, media consumption, the word of wisdom, etc. the book now takes a more principle-based approach. It teaches core principles to help you discern what’s right and wrong through the Spirit, and make those decisions for yourself. The gospel isn’t about checking boxes, it’s about becoming better disciples of Jesus Christ and strengthening our relationships with Him.

Sources:
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/come-follow-me-for-home-and-church-new-testament-2027/11?lang=eng
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/jesus-the-christ/chapter-15?lang=eng
https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/blog/2023/02/27/come-follow-me-with-fair-faithful-answers-to-new-testament-questions-matthew-8-mark-2-4-luke-7
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/bc/content/shared/content/english/pdf/ForTheStrengthOfYouth-eng.pdf

Q: If the “yoke is easy” (Matthew 11:30) why does the Church ask so much of its members, especially paying tithing?

A: Matthew 28:30 doesn't necessarily mean discipleship will be easy. Rather, drawing near to Christ will help lighten burdens and ease our load. That doesn't mean that we won't go through trials or have hard experiences; after all that's what we were put on this Earth to do. But this verse teaches us that Christ will always be there to help.

Sometimes paying tithing can be hard. With so many expenses mounting and the cost of living ever increasing, it can definitely feel daunting to give up 10% of our income. However, this is a commandment from the Lord, and it should be noted that it's one of the few that we can follow with absolute exactness. Keeping the law of the tithe brings many blessings, so much, "that there shall not be room enough to receive it" (3 Nephi 24:10.)

President Thomas S. Monson taught, "The honest payment of tithing provides a person the inner strength and commitment to comply with the other commandments."

Tithing (and other sacrifices) can feel heavy—especially when money is tight—but the promise is that as we come unto Christ, He gives spiritual rest and strength to carry what we can't carry alone.

Sources:

https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/new-testament-seminary-student-manual-2023/matthew-11-28-30?lang=eng

https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/cfm_home/abqmain/abq-pay-tithing

https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/new-era/2014/06/tithing-provides-inner-strength?lang=eng

https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/blog/2026/04/26/tithing-putting-god-first

Q: Why does Luke's version of the Lord's Prayer differ from Matthew's?

A: Luke and Matthew are recording the same kind of teaching on two different occasions, or even possibly with a different emphasis for different audiences. Even though the wording isn't identical, the pattern is.

In the two versions of the Lord's prayer, there is slightly different wording with the same meaning. For example, Matthew says, "forgive us our debts" and Luke says "forgive us our sins." Even though the words are different, both phrases connect forgiveness with our willingness to forgive others.

The two accounts also have two different settings for the Lord's Prayer. In Matthew 6, Jesus is giving the prayer as part of the Sermon on the Mount. In Luke 11, He gives it when disciples specifically ask Him to teach them how to pray. This certainly accounts for the differents between Matthew and Luke - they were recorded at different times and summarized in different ways.

While the words may differ, the meaning stays the same. The important thing to take away is what Jesus is teaching us to do: pray to Heavenly Father, worship and submit to His will, ask for daily help, repent, forgive, and seek deliverance from the devil.

Sources:
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/ensign/1976/01/the-lords-prayers?lang=eng
https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/answers/Textual_variants_in_the_Bible
https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/answers/The_Joseph_Smith_Translation_of_the_Bible#Did_Joseph_Smith_ignorantly_include_an_error_from_the_Bible_into_the_Book_of_Mormon_when_including_the_Lord's_Prayer_in_3_Nephi_13:13

Week 12: March 15–21 “What Is the Kingdom of God Like?” Matthew 13; Luke 8; 13

Quote: “The intended meaning or message of a parable typically is not expressed explicitly. Rather, the story only conveys divine truth to a receiver in proportion to his or her faith in God, personal spiritual preparation, and willingness to learn. Thus, an individual must exercise moral agency and actively “ask, seek, and knock” to discover the truths embedded in a parable.” —David A. Bednar, “Put On Thy Strength, O Zion,” October 2022 General Conference

Image link:
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/media/image/bible-videos-wheat-tares-cdc4c18?lang=eng

Q: Is Jesus intentionally hiding truth from people in Matthew 13:10-15 and Luke 8:10? Is that compatible with a loving God?

A: Jesus isn’t trying to keep sincere people in the dark in these passages — He’s teaching in a way that reveals profound truths for those who are spiritually prepared. It also exposes the consequences of a hardened heart.

Parables carry deep truth for people who are ready to receive God’s word, those who receive get more abundance as they respond to the light they’re given. They are invitations to seek meaning.

This approach is compatible with a loving God because it honors agency and readiness. The humble are drawn to ask, ponder, and follow, while those set on rejecting Him aren’t coerced into greater unwanted responsibility.

Sources:
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/come-follow-me-for-individuals-and-families-new-testament-2023/13?lang=eng
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/new-testament-student-study-guide/the-gosp

el-according-to-saint-matthew/matthew-13?lang=eng
https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/conference_home/2019-2015-fair-conferences/august-2019_fair_conference/parables-of-jesus

Q: Does Matthew 13:19-22 imply that some people are predestined to fail because their soil is bad?

A: The parable of the sower doesn't teach predestination. The soil represents a person's current heart condition and choices, and it can change. The point of the parable is to describe different ways people receive and respond to God's word (being distracted, shallowly rooted, or shocked by competing priorities.)

We are not locked into one soil type, and through faith in Jesus Christ, we can improve our spiritual soil so the word can take root and bear fruit. The condition of our soil is something we can work on with the Lord's help.

President Dallin H. Oaks frames the parable as an invitation to become "good ground" and asks how we can prepare ourselves so the seeds will grow. The soil is about our present spiritual state, not an unchangeable destiny. Thus, no one can be predestined to fail because there is always room to change.

Sources:
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/liahona/2023/01/come-follow-me/19-prepare-your-spiritual-soil?lang=eng
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2015/04/the-parable-of-the-sower?lang=eng
https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/conference_home/2019-2015-fair-conferences/august-2019_fair_conference/parables-of-jesus

Q: Is Jesus making a scientific mistake in the mustard seed parable—since mustard isn't literally the smallest seed and doesn't typically grow into a full-sized tree? Does that affect the credibility or meaning of the parable in Matthew 13:31–32?

A: While the mustard seed isn't technically the smallest seed, and it doesn't grow into what we normally view as a tree, the parable still stands and the lesson stays the same.

In Jesus's day, mustard seed was a standard expression for something very small (a cultural idiom), not a scientific claim about *all* seeds everywhere. Jesus is teaching in normal, everyday language that His listeners would instantly understand.

Mustard doesn't usually become a "tree" the way we picture one, but it can grow unusually large and tree-like under the right conditions, big enough for birds to lodge in it. Jesus is pointing to something striking but recognizable.

Parables teach spiritual realities using everyday speech. The message remains: Christ's kingdom can grow from humble beginnings to a worldwide work. And if

Sources:
https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/blog/2021/06/28/come-follow-me-week-27-doctrine-and-covenants-71-75
https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/conference_home/2019-2015-fair-conferences/august-2019_fair_conference/parables-of-jesus
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/ensign/2014/03/the-mustard-seed?lang=eng

Week 13: March 22–28 "O Grave, Where Is Thy Victory?" Easter Week

Quote: "Jesus Christ is more than a mortal first laid in a manger, more than a friend, teacher, rabbi, minister, or prophet. He is the Only Begotten Son of the Father. And by divine design, His Resurrection by His own godly power reunited His body and His spirit. What a majestic and monumental event in Father in Heaven's eternal plan." — Ronald A. Rasband, "He Is Risen," April 2026 General Conference

Image link:
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/media/image/mary-and-the-resurrected-christ-1728928?lang=eng

Q: What evidence is there for the Resurrection of Jesus Christ?

A: FAIR resources lay out a cumulative ase for the Resurrection: multiple strands of historical and textual evidence that point to the earliest Christians sincerely teaching that Jesus rose from the dead — not just symbolically, but as a real event.

A major piece is the New Testament's consistent claim that the tomb was empty and that something happened there that required an explanation. Along with that are the reports of post-Resurrection appearances to different people and groups. This forms a repeated pattern of testimony rather than a single, isolated claim.

Another emphasis in these sources is the kind of testimony given. The accounts present as physically risen—described in tangible, concrete ways—rather than merely “alive in memory.” The Church’s Easter article also adds helpful historical and archaeological context about Jerusalem that can anchor the events in real locations and practices, even if archaeology can’t “prove” a miracle by itself.

Faith in the Resurrection isn’t only about ancient reports. It’s also about seeking present-day testimony of Jesus Christ and receiving a spiritual confirmation from God.

Sources:
https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/blog/2013/06/26/mormon-fair-cast-152-evidences-of-the-resurrection
https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/home-page/current-events/easter
https://newsroom.churchofjesuschrist.org/article/archeological-insights-modern-witnesses-easter-christs-resurrection

Q: Why don't Latter-day Saints observe Palm Sunday like many other Christian religions?

A: Latter-day Saints still care about Palm Sunday, but don’t treat it as a required, distinct holiday with set rituals the way some Christian traditions do. Their Sunday worship pattern is not built around a formal liturgical calendar with mandated feast days, so Palm Sunday often looks like normal sacrament and church meetings with Easter Sunday being more unique.

Latter-day Saint worship is designed to keep members focused on Jesus Christ every week, especially through the sacraments, which is centered on Jesus Christ and His Atonement and Resurrection. The Palm Sunday story is definitely taught and referenced, but the Church doesn’t require a special Palm Sunday service.

At the same time, the Church has recently increased their emphasis on the celebration of Easter, which includes more of an emphasis on Palm Sunday and the final week of the Savior’s life. Palm Sunday isn’t ignored, it’s just observed through teaching and worship focused on Jesus Christ year round, rather than through a distinct annual ceremony.

Sources:
https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/answers/Question:_Why_don%27t_Mormons_observe_Palm_Sunday_like_many_other_Christian_religions%3F
https://newsroom.churchofjesuschrist.org/article/what-is-palm-sunday-and-why-does-it-matter-to-latter-day-saints
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/media/broadcasts/palm-sunday-celebration?lang=eng

Q: What do Latter-day saints have against using the symbol of the cross?

A: Latter-day Saints respect what the cross represents and fully believe the Crucifixion is central to salvation. The Church has taught that Christ's suffering and death on the cross are vitally important to their faith, even if they don't typically use the cross as their primary religious symbol.

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland explained that we generally choose to focus our public symbols and symbolism on the living, resurrected Christ, rather than adopting the cross as a main identifier. We honor others' devotion that's expressed through the cross, while having different symbols.

Historically, Latter-day Saint leaders have also pointed out that early Christians didn't immediately use the cross widely as a symbol, and that over time Christian traditions developed
different ways of expressing faith. For many Saints, avoiding the cross isn't a rejection of Christ—it's more a choice to keep attention on the whole Atonement and Resurrection.

In the end, Latter-day Saints aren't trying to reject the cross or criticize Christians who cherish it. They simply tend to express devotion in other ways—by focusing on the living, resurrected Jesus Christ and trying to let covenant discipleship be the clearest "symbol" of their faith. They still honor the Crucifixion as essential to the Savior's redeeming work, even if the cross isn't usually their preferred outward emblem.

Sources:
https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/answers/Question:_Why_don%27t_Latter-day_Saints_use_the_symbol_of_the_cross%3F
https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/answers/Why_do_the_Latter-day_Saints_not_wear_or_use_the_cross
https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/answers/Old_Question:_Are_Latter-day_Saints_are_not_true_Christians_because_they_do_not_use_the_cross_and_believe_that_the_atonement_occurred_in_the_Garden_of_Gethsemane%3F
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/ensign/2011/07/the-meaning-of-the-cross-for-latter-day-saints?lang=eng
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2022/10/41holland?lang=eng

Week 14: March 29–April 4 "Be Not Afraid" Matthew 14; Mark 6; John 5–6

Quote: "Remember, there is always one reliable source of strength and courage. The arms of

Jesus extend to us, just as they extended to Peter. As we reach for Him, He will lovingly rescue us. We are His." — S. Gifford Nielsen, "This Is Our Time!", April 2021 General Conference

Image link:
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/media/image/jesus-walking-on-water-7beb022?lang=eng

Q: If Peter had real faith to step onto the water, why did he still end up sinking?

A: Peter did have faith — enough to get out of the boat and actually start walking on the water. He only started to sink when his focus shifted away from Christ and towards the scary waters around him.

As he started to feel fear and doubt, his confidence wavered and the miracle was interrupted. This story can teach us that even sincere disciples can struggle when they focus on other things instead of the Savior. Faith cannot exist alongside doubt or uncertainty, thus Peter began to sink.

The hopeful part is that Peter immediately reached out for help, and then Jesus immediately helped him. From this we can learn that we can always turn towards the Savior, especially in the midst of our doubts and fears. He does not leave us alone; He will always come to our rescue.

Sources:
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/1994/04/increase-in-faith?lang=eng
https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/blog/2026/08/16/best-days-and-worst-days
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/gospel-topics/answering-gospel-questions?lang=eng

Q: Why did Jesus' own disciples walk away from Him in John 6?

A: They were offended by what they called "a hard saying." After Jesus taught that the people must eat of the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, the disciples asked, "Who can hear it?" and then walked away.

They took Christ's words too literally and couldn't accept the deeper meaning. Eating and drinking of the Savior is meant to mean you fully accept Christ and obey Him, not literally eat
and drink Him. Many fell away when this became a test of faith. Some were following Him for the wrong reasons, but others just needed time to process what Christ was asking of them.

However, the apostle Peter held on. He says in John 6:67-68, "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life." When gospel teaching feel hard or demanding, we can learn from

Peter that we should cling to what we already know about Christ. Keep participating, keep praying, and let understanding come in its own time.

Sources:
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/new-testament-student-manual/introduction-to-the-gospel-according-to-st-john/chapter-23-john-5-7?lang=eng
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/jesus-the-christ/chapter-21?lang=eng
https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/scripture-study-resources/nt/come-follow-me-fair-new-testament-nt14

Q: Why does the Church not pay their clergy? Is this right?

A: The Church doesn't generally pay its leaders because it is organized around a lay ministry. Members are called to serve while keeping their regular jobs. Leadership responsibilities rotate so everyone gets a chance to participate in ministering and growing in discipleship.

Is it right? From the Church's point of view, yes. This is part of how the Lord's work is meant to function. Instead of church funds (tithing) used for personal salaries of local leaders, tithes are used for the advancement of the church and humanitarian efforts — building temples, maintaining meethouses, missionary work, humanitarian projects, etc.

"In our church you are not a volunteer – you are called, sustained, and set apart. Non-paid workers are not given the unimportant jobs, they're given all the jobs. And we see these positions not as just being good for the church presenting a professional or slick image, but they are good for the person who holds them. Whether you work in the Nursery or are the Bishop, that calling is a responsibility where you will help shoulder the weight of what the congregation needs. And we all do it together. And that is part of what shapes our spirituality. Church is not something we pay other people to produce for us, it is something we co-create." —Jennifer Roach Lees

Sources:
https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/blog/2023/03/27/come-follow-me-with-fair-faithful-answers-to-new-testament-questions-matthew-14-mark-6-john-5-6
https://newsroom.churchofjesuschrist.org/blog/the-church-s-unpaid-clergy
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/gospel-topics/church-financial-administration?lang=eng

Week 15: April 5–11 "Thou Art the Christ" Matthew 15–17; Mark 7–9

Quote: "He [Christ] 'went about doing good' yet was despised for it. His gospel was a message

of peace and goodwill. He entreated all to follow His example. He walked the roads of Palestine, healing the sick, causing the blind to see, and raising the dead. He taught the truths of eternity, the reality of our premortal existence, the purpose of our life on earth, and the potential for the sons and daughters of God in the life to come." —The Living Christ, 2000

Image link:
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/media/image/bible-films-christ-teaching-disciples-7855960?l ang=eng

Q: If Jesus says what goes into the mouth doesn't defile, why do Latter-day Saints emphasize the Word of Wisdom?

A: Jesus's statement that "what goes into the mouth" doesn't defile is directed at the Pharisee's traditions about ritual uncleanness. He is attempting to turn the people away from being overly focused on outward rituals, and instead center on the condition of their hearts. It's also important to note that the Joseph Smith Translation changes the verse to this: "There is nothing from without, that entering into a man, can defile him, which is food; but the things which come out of him; those are they that defile the man, that proceedeth forth out of the heart." (Mark 7:15)

Latter-day Saints emphasize the Word of Wisdom for another reason: it's a modern revelation given by the Lord as a guide for health in our day. It's not a claim that eating or drinking automatically makes someone spiritually unclean, like the Pharisee's rules. The Word of Wisdom is a standard that blesses us physically and spiritually.

In Matthew 15 and Mark 7, Christ isn't saying our choices about what we put in our bodies never matters. He's clarifying that ritual food/tradition rules don't necessarily make someone spiritually unclean. He teaches that true defilement comes from the heart. The Word of Wisdom is our modern application of this teaching. It's not about Pharisaic purity, but about honoring the sacred gifts of our bodies and making choices that invite the Spirit.

Sources:
https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/answers/Modern_implementation_of_the_Word_of_Wisdom
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/gospel-topics/word-of-wisdom?lang=eng
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/new-testament-student-manual/introduction-to-mark/chapter-12?lang=eng

Q: If Jesus gave Peter keys and promised the Church would endure, how can Latter-day Saints claim a Great Apostasy?

A: Those two ideas can both be true — Jesus did give Peter the priesthood keys and there was still a Great Apostasy. However, the keys were not automatically preserved because the authorized key-holders were killed and no successors were ordained. According to the Church's Gospel Topics page, after the deaths of Jesus's Apostles, "unauthorized changes" were made and "the Lord withdrew the authority of the priesthood from the earth."

The New Testament actually warns of a broad falling away. In 2 Thessalonians 2:3, Paul says Christ's Second Coming would not happen "except there came a falling away." And in Acts 20:28-30 he warned leaders that after his departure, "grievous wolves" would enter and draw disciples away.

Peter's keys and Christ's promise did not mean there would be no apostasy, but they do explain why a restoration would be needed. The apostles were given real authority, but the New Testament and the Church's Gospel Topics both indicate that after the apostles were gone, doctrine and authority were removed. Christ still kept His promise by preserving His work and bringing priesthood authority back in His own time.

Sources:
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/gospel-topics/apostasy?lang=eng
https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/answers/Apostasy
https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/answers/Apostasy/Why_did_God_allow_it#Question:_Why_did_God_allow_the_Apostasy_to_occur?

Q: If Jesus was truly the Messiah, why did He tell the apostles not to reveal that? (Mark 8:30)

A: There are many verses in the 4 Gospels, especially in Mark, where Jesus tells the disciples to not speak about miracles He had performed or who He really was. The scriptures suggest several ideas for why the Savior might have asked for privacy on some occasions.

In the book of Mark we learn that Jesus' fame grew so great that it started to cause some difficulties. At times, He couldn't enter certain villages, people who wanted to see Him couldn't get through the crowds, and sometimes He was so surrounded by people that He could not find time to eat or rest.

Christ also could have asked for discretion because he wanted to stall the opposition that would lead to His crucifixion (at least until the time was right.) The more the people knew of and went to see Jesus, the more the chief priests increased their opposition to Him, because they didn't want Him to undermine their places in society. After Jesus entered Jerusalem and very publicly declared Himself as the Messiah, less than a week later He was arrested and crucified.
The Savior also knew that most Jews in this time were expecting a Messiah to put an end to Israel's political enemies and reign as a Jewish king. Jesus wanted to avoid presenting Himself as such a person. His mission on Earth was not for political reasons, but instead to overcome death, sin, and suffering.

While we may never know exactly why Jesus sometimes insisted the disciples keep His miracles and identity quiet, there are several reasons we can find in the scriptures to help us understand this decision.

Sources:
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/new-testament-student-manual/introduction-to-mark/chapter-13?lang=eng
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/new-testament-student-study-guide/the-gospel-according-to-saint-matthew/matthew-16?lang=eng
https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/answers/Question:_Is_Jesus_the_promised_Messiah_of_the_Old_Testament%3F

Week 16: April 12–18 “What Shall I Do to Inherit Eternal Life?” Matthew 18; Luke 10

Quote: “Like the Good Samaritan, we cross the road to minister to whoever is in need, even if they are not within the circle of our friends. We bless them that curse us. We do good to those who despitefully use us.” —Robert D. Hales, “Becoming a Disciple of Our Lord Jesus Christ,” April 2017 General Conference

Image link:
https://history.churchofjesuschrist.org/ch-exhibit/bc/2002_Latter-day_Saints_Yesterday_and_Today/brickey-the-good-samaritan.jpg

Q: Matthew 18:1–4 talks about becoming like a child. Does Jesus mean innocence or naivety? How do you reconcile “childlike” with being wise and discerning?

A: In these verses, Jesus sets a child in the middle of the crowd and explains what He means: “Whosoever… shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest” (Matthew 18:4) The focus is humbling yourself, not coming naive.

Mosiah 3:19 gives a very clear definition of what becoming like a child truly means, “submissive, meek, humble, patient, full of love, willing to submit to all things which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon him, even as a child doth submit to his father.”
President Eyring taught, “to be like a child is not to be childish.” So, the reconciliation is: be childlike in humility, trust in God, and love, while still being wise and discerning. Real discipleship includes listening to the Holy Ghost, watching your thoughts and choices, and growing up “in Christ,” not staying immature.

Sources:
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2006/04/as-a-child?lang=eng
https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/blog/2025/05/04/as-a-little-child
https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/conference_home/2020-2024-fair-conferences/august-2022-

f air-conference/teaching-and-communicating-the-doctrine-of-the-family-to-the-rising-generation

Q: Matthew 18:19–20 says that whatever we pray for, it shall be done. Why don't prayers always get answered the way this sounds?

A: In these verses is a real promise, but it's not meant as "God will grant any request exactly how I picture it." In Latter-day Saint scripture and teaching, there are clear reasons that help explain why answers to prayers can look different than what we imagine.

First, we have to ask in Christ's name for what is right (3 Nephi 18:30.) Second, God answers us according to His will, not our own. Sometimes the answer is what we want, and sometimes it isn't because He can see what we can't. Third, the answer may come, just not in the time or way we expected. Elder David A. Bednar taught: "Every sincere prayer is heard and answered … but the answers we receive may not be what we expect or come to us when we want or in the way we anticipate."

And finally, sometimes God is doing something bigger than the immediate request. Heavenly Father has a perfect plan for each of us, and oftentimes it is not the plan we have for ourselves. He knows us, our struggles, weaknesses, the experiences we will have, and how our future looks. He knows what is best, and even though it can be hard, we have to learn to place our trust in Him and have faith that everything will work out for good.

Sources:
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2008/04/ask-in-faith?lang=eng
https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/blog/2025/07/20/spiritually-whole-in-him
https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/scripture-study-resources/ot-pgp/week-16-stand-still-and-see the-salvation-of-the-lord

Q: Why does Jesus make the hero a Samaritan—is He attacking ethnic/religious prejudice directly?

A: Yes, Christ is teaching about prejudice pretty directly. In the parable, the expected "good guys" (a priest and a Levite) pass by, but a Samaritan stops and shows compassion. Then Christ makes the point that the true neighbor is "he that shewed mercy" and He commands all to, "Go, and do thou likewise" (Luke 10:36-37.) Real discipleship is measured by merciful action, not by ethnic or religious identities.

The Church's Gospel topics page teaches, "In the parable of the good Samaritan, Jesus Christ taught that the commandment to love our neighbor transcends ethnic, cultural, and religious

differences."

Jesus makes the Samaritan the "good guy" to show that being a true neighbor isn't about your ethnic or religious identity, it's about mercy. The parable invites us to drop our prejudices and instead act how Christ would: notice people and take action to help them, regardless of their background.

Sources:
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/gospel-topics/racial-prejudice?lang=eng
https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/answers/Combating_racial_prejudice
https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/blog/2011/06/12/immigration-and-the-good-samaritan-by-ben mcguire

Week 17: April 19–25 "I Am the Good Shepherd" John 7–10

Quote: "So what if the answers to our prayers come in plain or convoluted ways? Are we willing to persevere, to keep trying to live Christ's gospel no matter how much spit and clay it takes?" —Jeffrey R. Holland, "And Now I See," October 2025 General Conference

Image link:
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/media/image/jesus-healing-blind-man-5ab45e0?lang=eng

Q: Does John 9:2 prove that Latter-day Saint premortal life ideas are made up?

A: This verse isn't necessarily proof against premortal life, it's the disciples asking a question. The key point is that Jesus doesn't accept their framing that disability must be traced to someone's moral fault.

In verse 3, Christ immediately redirects them: "Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him." The passage is best read as a correction of the disciple's view of suffering. It is not a definitive statement about what did or didn't happen before life on Earth.
There are many other Biblical scriptures that prove premortal life. "Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee" (Jeremiah 1:5), Abraham's vision of spirits "organized before the world was" and "chosen before thou wast born" (Abraham 3:22–23.) John 9 is addressing misplaced blame on the parents/son, while premortality is taught in many other places.

One non-LDS scholar said, "It is perfectly reasonable to surmise on the basis of this episode that Jesus and his followers accepted preexistence and thought so little of it that the question of

prenatal sin did not even call for an answer."

John 9:2 is simply a disciple question that Jesus corrects, making it a weak foundation for disproving mortal life.

Sources:
https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/answers/Question:_Did_Jesus_and_the_apostles_believe_in_pre-mortal_life%3F
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/gospel-topics/premortality?lang=eng
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/gospel-topics/premortality-study-guide?lang=eng

Q: Does John 10:38 conflict with Latter-day Saint belief that the Father and the Son are distinct beings?

A: No, Latter-day Saints read John 10:38 (“the Father is in me, and I in him”) as teaching perfect unity between the Father and the Son—not that They are the same being.

The Church teaches that “each member of the Godhead is a separate being” while being “one in purpose and doctrine.”

Jesus’s wording is describing an intimate unity between the Father and the Son, while still affirming that They are distinct persons in the Godhead. As you keep reading John (especially John 17), the “in/one” language consistently points to unity that can be shared, not the idea that the Father and the Son are literally the same being.

Sources:
https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/answers/Mormonism_and_the_nature_of_God/Trinity
https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/answers/Question:_What_does_John_10:30_have_to_do_with_Trinitarianism%3F
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/gospel-topics/godhead?lang=eng

Q: Why does Jesus make the blind man do a physical act (clay and washing) instead of just immediately healing him?

A: From an LDS perspective, the small, physical act that Jesus requires to perform this miracle is often the pattern of how the Lord works with us. He invites us to act in faith, not just watch a miracle happen.

A 2017 Ensign article points out that the Savior repeatedly invites people to take action, and

when they follow a divine assignment, “their faith is increased.”

The Church's New Testament Student Manual adds another layer. After the physical healing, the man’s understanding of his healing and his Healer grew only with time, moving from a “man that is called Jesus,” then to “a prophet,” and ultimately believing that Jesus is “the Son of God.” The simple act of going and washing becomes part of a bigger story of discipleship and conversion, not just a moment of relief.

The Lord often ties blessings to following His word. That kind of lived obedience gives us a stronger, more personal testimony than if we were just automatically healed.

Christ didn’t need the clay or water to heal the blind man. He used them to invite faith, require action, and grow a disciple. As we keep on acting on what Christ asks, He can open not only our circumstances, but help us develop our spiritual sight too.

Sources:
https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/blog/2026/03/29/and-now-i-see
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/ensign/2017/03/still-in-force-today?lang=eng
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/new-testament-student-manual/introduction-to-the-gospel-according-to-st-john/chapter-24-john-8-10?lang=eng

Week 18: April 26–May 2 “Rejoice with Me; for I Have Found My Sheep Which Was Lost” Luke 12–17; John 11

Quote: “God is in relentless pursuit of you. He ‘wants all of His children to choose to return to Him,’ and He employs every possible measure to bring you back.” —Patrick Kearon, “God’s Intent Is to Bring You Home,” April 2024 General Conference

Image link:
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/media/image/lost-lamb-art-lds-d7c5620?lang=eng

Q: If Jesus has the power to heal instantly, why did He heal the lepers “as they went”?

A: Christ could have healed them on the spot, but often He links miracles to faith-filled action and obedience. He gave them a clear assignment, and their healing came only as they acted in faith.

An Ensign article points out that, “As an evidence of their faith, they accepted the assignment, and ‘as they went, they were cleansed.’” In other words, the Savior sometimes asks us to move forward on His word first—and then the blessing becomes visible.

The New Testament Seminary Student Manual also notes that this fits the law of Moses. Lepers who were healed had to show themselves to the priests to be declared clean. So Jesus wasn't delaying the miracle; He was teaching discipleship and honoring God's established order.

The Savior's timing teaches that He often blesses us in the process of faithful obedience, not because He lacks power, but because He's helping us become the kind of disciples who trust Him enough to walk forward before we can see the outcome.

Sources:
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/ensign/2017/03/still-in-force-today?lang=eng
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/new-testament-seminary-student-manual-2023/luke-17-11-19?lang=eng
https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/answers/Mormonism_and_priesthood/Christians_don%27t_need_a_mediating_priesthood
https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/blog/2025/07/20/spiritually-whole-in-him

Q: Does the lost sheep parable imply God cares more about those who stray than those who stay faithful?
A: The lost sheep parable doesn't mean God cares more about people who stray than those who stay faithful. It teaches that every individual matters! Jesus described the shepherd leaving the ninety and nine to seek the one until he finds it and then rejoicing when it's safe again. This doesn't mean that the ninety and nine are less loved, it's an important reminder that a loving shepherd won't give up on even one.

Jesus also explained *why* there's so much joy: "joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth" (Luke 15:7). That joy is about a rescue—someone in real spiritual danger coming back to life and safety—not about God being unimpressed with steady discipleship. The hymn, "Dear to the Heart of the Shepherd" says: "Dear to the heart of the Shepherd, Dear are the "ninety and nine"; Dear are the sheep that have wandered Out in the desert to pine."

Each of us may go through times when we are the faithful ninety and nine, but we also experience times where we might be the lost sheep. This parable is important and comforting because we know that our Shepherd will never give up on us. He loves us infinitely and always wants us to come back to His fold.

Elder Patrick Kearon illustrated this point when he said, "Everything about the Father's plan for His beloved children is designed to bring everyone home." Heavenly Father loves each one of us equally and provides ways for everyone to return home to Him. The parable of the lost sheep doesn't mean He doesn't care about those who are faithful; it means He loves all of us and cares about each one.

Sources:
https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/answers/Mormonism_and_culture/Wayward_family_members/Other_quotes
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/1993/04/search-and-rescue?lang=eng
https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/conference_home/2025-fair-conferences/august-2025-fair-conference/the-path-of-the-peacemaker

Q: Does the prodigal son parable teach that sin has no consequences?

A: The parable of the prodigal son does not teach that sin has no consequences. Jesus says the son "wasted his substance with riotous living," then "there arose a mighty famine… and he began to be in want," and he ended up so low he was feeding swine and starving (Luke 15:13–16). Those are clear consequences of his sins and the choices he had made up to that point.

What we do learn from the parable is that consequences don't cancel out Heavenly Father's mercy when we do choose to repent and turn to Him. When the son came back to his father, the father received him with compassion.
Elder Patrick Kearon said, "All of us can have a new beginning through, and because of, Jesus Christ." Even though the prodigal son had made some mistakes in his life, he was still able to return back to a loving and compassionate father, just like we can to our Heavenly Father. Sin has consequences, but repentance through Jesus Christ brings forgiveness and a way home.

Sources:
https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/answers/Question:_Should_Latter-day_Saints_(%22Mormons%22)_reject_%22wayward%22_family_members_or_those_who_leave_the_Church%3F
https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/blog/2013/09/17/the-atonement-and-the-prodigal-son
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/new-testament-seminary-student-manual-2023/luke-15?lang=eng

Week 19: May 3–9 "What Lack I Yet?" Matthew 19–20; Mark 10; Luke 18

Quote: "Brothers and sisters, there are going to be times in our lives when someone else gets an unexpected blessing or receives some special recognition. May I plead with us not to be hurt—and certainly not to feel envious—when good fortune comes to another person? We are not diminished when someone else is added upon. We are not in a race against each other to see who is the wealthiest or the most talented or the most beautiful or even the most blessed.

The race we are really in is the race against sin, and surely envy is one of the most universal of those." —Jeffrey R. Holland, "The Laborers in the Vineyard," April 2012 General Conference

Image link:
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/imgs/5105cf63e63a37c08b27525a55f375ca5836a28b/full/ %21500%2C/0/default

Q: In the laborers in the vineyard (Matthew 20), why do latecomers receive the same pay? Does God's grace ignore effort and obedience?

A: The pay is given equally because the parable is not about wages. It's about God's goodness and mercy in offering the same ultimate gift—His kingdom—to all who come, even late. The householder reminds the early workers they were not cheated: "didst not thou agree with me for a penny?" and then asks, "Is thine eye evil, because I am good?" (Matthew 20:2, 13, 15).

Elder Holland taught that no one was treated unfairly and that the complaint is really about envy when God is kind to someone else. He explains the parable as teaching "God's goodness, His patience and forgiveness… [and] grace," and that the Lord is free to be generous—especially to those who feel they don't deserve it.
God's grace does not ignore effort and obedience. We "labor diligently… to believe in Christ, and to be reconciled to God," and "it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do" (2 Nephi 25:23). Faithful discipleship matters deeply, but salvation is still a gift made possible by Jesus Christ, not something we earn over others.

The latecomers receiving the same pay teaches that God's mercy is real and generous, while obedience and lifelong effort are still essential to follow Christ and become like Him.

Sources:
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2012/04/the-laborers-in-the-vineyard?lang=eng
https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/blog/2024/10/20/living-as-children-of-the-covenant-understanding-our-birthright-and-responsibility
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/new-testament-seminary-student-manual-2023/matthew-20-1-16?lang=eng

Q: If "men ought always to pray, and not to faint," what do we do with prayers that seem unanswered for years?

A: When prayers seem unanswered for years, Luke 18 teaches that the point is to keep praying and not give up. Sometimes we have to wait, and oftentimes it's for wise reasons that we may not see yet. The widow's persistence isn't teaching that God is reluctant, it encourages us to

have steady faith in the waiting periods of life.

In mortal life we experience trials and tribulations, and we are here to learn and grow. If Heavenly Father instantly answered every single prayer we offered, would that teach us anything? Would we develop strong testimonies and become like Jesus Christ?

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland taught that our prayers *are* "heard and… answered, though perhaps not at the time or in the way we wanted," and that "the times and seasons… are His… alone to direct."

So what do we do? We keep praying, keep living the gospel, and keep trusting God's timing even when the answer is delayed. Heavenly Father loves us infinitely and knows what is best for each of us. Part of our journey here on Earth is to grow in faith and trust in Him — especially through our trials. We should continue to "pray always and not to faint," trusting that He knows what's best and our answers will come in His time.

Sources:
https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/blog/2025/07/20/spiritually-whole-in-him
https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/blog/2024/02/06/come-follow-me-week-25-1-samuel-8-10-13-15-18
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2020/10/57holland?lang=eng

Q: If Jesus foretold His death so clearly, why were the disciples still shocked later?

A: Jesus did prophesy His suffering, death, and Resurrection clearly, but the disciples still had spiritual blindness and only understood step by step. The New Testament Teacher Manual notes that even those closest to Him were "slow to understand." And the book of Mark highlights a theme of "spiritual blindness" when Jesus taught them about His atoning mission.

Another big piece was the disciples' expectations of what the Messiah would do. The Emmaus disciples' line—"we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel"—reflected a hope that Jesus would be a political and military leader, which made the Crucifixion feel like a shocking collapse of their expectations until Jesus helped them understand His saving mission.

The disciples were shocked not because Jesus was unclear, but because understanding His atoning mission required revealed spiritual sight, corrected expectations, and the confirming power of the Holy Ghost—things that came more fully after the Resurrection.

Sources:
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/new-testament-student-manual/introduction-to-the-gospel-according-to-st-luke/chapter-20-luke-23-24?lang=eng
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/new-testament-teacher-manual/the-gospel-ac

cording-to-st-mark/lesson-13-mark-8-10?lang=eng
https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/conference_home/2004-1999-fair-conferences/august-1999-f air-conference/salvation-for-the-dead-a-response-to-luke-wilson

Week 20: May 10–16 “Behold, Thy King Cometh” Matthew 21–23; Mark 11; Luke 19–20; John 12

Quote: “The Lord requires us to forgive for our own good. But He does not ask us to do it without His help, His love, His understanding. Through our covenants with the Lord, we can each receive the strengthening power, guidance, and the help we need to both forgive and to be forgiven. Please know that forgiving someone does not mean that you put yourself in a position where you will continue to be hurt. ‘We can work toward forgiving someone and still feel prompted by the Spirit to stay away from them.’” —Kristin M. Yee, “Beauty for Ashes: The Healing Path of Forgiveness,” October 2022 General Conference

Image link:
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/media/image/jesus-christ-chief-priests-a546c71?lang=eng
Q: Why is the temple cleansing recorded at two different points in the Gospels (early in John and during Holy Week in Matthew, Mark, and Luke)?

A:The Church’s study resources note that the temple cleansing appears at two different points in the Gospels because there are two faithful ways to understand the accounts. John places a cleansing early in his narrative, while Matthew, Mark, and Luke record a cleansing during Jesus’s final week.

One explanation is that it was the same historical event, but that John chose to relate it early in his Gospel for teaching purposes, even though the Synoptic writers narrate it in the Holy Week timeline. The *New Testament Student Manual* says John 2 may refer to the same event that John decided to place early.

The other explanation is that there were two separate temple cleansings—an earlier one near the beginning of Jesus’s ministry (John 2) and a later one during Holy Week (Matthew/Mark/Luke). The same manual says John 2 may refer to an earlier cleansing, and it notes that differences in language can suggest there may have been two cleansings.

The different placements don’t mean that it isn’t true. Church resources explicitly allow for either (1) one cleansing reported in different narrative positions or (2) two cleansings, early and late, with both readings keeping the focus on Christ’s authority over His Father’s house.

Sources:
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/new-testament-student-manual/introduction-to

-the-gospel-according-to-st-john/chapter-22-john-2-4?lang=eng
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/jesus-the-christ/chapter-12?lang=eng
https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/blog/2022/08/16/come-follow-me-week-33-psalms-49-51-61-66-69-72-77-78-85-86

Q: If forgiveness is a doctrinal “condition” for being forgiven, what about serious abuse or ongoing harm?

A: Forgiving others is tied to our own forgiveness and the Lord’s command, “of you it is required to forgive all men” (D&C 64:9–10). But it is important to recognize that forgiveness is not the same thing as excusing abuse, pretending it didn’t happen, or removing consequences.

For serious abuse or ongoing harm, the Church is very explicit that safety comes first: “Leaders should not encourage a person to remain in a home or situation that is abusive or unsafe” (General Handbook 38.6.2, “Abuse”)

Wendy Ulrich said, “Let’s be clear about what forgiveness does not mean. It does not mean letting people continue to abuse you, saying the other person was right and you were wrong, or pretending there is no debt to be paid. In fact, these approaches generally make it harder, not easier to forgive.”
So, in the restored gospel, forgiveness is a commandment, but it’s never meant to keep someone in a dangerous situation. You can forgive in your heart over time with the Savior’s help while still telling the truth, setting firm boundaries, seeking professional and priesthood support, and allowing appropriate legal and Church consequences. Forgive, but don’t enable.

Sources:
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/general-handbook/38-church-policies-and-gui delines#sec87
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/abuse-help-for-victims/is-it-possible-to-forgive?lang=eng
https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/blog/2021/06/13/come-follow-me-week-25-doctrine-and-covenants-64-66

Q: How can a parable ending with the king destroying enemies reflect Jesus, the Prince of Peace? (Luke 19:27)

A: In Luke 19:27 the line “bring hither, and slay them before me” is part of the parable of the pounds, not a command for Christ’s disciples to harm people. The key is to read parables for their main doctrine and not force every detail into a literal policy statement. The Bible Dictionary specifically warns not to “force a meaning on subordinate incidents” and notes that details like “the nobleman who went into a far country … do not concern the interpretation of the parable.”

This parable is about stewardship and the reality that Christ will return and require an accounting. It also teaches about the Lord's future millennial reign and that Christ would be rejected and would not immediately reign as many expected.

So, in this parable Jesus is teaching that rejecting God's rightful King has consequences. He also teaches that final justice belongs to the Lord at His return—not to us in the meantime. We're still commanded to follow the Savior's way of repentance, forgiveness, and peacemaking. The "slay them" line is parable judgment imagery pointing to Christ's ultimate authority and final accounting, not a statement to condone violence.

Sources:
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/scriptures/bd/parables?lang=eng
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/new-testament-student-manual/introduction-to-the-gospel-according-to-st-luke/chapter-19-luke-18-22?lang=eng
https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/conference_home/2025-fair-conferences/virt_2025-ot/the-old testament-and-the-interpretive-bounds-of-modern-revelation-straight-jacket-or-parachute

Week 21: May 17–23 "The Son of Man Shall Come" Joseph Smith—Matthew 1; Matthew 24–25; Mark 12–13; Luke 21

Quote: "The best is yet to come, my dear brothers and sisters, because the Savior is coming again! The best is yet to come because the Lord is hastening His work. The best is yet to come as we fully turn our hearts and our lives to Jesus Christ." —Russell M. Nelson, "The Lord Jesus Christ Will Come Again," October 2024 General Conference

Image link:
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/media/image/the-second-coming-a824e2d?lang=eng

Q: Why do the end-times timelines differ between Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21? Do they contradict each other?

A: The timelines can feel different because they're all writing about the same Mount of Olives teaching, but they emphasize different parts of what Jesus said. The disciples actually asked two questions: one about the destruction of the temple/Jerusalem, and one about the signs of His coming and the end of the world. In Matthew's account it can be hard to understand which verses answer which question.

The Student Manual says that Joseph Smith—Matthew, "clearly separate[s] the answers." Verses 5–21 focuses on Jerusalem's destruction, and verses 22–55 focuses on the Second Coming.The Seminary Study Guide teaches the same division, which helps explain why the Synoptic Gospels can sound like they "shift" back and forth—Jesus is addressing related but

distinct topics.

Luke's account also includes some unique details that Matthew and Mark don't, which can make the timeline feel different. Only Luke records a specific last-days warning about being "weighed down" by "overindulgence… and cares of this life" (Luke 21:34.)

These chapters aren't contradictions, they're overlapping accounts of the same discourse, with different emphases. Joseph Smith—Matthew helps clarify that Jesus was answering two connected questions.

Sources:
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/new-testament-student-manual/introduction-to-matthew/chapter-8?lang=eng
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/new-testament-student-study-guide/the-gospel-according-to-saint-matthew/matthew-24?lang=eng
https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/blog/2023/05/22/come-follow-me-with-fair-faithful-answers-to-new-testament-questions-joseph-smith-matthew-1-matthew-24-25-mark-12-13-luke-21

Q: How do we reconcile the "everlasting punishment" language with a loving God?

A: In the Olivet Discourse, Jesus' strongest warnings are framed as protective, covenant-keeping counsel. The Pearl of Great Price student manual explains that Joseph Smith's translation makes Christ's prophecy clearer and more organized. It also repeatedly emphasizes preparedness, instead of panic. This translation helps the "everlasting punishment" language read less like a threat and more like a loving Savior trying to help His disciples stay faithful through the consequences of living in a fallen world.

Modern revelation helps us understand the "everlasting punishment" phrase in Matthew 25. The Lord clarifies that "Eternal" and "Endless" are names of God—so "eternal punishment" is God's punishment, not punishment that never ends for every person.

It also helps to notice that in Matthew 25 the judgment scene is tied to love, service, and what we become. It's not about Heavenly Father looking for reasons to punish. He does not want to give us punishment that never ends. Rather, this chapter is about fair warnings for the consequences of sin.

Sources:
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/the-pearl-of-great-price-student-manual/joseph-smith-matthew?lang=eng
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/doctrine-and-covenants-student-manual/section-19-the-gift-of-repentance?lang=eng
https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/scripture-study-resources/nt/come-follow-me-fair-new-testament-nt22

Q: What limits does discipleship place on political loyalty? (“Render unto Caesar)

A: Jesus’s “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s” (Mark 12:17) teaches that disciples can have real civic duties, but their highest loyalty belongs to God. In other words, political identity can’t replace discipleship; when the claims of “Caesar” and God collide, a disciple prioritizes covenant faithfulness and conscience before the Lord.

At the same time, Latter-day Saints are taught to be good citizens: “We believe in being subject to kings, presidents, rulers, and magistrates, in obeying, honoring, and sustaining the law” (Articles of Faith 1:12.)

Practically, discipleship places limits on political loyalty by requiring Christlike civility and refusing to turn the Church into a political machine. The Church states it “does not … endorse, promote or oppose political parties … or candidates” and it “does not … advise its members on how to vote,” while encouraging members to participate as responsible citizens.
“Render unto Caesar” means we honor laws and civic responsibilities, but we never give to politics what belongs to God—our worship, covenants, conscience, and Christlike conduct.

Sources:
https://newsroom.churchofjesuschrist.org/official-statement/political-neutrality
https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/conference_home/2020-2024-fair-conferences/august-2023-fair-conference/the-restored-gospel-and-the-new-liberalism-the-inescapability-of-political-apologetics
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/general-handbook/35?lang=eng#sec21

Week 22: May 24–30 “In Remembrance” Matthew 26; Mark 14; John 13

Quote: “The ordinance of the sacrament is a holy and repeated invitation to repent sincerely and to be renewed spiritually. The act of partaking of the sacrament, in and of itself, does not remit sins. But as we prepare conscientiously and participate in this holy ordinance with a broken heart and a contrite spirit, then the promise is that we may always have the Spirit of the Lord to be with us. And by the sanctifying power of the Holy Ghost as our constant companion, we can always retain a remission of our sins.” —David A. Bednar, “Always Retain a Remission of Your Sins,” April 2016 General Conference

Image link:
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/media/image/jesus-last-supper-08e1294?lang=eng

Q: If Jesus had power, why didn't He resist arrest?

A: Jesus could have stopped the arrest. And He told Peter He could pray to the Father and receive "more than twelve legions of angels" (Matthew 26:53). This shows Christ had real power to defend Himself, but He chose not to.

So why didn't He resist His arrest? Because the Savior was unwilling "to exert His infinite power for personal benefit" and instead voluntarily submitted to arrest and the suffering that followed—because that was part of completing His saving mission.

Elder David A. Bednar connected this directly to Christlike meekness—strong self-restraint and willing submission. He notes that Jesus even healed a man in the arrest scene (showing power) while still choosing not to use that power to avoid His sacrifice.
So, Jesus didn't resist arrest because he couldn't, He did it because He wouldn't. He knew that it was all part of Heavenly Father's plan. Even though He had the power to stop it, He chose a higher path of willing submission in order to fulfill the plan and complete the Atonement.

Sources:
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/scripture-helps-new-testament/23-matthew-26-mark-14-john-13?lang=eng
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2018/04/meek-and-lowly-of-heart ?lang=eng
https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/scripture-study-resources/new-testament/come-follow-me-fair-new-testament-nt23

Q: If Jesus knew what was ultimately going to happen, why did he pick Judas as a disciple at all?

A: Jesus did knowingly choose Judas as one of the Twelve. Actually, He openly acknowledged both truths: "Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?" (John 6:70). Judas's call wasn't a surprise to Jesus—Jesus' foreknowledge is part of the story, not a contradiction of it.

One reason given in scripture is that the betrayal fit into prophecy and the Lord's mission. Jesus said, "I know whom I have chosen: but that the scripture may be fulfilled" (John 13:18), and later prayed that none of the Apostles was lost "but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled" (John 17:12). In other words, the Atonement wasn't derailed by betrayal—God knew this would happen.

It's important to note that Jesus' foreknowledge didn't take away Judas's agency. *Jesus the Christ* teaches that it would be "contrary to… the revealed word" to say Judas was "deprived of freedom or agency," and that Judas "was no victim of circumstances… except as he by personal volition gave himself up to Satan"

So, why pick Judas at all? Because Jesus knowingly called him, the Lord's saving mission included foreseen prophecies that would be fulfilled, and Judas still acted by his own agency. God can accomplish His purposes without taking away anyone's agency.

Sources:
https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/archive/publications/agency-vs-predestination
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/jesus-the-christ/chapter-34?lang=eng
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/new-testament-student-manual/introduction-to-the-gospel-according-to-st-john/chapter-27-john-17-19?lang=eng
Q: Why is the symbol of the sacrament just bread and water? Doesn't that minimize the depth of the Atonement and Christ's sacrifice?

A: Bread and water are used, but the Lord has taught that the power of the sacrament isn't in the specific food or drink, but in remembering Christ and renewing covenants. In Doctrine and Covenants 27:2, Jesus said, "it mattereth not what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink … if it so be that ye do it with an eye single to my glory—remembering … my body … and my blood." That's why the Church can use water today (and it's also universally available).

The Church teaches that water replaced wine by revelation and prophetic direction, and that our focus should stay on the Savior, not the beverage. *New Era* explains that Joseph Smith received the revelation "It mattereth not what ye shall eat or drink," and concludes: "No matter what is used for the sacrament, we should focus our thoughts on the Savior and our commitment to follow Him."

Far from minimizing the Atonement, the simple emblems are meant to point you directly to the real sacrifice.

Sources:
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/new-era/2008/11/to-the-point/why-do-we-use-water-instead-of-wine-for-the-sacrament?lang=eng
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2014/10/the-sacrament-and-the-atonement?lang=eng
https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/blog/2023/05/29/come-follow-me-with-fair-faithful-answers-to-new-testament-questions-matthew-26-mark-14-john-13

Week 23: May 31–June 6 "Continue Ye in My Love" John 14–17

Quote: What a precious gift is divine love! Filled with that love, Jesus asks, "Will ye not now

return unto me, and repent of your sins, and be converted, that I may heal you?" Tenderly He reassures, "Behold, mine arm of mercy is extended towards you, and whosoever will come … will I receive; and blessed are those who come unto me." Will you not love Him who first loved you? Then keep His commandments. Will you not be a friend to Him who laid down His life for His friends? Then keep His commandments. Will you not abide in His love and receive all that He graciously offers you? Then keep His commandments.

(Link)
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2016/10/abide-in-my-love?lang=eng

Image link:
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/media/image/jesus-christ-last-supper-apostles-0340730?lang=eng&collection=artwork-of-jesus-christ-images

Q: If the Father is in Christ, and Christ in the Father, how can they be separate personages? (John 14:10-11)

A: While it may seem that Christ is referring to himself as being the same person as his Father, it is best to be understood by what makes them alike. They each have similar roles: both the Father and the Son shepherd man and woman, seeking to bring to pass our immortality and eternal life; each communicate by scripture paired with the spirit; each have a deep and eternal love for each individual soul; each have a role in Creation. They are the same in purpose and attribute, rather than physically.

Sources:
https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/answers/The_nature_of_God_in_the_Book_of_Mormon
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/scriptures/gs/god-godhead?lang=eng
http://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2007/10/the-only-true-god-and-jesus-christ-whom-he-hath-sent?lang=eng
Q: Why does Christ put conditions on friendship? Isn't conditional love (and in this case friendship) not Christlike? (John 15:13-15)

A: Much like a covenant relationship, a friendship works on mutual trust and implied conditions to maintain the integrity of the relationship. Here, Christ sets forth the conditions for friendship, as applies to both parties. Christ will always maintain unconditional *love,* which is ongoing– whether or not a friendship exists. Friendship is wholly two way relationship, while love can be either a one or two way interaction.

Sources:

https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2024/04/14dennis?lang=eng
https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/blog/2024/04/21/consider-conference-put-ye-on-the-lord-jesus-christ
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2023/10/42freeman?lang=eng

Q: Christ says the Spirit cannot speak for himself, only exists to pass on the messages he receives. Does the Spirit not have agency? (John 16: 13-14)

A: The Spirit manifests as a personage, similar to the other members of the Godhead, but only in Spirit form. Being a personage of intelligence comes with the ability to act for one's self. Thus, enacting showing, speaking, receiving, and hearing implies his own will is working in harmony within the Godhead.

Sources:
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/1974/04/the-holy-ghost?lang=eng
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/scriptures/dc-testament/dc/130?lang=eng
https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/answers/Holy_Ghost/Divinity_without_a_body

Week 24: June 7–13 "Not My Will, but Thine, Be Done" Luke 22; John

Quote: " …[R]emember these words of the Savior: "I am not alone, because the Father is with me." So it is with us. We are not alone. The Lord Jesus Christ and our Heavenly Father love us, and They are with us. Because Jesus looked to His Father and completed the great atoning sacrifice, we can look to Jesus Christ with assurance that He will help us."

(Link) https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2019/04/33clark?lang=eng

Image link:
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/media/image/jesus-kneeling-in-prayer-nelson-dbe721d?lang=eng&collection=artwork-of-jesus-christ-images

Q: Why does the LDS church not celebrate passover, when Christ and his apostles did? (Luke 22:7-8)

A: Anciently, the passover was practiced to point people toward Christ and what he had done for them. During the Last Supper, Christ instituted the Sacrament—keeping the same symbolism and actions, yet expanding on it. In a way, the passover is fulfilled in the Sacrament we take each week, which is why the Church does not mandate an annual passover observance.

Sources:
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/1995/10/this-do-in-remembrance-of-me?lang=eng
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/1985/04/christ-our-passover?lang=eng
https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/The-Passover-the-Sacrament-and-Christ_-A-Sacred-Fulfillment.pdf

Q: Why did Christ instruct the apostles to buy swords if he knew people may be harmed later in the evening? Shouldn't Christ have gone peacefully without Peter harming Malchus? Is it not exploitative to create a situation causing pain for a miracle to take place? (Luke 22:35-38, 49-51)

A: Christ's ministry was about to take a turn for his disciples. Christ was preparing them for the time where he'd be gone, where the apostles were about to be persecuted for sharing the gospel which–required protection against adversaries. Though it may have led to Peter harming Malchus, Jesus himself went peacefully despite the situation involving the swords. Peter, with the weapon, chose to attack in his own folly
Sources:
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/jesus-the-christ/chapter-33?lang=eng
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/liahona/2023/06/come-follow-me/19-miracles-of-mercy?lang=eng
https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/answers/Times_and_Seasons/6/2

Q: According to the LDS doctrine, Christ's cup was the Atonement—which had already been paid in the garden of Gethsemane. Why then does Christ say that his cup still needs to be drunk when the soldiers took him away? (John 18: 11)

A: While many think of the act in the Garden of Gethsemane, Christ's Atonement was made manifest in all of his sacrifice, whether it was in the Garden or on the cross—in death and in life.

Sources:
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/ftsoy/2022/04/05-jesus-christ-is-your-savior?lang=eng
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/1999/04/the-hands-of-the-fathers?lang=eng
https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/answers/Jesus_Christ/Atonement/Latter-day_Saint_perspective#Question:_How_do_Latter-day_Saints_understand_the_significance_of_Christ's_death_on_the_cross?

Week 25: June 14–20 "It Is Finished" Matthew 27; Mark 15; Luke 23; John 19

Quote: "Remember, heaven is filled with those who have this in common: They are forgiven. And they forgive. Lay your burden at the Savior's feet. Let go of judgment. Allow Christ's Atonement to change and heal your heart. Love one another. Forgive one another. The merciful will obtain mercy."-Dieter F. Uchtdorf

(Link)
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2012/04/the-merciful-obtain-mercy?lang=eng
Image link:
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/media/image/jesus-christ-crown-thorns-5720e36?lang=eng&collection=easter-images

Q: Why would Jesus ask the Father why he had forsaken him? Did Heavenly Father break his promise to always be with him? (Matthew 27:46)

A: Up unto that point, Christ had felt everything in mortal experience, only with God with him. To truly know all experiences, Christ would have to know what it was to be alone without the Father or Spirit to know the true loneliness of the world. Heavenly Father still loved his son through it

all, and they were still one in purpose, thus still being as one.

Sources:
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2009/04/none-were-with-him?lang=eng
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/scripture-helps-new-testament/26-matthew-27-mark-15-luke-23-john-19?lang=eng
https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/answers/Criticism_of_Mormonism/Books/Do_Christians_Believe_in_Three_Gods/Relationship_between_Father,_Son,_and_Holy_Spirit

Q: Why doesn't the LDS church focus on the cross as often as the rest of Christianity?

A: While the cross itself was key to enacting the final moments of Christ's life, the message of LDS symbolism tries to emphasize the life Christ lived as a mortal man and as a resurrected being rather than his death. Members are encouraged to try and live as Christ did as a testament rather than using the identification through the cross.

Sources:
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2022/10/41holland?lang=eng
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/ensign/2005/04/the-symbol-of-our-faith?lang=eng
https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/answers/Latter-day_Saints_and_the_symbol_of_the_cross

Q: Why does Matthew's account say Christ was clothed in scarlet when Mark and John's accounts say he was clothed in purple? (Matthew 27: (Mark 15:17-20)
A: There is a possibility that one or both colors mentioned were a blanket term for the shades presented. Anciently, both scarlet and purple were used to symbolise royalty meaning that each color was mocking Christ in reference to the title placed on him as "King of the Jews." It may also have been translation error between the two accounts or an intentional symbolic variance.

Sources:
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/jesus-the-christ/chapter-34?lang=eng
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/scripture-study-the-power-of-the-word-teacher-manual/lesson-13?lang=eng
https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/answers/Tips_for_reading_and_understanding_scripture

Week 26: June 21–27: “He Is Risen” Matthew 28; Mark 16; Luke 24; John 20–21

Quote: “No words in Christendom mean more to me than those spoken by the angel to the weeping Mary Magdalene and the other Mary when, on the first day of the week, they approached the tomb to care for the body of their Lord. Spoke the angel: “Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen.”

Our Savior lived again. The most glorious, comforting, and reassuring of all events of human history had taken place—the victory over death. The pain and agony of Gethsemane and Calvary had been wiped away. The salvation of mankind had been secured. The Fall of Adam had been reclaimed.

The empty tomb that first Easter morning was the answer to Job’s question, “If a man die, shall he live again?” To all within the sound of my voice, I declare, If a man die, he shall live again. We know, for we have the light of revealed truth.

(Link)
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2010/04/he-is-risen?lang=eng

Image link:
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/media/image/jesus-christ-empty-tomb-goshen-utah-f3d2253?lang=eng&collection=easter-images
Q: Was Christ choosing favorites when he made John live forever? (John 21:21-24)

A: Not exactly. Both Peter and John took upon themselves their roles following Christ’s return. This is Christ honoring those desires and callings. While it may seem as a comparison, it is also each apostle taking on their roles within the growing ministry.

Sources:
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/scriptures/dc-testament/dc/7?lang=eng
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/1988/10/answer-me?lang=eng
https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/blog/2026/08/02/about-his-business

Q: The apostles had the sacrament on Friday, while Clopas received it on Sunday. Does the sacrament need to be taken on Sunday? (Luke 22) (Luke 24:29-30)

A: While nothing has been noted about ancient Sacrament, the Handbook and church leadership states that the Sacrament is to be taken on the Sabbath specifically, as it is a day the Lord has set aside for us to focus on him above all other things.

Sources:
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/general-handbook/18-priesthood-ordinances and-blessings?lang=eng#sec27
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/jesus-the-christ/chapter-33?lang=eng
https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/cfm_home/abqmain/abq-going-to-church

Q: Why did Christ ask Peter three times if he loved him? (John 21:15-17)

A: In asking these questions, Christ was emphasizing his message in a personal unique way to Peter. It is reminiscent of his earlier denial, yet could also have three separate meanings behind each time asked. Either way, it is a cathartic example of the Savior teaching.

Sources:
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2012/10/the-first-great-command ment?lang=eng
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/ensign/1994/08/shepherds-lambs-and-home-teachers ?lang=eng
https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/blog/2015/08/07/riseup-podcast-the-choice-of-discipleship

Week 27: June 28–July 4 “Ye Shall Be Witnesses unto Me” Acts 1–5

Quote: “As members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, we have the blessing and privilege to stand as witnesses of the Lord and His name everywhere we are. As we strive to live our lives in harmony with the gospel of Jesus Christ, our conduct will be a living testimony of our Redeemer and His name. Moreover, we witness of Christ in word by sharing with others what we believe, feel, or know of Jesus Christ.” —Adilson de Paula Parrella, “Bearing Witness of Jesus Christ in Word and Actions,” October 2023 General Conference

Image link:
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/media/image/bible-videos-peter-81fbbbb?lang=eng

Q: Do all apostles have to see Jesus Christ?

A: Apostles are special witnesses of the name of Christ in all the world. That calling is real and authoritative even though it is not required of an Apostle to publicly report a personal, physical appearance of the Savior.

A Church magazine article explains it this way: Apostles today may have seen Jesus Christ, but "it is not physically seeing Jesus that makes someone a witness of Him." It also teaches that the Holy Ghost is the way we come to truly know Jesus Christ.

Elder Boyd K. Packer also taught that some experiences connected with the Savior are too sacred to speak about in public, and that the Spirit is the one who ultimately confirms truth. So when Apostles don't speak in detail about visions, that restraint can reflect sacredness, not absence of faith or authority.

Apostles are sustained as Christ's special witnesses through divine calling and revelation. While some may receive very sacred personal manifestations, their witness is fundamentally established and confirmed by the Holy Ghost, not by talking about whether or not they've seen Christ. Everyone can be a witness of Christ, regardless of whether or not they have seen the Savior.

Sources:
https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/archive/publications/ask-the-apologist-must-all-apostles-literal ly-see-christ
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/new-era/2019/07/the-apostles-are-witnesses-of-jesus christ-and-you-can-be-too?lang=eng
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/1971/04/the-spirit-beareth-record ?lang=eng
Q: Who actually has the right to perform ordinances: any believer or just authorized servants?

A: Not just any believer can perform ordinances. Saving ordinances are performed by authorized servants who hold priesthood authority and act under priesthood keys. The General Handbook teaches: "The priesthood includes the authority to administer gospel ordinances that are necessary for salvation and exaltation."

That pattern matches scripture: "No man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God" (Hebrews 5:4), and "it shall not be given to any one… to build up my church, except he be ordained by some one who has authority" (Doctrine and Covenants 42:11). Likewise, the Articles of Faith teach that a person must be "called of God… and by the laying on of hands by those who are in authority… to administer in the ordinances" (Articles of Faith 1:5).

The Handbook spells this out ordinance-by-ordinance. For example, “Baptism… by one having authority is necessary,” and “the ordinance of baptism is performed by a priest or Melchizedek Priesthood holder,” and the person performing it must be approved by the bishop.

So, in Latter-day Saint doctrine, ordinances are only valid when performed by those who are called, ordained, and authorized—not simply by anyone who believes.

Sources:
https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/archive/publications/is-there-a-priesthood-of-all-believers
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/general-handbook/18-priesthood-ordinances-and-blessings?lang=eng#sec2
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/scriptures/pgp/a-of-f/1?lang=eng&id=p5#p5

Q: Why does God strike Ananias and Sapphira dead in Acts 5? Isn’t this harsh?

A: In Acts 5:1–11, Ananias and Sapphira weren’t condemned for donating too little. Peter makes clear the property and money were theirs to keep. Their sin was choosing to pretend they were giving the full amount, while deliberately lying.

The New Testament Student Manual explains that this happened in the context of the Saints trying to live in a consecrated, covenant community. Ananias and Sapphira “made a solemn covenant with God” and then “broke” it “by stealing and lying,” which was “a serious offense with calamitous consequences.” The manual calls it “a powerful illustration of the need to keep our covenants and be honest before our God.”

So, is it harsh? It may at first seem like it, but from this story we receive an early, unmistakable warning that covenant deceit and spiritual hypocrisy is harmful, and that God takes integrity seriously. This is especially true when people are presenting themselves as fully consecrated while secretly “keeping back” (Acts 5:2). And, Peter doesn’t frame it as a financial issue—he frames it as a spiritual issue: lying to the Holy Ghost and to God.
The point of Acts 5 isn’t that God is eager to punish, but that discipleship and consecration require real honesty. God wants willing hearts! And covenant-breaking deception has real consequences, even when we might minimize it.

Sources:
https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/answers/The_Church_of_Jesus_Christ_and_plural_marriage_today
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/new-testament-student-manual/acts/chapter-30-acts-3-7?lang=eng
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/1976/04/an-honest-man-gods-noblest-work?lang=eng

Week 28: July 5–11 “What Wilt Thou Have Me to Do?” Acts 6–9

Quote: “Under the Lord’s direction and in answer to our prayers, recent procedural adjustments have been made. He is the One who wants you to understand with great clarity exactly what you are making covenants to do. He is the One who wants you to experience fully His sacred ordinances. He wants you to comprehend your privileges, promises, and responsibilities. He wants you to have spiritual insights and awakenings you’ve never had before.” —Russell M. Nelson, “The Temple and Your Spiritual Foundation,” October 2021 General Conference

Image link:
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/media/image/bible-videos-stephen-death-295f9bd?lang=eng&collection=acts-of-the-apostles-bible-images

Q: Why would God allow Stephen’s martyrdom right after such powerful miracles and growth?

A: Stephen’s martyrdom shows that miracles and growth don’t remove agency or opposition. Even while Stephen was “full of the Holy Ghost” and given a vision of the Savior (Acts 7:55–60), his enemies still chose violence. The New Testament Student Manual notes the broader pattern in Acts: the work of God progresses despite persecution.

God also allowed Stephen’s death to become a powerful witness that ultimately pushed the gospel outward. Right after Stephen’s death, “there was a great persecution,” and the Saints were “scattered abroad,” and “they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word” (see Acts 8:1–4). So, what looked like a tragic setback became part of how the Lord moved His work beyond Jerusalem.

We won’t always know why the Lord intervenes in one case and not another, but He can still accomplish His purposes and reward faithfulness. “Jesus the Christ” describes Stephen as the first Christian martyr and explains that after his death, persecution scattered the Saints—and “the blood of Stephen the martyr proved to be rich and virile seed, from which sprang a great harvest of souls.”

God didn’t abandon the Church when Stephen was martyred; He allowed agency and opposition, honored Stephen’s faithful witness, and then turned persecution into momentum as the Saints carried the gospel everywhere.

Sources:
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/new-testament-student-manual/acts/chapter-31-acts-8-12?lang=eng
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/jesus-the-christ/chapter-38?lang=eng

https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/scripture-study-resources/new-testament/come-follow-me-fair-new-testament-nt42

Q: When the Church makes administrative changes, is that “less spiritual”? (Acts 6:1–7)

A: Administrative changes in the Lord’s Church aren’t “less spiritual” just because they sound practical. In Acts 6:1–7, some widows were being neglected, and the Apostles responded by organizing a better way to care for people—calling seven trusted men and giving them responsibility. That wasn’t a distraction from spirituality; it was part of how the Lord guided His Church.
The Apostles said their priorities needed to be: “prayer, and… the ministry of the word” (Acts 6:4). The administrative change protected those spiritual priorities, because it delegated the work in a wise, orderly way. The outcome was deeply spiritual: “the word of God increased” and the Church grew (Acts 6:7).

President Russell M. Nelson has taught that while gospel principles don’t change, the Lord does guide His Church in changing methods as needed through inspired leaders. He quoted President Harold B. Lee, when he said: “methods change as the inspired direction comes.” And he testified that such adjustments are “evidence that the Lord is actively directing His Church.”

Administrative changes can be a spiritual part of revelation and stewardship—helping the Church care for people better and keeping the focus on faith, prayer, and preaching the gospel.

Sources:
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2021/10/47nelson?lang=eng
https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/cfm_home/abqmain/abq-why-change
https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/answers/Mormonism_and_doctrine/Changing

Q: Why does God use a dramatic manifestation for Saul but not for most

people?

A: God sometimes uses a dramatic manifestation because the situation (and the person’s calling) is dramatic. Saul was “yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter” against the Saints when the Lord stopped him with a brilliant light and a direct voice (Acts 9:1–6). The Lord explained that Saul was “a chosen vessel” to bear Christ’s name widely (Acts 9:15), so his conversion also became a public turning point that propelled the work forward.

But in scripture, God teaches that His usual way is quieter: Elijah learned that “the Lord was not in” the wind, earthquake, or fire, but in “a still small voice” (1 Kings 19:11–12). In this dispensation the Lord similarly says revelation often comes “in your mind and in your heart, by the Holy Ghost” (Doctrine and Covenants 8:2–3). So most people aren’t missing something—this is the normal pattern of personal revelation.

Elder David A. Bednar taught that immediate, intense manifestations do happen, “however, this pattern of revelation tends to be more rare than common,” and that we can mistakenly “emphasize marvelous and dramatic spiritual manifestations” and overlook the steady, incremental way the Holy Ghost usually works. He reassured people who worry they don’t have “Saul on the road to Damascus” experiences: “please know that you are quite normal. Just keep pressing forward obediently and with faith in the Savior.”

Elder Alexander Dushku also compared revelation to pillars and rays of light. While some people (like Joseph Smith) have a “pillar of light” experience, most of us will receive revelation one ray at a time. “sisters. Rather than sending us a pillar of light, the Lord sends us a ray of light, and then another, and another.

God tailors revelation to His purposes and to our needs—sometimes dramatic (like Saul) for a specific mission, but most often quietly through the Holy Ghost. The faithful path is to keep listening, obeying, and pressing forward, trusting that the rays will come.

Sources:
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2011/04/the-spirit-of-revelation?lang=eng
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2024/04/15dushku?lang=eng
https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/blog/2024/06/30/consider-conference-pillars-and-rays

Week 29: July 12–18 “The Word of God Grew and Multiplied” Acts 10–15

Quote: “Are the heavens open? Does God reveal His will to prophets and apostles as in days of old? That they are and that He does is the unflinching declaration of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to all the world.” —Jeffrey R. Holland, “Prophets, Seers, and Revelators,” October 2004 General Conference
Image link:
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/media/image/peter-james-jerusalem-conference-a812767?lang=eng

Q: Why would God need to correct Peter if Peter was really led by God?

A: God correcting Peter doesn't mean Peter wasn't led by God. It shows how God leads real, mortal leaders line upon line. When Peter saw the vision in Acts 10, he "struggled at first to understand it" and even "doubted in himself what it should mean," and then the Lord gave him greater understanding as he kept seeking it. That's a sign of continuing revelation, not a sign the Church was leaderless.

It also highlights a basic Latter-day Saint belief: prophets and apostles aren't infallible. God's doctrine is perfect, but His servants are still learning, growing, and sometimes bringing cultural assumptions with them until the Lord expands their understanding. President Dieter F. Uchtdorf taught, "there have been times when members or leaders in the Church have simply made mistakes… But He works through us—His imperfect children—and imperfect people make mistakes."

In Peter's case, the correction wasn't God taking away his leadership, it was God guiding Peter into a bigger phase of the work: welcoming Gentiles fully into the covenant. Peter ends up testifying, "God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean" (Acts 10:28), and then he sees God confirm it by the Holy Ghost and authorizes baptism (Acts 10:44, 47–48).

God doesn't call perfect people—He calls servants, teaches them as they go, and corrects/clarifies by revelation so His Church stays on course. Peter being corrected is evidence that Christ was still actively leading His Church.

Sources:
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/come-follow-me-for-individuals-and-families-new-testament-2023/30?lang=eng
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2013/10/come-join-with-us?lang=eng)
https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/blog/2025/01/05/be-the-wind-supporting-others-on-the-covenant-path

Q: Why would a loving and merciful God deliver Peter in Acts 12 but kill James?

A: God sometimes delivers one servant and allows another to die because He's working with different missions, different timing, and a bigger eternal perspective than we can see in the moment. In Acts 12, James is martyred while Peter is miraculously freed. That doesn't mean God loved Peter more—it means God's plan can include both deliverance and martyrdom. Neither outcome is a sign God has "abandoned" His people.

God hears and answers every prayer, but not always the way we ask. The New Testament Seminary manual explicitly notes that in Acts 12 "the prayers of the Saints may have been

answered differently than they hoped," since "James was martyred… [and] Peter… delivered."

In the restored gospel, death is not the end! So God allowing James to die isn't Him withholding mercy; it can be part of crowning a faithful witness and moving the work forward. The Lord told Joseph Smith that even the harshest sufferings can "give thee experience, and shall be for thy good" (Doctrine and Covenants 122:7). That doesn't make loss easier, but it helps us keep faith that God is still loving, present, and purposeful.

A loving God may deliver Peter and allow James to be martyred because He answers prayers in different ways, in His timing, and with His eternal plan in view. We don't always have the answers in this life, but we can trust that God has a plan for us.

Sources:
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/new-testament-seminary-manual-2027/28-acts-10-15/283-acts-12?lang=eng
https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/blog/2009/05/04/the-apostolic-foundation
https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/blog/2024/02/08/asking-big-questions-why-do-bad-things-happen-to-good-people

Q: Does Acts 15 prove "Bible-only" Christianity—no continuing revelation?

A: Acts 15 doesn't really support "Bible-only" Christianity, because the Bible as a finished collection didn't even exist yet. The chapter itself shows the Church being led by living apostles and the Holy Ghost in real time. The apostles and elders "came together" to consider the question (Acts 15:6), and their final decision explicitly says, "it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us" (Acts 15:28). That's guidance by revelation, not just quoting prior scripture.

The big issue in Acts 10–15, with Gentile converts and the law of Moses, was resolved as leaders counseled together and sought the Lord's direction. This shows the pattern of Christ leading His Church through revelation as new needs arose. Acts 15 is evidence of an ongoing, guided Church.

The Ninth Article of Faith states: "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…" And President Russell M. Nelson has taught that "the heavens are open and that God speaks to His children," and urged members to seek and receive revelation. Acts 15 points to continuing revelation—living apostles counseling together and then moving forward with what "seemed good to the Holy Ghost"—not to a "Bible-only, no more revelation" approach.
Sources:
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/come-follow-me-for-individuals-and-families-new-testament-2023/30?lang=eng
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2018/04/revelation-for-the-church-revelation-for-our-lives?lang=eng

https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/answers/Question:_Why_do_Mormon%27s_believe_that_ongoing_divine_revelation_is_necessary%3F

Week 30: July 19–25 “The Lord Had Called Us for to Preach the Gospel” Acts 16–21

Quote: “The gospel of Jesus Christ opens the path to what we may become. Through the Atonement of Jesus Christ and His grace, our failures to live the celestial law perfectly and consistently in mortality can be erased and we are enabled to develop a Christlike character. Justice demands, however, that none of this happen without our willing agreement and participation. It has ever been so.” —D. Todd Christofferson, “Free Forever, to Act for Themselves,” October 2014 General Conference

Image link:
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/media/image/paul-preaching-on-mars-hill-5fca3e4?lang=eng

Q: Why does Acts talk about whole households being baptized—does that imply infant baptism?

A: In Acts, the phrase “household baptisms” doesn’t automatically mean infants were baptized. In the jailer’s case, Paul and Silas “spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house,” and then the household rejoiced, “believing in God” (Acts 16:32–34). That description fits people old enough to be taught and to exercise faith, not necessarily babies.

Latter-day Saints believe baptism is for those who are accountable and capable of sin. The Book of Mormon directly rejects infant baptism: “little children are whole… not capable of committing sin… [and] it is solemn mockery before God” to baptize them (Moroni 8:8–12). The Church’s baptism study guide teaches that little children are sinless before God and do not need baptism.

Instead, the Lord set an age of accountability in Doctrine and Covenants 68:27: “their children shall be baptized… when eight years old.” So when Acts mentions a “household” being baptized, Latter-day Saints don’t read that as proof of infant baptism—just that the family members who could believe and choose the covenant were baptized.
“Household baptisms” in Acts don’t establish infant baptism. Modern revelation plus the Book of Mormon clarifies the principle: baptism is for accountable believers, while little children are alive in Christ and are baptized later, at age eight.

Sources:
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/gospel-topics/baptism-study-guide?lang=eng
https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/blog/2023/07/31/come-follow-me-with-fair-faithful-answers-to

new-testament-questions-acts-22-28
https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/answers/Question:_What_to_Latter-day_Saints_believe_regarding_the_concept_of_%22original_sin%22%3F

Q: If miracles can be counterfeited (sons of Sceva), how can anyone trust spiritual experiences?

A: Acts includes the sons of Sceva story to show that not every spiritual manifestation is from God—and that using Jesus's name without God's authority/power isn't the same as having it. The New Testament teaches caution: counterfeit spiritual power exists, and people can be sincerely wrong.

Latter-day Saints trust spiritual experiences by testing them. The Bible teaches, "believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God" (1 John 4:1). The Book of Mormon gives a clear measurement: if something invites you to do good and believe in Christ, it's of God; if it pushes you toward evil or denying Christ, it's not (Moroni 7:16–17).

One way we learn to trust spiritual experiences is by learning the patterns of how the Holy Ghost communicates. President Russell M. Nelson taught that as we "receive the Holy Ghost and learn to discern and understand His promptings," we can be guided and also sift through confusing voices around us. The goal isn't to never be fooled, but to build real spiritual capacity over time.

Because counterfeits exist, as we see in Acts 19, the scriptural approach is to test spiritual experiences by their fruits—do they edify, lead to good, and bring you closer to Jesus Christ—while praying for and developing discernment through the Holy Ghost.

Sources:
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2018/04/revelation-for-the-church-revelation-for-our-lives?lang=eng
https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/answers/Times_and_Seasons/3/12
https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/blog/2024/11/30/asking-big-questions-how-can-i-know-if-im-being-guided-by-the-holy-ghost