

RLDS Scriptures

An Introduction

The Christian's Relationship to the Bible

True Christians believe the Bible. They always have. In addition to His Son Jesus Christ, it is God's special revelation of Himself to mankind. In the Bible God announces His goodwill toward us and explains how we can come back into relationship with Him again through faith in His Son Jesus Christ, manifested in loving obedience to Him. As the Apostle Paul says to the younger Timothy, "...continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 3:14–15).

Jesus believed the Bible. He quoted it authoritatively to Satan when tempted by him in the wilderness. He quoted it liberally on a variety of other occasions. His own ministry was not to take anything away from the Law or the Prophets, but to fulfill them. Certain of the absolute accuracy of this written word, He promised that not the slightest detail would ever disappear from it until all of it was completely fulfilled. "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the slightest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished" (Matt. 5:17–18). Mankind could not ask for a better testimony for the accuracy and reliability of scripture. God gave us His own Word on it.

The writers of the New Testament also believed the Bible, and encouraged others to believe it as well. They, too, quoted authoritatively from it on numerous occasions. This "high view" of scripture is well expressed by the Apostle Paul as he continues speaking to Timothy, "All scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Tim. 3:16–17).

The same Spirit of God who gave birth to the scriptures has continued to speak through them in living power to all generations who would seek the Way of Salvation. The Bible has been the only minister needed for countless thousands who have been brought to the throne of Grace by simply responding to God's offer of forgiveness found in its pages. Just ask any Gideon. In Communist and Muslim countries today—where Christian witness is still severely restricted, or even outlawed—the Bible often remains as God's only missionary to His lost sheep there. And with amazing results. Christian workers in those countries recount an endless stream of converts

whose only contact with Christianity was *the Bible*.

Open Doors with Brother Andrew is a Christian organization which ministers to the needs of the Suffering Church living under such conditions. Knowing that the Scriptures “are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus,” one Chinese house church leader recently made a simple request of an Open Doors worker, “Just bring us the Bibles.”¹ The underground Church in China knows full well the power of the Bible to do its own work.

Joseph Smith’s Relationship to the Bible

If Joseph Smith had ever had a genuine relationship with the Lord, he too would have believed the Bible. Instead, he encouraged a “low view” of the Bible, by maintaining that it was an inferior document and very unreliable. This low view of the Bible is reflected in an article entitled “Errors of the Bible” which appeared in the church’s official newspaper, the *Evening and Morning Star*. Here is an excerpt from this article.

“As to the errors in the bible, any man possessed of common understanding, knows, that *both the old and new testaments are filled with errors, obscurities, italics and contradictions*, which must be the work of men ... the church of Christ [Latter Day Saints] will soon have the scriptures, in their original purity [Joseph Smith’s *Inspired Version*]...

“It must be admitted by all who have any knowledge of the general state of society, at the present time, that it is very corrupt; and those who have a knowledge of things as they really are, and as they really will be, knows that it does and will grow worse from year to year, *and yet the bible, instead of the hearts of men, must be PURIFIED* (capitalized as in the original)!

“Now just at the close of this world, or more properly at the close of this wicked generation, *the bible, after a period of hundreds of years, is found to be faulty and indecent*. It has been translated and sent to almost all nations, and now, *the whole work is full of errors and indecent expressions!*” (italics added)²

While convincing his followers that the Bible itself was corrupt and unreliable, Joseph came up with a variety of competing scriptures of his own, which seriously contradict the Bible and establish his own doctrine and theology. Joseph Smith, therefore, would not be judged *by* the Bible. Quite the contrary, he himself would stand in judgment *upon* the Bible.

And so it is today with the followers of Joseph Smith. Whether knowingly or ignorantly, they have discarded the Bible as an inferior document in favor of Joseph Smith’s own “revelations” which they feel are far superior. In the words of Joseph Smith, “The conference prized the revelations to be worth to the church the riches of the whole earth, speaking temporally. The great benefits to the world, which result from the Book of Mormon and the revelations, which *the Lord has seen fit, in his infinite wisdom to grant unto us for our salvation, and for the salvation of all that will believe*, were duly appreciated” (emphasis added).³ According to Joseph Smith,

1. “China: Midnight Raiders Leave Empty-Handed,” *Open Doors Newsbrief*, vol. 11, no. 1, (Santa Ana, CA: January 1996), p. 5.

2. “Errors of the Bible,” *Evening and Morning Star*, vol. 2, no. 14., (Independence, Missouri, July 1833), p. 106.

3. Joseph Smith, “History of Joseph Smith,” *T&S*, vol. 5, no. 9, (May 1, 1844), p. 512. See also *RHC*, 1:229–230.

one's salvation hinges on accepting the scriptures he generated.⁴ But the gaping disparity between the message of the Bible and Joseph Smith's scriptures is a subject which very few Latter Day Saints are willing to fathom.

Joseph Smith generated four books of scripture which are accepted by his followers: the *Book of Mormon*, the *Doctrine and Covenants*, the *Inspired Version* of the Bible and the *Pearl of Great Price*. RLDS accept all of these as scripture except a portion of the *Pearl of Great Price*. Utah Mormons accept all but Joseph's *Inspired Version* of the Bible, choosing to remain with the King James Version instead. RLDS therefore have what they refer to as "three standard books" of scripture, whereas the Utah Mormon church has four. Many, many volumes have been written over the years which evaluate these books by Biblical standards. The next six chapters will introduce the reader to each of these books, and will survey some of the ways in which they seriously conflict with the Biblical record.

4. This concept is also confirmed in *D&C* 34:5b and in Genesis 50:33 in Joseph Smith's *Inspired Version* of the Bible.