

Jesus Christ Is the Truth – The Church of Jesus Christ

Part Two

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“Stand Forever” Episode 34

Is The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints the kingdom of God on earth? Hello, I’m Larry Corbridge and that’s the question we continue to consider in this Episode 34 of the *Stand Forever Series*. In the last episode and this one, we take up the fourth of the Primary Questions.

I say again, nothing is more important than revelation by the power of the Holy Ghost. This is not an effort to prove the Church is true by logic and reason. Remember we are considering here the analytical method of learning as it relates to the primary questions and, therefore, we look at the evidence. Jesus said, “By their fruits ye shall know them.”

In the last episode, we considered the centrality of Christ in the Church, divine priesthood authority, living prophets and apostles, Latter-day Saints, common ground, the work of the Church in fulfilling God’s work and glory, and revelation. Today, we look at additional fruits.

The Assurance of Prophecy

Jesus Christ fulfilled all that was prophesied regarding His birth, life, death, and Resurrection, lest we make any mistake. Similarly, the Church He restored also fulfills all that was prophesied about it, that we make no mistake about it either.

Here are a few examples:¹

- “Truth shall spring out of the earth,” a prophecy in Psalms², fulfilled by the record unburied from the earth, translated by the power of God as The Book of Mormon.
- Isaiah spoke of the “words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I cannot; for it is sealed,” all of which was fulfilled by Martin Harris and Professor Charles Anthon in 1829.³

¹ Isaiah 29:11-12

² Psalms 85:11

³ JS History 1:64-65

- Ezekial prophesied that the stick of Judah and the stick of Joseph would be joined together as one, which was fulfilled by the Bible and The Book of Mormon literally bound together.
- The prophecy in Malachi and in every other book of scripture saying, “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse,”⁴ which was fulfilled by the appearance Elijah on April 3, 1836 to Joseph Smith and others in the Kirtland Temple restoring the sealing power by which things are bound and loosed on earth and are bound and loosed in heaven.⁵
- The prophecy of Joel saying, “And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit,” fulfilled in part by the young women and young men of the Church, especially those who serve missions.
- Isaiah’s prophecy that “The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant,”⁶ or the prophecy of Amos that there would be a “famine of hearing the words of the Lord,”⁷ or Christ’s prophecies that false Christs and false prophets would arise deceiving many,⁸ or Paul speaking of the Second Coming of the Lord saying, “for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first,”⁹ or many more all of which were fulfilled by the great apostasy following the death of Christ and the apostles.
- Isaiah’s speaking of our day saying, “I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, even a marvellous work and wonder” and “the Lord shall set his hand ... to recover the remnant of his people,”¹⁰ or as Jeremiah recorded, “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the

⁴ Malachi 4:5,6; See also JS History 1:38-39

⁵ Doctrine and Covenants 110:13-16

⁶ Isaiah 24:5

⁷ Amos 8:11

⁸ Matt 24:5, 24

⁹ 2 Thessalonians 2:3

¹⁰ Isaiah 11:11

house of Israel,"¹¹ or Daniel's prophecy that "shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever,"¹² or as recorded by Malachi, "Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts," or the Lord's prophecy that "Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things," or Peter who, also speaking of what should transpire before the Second Coming of the Lord, said "the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord" and "the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began,"¹³ or Paul who spoke of the "dispensation of the fulness of times,"¹⁴ or John the Revelator who said, "I saw another angel flying in midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people,"¹⁵ all of which and much more were fulfilled by the events of the restoration of the fulness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the kingdom of God again on the earth in our day.

There is one Church and one Church only that fulfills all that has been foreseen and prophesied regarding the kingdom of God on earth in these last days: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. How hard is that? In the end, "I didn't know" won't cut it.

The circumstances of this last dispensation have been clearly foretold throughout the ages, including that the Church of Jesus Christ would not only survive to the end of days but become "an ensign to the nations from far, and will hiss [call] unto them [scattered Israel] from the end of the earth: and, behold, they shall come with speed swiftly."¹⁶ For nearly two centuries that prophecy and all others pertaining to the kingdom of God in this dispensation continue to be fulfilled by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

The prophet Daniel said the God of heaven would set up His kingdom in the last days, which would fill the whole earth and "never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not

¹¹ Jeremiah 31:31

¹² Daniel 2:44

¹³ The Acts 3:19-21

¹⁴ Eph 1:10

¹⁵ Revelation 14:6

¹⁶ Isaiah 5:26

be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever."¹⁷

And of that prophecy, the Lord declared in 1831, "The keys of the kingdom of God are committed unto man on the earth, and from thence shall the gospel roll forth unto the ends of the earth, as the stone which is cut out of the mountain without hands shall roll forth, until it has filled the whole earth."¹⁸

There is no prophecy of a similar nature about the kingdom of God on earth in any other dispensation. To the contrary, in every other period the parting of the veil predicted eventual apostacy and failure, but not this time. This time is different. This time it will roll forward, fill the earth, and stand forever. That reality is borne out not only by prophecy but its ongoing fulfillment before our very eyes.

It was the vision of that reality that gave hope to all the faithful who labored, sacrificed, lived, and died before. This is the time "which (as the Lord said) our forefathers have awaited with anxious expectation to be revealed in the last times, which their minds were pointed to by the angels, as held in reserve for the fulness of their glory; A time to come in the which nothing shall be withheld."¹⁹

In September 1840, the Prophet Joseph Smith and his counselors in the First Presidency declared the following: "The work of the Lord in these last days, is one of vast magnitude and almost beyond the comprehension of mortals. Its glories are past description, and its grandeur unsurpassable. It is the theme which has animated the bosom of prophets and righteous men from the creation of the world down through every succeeding generation to the present time; and it is truly the dispensation of the fullness of times, when all things which are in Christ Jesus, whether in heaven or on the earth, shall be gathered together in Him, and when all things shall be restored, as spoken of by all the holy prophets since the world began; for in it will take place the glorious fulfillment of the promises made to the fathers, while the manifestations of the power of the Most High will be great, glorious, and sublime."²⁰

More recently, another prophet, President Spencer W. Kimball said:

In the meridian of time, the Son of God, the Light of the World, came and opened the curtains of heaven, and earth and heaven were again in communion. But

¹⁷ Daniel 2:35, 44

¹⁸ Doctrine and Covenants 65:2

¹⁹ Doctrine and Covenants 121:27-28

²⁰ *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 512-13

when the light of that century went out, the darkness was again impenetrable; the heavens were sealed and the 'dark ages' moved in. I bear witness to the world today that more than a century and a half ago the iron ceiling was shattered; the heavens were once again opened, and since that time revelations have been continuous.

That new day dawned when another soul with passionate yearning prayed for divine guidance. A spot of hidden solitude was found, knees were bent, a heart was humbled, pleadings were voiced, and a light brighter than the noonday sun illuminated the world—the curtain never to be closed again.

A young lad ... Joseph Smith, of incomparable faith, broke the spell, shattered the "heavens of iron" and reestablished communication. Heaven kissed the earth, light dissipated the darkness, and God again spoke to man, revealing anew 'his secret unto his servants the prophets.' (Amos 3:7) A new prophet was in the land and through him God set up his kingdom, never to be destroyed nor left to another people—a kingdom that will stand forever.

The foreverness of this kingdom and the revelations which it brought into existence are absolute realities. Never again will the sun go down; never again will all men prove totally unworthy of communication with their Maker. Never again will God be hidden from his children on the earth. Revelation is here to remain.²¹

Most recently another prophet, Russell M. Nelson, has said, "Our Savior and Redeemer, Jesus Christ, will perform some of His mightiest works between now and when He comes again. We will see miraculous indications that God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, preside over this Church in majesty and glory."²²

The Family, the Pattern of Heaven

God the Eternal Father is the beginning of our religion. The first words of the First Article of Faith are "We believe in God the Eternal Father."²³ As with other faiths, we believe in God Almighty who has all knowledge and all power, but unlike other faiths we believe in God who is first and foremost a parent. He is a father. We believe in God the Eternal Father. More than anything else God is our Father.

²¹ Spencer W. Kimball, *Ensign*, May 1977, p. 77; emphasis added

²² Russel M. Nelson, "Revelation for the Church, Revelation for Our Lives," *General Conference*, April 2018

²³ First Article of Faith

Family is the pattern of heaven. One would expect, therefore, the true church to promote, strengthen and defend family. No religion does more to promote, strengthen, and defend family than The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. It's general handbook states, "The home is the basis of a righteous life. (First Presidency letter, Feb. 11, 1999). In their homes, individuals and families engage in the work of salvation and exaltation. This work consists of four divinely appointed responsibilities: living the gospel of Jesus Christ; caring for those in need; Inviting all to receive the gospel; and, uniting families for eternity."²⁴

Speaking of our divine potential, the Lord said in Psalms, "Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the most High."²⁵ You are a child of God the Eternal Father, created in His likeness with the innate potential and capacity to advance from one degree of light and intelligence to the next, and from there on to the next and on and on until in the process of a very long time, and with the right conditions and choices, you become like Him.

To learn to become like Him you must learn to become a good father or mother, a good husband, or a good wife. An integral part of "eternal life" is family life and the continuation of the power of procreation throughout eternity. Therefore, to become like Him, to become an eternal parent, marry in the temple, have children, raise them in light and truth, and live in accordance with the order of the family which is the law of chastity. As you do so you learn the essence of godliness.

We get one shot at this, to learn to be a good and loving spouse and father or mother. We have one opportunity in all eternity to learn to use the power of procreation correctly, to have children and to learn to raise them in light and truth. If we learn enough about being a good spouse and parent while here, we will be permitted to live as husband and wife, father and mother, throughout eternity, as Eternal Fathers and Mothers.

In "The Family, A Proclamation to the World," the First Presidency and the Council of the Twelve Apostles proclaim that

marriage between a man and a woman is ordained of God and that the family is central to the Creator's plan for the eternal destiny of His children.

²⁴ General Handbook of Instructions, 2.2 "The Work of Salvation and Exaltation in the Home"

²⁵ Psalms 82:6

All human beings—male and female—are created in the image of God. Each is a beloved spirit son or daughter of heavenly parents, and, as such, each has a divine nature and destiny. Gender is an essential characteristic of individual premortal, mortal, and eternal identity and purpose.... The divine plan of happiness enables family relationships to be perpetuated beyond the grave. Sacred ordinances and covenants available in holy temples make it possible for individuals to return to the presence of God and for families to be united eternally.

The first commandment that God gave to Adam and Eve pertained to their potential for parenthood as husband and wife. We declare that God's commandment for His children to multiply and replenish the earth remains in force. We further declare that God has commanded that the sacred powers of procreation are to be employed only between man and woman, lawfully wedded as husband and wife.²⁶

But what about those who cannot marry or cannot have children here in this life? Are they just out of luck? No. Quoting again from the General Handbook of the Church, "Faithful members whose circumstances do not allow them to receive the blessings of eternal marriage and parenthood in this life will receive all promised blessings in the eternities, provided they keep the covenants they have made with God (see Mosiah 2:41)."²⁷

You don't have to be married to learn to be a good spouse; you only need to learn to become like the Lord by remembering Him to keep His commandments. You don't have to have children to learn how to be a good parent; you only need to learn to become like the Lord by remembering Him to keep His commandments. He is the Way in every way and in all ways.

But if you can and should marry but won't for selfish reasons, if you can and should have children but won't for selfish reasons, if you marry and then neglect or abuse your spouse, if you have children and then neglect or abuse them, or if you misuse or abuse the power of procreation in violation of the order of the family, you turn away from the very essence of godliness (and your divine nature), and by turning away, you risk forfeiture of those opportunities and power for family throughout eternity.

²⁶ First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, *The Family, A Proclamation to the World*

²⁷ Church Handbook 2020, *Church Policies and Guidelines*, 38.1.4

Nothing in life is more astonishing than birth and the fact that almost everyone in this life is entrusted with the phenomenal capacity to procreate. Think of it; you are given the power to create life. It is astounding that such a power would be entrusted to fallen man!

This power, although common, abused, confused, and profaned, is perhaps equal to or maybe even greater than the power to create worlds. Which is greater, life or the place where life resides? Without life, a place is just a place, without significance or purpose. Life gives meaning to everything. And, you have been given the divine power to create life. How amazing!

If you learn to use this power well and wisely in the short span of this life, you may continue to have it in the life to come, which is eternal life or eternal lives. If you don't learn to use the power of procreation correctly in this life, if you abuse it, misuse it, or neglect it here, why would you be given the same power again throughout eternity? How could any of us be trusted with such power there if we do not become trustworthy here?

What would be the consequence if all of God's children without number had the capacity to have children throughout all eternity without regard to the order of the family, with whomever, wherever?

What would be the consequence if all of God's children without number had the capacity to have children throughout all eternity without any intent to raise them in light and truth?

How can we expect or hope to be a husband or wife, or a father or mother in eternity if we do not learn to do so now? Here and now is the time to prepare for what we may do there and then.

Given our unique and profound understanding of the family as the order of heaven, one would expect the Church and its members would, of all people, defend and protect the family.

The Lord said in our day things would be turned upside down.²⁸ People cry out to redefine family and marriage which were established by God in the beginning of time. They say that this is a good thing, an enlightened and fair thing. They claim that marriage between people of the same gender is a fundamental right, all the while

²⁸ Isaiah 29:16

ignoring the fundamental rights of children to be raised by the two people, the man and the woman, the mother and the father, who brought them into the world.

Children have a fundamental right to life and a fundamental right to their father and mother. The design of the family reflects the order of heaven and provides the best environment and experience for children to be born, raised in light and truth by the mother and father who conceived them and realize their highest potential. That does not mean churches or governments can guarantee those rights, but it does mean they should protect and foster those rights.

In Genesis we read, “God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth,”²⁹ and, “Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.”³⁰

We don’t know why some people have attractions in one direction and others in another direction, any more than why some people can marry and have children in this life and others cannot, but what we do know is that we are all children of God and that we are all equally deserving of respect and love whatever our inclinations may be. What we do know is that we are all equally endowed with divine potential which can be fully realized by everyone, whatever the circumstances and challenges, if we will only keep God’s commandments. What we do know is that if we will keep His commandments and seek first to build up His kingdom and to establish His righteousness everything else will work out.³¹

God is our Father. He is a parent, our parent, your parent. The family is the pattern of heaven. To become like Him you must learn to become an eternal parent, a good spouse, a good father, or a good mother by striving to follow and become like the Lord. An integral part of “eternal life” is family life and the continuation of the power of procreation throughout eternity, eternal lives.

If you are looking for the true church, look for one that teaches, promotes, and defends those truths. No church does that better or more than The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

²⁹ Genesis 1:27-28

³⁰ Genesis 2:24

³¹ Matthew 6:33

Opposition

Like a magnet, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has always and will always draw criticism. It will always have many times more than its share of antagonists, desperately striving to disprove, debunk, discredit, and destroy, often curiously fueled with malevolent zeal. That is so, because it is true. If it were not true, if it were of no consequence, the world would pay it no mind much less waste any effort to oppose it. It would be permitted to roll along into oblivion, unnoticed and forgotten.

Opposition, criticism and antagonism are constant companions to the truth. Truth never exists unopposed.

Why not leave it alone? If the critics are right, if we are duped, if we are mistaken, then why do they care? What is it to them? Why not leave us to our folly? Why not permit us to muddle along in our well-intentioned error?

What other modern-day organization has drawn equal antagonism? Where are the movies that discredit Buddhism? Where are the exposés to impugn Mohamed? Islam surely is berated, but not because of its core beliefs and not out of a frenzied effort to show its religion to be false. Rather Islam is challenged because a radical segment of its members blow up hotels and buses, and crash airliners into tall buildings.

The Church does much good. It gives millions in humanitarian assistance world-wide. Wherever there is a disaster its members are usually the first on the scene and the last to go home. Like most religions, it encourages people to be kind, loving, honest, good people and good citizens, to obey, honor and sustain the law even when their rights are trampled. It is not as though the Church advocates taking advantage of a neighbor, doing harm to others, to hate other races or peoples, or commit suicide bombings against those who do not share its beliefs.

One of the most common beliefs of our day, and of the ages, is that churches and religions are all basically good; they teach essentially the same doctrines, to be kind, honest, good people, and in the end all who do so will be saved by a kind and loving God. The conclusion, therefore, is that it doesn't really matter what church you claim as your own; live a good life and you will be saved.

Given that belief, why not leave us alone? Why not leave The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints alone to teach its people to be good like all the other churches? Why go to such lengths to discredit it, if it doesn't matter in the end anyway? At very worst,

if Joseph Smith was a fraud, the Church is merely one more church like so many others teaching its members to be good people and good citizens. Where is the harm in that?

Sure, there are differences in doctrine. Yes, we do not believe that everything began at birth; we believe that we existed before this life in the presence of God. Yes, we believe that God has a body of flesh and bone and that there is more than a heaven and hell, there are degrees of glory, and so on. But there are differences between all religions. Why would these differences draw such consistent and often hateful opposition that has been as constant as sun in the Sahara?

You cannot excuse the antagonism as the efforts of well-meaning people trying to rescue us from error and help us find the way. They are not trying to rescue others, and the fact that they are trying to rescue us, is contradictory to their prevailing belief that the way is broad that leads to salvation and everyone will find it so long as they live a good life. If it doesn't matter what religion you profess, there is no reason to rescue anyone.

So, why single out The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints? Why fight against it? Why go to such lengths to debunk and disprove, so consistently over nearly two centuries?

Joseph Smith asked these same questions. He said:

I soon found, however, that my telling the story had excited a great deal of prejudice against me among professors of religion, and was the cause of great persecution, which continued to increase; and though I was an obscure boy, only between fourteen and fifteen years of age, and my circumstances in life such as to make a boy of no consequence in the world, yet men of high standing would take notice sufficient to excite the public mind against me, and create a bitter persecution; and this was common among all the sects—all united to persecute me. It caused me serious reflection then, and often has since, how very strange it was that an obscure boy, of a little over fourteen years of age, and one, too, who was doomed to the necessity of obtaining a scanty maintenance by his daily labor, should be thought a character of sufficient importance to attract the attention of the great ones of the most popular sects of the day, and in a manner to create in them a spirit of the most bitter persecution and reviling. But strange or not, so it was, and it was often the cause of great sorrow to myself.³²

³² JS-History 1:22-23

Where are the efforts to disprove the Quran? In recent times a cartoon of Muhammad surfaced in Denmark and riots ensued, blood ran in the streets because Islam's prophet was demeaned. What of the prophet of this dispensation?

Both the Library of Congress and the Church Historian's Office hold vast collections of publications including thousands of items about Joseph Smith, and most of them attempting to discredit him and the Church he organized.³³ Why is that?

It is because Joseph Smith was a prophet who bore witness of the truth, and the truth will always be opposed. It is fulfillment of an angel's prophecy echoed by Joseph Smith that his name would be had for good and evil among all nations, kindreds and tongues.³⁴

There are other instances of religious persecution over the ages, but few equal the history of persecution of the Latter-day Saints. Well, what about the Jews? Clearly, they have suffered greatly in the past 2000 years, but it has not been so much the result of their religion as other social issues relating to the Jews as a people.

One fact is undeniable, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has been the subject of antagonism and criticism, investigation, and opposition from the first time Joseph Smith shared his experiences with another person other than his family. Why? Because it is true.

There are absolutes. There is truth. The truth exists. The truth is not relative, nor is it situational. It does not change from time to time. It is absolute. And wherever it exists about matters of man, his purpose and destiny, there will always be a force to oppose it. Beginning with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden and down to our day, there will always be an effort to deceive, oppose, and frustrate the plan of life.

John was reclusive and isolated, and he was rejected. Jesus was with the people; He ate and socialized with people and was rejected. Jesus said: "For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a devil. The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners."³⁵ Either way they were opposed, not because of what they said or did, rather because of who they were and because they spoke the truth.

³³ See, George Edward Clark, *Why I Believe*, p. 40, (1952)

³⁴ JS-History 1:33

³⁵ Matthew 11:18-19

Why not take the counsel of the celebrated Jewish leader Gamaliel, a respected Pharisee of the Sanhedrin, who said of the prisoners Peter and other apostles: "Ye men of Israel [speaking to the Sanhedrin council] take heed to yourselves what ye intend to do as touching these men. For before these days rose up Theudas, boasting himself to be somebody; to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves: who was slain; and all, as many as obeyed him, were scattered, and brought to nought. After this man rose up Judas of Galilee in the days of the taxing, and drew away much people after him: he also perished; and all, *even* as many as obeyed him, were dispersed. And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought: But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God."³⁶

Leave Jesus and his followers alone. Leave Jesus and His Church alone. If their work be of men, it will come to naught, but if it be of God, you cannot overthrow it and if then by opposing it, you find yourself fighting even against God. Leave it alone. But alas, they cannot. They could not before; they cannot now, because there must needs be an opposition in all things, and the truth will always be opposed.

Temples and Family History Work

Next, temples and the work for the dead. Joseph Smith taught, "Our greatest responsibility in this world that God has laid upon us is to seek after our dead," meaning to identify them and help them receive the ordinances of the gospel for their blessing and exaltation. This is done through genealogical research to identify them and perform proxy ordinances such as baptism in their behalf.

The gospel is clear, and salvation is available to everyone. In fact, everyone who has not had an opportunity to know and accept will have that opportunity. "We believe that through the atonement of Christ, all mankind [every last one] may be saved, by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel." We are the only ones that believe that.

No one is excluded. As the scripture says, "He inviteth them all to come unto him and partake of his goodness; and he denieth none that come unto him, black and white, bond and free, male and female ... all are alike unto God."³⁷ All of that is true for the living and the dead.

³⁶ Acts 5:33-39

³⁷ 2 Nephi 26:33

That is one of the reasons for temples, and it is why so many members of the Church work so hard at genealogical research. They are not just interested in who their ancestors are, they are working for the salvation of “all mankind.” Who else is doing the work of salvation on both sides of the veil? No one.

As of the present date, there are 383 temples in various stages throughout the world. There is no other religion that includes everyone, but the Lord does and has provided a way for all through His Church.

Engagement in God’s Work

In one of the pivotal teachings in the Sermon on the Mount, the Lord said this, “Wherefore, seek not the things of this world but seek ye first to build up the kingdom of God and to establish his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”³⁸

The General Handbook of the Church states, “Jesus Christ established His Church to enable individuals and families to engage in His work, the work of salvation and exaltation (see Ephesians 4:11-13; see also 2.2 in this handbook).”³⁹ As I said before, there are always two consequences that flow from engagement in God’s work and building up the Church, “the gift and power of the Holy Ghost” and eternal life. God’s greatest gifts are His Son, His Spirit, and His life. When you engage in the work of His Son, the other two gifts are the result.

The Lord through His Church invites us to engage in His work, not to help him, rather to help us. Through His Church, the Lord extends the opportunity to engage in God’s work as in no other organization anywhere, ever. If you want to get close to God, engage in His work.

It is true there are good people everywhere, and members of the Church have no corner on goodness. If the only purpose of the Church is to make bad men good, and good men better, then we might look for another path less rigorous, because, make no mistake, the Lord requires all we have, time, talents, and even our will, to build up His kingdom. Almost all religions coincide with the common purpose to improve mankind.

But the purpose of the Church of Jesus Christ is more, much more. Its purpose is to make available in full measure the gift of God’s Son, Jesus Christ, including the

³⁸ JST, Matthew 6:38; see also Matthew 6:33

³⁹ General Handbook of Instructions, 1.3 “The Purpose of the Church”

blessings of His Atonement and the fulness of His gospel, confer the gift of God's Spirit, and engage His children in His work. It is to seal families together eternally and ultimately confer the gift God's life, eternal life, to God's children on both sides of the veil. In light of all of that, it not only makes a great deal of difference to which Church you belong but how thoroughly you engage in its work and how long you stay.

Extraordinary Claims

The Church is the source of many extraordinary claims which should come as no surprise. One would not reasonably expect the truth to blend into the dark backdrop of the general conditions of the world today. It stands in stark contrast to its dark surroundings, as much as One who proclaimed Himself to be the Son of God, or able to rebuild the temple if destroyed in only three days. Jesus Christ said things that were extraordinary because He was extraordinary, and the same applies to His Church today including:

- Joseph Smith did more than for the salvation of men in this world, than any other man that ever lived in it except for Jesus Christ.⁴⁰
- The name of an obscure farm boy from New York, Joseph Smith, would be known for good and evil among all nations, kindreds, tongues and all people.⁴¹
- The restored gospel of Jesus Christ will roll forth until it has filled the earth.⁴²
- The Book of Mormon is the most correct book on the earth and a man can get closer to God by reading and abiding by its precepts than any other book.⁴³
- If you read, ponder and pray with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ about the Book of Mormon, God will reveal its truth to you by the power of the Holy Ghost.⁴⁴
- By that same process you may know the truth of all things.⁴⁵
- The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the only true and living church upon the face of the whole earth.⁴⁶

Those claims and others equally extraordinary are not conclusive evidence of truth, but the Church cannot be true without them.

⁴⁰ Doctrine and Covenants 135:3

⁴¹ JS- History 1:33

⁴² Doctrine and Covenants 65:2

⁴³ Joseph Smith, *Introduction to the Book of Mormon*

⁴⁴ Moroni 10:3-4

⁴⁵ Moroni 10:5

⁴⁶ Doctrine and Covenants 1:30

The Lord's University

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the Lord's university on earth. It is the institution of highest education. For those who enroll and graduate, the Lord has said, "Great shall be their reward and eternal shall be their glory. And to them will I reveal all mysteries, yea, all the hidden mysteries of my kingdom from days of old, and for ages to come, will I make known unto them the good pleasure of my will concerning all things pertaining to my kingdom."⁴⁷ There is no education higher than that. Everything else is preschool.

The entrance requirements are low so everyone and anyone can enroll and there is no enrollment cap. "All those who humble themselves before God, and desire to be baptized, and come forth with broken hearts and contrite spirits, and witness before the church that they have truly repented of all their sins, and are willing to take upon them the name of Jesus Christ, having a determination to serve him to the end, and truly manifest by their works that they have received of the Spirit of Christ unto the remission of their sins, shall be received by baptism into his church."⁴⁸

The course material is truth as revealed by God in scripture, living prophets and personal revelation by the Holy Ghost. Most of what is learned is outside the classroom. The exams are ongoing and always open book. In fact, open book is the only way to pass.

Exams and all the courses can be retaken as many times as necessary. The intent is not to promote the most able and talented while eliminating everyone else, rather promote, support, and help everyone graduate who stays enrolled regardless of ability.

While the entrance requirements are low, the graduation requirements are the highest anywhere ever. No one can graduate on their own, but there is a compensating power that permeates the school that enhances the abilities of all students and faculty who will receive it, far beyond their natural capacity making them equal to the graduation requirements. Everyone eventually graduates who stays enrolled and engaged. No one fails unless they drop out.

⁴⁷ Doctrine and Covenants 76:6-7

⁴⁸ Doctrine and Covenants 20:37

Conclusion

Is The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints the kingdom of God on earth? The answer is yes. Everything in Episodes 31 and 32 about Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon point to the conclusion that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the kingdom of God on earth today. Additionally, in the past two episodes (33 and 34) we have considered further evidence all leading to the same conclusion. All that we have considered, however, is far from exhaustive and is only a good start.

As I have said before, nothing is more important than revelation by the power of the Holy Ghost. This is not an effort to prove the Church is true by logic and reason. Remember we are considering here the analytical method of learning as it relates to the primary questions and, therefore, we look at some of the evidence. As Jesus said, “by their fruits ye shall know them.” We have considered some of the fruits, not all of them, but as many as time will allow.

Christ is the center, the chief cornerstone of His Church. No religion does more to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ and make the blessings of His infinite Atonement available to God’s children everywhere on both sides of the veil than the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints established for that very purpose. Everything revolves around Christ to the end of bridging the gap with God Our Eternal Father. That is so, because it is His Church.

Priesthood authority is evidence of the kingdom of God on earth. The most glorious aspect of the restoration of the gospel and Church of Jesus Christ is the restoration of priesthood authority and keys held in their fulness by living prophets and apostles.

As Paul said, the Church of Jesus Christ is “built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone,”⁴⁹ as it was when Christ established His Church in the Meridian of time.

Latter-day saints stand as living evidence of the truth. As in the days Christ established His Church, members of the Church in this dispensation have made and make extraordinary sacrifices for their faith, often facing staggering opposition as a result. They are as diverse as any organization on earth, comprised of every nation, kindred, tongue and people, and yet they effortlessly and unconsciously blend as one in Christ, standing on common ground unlike any other organization on earth.

⁴⁹ Ephesians 2:19-22

As one would expect, the Church of Jesus Christ is engaged in His work and the work of Our Father to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man.⁵⁰ No church, no people from the beginning of time, compare with The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in preaching the gospel as Christ commanded to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people⁵¹ on both sides of the veil. Consequently, no one is beyond the reach of Christ.

The heavens are open, and God speaks not only to prophets as He has done throughout the ages, but all His children who ask, knock and seek. Revelation is both a sign of the truth and the means to know it.

Jesus Christ fulfilled all that was prophesied regarding His birth, life, death, and Resurrection, lest we make any mistake. Similarly, His restored Church also fulfills all that was prophesied about it, that we make no mistake about it either.

Given that family is the pattern of heaven, we should expect, therefore, the true church to promote, strengthen, and defend family. No religion does more to promote, strengthen, and defend family than The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Like a magnet, the Church of Jesus Christ has always and will always draw criticism and opposition. It will always have many times more than its share of antagonists, desperately striving to disprove, debunk, discredit, and destroy, often curiously fueled with malevolent zeal. That is so, because it is true. Opposition, criticism, and antagonism are constant companions to the truth. Truth never exists unopposed.

Temples and the work for the dead are evidence of the truthfulness of the Church. All mankind, living and dead, may be saved by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel. No one is forgotten.

The Church of Jesus Christ has a lay ministry. The Lord invites God's children to engage in His work, not to help him, rather to help us. Through His Church the Lord extends the opportunity to engage in His work to everyone as in no other organization anywhere, ever. If you want to get close to God, engage in His work.

The Church is the source of many extraordinary claims. One would not reasonably expect the truth to blend into the dark backdrop of the general conditions of the world today. It stands in stark contrast to its dark surroundings, as much as One who

⁵⁰ Moses 1:39

⁵¹ Revelation 14:6

proclaimed Himself to be the Son of God, or able to rebuild the temple if destroyed in only three days.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the Lord's university on earth. It is the institution of highest education.

If you are still with me, thank you. Let's take a moment to consider where we have been and what is yet ahead. We considered Christ as the Way, offsetting chaos, and we are in the middle of thinking of Him as the Truth offsetting darkness. We have considered different methods of discovering truth, including the scientific method, and we are now concluding our focus on the analytical method of learning. We will next turn our attention to the academic and divine methods of learning, and then we will consider Christ as the Life offsetting death. The *Stand Forever Series* has been a monumental undertaking. I hope it is helpful and you will stay with me.