

FAQ II

(August 8, 2006)

- To Write Us:

Heart of the Matter

314 South Redwood Road Suite 200
Salt Lake City, Utah 84104

Many of you fine and faithful viewers write or call and ask how you can help our ministry.

- Many want to contribute financially or help out in some other way.
- . . . kindly sent me books, poems, and even shirts and dinner invitations. You are all so kind.
We want to thank you for your support and for your willingness to help us continue forward.
- But I also want to take a moment and ask for your help in two specific ways.
 - **First, we need your prayers.** Please petition the Lord to help our show reach into the hearts of those prepared to hear.
 - That I will act according to His will and not my own.
 - That Mormonism will reform doctrinally.
 - **Second, I ask you to share the show** with all of your friends and acquaintances, whether in Utah and Idaho or not.
 - If out of the area, email them and give them our website address. Tell them to view the shows online through streaming video or by listening to our podcasts.
 - Heart of the Matter can be seen anywhere in the world via the internet. We ask you to share the show because the more who watch, the more who will come to know the Lord.
 - We thank you in advance for helping us in this way.

PRAYER

Every month we receive hundreds of calls, emails, and letters loaded with questions and some frank accusations.

Some are from people genuinely seeking to know the Lord.

Some are from people genuinely seeking to kill me in the name of the Lord.

But because we put an emphasis on our live calls here on the show, I often set these questions aside and never get around to answering them.

So tonight is “catch up on your questions” night.

348 emails this past week and compiled them (in order of those asked most frequently) and will try and answer them to the best of my ability. If I miss yours, please re-email us and we’ll try and get it read.

Okay, here goes (starting with the MOST asked questions in order of frequency):

Dear Shawn,

“What was it (really) that caused you to leave the Church? Why don’t you just come back and do what you know you should?”

- 1) Book spells it all out.
- 2) Impossible to go back when the Lord has pulled me out.
- 3) Church could not/did not lead me to a regenerative relationship with Jesus.
- 4) Could not overcome my sin nature as a Latter-day Saint – what I mean I could not legitimately overcome my natural self.

“What do you hope to accomplish with this show, book, and site?”

- 1) Help LDS understand the reality and need for personal genuine rebirth.
- 2) Help LDS embrace the Bible as God’s inerrant word – to trust it, to use it, to place it first in their scriptural lives.

“You say you want to get Mormonism to understand the Bible and to focus on being born-again, but you really want to destroy the Church don’t you!

- 1) Yes. I do. But only to the extent that it fails to bring people to a regenerative relationship with Jesus and that it dismisses the Bible as unreliable. Change these things and we’ll talk about the rest later.

“How does a person go about being born-again? What is the process? Does it happen once or over and over again? Doesn’t take a lifetime? What do I need to do to experience this?”

A pregnant woman gives birth to a child not over a lifetime, but immediately. It takes the child a lifetime to learn and grow. After the child dies, it will be resurrected.

- 1) Justification - Believe in your heart and confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord.
- may take time to change, but if genuine, salvation is genuine immediately.
- 2) Sanctification – life-long battle
- 3) Resurrection - later

“How could you believe in the Church and serve a mission and accept the Book of Mormon and then turn from it?”

- 1) The Book of Mormon is a piece of 19th century fiction produced by Joseph Smith. You can trust it if you want. I’ll take the Bible hands down and no other thing.
- 2) Taught to believe it NOT taught to be born-again or to really know the Bible.
- 3) Came to know the Lord by being born-again AND understanding His Word

“Once you are saved are you always saved?”

Yes. If you abide in Christ. Calvinist/Armenism. Matters is the heart. If a person states, “I’m saved, and I do what I want, I preach conditional salvation. If a person is struggling with believing they are saved, but whose heart is in the right place, I preach secured salvation. The Bible teaches both.

“Do you believe in a literal hell?”

Yes. Jesus taught it. I trust it is there. What gets you there? Not having faith in Jesus. Period. Sin does not put you in hell. Your sins were paid for 2000 years ago. It is not believing in Jesus Christ that puts you in hell, it’s not having faith in Him.

Most people like to hold onto the idea that it is sin that keeps them from God. If Jesus hadn’t been here yet this would be true. But He was here. He paid the price. Our faith in Him saves us because He paid for the sin.

And here's the kicker: When we believe in Him, we will, in time, overcome sin by His power and might.

NUMBER ONE MOST COMMON ACCUSATION

“You have no idea of what you are talking about. You are an idiot. Apparently you never listened when you were a member. WE ARE CHRISTIAN. We believe in Jesus Christ. His name is in the name of our church! We end our prayers and talks in His name. Duh. Why don't you give up trying to hurt the kingdom of God on earth and just crawl back under the rock you came out from.”

I get a lot of emails and letters (and calls) telling me I have “no idea what I am talking about.” This is really intriguing to me. Let's get to the heart of the matter right now, okay.

First, if I crawl back under the rock I came out from I would be back under the LDS doctrines, which are a burden.

Second, I've been LDS since birth.

- mission, assistant to the president – prayed, fasted, and was strictly obedient.
- Married in LA Temple – went every week – week!
- taught early morning seminary three years
- taught innumerable Sunday school, priesthood, YM
- in a Bishopric
- Stake High Council 4 years
- seventeen years where all I did was read, brothers and sisters.
- Then I attended a School of Ministry every day for three hours for two years!
- finally, I wrote a book that has generally gone uncontested by those in the know.

Not being proud. I am still a failure. I am still a big fat pig. I still get angry when I have no right.

But when it comes to Mormonism, Mormon doctrine, I know what I am talking about. And your not liking it is irrelevant because it is you who is uninformed about the very religion you claim is “the only true church on the face of the earth!

Think about this for a minute. WHY DO YOU SUPPOSE THE TANNERS HAVE SPENT THEIR LIVES DISSEMINATING INFORMATION ABOUT THE MORMONS? Why?

Why does much of Christianity call Mormonism the c-word?

Why do you think the church is picked on? You've been taught you are picked on because you "have the truth" or because "the devil hates the Church." But I've got news for you:

You are picked on because your church sends missionaries out door to door (just like the Jehovah's Witnesses) who in a spic and span presentation claim they are Christian, but in reality you history, doctrines, practices and methods are so freaking out there that they are frankly a danger to people wanting to have the peaceful, God-given assurance of salvation.

I humbly suggest that if you don't think I know what I'm talking about that it is YOU who doesn't know what you believe!

"Why are you so quick to jump down peoples throats on certain things – especially if the person is LDS and especially if they don't agree with you."

- Travel by air quite a bit.
- Every week SLC watch 20 to 30 LDS missionaries departing into the world.
- Often invited to sit in on their discussions with investigators back home. I listen to what they teach and tell people. It is not the truth nor is it fair.
- When people call the show, I am not going to let them try and paint a picture of Mormonism that is incomplete, misleading, or untrue – like the missionaries do.
- GOING TO FIGHT WITH EVERYTHING TO CUT IT OFF AT THE SOURCE AND SPEAK THE TRUTH.
- This is NOT about my opinion verses the LDS.
- It is about LDS doctrine verses the Word of God.
- AGAIN: DOCTRINE VERSES THE WORD
- Not here to make nice-nice. Here to examine the issues openly.

"Are you still a Mormon? Why the title Born-Again Mormon? If a person is born-again they cannot be a Mormon!"

From our critical Christian friends who just need to grow up. Again, I was born again and I remained LDS . . . (explain)

(I am no longer LDS now).

"What about priesthood authority? At least the Church can lay claim to the right to act in God's name. You have no authority!"

What about your family? Are they still LDS? How do you live together?

All of my family was LDS when I left. In the past two years, all have become Christians. None of them have had their names removed and my wife still participates in the LDS primary with her mother.

When they saw me change for the better, they wanted what I had.

What is a good Church I can go to in the (blank) area?

Our website at www.bornagainmormon.com has a list of recommended churches in your area.

Explain the Trinity.

When people begin to see Mormon doctrine for what it is, there are usually four areas they have trouble reconciling in their heads and hearts.

The first is the LDS doctrine of a pre-existence.
The second is the biblical teaching of a literal hell.
And the third is the unbiblical concept of eternal families.
And the fourth is the trinity.

I cannot explain the trinity, because I do not know God fully.
I can explain that I am monotheistic and that I reject polytheism.
I can explain that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are God.
I can show you a diagram that might help illustrate the Trinity:
(Diagram)
And I can say this: The preconceived, mind-bending teachings you have had about a pre-existence, no hell, the trinity, and eternal families will fade into an absurd oblivion as you are reborn and as you read and study the Word with the new eyes God gives you.

“Why don’t you ever go to the Bible and read scriptures to defend your positions with verses?”

A couple of reasons.

First I understand things in terms of large concepts after having taken the components of it into consideration. This is how the Lord has created me.

When I read, my brain – for some reason – takes everything in, digests it, and formats it into a file of truth or a file of error. I can tell if something “fits” one paradigm or not.

(Example of book – new Christian but it is consistent with what Bible teachers support. Why? I understand things conceptually.)

Another reason I don't use a specific verse strategy is because by pulling out single verses in an audience that doesn't understand the context, I am not doing the Word justice. And it's almost a waste of time.

And finally, single verse quotes lead to bashing, which I don't want to do.

My purpose and calling is to share the Word – that's it.

NOT to convert.

NOT to win a bash.

NOT to prove I know more and can out joust a caller.

It is to share God's truth relative to the doctrines of Mormonism. PERIOD!

“What do you think of the Law of Tithing?”

Breaking my rule not to use specific verses, Galatians 2:19 says : “For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.”

The New Testament only speaks of giving hilariously, cheerfully, from the heart. Tithing is an O.T. concept. It is legalistic and binds the hearts of those who attempt to live under it.

2nd Corinthians 9:7 Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.

2Co 9:7 Every man <hekastos> according as <kathos> he purposeth <proaireomai> in his heart <kardia>, so let him give; not <me> grudgingly <ek> <lupe>, or <e> of <ek> necessity <anagke>: for <gar> God <theos> **loveth <agapao> a cheerful <hilaros>** giver <dotes>.

Tithing places everyone back under the law. Christians are not under the law. They have liberty in Christ. And usually Christians give more than the required 10% when they truly abide in Christ. Truly, they give it all.

“Do you believe in prophets today? Why or why not?”

Act 2:17 And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams.

Mt 21:33 ¶ Hear another parable: There was a certain householder, which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country: And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it. And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. Again, he sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them likewise. But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son.

OT = Prophet recorded 200 times
NT= Prophet recorded 17

“Do I have to go to church to be saved?”

No. But you'll want to go once you are.

“What role do works play in Christianity?”

People know our faith by our works. Works are vital to any and every committed Christian.

“I know Joseph Smith was a true and living prophet.”

How can you know something unless you examine it? I can say I know that the moon is really really really made of swiss cheese but what are the facts?

What do the facts say about the moon and its make-up?

There is a lot of information out and about Joseph Smith and the doctrines he created.

Before you tell me you know he was a true prophet, put things in proper spiritual order:

Go to the Lord and ask to be spiritually born-again.
Study the Bible through and through for a few years.
Read all the trustworthy information you can about Joseph Smith.
Then read all the doctrinal information he created.
Compare it with the Word of God.

Then you tell me you know he was a true prophet.

“Are people saved by faith, grace, God, Jesus, works, belief or a combination of these?”

Christians are saved by the blood of Jesus. They are saved by God’s Grace by their faith in His shed blood for sins.

“Why do you say Mormons are sinful people?”

All people are sinful. You are only not a sinner if you have not sinned. Inward sins are possibly of greater strength than apparent.

“Is baptism necessary for salvation?”

No.

“Do you obey the Sabbath-day?”

I can’t because I am not Jewish. (Expound)

“What Church do you go to now that you left the Church?”

All over. I spy on the LDS church sometimes, attend Calvary at times, and others.

“Do you ever have doubts about having left the Church?”

Yes. But understand those doubts are culturally tied. I miss the ward family environment. It’s tough to find that kind of commraderie in a lot of Christian churches. I also miss many of my friends and family.

I’ve a younger brother who I sort of mentored up through his young life. Nothing much today.

Many many friends abandoned me completely.

But doctrinally, I don’t miss or question anything I’ve done. I have a relationship with Jesus that is more rewarding in an hour than 40 years as a LDS.

Doctrinally, it was like being released from prison and winning the lottery all on the same day.

Do you have beliefs left over from Mormonism that are not part of Christianity?

I actually enjoy many of the legalistic approaches the church takes when it comes to living. I don’t agree with them when it comes to salvation and find

them tools to force people into happiness models but I don't mind the idea of abstaining from tobacco, alcohol, or coffee. I mean, it makes some good sense.

“Do you drink alcohol? What do you think of the Word of Wisdom? Do you think it was inspired?”

I do not drink but have nothing against it even though most Christians do. I think drinking causes a lot of pain and misery in today's world.

“Why do you dress and look the way you do with your hair and all?”

I am a liberal artist-type at heart. I am free-wheeling and a tad bit of a rebel. I have been since birth. The Lord uses me as I am, and every now and again gets me to straighten up a bit – in my heart. He created me and likes the combination of gifts and opinions He's formed me with. So I just need to worry about my standing with Him and not anything else. My “style” or lack thereof is what I am comfortable in.

“How do get through to my LDS friend or family member?”

Love them as Jesus would love them, set an example of someone who rejoices in Jesus. Be patient. Pray. Bless them in Jesus name.

Do you see R-rated movies?

I see anything that I am interested in seeing and I am interested in seeing good films that have value. I can't imagine leaving this earth in this day and age not having seen films like Braveheart, Schindler's List, The Passion of the Christ, or other great R rated films.

Then again, I can't imagine spending a single minute in movies that do nothing for the mind like, The Fast and the Furious, or You Got Served, or Scary Movie 3.

Who sings on at the start of the show? What are the names of the songs?

Johnny Cash sings both songs. The open is with U2 and is called The Wanderer and the last is a remake of a Soundgarden song called, Rusty Cage.

How much money do you make doing the show?

I make no money doing the show. I sleep in an office building the nights I am here and I am picked up by friends at the airport.

My airfare is picked-up by a Church I attend in California.

We give 2/3rds of our books away.

I pay out of pocket to do the show.

What is your profession?

I was a stockbroker for 12 or so years. I also designed a clothing line in Sri Lanka for a few years and also failed in a start-up internet business. I've always been a writer (or sorts) and never cared deeply about a profession but have instead spent most of my life trying to acquire knowledge, insight, and information about religion, philosophy, and some literature.

Did you ever get a patriarchal blessing? What do you think of them?

I did get a patriarchal blessing at 17 years of age. (Opinion)

If you could change the Church today, what would you change? OR "In your opinion, what is missing in Mormonism today?"

If the LDS church isn't true, what Church is?

No Church is true – only God is true. We rely on Him and Him alone and gather together in His name doing the best we can.