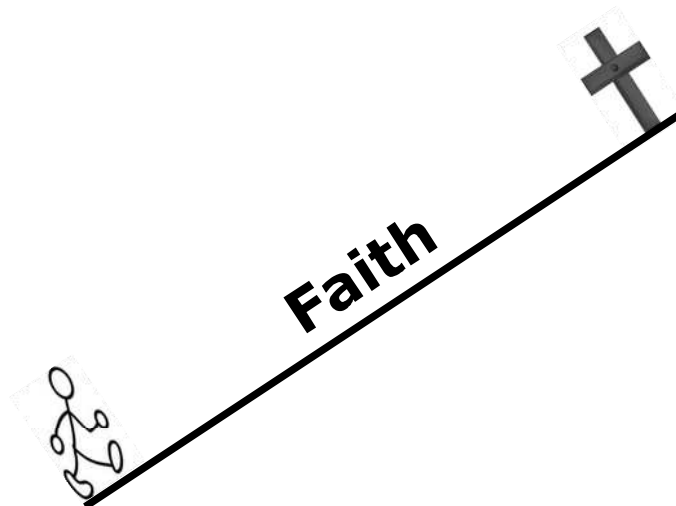


The above diagram represents ten of the most common obstacles both biblical Christians and Latter-day Saints encounter when attempting to understand, share and defend their respective faiths. Any number of these “rocks” may come into play during the course of dialog or debate.

Note that the path to the cross for Latter-day Saints is on an incline. This is because many LDS will suffer incredible loss (e.g. family, friends, social acceptance/status, financial security, etc.) for exchanging the LDS gospel of *works* for the biblical gospel of *grace*.

The below diagram represents the ideal sharing scenario—all potential “rocks” have been cleared from the road to redemption. In other words, the only thing standing between Latter-day Saints and being forgiven of ALL their sins (besides the potential losses mentioned above) is pure and simple faith in the FINISHED work of Christ on the cross and acceptance of His absolutely free gift of salvation.



Rock #3 Power Point

Testing
for
Truth




...becomes a rock on the road to redemption when LDS remain unaware of reliable and unreliable tests!

One aim of this lesson is to identify eight tests for the truth of Joseph Smith and the LDS Church that are often employed by Latter-day Saints which the laws of logic and God's Word in the Bible reveal as highly **unreliable**. It is important to note that while three of these tests, namely, prayer, heart-felt convictions, and dependence upon the Holy Spirit are indispensable in the life of a Christian, they ARE NOT *the biblical prescription* for exposing a *false prophet*.



The other aim is to identify the most **reliable** test for the truth of an alleged prophet and his revelations, namely, his/her gospel doctrine as compared to the biblical gospel of salvation (i.e. "previous revelation"). This IS the biblical prescription for exposing a *false prophet*. Granted, it is a negative test—that is, it only proves a prophet false and not necessarily true—but it is the first and most important test of an alleged prophet of God.

Prayer Is Unreliable

- We are tempted to pray with “wrong motives” if we stand to gain or lose much when praying about the truth of Joseph Smith and the LDS Church. 
- Many people have sincerely prayed to God about the truth of Joseph Smith and the LDS Church and been given entirely different answers.
- According to the Bible, prayer is *never* the way to test for the truth of a prophet or expose a *false prophet*.
- **Question:** Would a *false prophet* want us to depend primarily on prayer to test him and his revelations?
- **James 1:5** (quoted by many LDS) is written in the context of seeking God’s wisdom in “trials” (v. 2 NIV), not testing for the truth of a prophet.

When you ask [God], you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives.
(James 4:3a NIV)

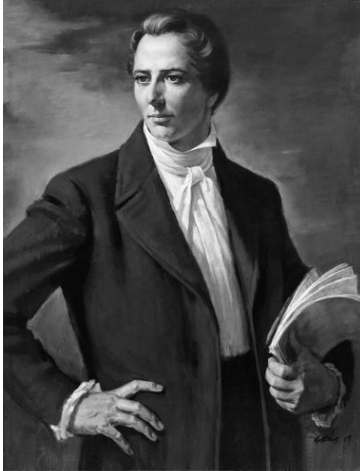
Our Hearts Are Unreliable

- **Question:** How can we trust our sinful hearts to lead us to the truth of Joseph Smith and the LDS Church when they are bent on deceiving us? 
- Faithful Catholics, Protestants, and Jehovah’s Witnesses believe with all of their hearts that Joseph Smith and the LDS Church are false.
- Because our hearts are so deceitful, God has given us His Word in the Bible to expose our self-deceit (see Heb. 4:12). 
- **Question:** Would a *false prophet* want us to depend more on our hearts than God’s Word in the Bible to test him and his revelations?
- **Question:** If God’s Word in the Bible exposes a *false prophet*, what would a *false prophet* try to discredit?
- **Question:** Does Joseph Smith, the founding Prophet of the LDS Church, discredit the Bible? (See LDS Article of Faith 8 and 1 Nephi 13:28 in the Book of Mormon below.)

The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?
(Jeremiah 17:9 NIV)

For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. (Hebrews 4:12 NIV)

**Joseph Smith
Discredits the
Reliability &
Sufficiency of
the Bible**



"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."

Joseph Smith, 1st LDS Prophet & President
Article of Faith 8 in *The Pearl of Great Price*

Wherefore, thou seest that after the book [the Bible] hath gone forth through the hands of the great and abominable church, that there are many plain and precious things taken away from the book, which is the book of the Lamb. (1 Nephi 13:28)

Joseph Smith, Translator of the Book of Mormon

The Spirit Is Unreliable

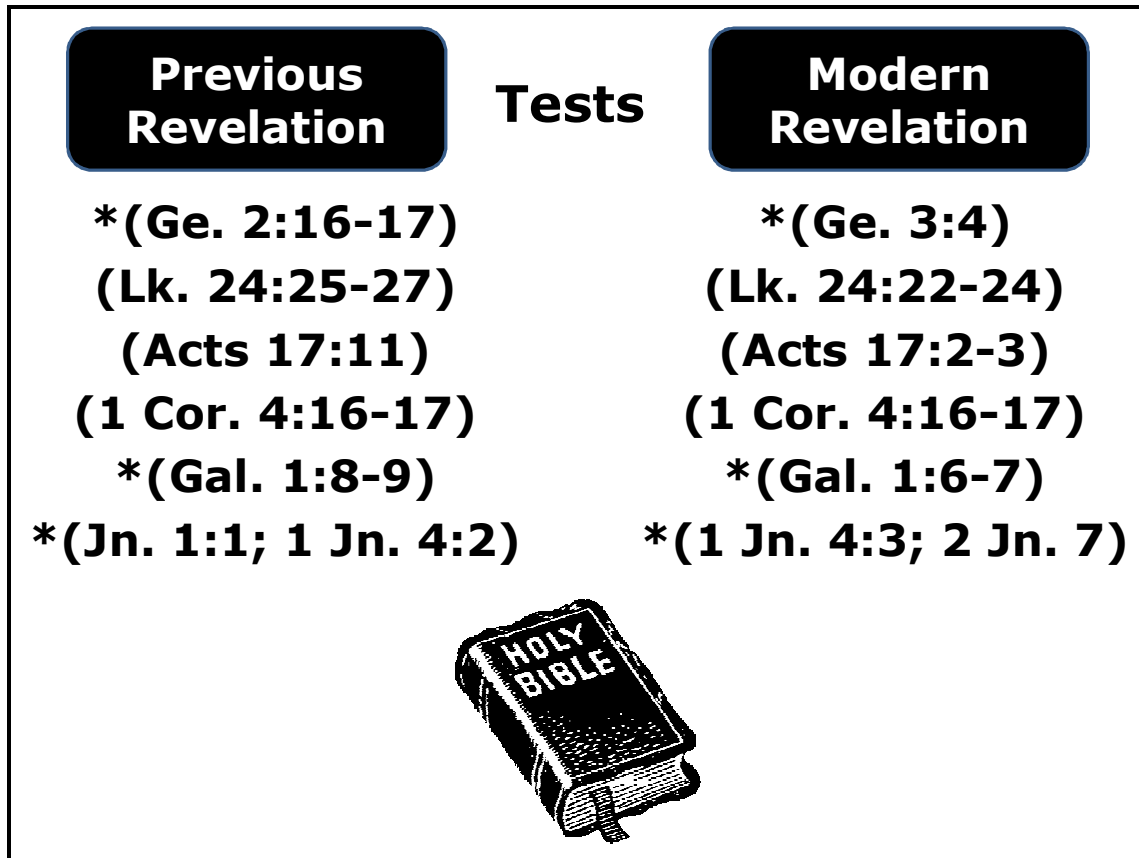
Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. (1 John 4:1 NIV)

For if someone comes to you and preaches a Jesus other than the Jesus we preached, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it easily enough. (2 Corinthians 11:4 NIV)

- It is possible to receive "a different spirit" (one that is not "from God") and this because we have either been deceived by our hearts, by a *false prophet*, or both.
- Testing "the spirits" is in the specific context of exposing "false prophets." Moreover, the test is a *doctrinal test* (i.e. whether or not "Jesus Christ is come in the flesh"—1 Jn. 4:2-3 KJV). Prayer, the heart and the Spirit are not here prescribed!
- **Question:** Would a *false prophet* want us to depend primarily on the Spirit to test him and his revelations?


The Book of Mormon Is Unreliable

- The biblical prescription for testing the truth of a prophet's revelation is that it is tested first by *previous revelation* (i.e. modern revelation must not contradict previous revelation or it is not from God; see the below diagram).




- Establishing the truth of Joseph Smith and the LDS Church by the Book of Mormon is essentially testing an alleged prophet by his own revelation. This commits the logical fallacy of *circular reasoning* and violates the biblical prescription for testing a prophet and/or exposing a *false prophet*.
- *Contradiction to God's previous revelation (i.e. the Bible) is what exposes a *false prophet*. (See the above Scriptures marked with an asterisk.)
- Question:** Would a *false prophet* want us to depend primarily on his own revelations to test him?
- Question:** If contradiction to God's Word in the Bible exposes a *false prophet*, what would a *false prophet* try to discredit? (See *Joseph Smith Discredits the Reliability and Sufficiency of the Bible* on [page 3.4](#); see especially *Satan's Modus Operandi (M.O.)* on [page 4.3 of Rock #4](#).)

Fulfilled Prophecy Is Unreliable

- “and if the sign or wonder of which he has spoken takes place” (v. 2a)—clearly a *false prophet* may fulfill prophecy to deceive us.
- “Let us follow other gods” (v. 2b)—clearly it is the prophet’s doctrine of and belief in false gods that expose him as a *false prophet*. This is a specific *doctrinal test*; dependence upon prayer, the heart or the Spirit is not mentioned! 
- **Question:** Would a *false prophet* want us to depend primarily on his fulfilled prophecies to test him and his revelations?


If a prophet, or one who foretells by dreams, appears among you and announces to you a miraculous sign or wonder, and if the sign or wonder of which he has spoken takes place, and he says, “Let us follow other gods” (gods you have not known) “and let us worship them,” you must not listen to the words of that prophet or dreamer. (Deuteronomy 13:1-3a NIV)

Miracles Are Unreliable

- Because *false prophets* may perform “great signs and miracles” to deceive us we must not depend on them as a reliable test for exposing imposters. 
- It may be argued that *false prophets* do not perform good and God-honoring miracles in an attempt to justify this test. However, Satan’s work is “displayed in all kinds of *counterfeit miracles*,” which are much more deceptive (see 2 Thess. 2:9-10 NIV).
- **Question:** Would a *false prophet* want us to depend primarily on his signs, wonders and miracles to test him and his revelations?

“For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect—if that were possible. See I [Jesus] have told you ahead of time.” (Matthew 24:24-25 NIV)

Blessings Are Unreliable

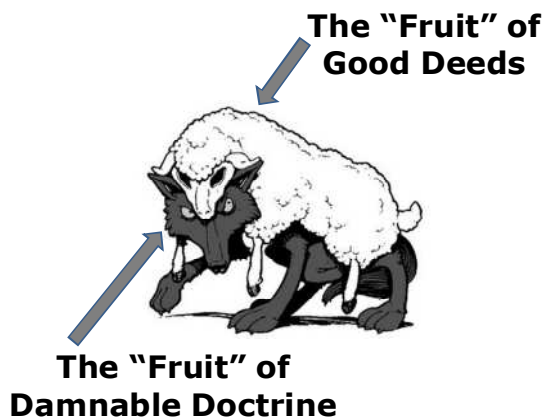
- Because God blesses “the evil” and “the unrighteous,” He even blesses followers of *false prophets* to show His unconditional love and to lead them to repentance. 
- God cleansed ten lepers knowing *only one* would “give praise” to Him (see Lk. 17:11-19 NIV).

“He [God the Father] causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.” (Matthew 5:45b NIV)

The "Fruit" of Good Deeds Is Unreliable

- "sheep's clothing" represents the deceitfulness of *false prophets* (i.e. they look like Christians because they ACT like Christians). Satan's "servants masquerade as servants of righteousness" (see 2 Cor. 11:15 NIV).
- **Question:** Would a *false prophet* want us to depend primarily on the "fruit" of good deeds to test him and his revelations?

"Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. By their fruit you will recognize them." (Matthew 7:15-16a NIV)



Which prophet would **most people** believe to be true or false?

Prophet A

- Lives by "the Golden Rule"
- Teaches a spiritual resurrection of Christ

Prophet B

- Tortures children
- Teaches a physical resurrection of Christ

Both are false by virtue of their doctrine & deeds, respectively!

The "Fruit" of Damnable Doctrine Is Reliable!

- *False prophets* and false teachers will "bring in damnable heresies" (2 Pt. 2:1 KJV).
- A false God (Dt. 13:1-13; Jn. 17:3); a false Christ (1 Jn. 4:1-3; Jn. 8:24); a false gospel (Gal. 1:8-9); and a false resurrection (1 Cor. 15:14-19) all expose *false prophets*. Prayer and the heart and the Spirit are not here prescribed!
- **Question:** What should be *the first test* of a prophet if a false gospel exposes and eternally condemns a *false prophet*? →

But even if we [Christ's original apostles] or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned!" (Galatians 1:8-9 NIV)