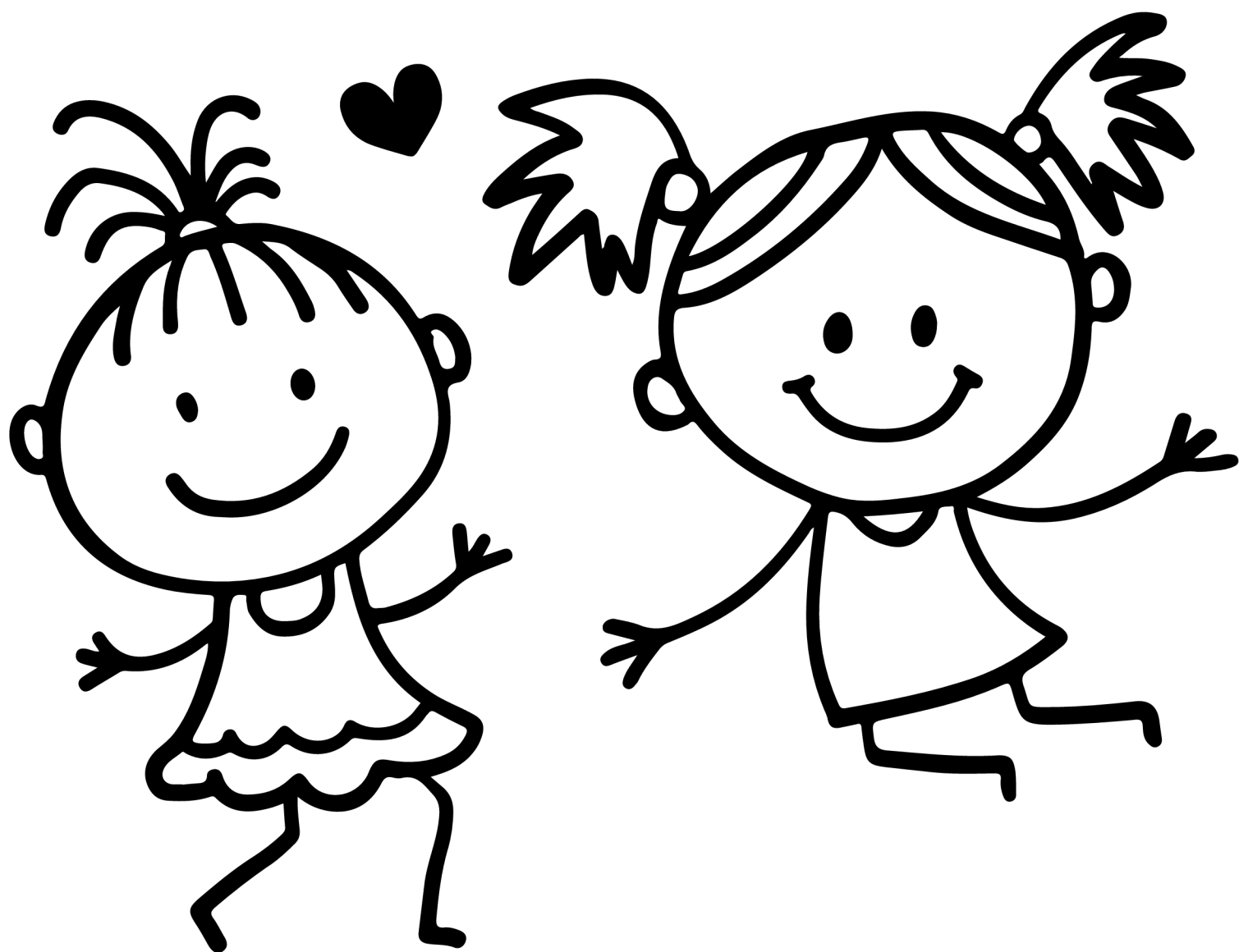


Some Research & Questions
about the
LDS
Church

by Katie and Jordan



The primary biblical passages describing Lucifer's (Satan's) desire to be like God are Isaiah 14:12–14 and Ezekiel 28:12–17.

In Isaiah 14:14, he declares: “I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High”.

While Isaiah 14 initially addresses the earthly King of Babylon, historical and theological interpretation understands this as a metaphor for the spiritual fall of Satan, whose pride and ambition led to his expulsion from heaven.

The passage records five “I will” statements highlighting his rebellion:

- “I will ascend into heaven”
- “I will exalt my throne above the stars of God”
- “I will sit on the mount of the assembly”
- “I will ascend above the heights of the clouds”
- “I will make myself like the Most High”

Although the word “Trinity” isn’t explicitly used in the Bible, the concept of one God existing as three co-equal persons—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—is supported throughout. These key verses demonstrate this triune nature:

- Matthew 28:19: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”
- Matthew 3:16–17: At Jesus’ baptism, all three are present simultaneously: the Son is baptized, the Spirit descends like a dove, and the Father speaks from heaven.
- 2 Corinthians 13:14: “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.”
- John 1:1, 14: The Gospel of John identifies Jesus (the Word) as both distinct from God and fully God, stating: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.”

Both God the Father and Jesus are described in the Bible as eternal—having no beginning and no end. Scripture emphasizes that They are one and unchanging, existing outside of time.

God's Eternal Nature

- Psalm 90:2: “Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.”
- Isaiah 40:28: “The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable.”

Jesus's Eternal Nature

- John 1:1-2: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God.”
- John 8:58: “Jesus said to them, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am.’”
- Revelation 1:8: “‘I am the Alpha and the Omega,’ says the Lord God, ‘who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.’”
- Hebrews 13:8: “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.”

Equality and Oneness

- John 10:30: “I and the Father are one.”
- Colossians 1:16-17: “For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible... all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.”

The Bible does not state that Jesus and Satan are brothers. Mainstream Christianity views Jesus as the uncreated, eternal God and Creator, and Satan as a created angelic being who fell.

However, the concept of them being “spirit brothers” comes from Mormon doctrine (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints). This belief stems from their interpretation of a pre-mortal existence where all beings, including Jesus and Lucifer (Satan), were created as spirit children by God the Father.

In LDS theology, this means all humans and angels share a spiritual brotherhood, though Jesus holds the status of the “firstborn” spirit child. For scriptural support, this theology often points to passages suggesting a pre-mortal council, such as Book of Moses 4:1-3 and Book of Abraham 3:27 in the Pearl of Great Price.

Mainstream biblical scholars and theologians reject this, asserting that Colossians 1:15-16 and John 1:3 indicate that Jesus is the Creator of all things, including angels, making it impossible for Satan to be his brother

The Misconception: “Christians are Demons”

The idea that Mormons view Christians as demonic likely stems from a misinterpretation of two things:

- **The Great Apostasy:** Mormonism teaches that shortly after the deaths of Jesus’s original apostles, the true priesthood authority and correct doctrines were lost from the earth. Because of this, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) teaches that traditional Christian denominations, while full of good intentions and partial truths, lack the divine authority to perform valid baptisms or ordinances.
- **Book of Mormon Passages:** A specific verse in the Book of Mormon (1 Nephi 14:10) states that there are only two churches: “the church of the Lamb of God, and the other is the church of the devil.” Traditional Christians sometimes interpret this as Mormons calling them satanic. However, LDS leaders clarify that “the church of the devil” refers broadly to any ideology, corruption, or system that fights against righteousness—not to everyday Christian believers.

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To engage a member of The LDS effectively, it is best to ask respectful, open-ended questions that contrast LDS theology with biblical text. Rather than arguing, focus on the differences regarding the character of God, the mechanism of salvation, and the sufficiency of Scripture.

Here are the key questions to ask, categorized by core biblical doctrines:

Questions on Grace and Salvation

Mormonism teaches that salvation involves personal worthiness achieved through laws and ordinances (“by grace after all that you can do” – 2 Nephi 25:23). The Bible teaches that salvation is a free gift received by faith alone.

- “When Paul says in Ephesians 2:8-9 that we are saved by grace through faith, ‘not of works, lest any man should boast,’ what works do you believe are still required?”
- “If you were to die right now, do you have the absolute assurance that you have eternal life, or do you have to wait to see if you were worthy enough?”
- “How do you reconcile the phrase ‘after all we can do’ with Romans 11:6, which states that if salvation is by grace, it can no longer be based on works at all?”

Questions on the Nature of God

LDS doctrine teaches that God the Father has a physical body of flesh and bone, and was once a mortal man who progressed to godhood. The Bible teaches that God is spirit, eternal, and unchanging.

- “In John 4:24, Jesus states that ‘God is a Spirit.’ How does this align with the teaching that the Father has a physical body of flesh and bones?”
- “God states in Isaiah 43:10 that ‘before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me.’ If humans can progress to become gods, how do we understand this verse?”
- “Malachi 3:6 says, ‘I am the Lord, I change not.’ If God was once a mortal man who had to progress to become God, when did He change from man to God?”

Questions on the Sufficiency of Scripture

Mormonism utilizes an open canon, believing the Bible has been corrupted and requires the Book of Mormon and modern prophets to restore lost truths. The Bible claims its own complete sufficiency for salvation.

- “Paul tells Timothy in 2 Timothy 3:16-17 that the Holy Scriptures are able to make you wise for salvation and thoroughly equip you for every good work.
 - If the Bible thoroughly equips us, why do we need additional scriptures?”
- “The Book of Mormon claims to contain the ‘fullness of the everlasting gospel.’
 - Why are major LDS doctrines—like eternal progression, celestial marriage, baptism for the dead, and a physical Father—not found in the Book of Mormon?”
- “In Galatians 1:8, Paul warns that even if ‘an angel from heaven’ preaches a gospel different from what he preached, they should be accursed.
 - How do you evaluate the angel Moroni’s message in light of this warning?”

Questions on the Church and Authority

LDS theology hinges on a “Great Apostasy,” claiming Christ’s original church completely fell away from the earth until Joseph Smith restored it.

- “Jesus promised in Matthew 16:18 that ‘the gates of hell shall not prevail’ against His church. If the church completely disappeared for 1,800 years until the Restoration, did the gates of hell temporarily prevail?”
- “The New Testament outlines strict qualifications for elders and deacons, stating they must be the ‘husband of one wife’ and rule their children well (1 Timothy 3:2, 12). Why does the LDS church ordain 12-year-old boys as deacons and 18-year-old young men as elders?”

The Millstone Warning in Matthew 18

In Matthew 18:6, Jesus states: “But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.”

- The Meaning of “Offend”: In the original Greek text, the word used is skandalizo, which means to place a stumbling block in someone’s path, causing them to trip, sin, or abandon their faith.
- The Severity: A millstone (moulos onikos) was a massive, heavy stone turned by a donkey to grind grain. Drowning with such a weight meant absolute, irreversible destruction. Jesus uses this intense imagery to show that leading a believer away from the truth is a grave spiritual offense.

“Children of God” vs. Mormon Doctrine

Traditional Christianity and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS/Mormonism) have fundamentally different definitions of what it means to be a “child of God.” This divergence is a primary reason traditional Christian denominations label certain LDS doctrines as heresy.

Traditional Christian View

- **Creation and Adoption:** Mainstream Christianity teaches that humans are creatures made in the image of God, but they become “children of God” spiritually through faith and adoption in Jesus Christ (John 1:12).
- **Creator-Creature Distinction:** God is an eternal, uncreated Spirit. Humans are finite creations who will never become gods.

Latter-day Saint (Mormon) View

- **Literal Offspring:** LDS theology teaches that all humans are the literal, pre-mortal spirit children of Heavenly Father and a Heavenly Mother.
- **Eternal Progression:** A core LDS doctrine (often summarized by the Lorenzo Snow couplet: “As man now is, God once was: As God now is, man may be”) teaches that humans can progress to become gods themselves, a concept known as exaltation.

Why Traditional Christianity Views This as Heresy
From the perspective of historic, orthodox Christian theology, the LDS view violates fundamental biblical doctrines:

- The Nature of God: Traditional Christianity relies on scriptures like Numbers 23:19 (“God is not a man”) and Psalm 90:2 (“From everlasting to everlasting, you are God”). The idea that God was once a man or that humans can become gods contradicts classical monotheism.
- The Nature of Christ: Orthodox Christianity affirms the Trinity (one God in three persons). LDS theology views the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as three physically distinct deities, which traditional Christians view as polytheism or henotheism.
- The Stumbling Block Connection: Many Christian apologists connect the Matthew 18 warning to these theological shifts. They argue that teaching a different gospel, a different Jesus, or a different definition of salvation acts as a spiritual stumbling block (skandalizo) that misleads people from biblical truth.

The verse John 14:6 (“I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me”) is frequently used by critics as a theological argument against Mormonism (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, or LDS) to dispute their doctrines on eternal progression, the nature of God, and exclusive priesthood authority. Critics argue that LDS theology bypasses or adds requirements to Christ’s definitive statement.

Here is a breakdown of how this argument is structured against Mormon doctrine, followed by how LDS theologians typically respond.

The Arguments Against Mormonism Using John 14:6

- **The Necessity of Temple Ordinances:** Critics argue that because Jesus said “no one” comes to the Father except through Him, the LDS requirement of specific temple ordinances (like celestial marriage, endowments, and secret tokens) contradicts Christ. In this view, Mormonism adds human deeds and rituals as gatekeepers to God, rather than relying solely on Christ as the “only way.”

- The Role of Joseph Smith: Evangelical and orthodox critics point to LDS teachings regarding the restoration of the gospel. Brigham Young famously stated that no man can enter the celestial kingdom without the consent of Joseph Smith. Critics argue this elevates a human prophet to a co-mediator position, violating the absolute exclusivity claimed by Jesus in John 14:6.
- Exaltation and Becoming Gods: LDS theology teaches eternal progression—the belief that humans can eventually become like God (exaltation). Critics argue that John 14:6 establishes a strict, permanent hierarchy where Jesus is the sole bridge to the Father, leaving no room for humans to progress to the status of ultimate godhood themselves.
- Authority and the “True Church”: The LDS Church claims to be the only church on earth with the divine authority (priesthood) to perform saving ordinances. Critics use John 14:6 to argue that salvation is found in a personal relationship with the person of Jesus Christ, not through allegiance to a specific institutional church or hierarchical priesthood.

- The LDS (Mormon) Counter-Response
- Latter-day Saints do not see John 14:6 as a contradiction to their faith; rather, they view it as a foundational text that aligns with their theology.
- Christ-Centered Theology: LDS theology teaches that Jesus Christ is the Savior of mankind and that no human can be saved without His Atonement. They interpret “except through me” literally, asserting that every ordinance performed in their temples is done strictly in the name of, and by the authority of, Jesus Christ.
- Faith and Works Integration: Like their interpretation of James 2:26 (“faith without works is dead”), Latter-day Saints view ordinances and commandments not as a replacement for Christ, but as the specific way Christ instructed believers to follow Him. To them, keeping Christ’s commandments is how one walks the “way” He established.
- Delegated Authority: Regarding Joseph Smith or priesthood keys, LDS doctrine argues that God has always used prophets and agents to deliver His message and administer ordinances (similar to Moses or the ancient Apostles). They view this as Christ working through chosen servants, not servants replacing Christ.

- Joseph Smith's connection to 19th-century folk magic is a well-documented reason why some people use the term warlock today. According to the foundational narrative of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, he obtained the Book of Mormon by divine revelation from an angel. Critics and secular historians view the book's origins differently, pointing to naturalistic creation or plagiarism.
- The Religious Account: Angelic Visitation
- According to Latter-day Saint history, Joseph Smith did not use sorcery, but was directed by God:
- The Messenger: In 1823, an angel named Moroni visited Smith in Palmyra, New York.
- The Location: Moroni revealed the location of a buried stone box on a nearby hill called Cumorah.
- The Plates: Inside the box were thin, engraved metal plates resembling gold.
- The Wait: Smith was told he was not yet ready and had to return to the hill on the exact same date for four consecutive years.
- The Retrieval: He was finally allowed to take the golden plates home on September 22, 1827.

The Magical Context: Why People Say “Warlock”

- The rumor that Joseph Smith was a warlock or occultist stems from his well-documented youth spent practicing early American folk magic:
- Treasure Hunting: In the 1820s, Smith’s family was highly impoverished. To make money, Joseph worked as a “money digger,” claiming he could find buried treasure and lost items using supernatural sight.
- Seer Stones: Smith found a smooth, chocolate-colored “seer stone” while digging a well. He would place this stone into a white top hat and bury his face in it to block out the light, claiming he could see visions in the dark.
- The 1826 Legal Trial: Smith’s treasure-hunting practices led to a preliminary court hearing in 1826, where he was legally charged under a New York statute for being a “disorderly person” and a “glass looker” (implying a fraudulent fortune teller).
- How he translated: When translating the Book of Mormon from 1828 to 1829, Smith did not read directly from the plates. Instead, he used the exact same seer stone and top hat method, dictating the English text to scribes like Oliver Cowdery.

- Because he used magical objects like peep stones, occult dates (the autumn equinox), and was accused of using magic circles, local critics and later secular historians began associating him with witchcraft or sorcery.
- The Secular Account: How Critics Explain It
- Historians who do not accept the divine origin of the Book of Mormon provide several secular explanations:
- Scribal Collaboration: Critics believe Smith worked secretly with educated peers to compile the stories.
- Plagiarism: Textual analysts note heavy similarities to local 19th-century books, including *The Late War Between the United States and Great Britain* and Solomon Spaulding's unpublished manuscript.
- Creative Dictation: Skeptics argue that Smith possessed a highly active imagination and a vast knowledge of the King James Bible, enabling him to dictate the text natively over a 90-day period.

Joseph Smith's Parents and Their Work

- The Smith family suffered continuous financial instability and moved frequently to find work. Their occupations included:
- Farming: Joseph Sr. and Lucy worked primarily as tenant farmers, growing crops like wheat, corn, and clover.
- Business Ventures: In Vermont, Joseph Sr. opened a mercantile store and attempted to export ginseng to China, but a business partner defrauded him, plunging the family into deep debt.
- Shopkeeping and Odd Jobs: In Palmyra, New York, Lucy Mack Smith operated a small shop selling painted oilcloth coverings, cake, and root beer to help support the family. Joseph Sr. and his sons also cut cordwood, dug wells, and hired themselves out as day laborers.
- Treasure Hunting: During times of intense poverty, Joseph Sr. and young Joseph Jr. participated in local community efforts to dig for rumored buried treasure and Spanish silver using “seer stones,” a common folk-magic practice in early 19th-century America.

The Nature of God (Theology Proper)

- **Rejection of the Trinity:** Mainstream Christianity teaches one God in three distinct persons (the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit). LDS theology teaches the “Godhead,” which claims the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are three entirely separate and distinct individual Gods who are merely unified in purpose.
- **God’s Corporeality:** Traditional theology reads passages like John 4:24 to establish that God is spirit and incorporeal. LDS theology asserts that God the Father possesses a tangible, physical body of flesh and bone
- **Eternal Progression (Exaltation):** Traditional theology asserts that God is eternally unchanged and the self-existent creator. LDS theology asserts that God was once a mortal man who progressed to godhood, and that humans can eventually progress to become gods themselves.

Members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (often called *Mormons*) defend the Book of Mormon against the warning in Revelation 22:18–19 by arguing that the warning applies strictly to the Book of Revelation itself, not to the entire Bible. They point out that the unified, bound Bible did not exist when John wrote those words, meaning he could only have been referring to his own scroll. Latter-day Saint apologists and Church leaders generally use four main arguments to address this critique:

1. “This Book” Refers Only to the Book of Revelation
 - Contextual focus: The text specifically warns against altering “the words of the prophecy of this book”.
 - Historical timeline: When John wrote the Book of Revelation on the Isle of Patmos, the Bible had not yet been compiled into a single volume.
 - The Bible’s creation: The collection of books we know as the Bible was compiled by church councils centuries later, and Revelation was simply placed at the very end of the compilation

Salvation and Grace (Soteriology)

- **Salvation by Works:** Mainstream biblical theology emphasizes justification by grace alone through faith alone (e.g., Ephesians 2:8-9). LDS scripture modified this concept in 2 Nephi 25:23, stating: “for we know that it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do”. Critics argue this turns salvation into something earned through human performance rather than a free gift.
- **Degrees of Glory:** Mainstream Christianity views eternity as a binary outcome (heaven or hell). LDS theology introduces three tiers of heavenly kingdoms (Celestial, Terrestrial, and Telestial) alongside practices like baptism for the dead, which mainstream theologians argue lacks sound biblical backing.

The Reliability of the Bible

- **Conditional Inerrancy:** The LDS 8th Article of Faith states: “We believe the Bible to be the word of God as far as it is translated correctly”. Critics argue this creates a theological loophole allowing the LDS Church to dismiss biblical passages that conflict with their modern doctrines by claiming the text was corrupted or lost over time.
- **Supremacy of Open Canon:** Because the LDS Church believes the biblical text has suffered from “faulty transmission”, they prioritize modern revelation and secondary scriptures like the Book of Mormon and Doctrine and Covenants to correct the Bible. Traditional Christians point to warnings like Galatians 1:8 to reject these additions.

2. Identical Warnings Appear in the Old Testament

- Deuteronomy parallel: A nearly identical warning is found in Deuteronomy 4:2, which states, “Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it”.
- Proverbs parallel: A similar warning appears in Proverbs 30:6, which says, “Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee”.
- The logical conclusion: Latter-day Saints argue that if these verses meant no more scripture could ever be written, then the entire New Testament (and the Book of Revelation itself) would be invalid for “adding” to what Moses and Solomon wrote.

3. John Wrote Other Books After Revelation

- Chronological evidence: Many biblical scholars believe that John wrote his Gospel (the Book of John) and his three epistles after he wrote the Book of Revelation.
- Sainthood perspective: If the warning in Revelation forbade all future scripture, John would have violated his own text by writing his subsequent Gospel and letters

4. The Warning Applies to Man, Not to God

- Divine authority: Latter-day Saints emphasize that the verse warns human beings (“if any man shall add...”) against tampering with God’s words.
- Continuous revelation: They argue that the verse does not limit God’s right to speak to His children or command His prophets to write new scripture whenever He chooses.