



Sego Lily Foundation

Heritage Church – 9.6.2025











Grand Junction Temple



Public Open House 9.11-9.27



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Introduction

- Questions for Today: What is Mormonism? And why is the LDS Church building a Temple in Grand Junction?
- Goal for This Session: Answer the first question in such a way that an LDS friend would agree with the explanation (even if he disagrees with the assessment).
- Challenge: Latter-day Saints have a wide variety of convictions, perspectives, and sensitivities.
- Summary Words: Restoration (this session) and Progression (next session)

Outline – Where are we going?

- Need for Restoration – The Great Apostasy
- Voice of Restoration – Joseph Smith, Jr. and Future LDS Prophets
- Results of Restoration – Plain and Precious Truths in Action



Need for Restoration

The Great Apostasy



The Great Apostasy

1. The Claim – 15 Centuries of Corruption and Loss

“After the deaths of the Savior and his apostles, men corrupted the principles of the gospel and made unauthorized changes in Church organization and priesthood ordinances. Because of the widespread apostasy, the Lord withdrew the authority of the priesthood from the earth. This apostasy lasted until Heavenly Father and His beloved Son appeared to Joseph Smith in 1820” (churchofjesuschrist.org, *Topics and Questions*, “Apostasy”)

The Great Apostasy

2. The Extent – All Creedal Christianity

“I [Joseph Smith] was answered that I must join none of them [denominations], for they were all wrong, and the Personage who addressed me said that all their creeds were an abomination in his sight; that those professors were all corrupt.” (Joseph Smith History 1:18-19)

The Great Apostasy

2. The Extent – The Bible

“And after they go forth by the hand of the twelve apostles of the Lamb, from the Jews unto the Gentiles, thou seest the formation of that great and abominable church, which is most abominable above all other churches; for behold, they have taken away from the gospel of the Lamb many parts which are plain and most precious; and also many covenants of the Lord have they taken away.... Wherefore, thou seest that after the book 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 of God.” (1 Nephi 13:26-28)



Voice of Restoration

Joseph Smith, Jr. and Future LDS Prophets



Joseph Smith, Jr.

1. Call of Joseph Smith – Spring, 1820

“In 1820, as He had done throughout history, our Father in Heaven again chose a prophet to restore the gospel and the priesthood to the earth. That prophet’s name was Joseph Smith.” (*The Restoration of the Gospel of Jesus Christ*, 11)

“The First Vision is the foundational event of the Restoration of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Faith in this divine event is at the heart of belief for members of the Church from around the world.” (churchofjesuschrist.org, “Accounts of the First Vision”)

Joseph Smith, Jr.

2. Revelations of Joseph Smith – 1823-1830

“Through the gift and power of God, Joseph Smith translated the Book of Mormon, which contains the plain and precious truths of the gospel. Many other revelations followed and have been recorded as scripture in the Doctrine and Covenants and the Pearl of Great Price.” (*Gospel Principles*, “The Gift and Power of God”)

“I told the brethren that the Book of Mormon was the most correct of any book on earth, and the keystone of our religion, and a man would get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book.” (Introduction, Book of Mormon)

Joseph Smith, Jr.

3. Revelations of Future Prophets

“And whatsoever they shall speak when moved upon by the Holy Ghost shall be scripture, shall be the will of the Lord, shall be the mind of the Lord, shall be the word of the Lord, shall be the voice of the Lord, and the power of God unto salvation.” (D&C 68:4)

“Our salvation is contingent upon our belief in a living prophet and adherence to his word. He alone has the right to revelation for the whole church. His words, above those of any other man, ought to be esteemed and considered by the Church as well as by the world. One day this truth will be understood.” (Theodore Tuttle, “What is a Living Prophet?” April, 1973)



Results of Restoration

Plain and Precious Truths in Action



Results of Restoration

1. Restoration of the Priesthood

“The authority of God to organize His Church and perform ordinances of salvation was lost because of apostasy after the death of Jesus Christ and His Apostles in the first century A.D. However, it was restored by the Lord to Joseph Smith through heavenly messengers during the 19th century.” (*Gospel Topics*, “Jesus Christ Restored the Priesthood”)

May 15, 1829, Restoration of the Aaronic Priesthood; the Restoration of the Melchizedek Priesthood occurred a short time later.

Results of Restoration

2. Restoration of Celestial Marriage – 1831, Kirtland, Ohio

“Joseph told associates that an angel appeared to him three times between 1834 and 1842 commanded him to proceed with plural marriage when he hesitated to move forward. During the third and final appearance, the angel came with drawn sword, threatening Joseph with destruction unless he went forward and obeyed the command fully.” (*Gospel Topic Essays*, “Plural Marriage in Kirtland and Nauvoo”)

Kirtland to Nauvoo – Growth, Exile, and Secret Practice

Results of Restoration

3. Consequences of Plural Marriage – June 7, 1844, *Nauvoo Expositor*

“We most solemnly and sincerely declare, God this day being our witness of the truth and sincerity of our designs and statements, that happy will it be with those who examine and scan Joseph Smith’s pretensions to righteousness We hope many items of doctrine, as now taught, some of which, however, are taught secretly, and denied openly, (which we know positively is the case,) and others publicly, considerate men will treat with contempt; for we declare them heretical and damnable in their influence, though they find many devotees.”

June 27, 1844 – Joseph and Hyrum Smith, murdered in Carthage, IL

Results of Restoration

4. Leadership Crisis, Split, & Migration

Brigham Young – “The House of the Lord should be reared in the Tops of the Mountains and the Proud Banner of liberty wave over the valleys that are within the mountains. I know where the spot is. I know how to make the flag” (John D. Lee Diary, 1846; quoted by Ronald Esplin in, “A Place Prepared,” *BYU Religious Studies Center*)



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Conclusion



Conclusion

- Based on what you've learned today, what are some thought-provoking questions to ask your LDS friends?
- What are some of the communication gaps you've had with Latter-day Saints and how will this information help you interact better?
- What are the most important Bible passages that you can share with Latter-day Saints?

Outline

1. Why are Temples important to the LDS Church?
2. What happens inside LDS Temples?



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Progression and the Temple

Why are LDS Temples so Important to LDS Friends?



1. Why are Temples Important?

- “Temples are literally the houses of the Lord and the only places on earth where families can be united forever” (Come Unto Christ, *What are Temples?*)
- “When you come to the temple you will love your family with a deeper love than you have ever felt before. The Temple is about families.” (Richard H. Winkel, *The Temple is about Families*, General Conference, 2006)
- Let me show you what that looks like.



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Temples, Family, and Eternal Progression

- Temples are where families put the Doctrine of Eternal Progression into affect.
- If we understand the Doctrine of Eternal Progression, we understand why LDS Temples are so important.

The Doctrine of Eternal Progression

- According to LDS Scripture:

“And again, verily I say unto you, if a man marry a wife by my word, which is my law, and by the new and everlasting covenant, and it is sealed unto them by the Holy Spirit of promise Then shall they be gods, because they have no end; therefore shall they be from everlasting to everlasting, because they continue; then shall they be above all, because all things are subject unto them. Then shall they be gods, because they have all power, and the angels are subject unto them. Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye abide my law ye cannot attain to this glory.” (D&C 132:19-21)

The Doctrine of Eternal Progression

- Clarified and Confirmed by Future LDS Prophets:

“As man now is, God once was: As God now is, man may be” – Lorenzo Snow, 5th President

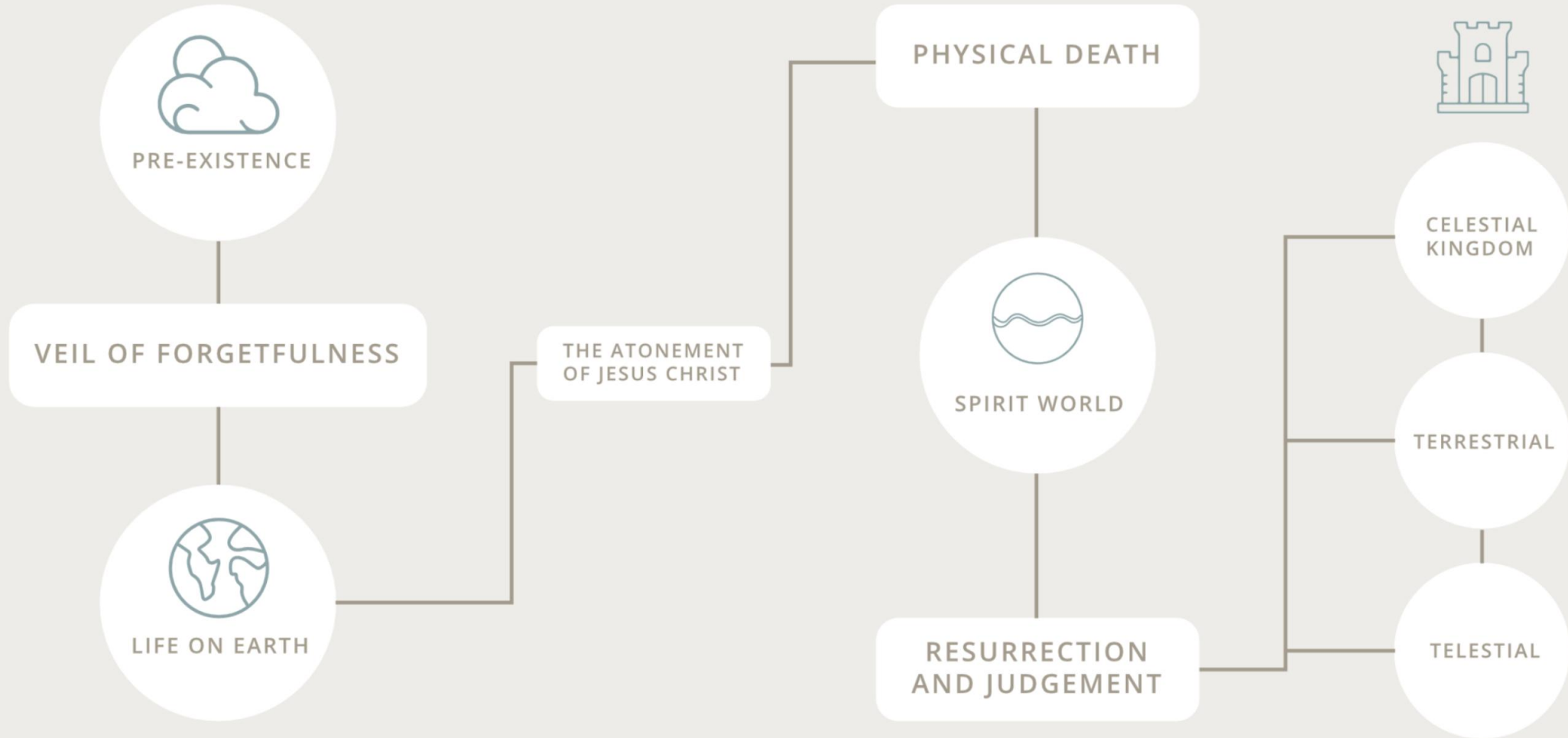
“Well, as God is, man may become. We believe in eternal progression very strongly” – Gordon B. Hinkley, 15th President

“Because there is a grand plan of salvation authored by Heavenly Father, does it not stand to reason that you also have a divine destiny? Make no mistake about it; your potential is divine.” – Russell M. Nelson, 17th President

Progression in the Family Mode

- “The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints teaches that all human beings, male and female, are beloved spirit children of heavenly parents, a Heavenly Father and a Heavenly Mother. This understanding is rooted in scriptural and prophetic teachings about the nature of God, our relationship to Deity, and the godly potential of men and women. The doctrine of a Heavenly Mother is a cherished and distinctive belief among Latter-day Saints.” (*Gospel Topic Essay*, “Heavenly Mother”)

Picture of Eternal Progression



Role of Temples in Eternal Progression

- **The Family: A Proclamation to the World**

“In the premortal realm, spirit sons and daughters knew and worshipped God as their Eternal Father and accepted His plan by which His children could obtain a physical body and gain earthly experience to progress toward perfection and ultimately realize their divine destiny as heirs of eternal life. 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.”

Temples and the Family

- “God has revealed the eternal nature of celestial marriage and the family as the source of our greatest joy Our family is the focus of our greatest work and joy in this life; so it will be throughout all eternity.” (Russell M. Nelson, *Families Can Live Together Forever*)

Temples and the Family

- Hymn, “Families Can be Together Forever” #300 LDS Hymnal

I have a family here on earth, they are so good to me. I want to share my life with them through all eternity.

Families can be together forever through Heav’nly Father’s plan. I always want to be with my own family, and the Lord has shown me how I can. The Lord has shown me how I can.

While I am in my early years, I’ll prepare most carefully, so I can marry in God’s temple for eternity.

Families can be together forever through Heav’nly Father’s plan. I always want to be with my own family, and the Lord has shown me how I can. The Lord has shown me how I can.

Leaving and the Threat to LDS Families

“Who glorifies the Father, and saves all the works of his hands, except those sons of perdition who deny the Son after the Father has revealed Him. Wherefore, he saves all except them – they shall go away to everlasting punishment, which is endless punishment...” (D&C 76:43-44)

“We are the only Christians on the planet who are led by Jesus Christ If you walk away from this religion, you lose everything. You lose everything that truly matters most.” (Bradley R. Wilcox, Fireside Talk, Alpine, UT 2/2/2022)



What happens inside?



2. What happens inside?

- Broadly: endowment, sealings (marriage and family), and baptisms for the dead.
- Specifically: “We should not disclose or describe the special symbols associated with the covenants we receive in sacred temple ceremonies. Neither should we discuss the holy information that we specifically promise in the temple not to reveal.” (David A. Bednar, *Prepared to Obtain Every Needful Thing*, 2019 General Conference)

2. What happens inside?

- Only members in good standing are welcome to enter the Temple after it's sealed.
- Often, retired couples accept missionary callings to serve as Temple Workers.





**How can you use LDS Temples to
advance the true gospel?**





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“...to equip the saints for the work of
ministry, for building up the body of
Christ.”

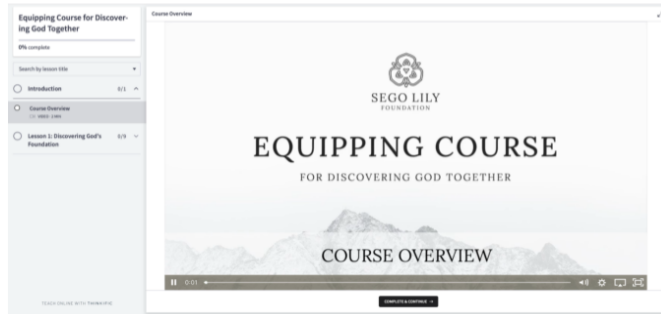
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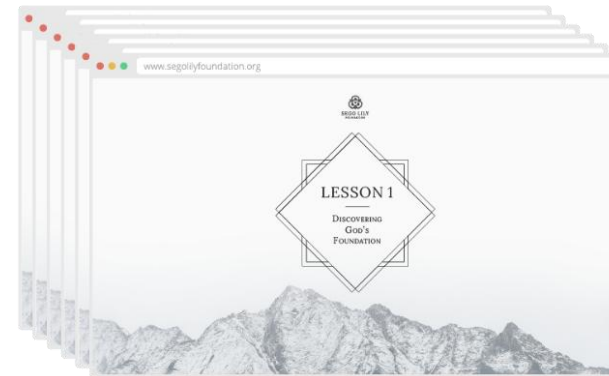
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Equipping Born-Again Christians for Latter-Day Saint Evangelism

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1.1 Introduction



EQUIPPING COURSE

FOR DISCOVERING GOD TOGETHER

1.1 INTRODUCTION



Before getting started, please consider the following five points.

1. I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the

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An Invitation to Talk



Outline

1. An Invitation to the Temple
2. A Follow-up Conversation



An Invitation to the Temple



1. Should You Go?

- “I know and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself, but it is unclean for anyone who thinks it unclean (Romans 14:14).
- If your conscience gives you liberty to go, great!
- If your conscience asks you to refrain, great!
- My Suggestion – Whether you go or don’t go, ask to take them to a meal as a follow-up.



A Follow-Up Conversation



Ask Questions like Jesus Asked

- *Jesus asked around 300 questions in the gospels.*
- “Which one of you who has a sheep, if it falls in a pit on the Sabbath, will not take hold of it and lift it out?” (Matthew 12:11)
- “What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he? (Matthew 22:43)

Ask Questions like Jesus Asked

- “A certain money lender had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. When they could not pay, he cancelled the debt of both. Now which one of them will love him more?”
(Luke 7:41-42)



Questions We Might Ask



Temple Specific Questions

“Thus says the LORD, Heaven is my throne and earth is my footstool; what is the house that you would build for me, and what is the place of my rest? All these things my hand has made, and so all these things came to be, declares the LORD. But this is the one to whom I will look: he who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word.”
(Isaiah 66:1-2)

Temple Specific Questions

“O LORD, who shall sojourn in your tent? Who shall dwell in your holy hill?” (Psalm 15)

“Do you not know that you are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in you?” (1 Corinthians 3:16; see also 1 Corinthians 6:19)

My 3 Favorite Questions

1. When opposing truths collide, what wins?
2. What is your view of God?
3. What is the thing you fear the most?

1. What wins?

“But, behold, I say unto you, that you must study it out in your mind; then you must ask me if it be right, and if it is right I will cause that your bosom shall burn within you; therefore, you shall feel that it is right. But if it be not right you shall not have such feelings ...” (Doctrines and Covenants 9:8-9).

2. View of God?

- “We are all literally children of God, spiritually begotten in the premortal life. As His children, we can be assured that we have divine, eternal potential and that he will help us in our sincere efforts to reach that potential.”

(Heavenly Father, Topics and Questions)

- “Men corrupted the principles of the gospel and made unauthorized changes Because of this widespread apostasy, the Lord withdrew the authority of the priesthood from the earth.” *(Apostasy, Topics and Questions)*

3. What's your greatest fear?

“When I leave this frail existence,
When I lay this mortal by,
Father, Mother, may I meet you
In your royal courts on high?
Then at length, when I've completed
All you sent me forth to do,
With your mutual approbation
Let me come and dwell with you.”

(Eliza Snow, O My Father, stanza 4)



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