Four Apologetic Conversations

1) With academics, who ask:
   “What do you believe and why?”
Maxwell Institute Podcasts

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Four Apologetic Conversations

1) With academics, who ask:
   “What do you believe and why?”

   Be better informed
   Learn the language
   Listen to others
   Remember the Golden Rule
Four Apologetic Conversations

2) With critics, who ask: “How can you believe that?”
Four Apologetic Conversations

2) With critics, who ask:
   “How can you believe that?”

Assume good faith
Watch your rhetoric
Own up to problems
Be willing to reconsider
Check theological assumptions
Remember the Golden Rule
Four Apologetic Conversations

3) With faithful members, who ask: “Aren’t our beliefs great?”
UNDERSTANDING THE BOOK OF MORMON

A READER'S GUIDE

GRANT HARDY
18.1—5: The Loro’s visit to Abraham and Sarah. 1. The oaks of Mamre, see 12.6—8; 13.18. 2–8: A description of ideal hospitality of Abraham parallel to that of Lot in 19.1–10. This motif of slyly divine visitors is widespread in folklore. The relation between these three visitors and the Loro 4x 5  is unclear. The narrative fluidly shifts from speaking of them as a group (e.g., v. 9) to having “the Loro” speak alone (e.g., v. 12; cf. v. 18). Later materials in v. 25 and 19.1 conceive of “the Loro” as one of the three angels (see 16.11), though this is not specified in the preceding narrative (“one” in the NRSV of v. 10 is a translator’s addition). 9–15: The Lor’s utterance of Sarah’s laughter (cf. 17.17) to stress the incredulity of God’s promise of a son (eventually Isaac, 21.1–5). 11: Caused . . . after the manner of women; a circumlocution for menopause. 12: Isaac’s name means “He [God] laughs.” and other traditions develop the link with laughter as well (21.4–5; 21.6–8; 28.4–5). 18.16–12: Abraham’s intercession for Sodom and Gomorrah, 17–19: This first speech by the Loro stresses that he speaks to Abraham because he chose him to teach his household the righteousness of righteousness. In vv. 22–23: the Loro will model such righteousness in his responsiveness to Abraham. See 12.20, 22–23. This second speech by the Loro echoes his decision at Babel to go down and see what was going on there (11.5; cf. divine self-reflection in 3.22; 6.3–5; 11.6–7). Unlike vv. 17–19, this speech suggests that the Loro has not yet
their cry shall go, even according to the simpleness of their words. 23Because of their faith their words shall proceed forth out of my mouth unto their brethren who are the fruit of thy loins; and the weakness of their words will I make strong in their faith, unto the remembering of my covenant which I made unto thy fathers.

24And now, behold, my son Joseph, after this manner did my father of old prophesy. 25Wherefore, because of this covenant thou art blessed; for thy seed shall not be destroyed, for they shall hearken unto the words of the book. 26And there shall rise up one mighty among them, who shall do much good, both in word and in deed, being an instrument in the hands of God, with exceeding faith, to work mighty wonders, and do that thing which is great in the sight of God, unto the bringing to pass much restoration unto the House of Israel, and unto the seed of thy brethren. 27And now, blessed art thou, Joseph. Behold, thou art little; wherefore hearken unto the words of thy brother, Nephi, and it shall be done unto thee even according to the words which I have spoken. Remember the words of thy dying father. Amen." 4

And now, I, Nephi, speak concerning the prophecies of which my father hath spoken, concerning Joseph, who was carried into Egypt. 2For behold, he truly prophesied concerning all his seed. And the prophecies which he wrote, there are not many greater. And he prophesied concerning us, and our future generations; and they are written upon the Plates of Brass.

A Blessing on the Children of Laman, and Lemuel

3Wherefore, after my father had made an end of speaking concerning the prophecies of Joseph, he called the children of Laman his sons and his daughters, and said unto them, "Behold, my sons and my daughters, who are the sons and the daughters of my firstborn, I would that ye should give ear unto my words. 4For the Lord God hath said that:

1'Inasmuch as ye shall keep my commandments
ye shall prosper in the land;
and inasmuch as ye will not keep my commandments
ye shall be cut off from my presence.' 6

3But behold, my sons and my daughters, I cannot go down to my grave save I should leave a blessing upon you; for behold, I know that if ye are brought up in the way ye should go ye will not depart from it. 4Wherefore, if ye are cursed, behold, I leave my blessing upon you, that the cursing may be taken from you

and be answered upon the heads of your parents. 7Wherefore, because of my blessing the Lord God will not suffer that ye shall perish; wherefore, he will be merciful unto you and unto your seed forever."

8And it came to pass that after my father had made an end of speaking to the sons and daughters of Laman, he caused the sons and daughters of Lemuel to be brought before him. 9And he spake unto them, saying, "Behold, my sons and my daughters, who are the sons and the daughters of my second son; behold I leave unto you the same blessing I left unto the sons and daughters of Laman; wherefore, thou shalt not utterly be destroyed; but in the end thy seed shall be blessed."

Lehi's Final Blessings and Death

10And it came to pass that when my father had made an end of speaking unto them, behold, he spake unto the sons of Ishmael, yea, and even all his household. 11And after he had made an end of speaking unto them, he spake unto Sam, saying, "Blessed art thou, and thy seed; for thou shalt inherit the land like unto thy brother Nephi. And thy seed shall be numbered with his seed; and thou shalt be even like unto thy brother, and thy seed like unto his seed; and thou shalt be blessed in all thy days." 12And it came to pass after my father, Lehi, had spoken unto all his household, according to the feelings of his heart and the Spirit of the Lord which was in him, he waxed old. And it came to pass that he died, and was buried.

[End of Lehi's Teachings: 2 Nephi 1:1-4:12]

The Psalm of Nephi

13And it came to pass that not many days after his death, Laman and Lemuel and the sons of Ishmael were angry with me because of the admonitions of the Lord. 14For I, Nephi, was constrained to speak unto them, according to his word; for I had spoken many things unto them, and also my father, before his death; many of which sayings are written upon mine other plates; for a more history part are written upon mine other plates.

15And upon these I write the things of my soul, and many of the scriptures which are engraven upon the Plates of Brass.

For my soul delighteth in the scriptures,
and my heart pondereth them,
and writeth them for the learning and the profit of my children.

16Behold, my soul delighteth in the things of the Lord;
and my heart pondereth continually upon the things which I have seen
and heard.
Four Apologetic Conversations

3) With faithful members, who ask: “Aren’t our beliefs great?”

Celebrate strengths
Provide positive apologetics
Don’t over-claim
Be self-critical
Encourage context and nuance
Remember the Golden Rule
Four Apologetic Conversations

4) With wavering Mormons, who ask: “What do I believe?” or “Can I believe?”
Four Apologetic Conversations

4) With wavering Mormons, who ask:
   “What do I believe?” or “Can I believe?”

   Be patient; be fair
   Address concerns
   Provide positive apologetics
   Be aware of “crises of expectations”
   Remember the Golden Rule
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   “How can you believe that?”

3) With faithful members, who ask:
   “Aren’t our beliefs great?”

4) With wavering Mormons, who ask:
   “What do I believe?” or “Can I believe?”
“Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.”

1 Peter 3:15 (NIV)
Elder Perry, October Conference, 2011
You're Invited

Practice
Maxwell Institute Podcast Episodes

#16 – Peter Enns

#33 – Maria Dakake
    Joseph Lumbard

# 38 – N. T. Wright

# 42 – Julia Watts Belser
Practice

Prepare
“Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.”

1 Peter 3:15

“How is being a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints working for you?”
Less of this
More of this