

**My Observations and Questions Concerning
The Doctrine, Practice and Organization
Of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-
Day Saints**

1. Where do you find the Biblical authority/example for the organizational structure of Christ's first century church to include Bishops, Council of Seventy, Council of Apostles and a Prophet over local elders shepherding local congregations (wards)? (**Heb 13:17**) Is this hierarchical structure mentioned in the Book of Mormon?

2. If "Bishops" are not elders, why did Paul provide Timothy with qualifications for "Bishops" and deacons, but not elders who have God-ordained spiritual oversight of His local congregations (wards)? Are the qualifications for elders found anywhere in the Book of Mormon? (**1 Timothy 3; Acts 20:17, 28**)

3. If we agree that elders are the spiritual leaders over local congregations (wards), do you believe that 18 year old single men have the experience, Bible knowledge, life skills, wisdom and maturity to effectively shepherd hundreds of members, many married with children? (**1 Peter 5:1-2; Heb 13:17**)

4. How do twelve year old boys meet the qualifications of deacons listed in **1 Timothy 3:10-12**?

5. Why would there be a need for a future revelation in light of **2 Peter 1:3, 2 Timothy 3:16-17, Jude 3, Gal 1:6-10** which appear to clearly state that all of God's revelation was provided in the first century?

6. How can "Apostles" exist today in light of the qualification stated in **Acts 1:21-22**?

7. Where in the New Testament is there any indication that God would be providing man with future revelation?

8. Baptism for the dead (**1 Cor 15:29**) - In light of **Heb 9:27; Lk 16:25-26; 2 Peter 4,9,17; Matt. 25:46** and **Rev 20:10-15** which all indicate there is no "second chance" for anyone who dies outside of Christ, how do you explain your interpretation?

9. Why was so much of the Book of Mormon (+/-11%) copied verbatim from the KJV of 1611? Why would the Holy Spirit re-reveal these scriptures? This would be redundant and frivolous. Many original manuscripts have been discovered in the last 400 years that contribute to the inaccuracy of the KJV. Why do you continue to use it? Is it because the style of writing in the Book of Mormon loosely matches it?

10. If the original revelation was never to be altered ("The Challenge", condition 10), "When you finish in 60 days, you must make no changes in the text. The first edition must stand forever.", why have an estimated 4,000 grammatical (not printer) errors from the original 1830 edition (examples: **Jacob 7:24, Alma 48:25; 53:5, 1 Nephi 5:11**) and many content mistakes; examples - **Mosiah 21:28** ("Benjamin" changed to "Mosiah"); **Alma 37:21** ("directors changed to "interpreters"); **1 Nephi 13:32** ("state of awful woundedness" changed to "awful state of blindness"); **Mosiah 27:29** ("wrecked" changed to "racked") been corrected in subsequent editions?

11. Are the names of the sections of the Book of Mormon mentioned in the Bible in the same context?

12. Introduction to the Book of Mormon

a. Third paragraph: Does the New Testament mention Jesus' ministry to the Nephites in its account of Jesus' activity between his resurrection and ascension? (*another gospel?*)

b. Fifth paragraph: states Book of Mormon is a "new" and "additional" witness of Jesus Christ. "New" equates to "not existing before"; "additional" equates to "adding to something that already exists" These terms appear to conflict **with Gal 1:6-10; Rev 22:18-19, Jude 3, 2 Timothy 3:16-17)**

c. Sixth paragraph: states the Book of Mormon is the most "correct" book on earth and it would get a man nearer to God than "any" other book. This statement relegates the Bible to an inferior position in God's revelation. (**2 Tim 3:16-17**)

d. Eighth paragraph: states that anyone who reads the Book of Mormon, prays asking God if the Book is true, will gain testimony of its truth by the power of the Holy Ghost. This statement insinuates that anyone who reads the book and does not come to a conclusion of truth is not seeking truth with a sincere heart and faith. This does not allow for a reasoned study which comes to any other conclusion. (**Acts 18:4**)

13. Testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith - seventh paragraph: states that the "fullness of the everlasting Gospel was contained in the Book of Mormon." This statement conflicts with the following passages (**2 Peter 1:3; Jude 3; Gal 1:6-10; 2 Tim 3:16-17**)

14. First Book of Nephi - Why did the Holy Spirit reveal this information to Joseph Smith in the 1800's in the United States using antiquated (**KJV**) language? This is not how people talked or wrote at this time and place in history. The grammar and syntax of Nephi are well below the quality utilized by American writers in the early 1800's. It is reasonable to expect the Holy Spirit to inspire Smith to write the words and sentences that would be most understandable to people in America in the 1800's. Why is this not the case? It is not my intention to ridicule this Book, but it appears to me that this writing is an uninspired attempt by Smith to mimic the language, and periodically the exact words, of the **KJV** Bible in order to gain credibility and general acceptance.

15. What is missing from the New Testament that is found in the Book of Mormon that would be necessary for me to live a life pleasing to God?

Answers to my questions:

16. LDS response: Something to understand before you read anything here is that all we are presenting is not necessarily the doctrine of the LDS. It is just our best understanding of it that we can supply.

Response to LDS: I am perplexed by your opening disclaimer. I have never heard or read such a statement in all my Bible studies with people of other faiths, nor have I ever used it. That being said, I will provide my response as follows:

17. **Revelation 22:18-19** -

LDS response: One of the things to consider about any passage of scripture is the context in which it is written. This is one application of the "necessary inference" part of the hermeneutic you shared with us. Our understanding of this passage hinges upon some of the context we have observed about what "book" John was speaking of in these verses. Many affirm this to be the Bible, but we don't see any evidence for this. **Revelation 1:11** clarifies that John was commanded to write his vision in a book which would then be sent to seven churches. It was not sent along with a copy of the other 65 books of the Bible. This would be impossible for two reasons. First, the books among these 65 later identified as the New Testament were not compiled that way and given that label until years afterward. Secondly, according to many copies of the New World Translation of the Bible and other scholars, the timeline showing when the various books of the New Testament were written does not place Revelation last. John himself wrote other books after the writing and sending his vision recorded in Revelation. One of these was the Gospel of John which says in the last verse (**21:25**) that not even the entire world could contain a record of all that Jesus said or did. This implies there to be more which could be in the Bible that is already there.

Response to LDS: If this was the only scripture that dealt with adding to God's revealed word, your comments would have some value; but it is not. Moses made it abundantly clear in **Duet 4:2** and **12:32** that nothing was to be added to his statutes, judgments and commands. **2 Timothy 3:16-17** states that "All scripture (not now AND to come) is (present tense) given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect (complete), thoroughly furnished unto ALL good works." **Proverbs 30:5-6; Gal 1:6-10; Jude 3; 2 Pet 1:3** all support this fact. It is interesting that the Bible starts and ends with identical pronouncements about adding to God's revelation. It seems reasonable to infer from these verses that there was to be no further revelation from God to mankind. It is also interesting that you reference the Jehovah's Witness's New World Translation of the Bible. Do you believe it is an accurate translation?

18. I believe you are making a "leap too far" by implying that **John 21:25** opens the possibility of further revelation from God to mankind. I would infer that John was simply pointing out to his first century readers that even with all the evidence presented as to the divinity/messiahship of Christ, much more *could* be told IF God deemed it necessary for their/our understanding, which He did not. I trust God to say what He means and mean what He says.

19. **2 Peter 1:3** -

LDS response: In addressing the context of this verse, when it says "life and godliness," there are things which could yet be learned not contained under the umbrella of this phrase. Such things are discussed in the later verses of the chapter (see verses 4-8). You said you read this phrase to mean things physical and spiritual. I don't think "godliness" necessarily means spiritual. Another way to read this could be things pertaining to this mortal life and eternal life to come (God's life). Thus, this phrase seen through this lens encapsulates things necessary for Salvation, but not other extraneous topics. The later verses support this, as "godliness" is referenced among the attributes we attain unto as we continue in the discipleship of Jesus Christ.

To clarify, godliness refers to the nature of Godhood that Jesus Christ has that we should try to develop. When reviewing other scriptures mentioning godliness, we came across **Titus 1:1-2** and **2 Peter 3:10-12**. In **Titus**, Paul connects the concepts of godliness with eternal life in one thought (this is seen more easily when the verse divisions are eliminated and the text is read like the continuous letter it was formatted as). The verses Peter wrote talk about godliness being a manner people live after like their speaking one with another, and therefore identifies it as an action. (Your point is unclear in previous sentence??) The gospel was given for the development of these characteristics within ourselves. God has given us all things pertaining to life and the ability to become more like God (that is Salvation).

Assuming, however, that he is referring to revelations relating to any topic, the keyword you point to is the word "all," which is a blanket absolute. Consider, however, what the verse does not say. It does not say that those who received this revelation wrote "all" things down. Even if they did, it is possible some of them were not eventually compiled into the Bible. Even if they were, the commentary given above on **Revelation 22:18-19** with reference to **John 22:25** (assume you meant "John 21:25") shows such writings were not perfectly comprehensive of every topic worthy of discussion. The verse also does not say that any of this "all" could not be written again elsewhere as people needed it. (See II Nephi 29). In short, the apostles could have received this "all" without ever claiming to have presented it in some exhaustive manner.

Response to LDS: Verse 4 begins, "by which" referring the reader back to verses 1-3 as the foundation for what Peter is about to say. The Greek word for "godliness" can be interpreted as "holiness, "piety" or "sanctification," which all relate to the spirituality of man during his physical life on earth. Your statement at the end of paragraph two reads, "God has given us all things pertaining to life and the ability to become more like God (that is Salvation)."

What else is there?? This is an "umbrella" statement that encapsulates the totality (physical and spiritual aspects) of man. It has been said that if you want to know the meaning of a verse, ask a ten year old to explain it. Adults often tend to over-analyze God's word. "All" means all; "complete" means complete, "once" means once and NONE means NONE (**Lk 16:26**).

Much of your argument for an alternate interpretation of **2 Peter 1:3** is based on suppositions that cannot be verified. I see no reason why God would not have revealed all that He intended for man to know during the first century. Numerous scriptures mentioned above support this conclusion.

20. **Gal 1:6-10** -

LDS response: The "gospel" described here is the good news of Christ. Gospel literally means "good news." That news is that through faith in Jesus Christ and His atonement, repentance through the grace and mercy of Jesus Christ, baptism in the name of Jesus Christ, and enduring to the end by "pressing forward with a steadfastness in Christ, having a perfect brightness of hope, and a love of God and of all men," (2 Nephi 31:20) we can receive such a remission of sins, be perfected in Christ, and live with God again (eternal life). The details of the gospel are treated at greater length in the remainder of 2 Nephi 31 as well as 3 Nephi 27.

This is what the apostles taught. It's what Joseph Smith taught. It is what the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints teaches now. The gospel has not been preached in any altered manner.

Response to LDS: Having read the first 14 chapters of First Nephi, it is evident to me, at this point, that the Book of Mormon is, as the cover states, "Another Testament" of Jesus Christ. It is not a clarification of the Bible. It contains uninspired verbatim copying of words/verses from the readily available Bible (+/- 11%) and information that is clearly in addition to (different than) revealed scripture. According to Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, "another" in **Gal 1:6-10** means "different."

As you mentioned above and I noted in **1 Cor 15:1-4**, baptism is an essential part of the gospel of Christ. The doctrine of "baptism for the dead" is a perversion of Jesus' gospel and stands in direct conflict with the scriptures listed in paragraph 8 above. It also provides false hope to loved ones left behind. **Luke 16:26**, *"And besides all this, between us (Abraham and Lazarus) and you (rich man) there a great chasm has been FIXED, in order that those who would pass from here (paradise) to you (torment) may NOT be able, and NONE may cross from there (torment) to us (paradise)"* Lazarus died in a saved condition and instantly arrived in Abraham's bosom (paradise). The rich man died in a lost condition and instantly arrived in torment. Their eternal destination was fixed the instant they physically died (their spirit left their physical bodies) according to Luke's inspired account. Either Luke was lying or "baptism for the dead" is a false (another) gospel and condemned by Paul (**Gal 1:6-10**)

21. **Jude 1:3** -

LDS response: You look especially at the word "once" to claim that the gospel only needs to be given the time it has been previously given. The word "once" either indicates when something occurs (once A is complete, do B) or a number of times something occurs (A was done once and B was done twice). If the usage here is the sense of when, then the verse does not indicate any cessation of revelation. However, I have reviewed the sentence where this word is used and have concluded that it does say "once" in the numerical sense. But, to immediately jump to the conclusion that this means the faith Jude describes had been given and will never again be given cannot be done, because it says that it has been given once without saying that no second, third, etc. can be given. It would have the meaning of once and only once if Jude is speaking in the future tense (the faith will be once delivered), but he is not. If it mean that, then why would Jude write this letter to correct the Saints when that "once" already occurred (Verse three has reference to another previous written by Jude not canonized in the New Testament)? 3 Nephi 7:8, Alma 4-5 and Helaman 12:2-4 show how people need to be constantly reminded of the doctrines and

righteous practices they once knew. That is what we think Jude is trying to accomplish with this epistle.

Response to LDS: The word "faith" here means "system of religious (Gospel) truth" according to Strong's. The Bible is its own best commentary. The verses previously listed support the determination that "once" means once. Strong's defines the Greek word used for "once" to mean "one (or a single) time, (numerically or conclusively). The hermeneutical principle of the Authority of Silence is applicable here. Since the Holy Spirit said "once" there is no need to list "second, third, etc. We have the authorized example for using the fruit of the vine and unleavened bread for the Lord's Supper. Why don't we use hot dogs and ice tea? The scriptures do not say we can't use them? The Authority of Silence. I agree that God's people need to be continually reminded of His doctrines. That is why we have Bibles readily available for private study, weekly classes and sermons for corporate study. Why would the Holy Spirit re-reveal scripture He has already revealed? That would be redundant and frivolous. It is just not reasonable to believe that "constantly" could mean another (different) revelation from God every 1800 years or so.

22. **Eph 4:11-14** -

LDS response: These verses stated more concisely say that apostles and prophets are necessary to guide disciples of Christ until two things happen:

1) The Saints will be unified in their faith and what they know about Jesus Christ and,

2) Because of this knowledge, we will be perfect men and women in stature "as great as Christ"

You have said that the first has occurred, but nobody can say that we all have attained unto "the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." Paul says in **Romans 3:23** that we are an imperfect people. This is noted also in Mosiah 3:19 where it says that we must put "off the natural man..and (become) as a child in our submission to God before we become perfect.

Response to LDS: As I mentioned previously, **Acts 2:44-47** clearly states that unity had come to Christ's church in the first century. (**Eph 4:14**) "That we henceforth be no more children" ties directly into **1 Cor 13:11**, "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things." Paul is obviously referring back to verse 8 concerning miracles such as prophecies, tongues and miraculous knowledge. "Perfect and perfecting" do not mean attaining a "*stature as great as Christ.*" *No one will ever attain divinity.* According to Strong's, "Perfect" means *complete* and "Perfecting" means *completely furnished*. Man is "complete" when he has available to him all that God intended for him to have to withstand the trials and temptations of life and serve/worship Him. Miracles ceased because God had completed His revelation to man and therefore there was no further need to confirm the messenger and his message.

The Twelve Apostles were chosen by Christ to serve a unique role during the first century and on into eternity. It should be noted that when Judas killed himself BEFORE PENTACOST Jesus directed the eleven to replace him with a man "who had been with Jesus," (**Acts 1:21-22**) but when James was killed AFTER PENTACOST he was NOT replaced, why? The physical presence of the Twelve was no longer required after the establishment of Christ's church and the completion of God's revelation of His will to man.

There were others in the New Testament that performed functions of an apostle (ambassador) such as Barnabas, but was not on the level of the Twelve.

In a sense there were "Capital "A" Apostles and "Small "a" apostles serving different functions with different qualifications.

The same can be said of "Prophets." Most people think only of someone who foretells the future when the word is mentioned. While that was a function of Biblical Prophets, much of their time and effort was devoted to proclaiming God to others, especially those in powerful positions.

Lower case "apostles" and "prophets" may exist today without the miraculous powers of the Twelve Apostles and Prophets in the Bible.

23. Connections to the Book of Mormon -

LDS response: As for a reference to the Book of Mormon in the New Testament, **John 10:16** records Jesus speaking of disciples that are not in the "fold" He is presently conversing with. In reading the book of Mormon, Jesus says the same thing in 3 Nephi 15:12-24, 16:1 when He speaks to the residents of America around 34 A.D. He clarifies that these "other sheep" include but are not limited to the residents of America.

You also asked where the New Testament predicts future revelations. It says in **Acts 3:20-21** that Jesus Christ's Second Coming would not occur until a "restitution of all things." We believe his to be a restoration of lost truths, doctrines, authority, etc. such as has begun to be given through prophets in these modern times.

Response to LDS: Copying words, phrases and verses verbatim from the New Testament, which was readily available in the early 1800's, was not inspired revelation. Considerable misunderstanding exists regarding the phrase "until the times of restitution of all things", (**Acts 3:20-21**). Elaborate theories have been proposed regarding what Peter meant. He used a Jewish idiom in common use in his day. A basic question in biblical interpretation is "What did this mean to those who first heard the words?" To his Jewish audience, *the restitution of all things*" was messianic terminology. When the Messiah came, He would make all things right. Peter wanted them to know that if they accepted Jesus as the Messiah, when He returned, all *legitimate* messianic hopes and dreams would be completely and finally realized. This would be a powerful motivation to those whose thoughts centered on the Messiah all their lives.

As to the "other sheep not in the fold," this is a clear reference to those people who had not yet accepted Jesus as the messiah about which the Old Testament prophets spoke.

Do you know of historical evidence that supports people from Europe or the Mideast being in America 2,000 years before Columbus "discovered" it?

I ask that you respond to the above in numerical order, remembering that some paragraphs have multiple questions/comments.

God bless,

Jim