

WITNESSING EFFECTIVELY TO LATTER DAY SAINTS (LDS)
(aka PROFESSED MORMONS): PART 2
Equipping Hour at Saving Grace Bible Church, Osprey, FL; 7/23/2017

INTRODUCTION

For several weeks, Colin Jordon faithfully presented truth from the Word of God whereby he contrasted a number of “faith” movements that strayed from the doctrines of historical Biblical Christianity. With that as a precursor, last week I began a brief series on how to witness effectively to professed Mormons.

PURPOSE

To compare LDS Church doctrines with the Bible so that you may be better equipped to witness effectively to professed Mormons. The purpose is not to bash Mormons as people, but to compare LDS doctrinal issues with Bible truth. You need to be informed on the LDS church’s main doctrinal issues in order to reach out to professed Mormons who are being deceived. Also, to strengthen your knowledge and deepen your understanding of the Word of God.

REVIEW

Highlights from Part 1 (last week) include:

a) Our family resided 35 miles SW of Salt Lake City in Tooele County. From 2000-2014 we lived, worked, and conducted business among predominately professed Mormons.

b) **Sincere People.** Professed Mormons sincerely believe what the LDS church teaches; they know what they are taught by their church and defend it. They truly believe they follow the gospel as the LDS church defines and understands it.

c) **The LDS Church Distinctives.** The LDS Church claims that it is a Christian Church, but declares it is neither Catholic nor Protestant. Rather, it is a restoration of the Church of Jesus Christ, as originally established by the Savior in the New Testament of the Bible. Why do some LDS members leave their church? Several main reasons: (1) Hunger for God (sincere); (2) Deal breaking inconsistencies they see from what they are taught and experience in life; and (3) Besetting burdens placed on LDS members – a system of good works.

d) Origins of Mormonism According to the LDS Church. When Jesus lived on earth, He organized His church. He had 12 apostles that He ordained. When Jesus was crucified, His apostles were killed and the truth was lost. According to the LDS Church, 14-year old Joseph Smith was visited by God the Father and God the Son after reading James 1:5 and praying about which church he should join. The LDS church teaches that Joseph Smith was told that he should join none of them because they were all an abomination to God. Three years later, Joseph was visited by a messenger from heaven. He told Joseph about a record written on golden plates, a record written by ancient prophets who lived in the Americas long ago. Eventually Joseph allegedly was given the power to translate these records from Egyptian into English. Soon the record was translated and published as the Book of Mormon, *another* (note a key distinction: not homogenous- of the same kind; rather, heterogenous or very different kind) testament of Jesus Christ.

When the hunger for religious experience peaked in the 1800s, the lack of unity among the differing branches of Christian faith became a stumbling block for some. Thus, the LDS Church teaches that to Joseph Smith was restored the “holy priesthood [of] the apostles and disciples of old” since in these “latter days” of the world; all other churches were participating in apostasy (Articles of Faith, p. 182-185); only his private revelation (or that of those associated with him) could be trusted for salvation and instruction (Mormon Doctrine, p. 670).

e) LDS Church Numbers. In 2008, the LDS Church published in the *Deseret News Church Almanac* nearly 6M in USA; 12M world-wide. Most of those outside of the USA are in Latin American countries (see <http://newsroom.lds.org/ldsnewsroom/eng/statistical-information>).

f) LDS Missionaries. The LDS church sends out large numbers of missionaries because it claims to be the "only true church" and the only church with the authority to act in God's name. 18-19 year olds serve a 2-year "mission" many south of the US border.

g) The 4 Primary sources the LDS Church relies on to support their faith/doctrines:

1. KJV Bible (only). 'We believe the Bible to be the word of God as far as it is translated correctly; we also believe the Book of Mormon to be the word of God.' (Articles of Faith 1:8.) (Note: When a professed Mormon says translated correctly, they mean interpreted correctly.)
2. The Book of Mormon.
3. The Doctrine and Covenants.
4. The Pearl of Great Price.

Other sources include: The Journal of Discourses and Mormon Doctrine

MORMON DOCTRINE (aka Systematic Theology of the LDS) by Bruce McConkie (1958; 2nd ed. 1966) a LDS Church authority. McConkie (1915-1985) was a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles of the LDS Church after serving as a member of the First Council of the Seventy of the LDS Church.

(Note: *In May 2010 McConkie's "Mormon Doctrine" was taken out of print. It had been a cornerstone for LDS beliefs and a foundational reference document for over 50 years! McConkie himself described it as "the first major attempt to digest, explain, and analyze all of the important doctrines of the kingdom" and "the first extensive compendium of the whole gospel—the first attempt to publish an encyclopedic commentary covering the whole field of revealed [LDS] religion."* Undoubtedly, its teachings have had a major impact upon several LDS generations.)

Question: *Why was this work of Mormon Doctrine taken out of print? Conjecture by some who study LDS Church operations: (1) to avoid candid discussion of LDS doctrines that the church is now attempting to downplay or conceal. Such teachings as God once being a man, his wife—Heavenly Mother, and Jesus being the literal, physical son of God are just a few of the doctrines that are being minimized in current LDS church manuals. If the LDS Church believes Mormon Doctrine presented a faulty (or less than accurate) compilation of their doctrines, why not issue an authorized compendium of LDS Church beliefs? Mormon officials have told Sandra Tanner of Utah Lighthouse Ministry (in Salt Lake City, UT): "That's [Mormon Doctrine] not official [LDS] church doctrine." This is very odd/confusing because it is not as if there is some other document that summarizes the official teachings of the LDS Church's Systematic Theology or Doctrine. It begs the rhetorical question, Where is the official systematic theology of Mormonism? Like it or not, the LDS Church cannot deny that for over 50 years McConkie's reference book has been their default (sic) systematic theology manual. Be aware that the beliefs of the LDS Church change via a continuation of prophesy through their prophets (i.e., LDS Church presidents).*

LESSON FOR JULY 23, 2017

Three Key Areas of Exploration for Today's Lesson:

- (i) LDS Church Teaching on the Doctrine of God (i.e., The Godhead, God the Father)

- (ii) LDS Church Doctrine Regarding the Person of Jesus Christ (especially His birth)
- (iii) LDS Church Doctrine Regarding the Holy Ghost
- (iv) Explore/Answer Some Key Questions:
 - In the early 1820s, did the Christian Church Need to be Restored as Claimed by Joseph Smith?
 - Was Joseph Smith a True Prophet of God?
 - Does the LDS Church believe in modern-day prophets?
 - Does the LDS Church believe that their apostles (i.e., LDS Church Office of the First Presidency) receive revelations from God?

(1) The LDS Doctrine Regarding the Godhead

The LDS Church's view of the members of the Godhead corresponds in some ways with the views of others in the Christian world, but with significant differences. LDS church members pray to God the Father in the name of Jesus Christ. (Note: LDS men will pray with their arms folded to ward off evil spirits.) They acknowledge the Father as the ultimate object of their worship, the Son as Lord and Redeemer, and the Holy Spirit as the messenger and revealer of the Father and the Son. But where LDS differ from other Christian religions is in their belief that God and Jesus Christ are glorified, physical beings and that each member of the Godhead is a separate being.

It is viewed by most as a mysterious doctrine, but the Bible does teach that there is One God eternally existing in three Persons (Matthew 28:19). Because Mormonism holds a distinctly unbiblical view of God, the LDS Church should be considered as a religion distinct from not only Protestant or Catholic but any historical, biblical, orthodox Christian sect rather than a part of it.

The LDS Doctrine Regarding God the Father

What do professed Mormons believe about God the Father? In sharp contrast to the revelations of Scripture are the "revelations" of Joseph Smith, Brigham Young, and the succeeding Mormon "prophets." So you will have no difficulty understanding what the true Mormon position is concerning the nature of God, the following quotations (derived from popular Mormon sources) will convey what professed Mormons mean when they speak of "God":

1. "In the beginning, the head of the Gods called a council of the Gods; and they came together and concocted a plan to create the world and people it" (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, 349).
2. "God himself was once as we are now, and is an exalted man" (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, 345).
3. "The Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man's: the Son also; but the Holy Ghost has not a body of flesh and bones, but is a personage of Spirit" (Doctrine and Covenants, 130:22).
4. "Gods exist, and we had better strive to be prepared to be one with them" (Brigham Young, Journal of Discourses, 7:238).
5. "As man is, God once was: as God is, man may become" (Prophet Lorenzo Snow, quoted in Milton R. Hunter, *The Gospel Through the Ages*, 105–106).
6. "Each of these Gods, including Jesus Christ and His Father, being in possession of not merely an organized spirit, but a glorious immortal body of flesh and bones" (Parley P. Pratt, *Key to the Science of Theology*, ed. 1978, 23).

7. “And then the Lord said: Let us go down. And they went down at the beginning, and they, that is the Gods, organized and formed the heavens and the earth” (Abraham 4:1).

8. “Remember that God, our heavenly Father, was perhaps once a child, and mortal like we ourselves, and rose step by step in the scale of progress, in the school of advancement; has moved forward and overcome, until He has arrived at the point where He now is” (Apostle Orson Hyde, Journal of Discourses, 1:123).

9. “Mormon prophets have continuously taught the sublime truth that God the Eternal Father was once a mortal man who passed through a school of earth life similar to that through which we are now passing. He became God—an exalted being—through obedience to the same eternal Gospel truths that we are given opportunity today to obey” (Hunter, op. cit., 104).

10. “Christ was the God, the Father of all things. Behold, I am Jesus Christ. I am the Father and the Son” (Mosiah 7:27 and Ether 3:14, Book of Mormon).

11. “When our father Adam came into the Garden of Eden, he came into it with a celestial body, and brought Eve, one of his wives, with him. He helped to make and organized this world. He is MICHAEL, the Archangel, the ANCIENT OF DAYS! -- about whom holy men have written and spoken—HE is our FATHER and our GOD, and the only God with whom we have to do” (Brigham Young, in the Journal of Discourses, 1:50).

12. Historically, this doctrine of Adam-God was hard for even faithful Mormons to believe. As a result, on June 8, 1873, Brigham Young stated: “How much unbelief exists in the minds of the LD Saints in regard to one particular doctrine which I revealed to them, and which God revealed to me—namely that Adam is our father and God. “Well,’ says one, ‘Why was Adam called Adam?’ He was the first man on the earth, and its framer and maker. He with the help of his brethren brought it into existence. Then he said, ‘I want my children who are in the spirit world to come and live here. I once dwelt upon an earth something like this, in a mortal state. I was faithful, I received my crown and exaltation’ ”(Deseret News, June 18, 1873, 308).

13. God the Father is the Supreme Being in whom we believe and whom we worship. He is the ultimate Creator, Ruler, and Preserver of all things. He is perfect, has all power, and knows all things. He “has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man’s.” (Doctrines and Covenants 130:22).

Clearly, the LDS church’s doctrine of God is not the same as the historic Biblical orthodox Christian view. It holds that God and man are essentially of the same species, and that God the Father has a body of flesh and bones. He is not uniquely self-existent, transcendent, or eternal. Neither is he truly the creator of all things for he is one among potentially billions of Gods, and does not even have the ability to create matter. As Brigham Young University (BYU) professor David Paulson once put it, “God does not have absolute power... but rather the power to maximally utilize natural laws to bring about His purposes.”

14. The traditional Mormon view of God is summed up by the famous Lorenzo Snow couplet, “As man is God once was, as God is man may be.” The historic understanding of this strongly implies that God the Father was once a sinner, and that we ourselves may model our mortal experience unto godhood after the mortal experience he once participated in.

15. In his famous “King Follett Discourse” Joseph Smith taught, “God himself was once as we are now, and is an exalted man, and sits enthroned in yonder heavens. That is the great secret... [Y]ou have got to learn how to be Gods yourselves, and to be kings and priests to God, the same as all

Gods have done before you..."

16. In a later sermon Joseph Smith boldly preached: "If Jesus Christ was the Son of God, and John discovered that God, the Father of Jesus Christ, had a Father, you may suppose that He had a Father also. Where was there ever a son without a father? And where was there ever a father without first being a son? Whenever did a tree or anything spring into existence without a progenitor? And everything comes in this way. Paul says that which is earthly is in the likeness of that which is heavenly, Hence, if Jesus had a Father, can we not believe that He had a Father also? I despise the idea of being scared to death at such a doctrine, for the Bible is full of it."

What Does the Bible Say in Response to the LDS Church's position on God?

God says in Isaiah 43:10, "Before me no god was formed, nor shall there be any after me."

Psalm 90:2 says of Him, "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to Everlasting you are God."

This is the God Christians worship. Of him we can say, "Who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor? Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid? For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen." (Romans 11:34-36)

Do LDS Church Leaders "Change the Rules in the Middle of the Game"?

Not all Mormon prophets have held to the traditional Mormon view of God the Father. Brigham Young taught that "Adam was the father of the spirits of mankind in addition to being the first procreator of mankind's physical bodies; that Adam came to this earth as a resurrected and exalted being; that he 'fell' to a mortal state of existence in order to procreate mortal bodies; and that Adam was the spiritual and physical father of Jesus Christ." (David John Buerger, *Dialogue*, Vol.15, No.1, p.45). This doctrine has been denounced by subsequent Mormon leaders as a deadly, damnable heresy.

LDS Church Website: One of the most common images in Western and Eastern religions alike is of God as a parent and of human beings as God's children. Billions pray to God as their parent, invoke the brotherhood and sisterhood of all people to promote peace, and reach out to the weary and troubled out of deep conviction that each of God's children has great worth.

But people of different faiths understand the parent-child relationship between God and humans in significantly different ways. Some understand the phrase "child of God" as an honorary title reserved only for those who believe in God and accept His guidance as they might accept a father's. Many see parent-child descriptions of God's relationship to humanity as metaphors to express His love for His creations and their dependence on His sustenance and protection.

LDS members see all people as children of God in a full and complete sense; they consider every person divine in origin, nature, and potential. Each has an eternal core and is "a beloved spirit son or daughter of heavenly parents."¹ Each possesses seeds of divinity and must choose whether to live in harmony or tension with that divinity. Through the Atonement of Jesus Christ, all people may "progress toward perfection and ultimately realize their divine destiny."² Just as a child can develop the attributes of his or her parents over time, the divine nature that humans inherit can be developed to become like their Heavenly Father's.

The desire to nurture the divinity in His children is one of God's attributes that most inspires, motivates, and humbles members of the Church. God's loving parentage and guidance can help

each willing, obedient child of God receive of His fullness and of His glory. This knowledge transforms the way Latter-day Saints see their fellow human beings. The teaching that men and women have the potential to be exalted to a state of godliness clearly expands beyond what is understood by most contemporary Christian churches and expresses for the Latter-day Saints a yearning rooted in the Bible to live as God lives, to love as He loves, and to prepare for all that our loving Father in Heaven wishes for His children.

Biblical Response:

The Bible is particularly adamant and specific in its declaration that God recognizes the existence of no other “deities.” In fact, on a number of occasions the Lord summed up His uniqueness in the following revelation:

You are my witnesses, says the Lord, and my servant whom I have chosen: that you may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I, even I, am the Lord; and beside me there is no Savior. Thus says the Lord the King of Israel, and his redeemer the Lord of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God. Ye are even my witnesses. Is there a God beside me? Yes, there is no God; I know not any. I am the Lord, and there is none else, there is no God beside me: I girded you, though thou hast not known me. There is no God else beside me; a just God and a Savior; there is none beside me. Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else (**Isaiah 43:10–11; 44:6, 8; 45:5, 21–22, emphasis added**).

(ii) The LDS Church Doctrine Regarding Jesus Christ

According to the LDS Church, Jesus is a created being, the first spirit to be born of the Father (*Mormon Doctrine*, p.129) and a celestial mother (*Mormon Doctrine*, p. 516). Therefore, Jesus could not be the eternal God or part of an eternal Trinity. Mormons also teach that both the Father and the Son are men with bodies of flesh and bone (*Doctrine & Covenants* 132:20; *Articles of Faith*, p 38); as two separate people, the Father and the Son cannot be considered “one.”

The LDS Church also teaches that Jesus is just one of many sons of God. Jesus is referred to specifically as “a son of God” in the Book of Mormon (Alma 36:17). Lucifer, or the devil, is another son of God in Mormon theology (*Mormon Doctrine*, p.163). Further, Mormonism teaches that the number of gods is increasing. Any man on Earth can one day become the god of another planet and populate it with children born to him from his eternal wife (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 345-354). Any one of those children can later become a god in his own right (*Doctrine & Covenants* 132:20). Thus, there is not just One God, triune or not; there are many, many gods (*Book of Abraham* 4:3).

Mormonism’s founder, Joseph Smith, clearly rejected the Trinity. He wrote, “Many men say there is one God; the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost are only one God. I say that is a strange God. . . . All are crammed into one God according to sectarianism [the Christian faith]. It would make the biggest God in all the world. He would be a wonderfully big God—he would be a giant or a monster” (*Teachings*, p. 372). Other Mormon writers such as James Talmage have confirmed Mormon denial of the Trinity (*Articles of Faith*, p.35).

So, Does the LDS Church Teach the Truth About Jesus?

The LDS Church claims that Jesus pre-existed with us; He pre-existed in Heaven before He became a man, died on the cross, rose bodily from the grave, and ascended into Heaven. However, the LDS church teaches

that all human beings pre-existed in Heaven as spirit children before becoming humans; Jesus is the firstborn of God's spirit children and the first (of many) to become a God. Although Jesus is a member of the Godhead, the LDS Church teaches that no one should pray to Jesus. As a human being, he is the literal son of God the Father through a physical union: Jesus is the only person on earth to be born of a mortal mother and an immortal father (Gospel Principles, p. 64). By His death and resurrection, Jesus secured "immortality" for all human beings – whether they believe in Him or not. After He rose from the dead, Jesus went to the Americas to preach to the Nephites there (Book of Mormon, 3 Nephi)

What does the Bible teach about the Lord Jesus Christ?

Jesus is not the first of God's billions of pre-existent spirit children; instead He is the only human being to have pre-existed as a spirit in Heaven. Look at John 1:1-5, 14 (and John 3:31 where John the Baptist speaks of Jesus).

Jesus is from Heaven; we are not. As God, Jesus is addressed properly in prayer (John 14:14; Acts 1:24, 7:59-60; II Cor. 12:8-9). He was not born as God's literal earthly son by a sexual union, but was conceived by the Holy Spirit (Matt. 1:18; Luke 1:35). By His death and resurrection, Jesus secured resurrection to eternal life only for those whom God redeems through faith (I Cor. 15:8). There will also be a resurrection of the wicked.

(iii) The LDS Church Doctrine Regarding The Holy Ghost

According to the LDS Church, all heavenly spirits other than the Father and his celestial wife (our "heavenly mother"), including Jesus, are their spirit sons and daughters. This doctrinal view has led some Mormons naturally to the conclusion that the Holy Ghost is another of God's spirit sons. "The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints teaches that the Holy Ghost is a spirit man, a spirit son of God the Father" (*Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 6:249). In other words, according to some Mormons, the Holy Ghost is one of our spirit brothers in heaven—one who somehow became part of the Godhead. LDS leaders have officially neither endorsed nor denied this idea, and LDS theologians who advocate it have no explanation for how this might have happened.

What does the Bible teach about the Holy Spirit?

The notion that the Holy Ghost (or Holy Spirit) is one of God's many spirit sons or some other deity separate from God himself not only has no support whatsoever in the Bible, it is inconsistent with what the Bible teaches. The Holy Spirit is one God with the Father and the Son, so that the Bible calls him the Spirit of the Father and the Spirit of the Son (Jesus Christ). This inseparable relationship between the Holy Spirit and the other two divine persons implies that as "the eternal Spirit" (Hebrews 9:14) He has always been this divine Spirit. In other words, the Holy Spirit is not a spiritual being who somehow advanced to the status of a member of the Godhead, but rather He is and always has been the Lord God (Acts 5:3-4, 9; 2 Corinthians 3:17-18). By the grace of God in redemption, believers are adopted to become "brothers" to God's one and only divine Son, Jesus Christ (Romans 8:29; Hebrews 2:11-18). This means that we were not and are not brothers of the Holy Spirit; nor are we heavenly beings that the Holy Ghost helps to reach their divine potential. Rather, it is by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit that we physical creatures are able to call God our Father (Romans 8:14-17; Galatians 4:4-6).

Explore/Answer Some Key Questions:

(1) In the early 1820s, did the Christian Church Need to be Restored as Claimed by Joseph Smith?

According to LDS Church teachings, after the death of Jesus' original apostles, the Christian Church gradually

slipped into “the Great Apostasy” – defined as a complete and universal abandonment of true Christian principles. Though we do not know exactly when this took place, Christian doctrine became thoroughly corrupted, and the priesthood authority necessary to administer key ordinances like baptism and the Lord’s Supper was lost. The importance of believing that the true church was destroyed is underscored by Mormon apostle James Talmage: “If the alleged apostasy of the primitive Church was not a reality, the Church of Jesus Christ of LDS is not the divine institution its name proclaims. (*The Great Apostasy*, page iii).

The LDS Church claims that the restoration of true Christianity began when God the Father and Jesus Christ appeared to a youth named Joseph Smith in the spring of 1820. In this “First Vision” Jesus told Smith that all church were wrong and that all their creeds (statements of belief) were “an abomination.” (Joseph Smith -- History 1:19).

The Bible teaches that there was no general apostasy. Jesus promised His followers that He would be with them in their ministry of making disciples (Matthew 28:20). He promised that He would build His church. He promised that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. Such promises would not have been broken had Jesus allowed His church “to be destroyed.” While the Bible mentions that some shall depart from the faith (I Timothy 4:1), it never implies that a universal or “complete” apostasy would take place prior to His return. The fact that some would depart implies that others would not. The NT here and elsewhere portrays apostasy as the acts and attitudes of individuals and groups breaking away from the church (I John 2:19), not as the church ceasing to exist.

[Aside: Though the LDS church views the many Christian denominations as proof that Christ’s “One True Church” was lost, numerous LDS splinter groups exist. The second largest of these groups is the LDS Community of Christ (aka as the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of LDS). Additionally, numerous fundamentalist LDS groups believe that the Utah-based LDS Church (Headquartered in Salt Lake City) itself became apostate when it officially renounced polygamy in 1890.]

(2) Was Joseph Smith a True Prophet of God?

He lived from 1805-1844. He is the LDS church’s founder, first president, a modern prophet, seer, and revealer (a person who reveals divine truth). He is ranked in importance second only to Jesus Himself when it comes to the salvation of mankind: “Joseph Smith the Prophet and Seer of the Lord has done more, save Jesus only, for the salvation of men in this world, than any other man that has ever lived in it.” (quoted from the D&C 135:3)

“Many believe that the most convincing witness to Joseph’s calling as a prophet is the Book of Mormon, which he called “the most correct book of any on earth.” (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 194).

So, what does the Bible teach about testing Prophets?

God provided two main tests for the Israelites to determine whether a self-proclaimed prophet was legitimate. (1) He must represent the true God of the Hebrews; prophets who introduced false gods were immediately rejected (Deut. 13:1-3). (2) The Israelites were to reject professing prophets who incorrectly foretold the future (Deut. 18:20-22). They were also commanded not to add or to take away from the revelations God had given them (Deut. 4:2; Prov. 30:6).

(3) Does the LDS Church believe in modern-day prophets?

Yes. The Church is governed today by apostles, reflecting the way Jesus organized His Church in biblical times. Three apostles constitute the First Presidency (consisting of the president or prophet of the Church

and his two counselors), and, together with the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, they have responsibility for leading the Church worldwide and serving as special witnesses of the Lord Jesus Christ. Each is accepted by Church members in a prophetic role corresponding to the apostles in the Bible.

(4) Does the LDS Church believe that their apostles (i.e., LDS Church Office of the First Presidency) receive revelations from God?

Yes. When Latter-day Saints speak to God, they call it prayer. When God responds through the influence of the Holy Spirit, members refer to this as revelation. Revelation, in its broad meaning, is divine guidance or inspiration; it is the communication of truth and knowledge from God to His children on earth, suited to their language and understanding. It simply means to uncover something not yet known. The Bible illustrates different types of revelation, ranging from dramatic visions to gentle feelings — from the “burning bush” to the “still, small voice.” Mormons generally believe that divine guidance comes quietly, taking the form of impressions, thoughts and feelings carried by the Spirit of God.

Most often, revelation unfolds as an ongoing, prayerful dialogue with God: A problem arises, its dimensions are studied out, a question is asked, and if we have sufficient faith, God leads us to answers, either partial or full. Though ultimately a spiritual experience, revelation also requires careful thought. God does not simply hand down information. He expects us to figure things out through prayerful searching and sound thinking.

The First Presidency (consisting of the president or prophet of the Church and his two counselors) and members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles receive inspiration to guide the Church as a whole. Individuals are also inspired with revelation regarding how to conduct their lives and help serve others.