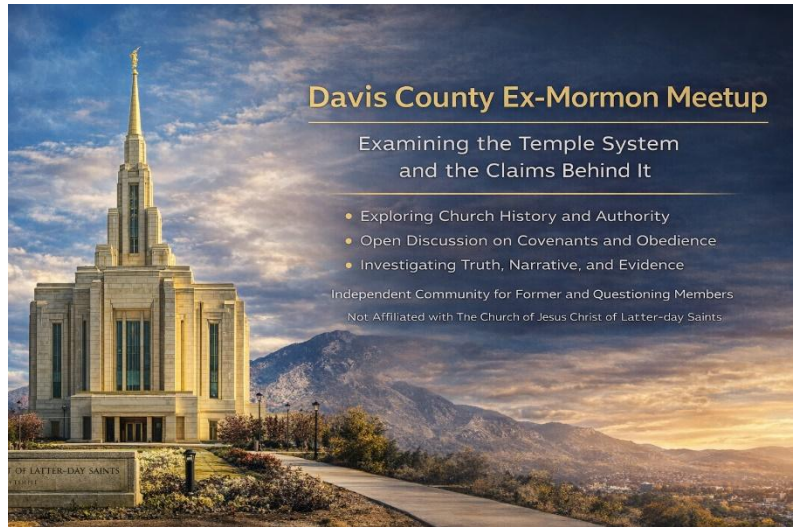


**Davis County Ex-Mormon meetup Sunday Mar 15, 2026, 2:30 AM at Smiths Marketplace, 1370 W 200 N, Kaysville, UT 84037.** Entering Smith's turn right, take the up staircase on the right side of Starbucks, turn right on the 2nd floor at the top of the stairs, take 10 strides passing the lockers to the conference room entrance on the right. **Contact:** Francis 'Nelson' Henderson, 858-668-6943, [francisnh12@gmail.com](mailto:francisnh12@gmail.com)

[All links from Invitations.](#) (374 Members)

**Our purposes: First,** we uncover the fallacies, deception, and misinformation employed by the LDS Church to gain control over our lives.

**Secondly,** when leaving Mormonism, people often find that they no longer have community or support. Our goal is to provide support for each other and to build community. So, whether you are a member, or left the church recently, or have been out for years, or were never Mormon but are looking for community, come and socialize with us and share your story.



We assist anyone wishing to resign their Church membership or post their own Exit Statement. Recommend [www.wasmormon.org](http://www.wasmormon.org).

“[The Grand Deception](#)” Art Carpenter’s new comparison, line-by-line, teachings of the King James Version of the New Testament against LDS doctrines.” Note: Art’s work is always found here: [All links from Invitations Full Exit Statement](#) of Francis ‘Nelson’ Henderson

**Invitation: [A God of Forgiveness \(Luke’s Gospel\) vs. Atonement \(Hebrew Sacrifice: Matthew, Mark\)](#)**

Video: [Jesus' Message Unpacked: Forgiveness vs. Atonement](#)

**Luke’s gospel stands as an early attempt to break this same authoritarian pattern: rejecting fear and punishment as the path to goodness making Forgiveness instead of Atonement<sup>1</sup> as the path to freedom.**

Luke is one *example of dissent within Christianity*, If there were ever proof that Christianity inherited something **morally corrosive from its Hebrew roots**, it is the idea that God requires blood to forgive. Ancient Israelite religion ritualized slaughter: bulls, goats, and lambs bled out on altars to “atone” for the people’s sins. The very notion assumes that someone, or something, must suffer for another’s guilt. But that is precisely what any sane human legal system forbids: no one may be punished for the crimes of another. Justice cannot be transferred. Guilt cannot be transferred. It is personal by definition.

And yet later Christianity made this primitive logic the center of its theology: Jesus supposedly died as a substitute, punished for humanity’s sins. This is not justice; it is a theologically sanctioned miscarriage of justice. Calling the atonement “infinite” does not solve the moral problem; it only cloaks injustice in grandeur. A crime does not become just because it is infinite.

<sup>1</sup> [Forgiveness vs Atonement](#), Ancient Hebrews believed God required blood Sacrifice, By Francis N Henderson, Oct 2025

Luke's Gospel quietly but decisively resists this entire Atonement paradigm<sup>2</sup>. For example, Mark has Jesus say the Son of Man came "to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45), Luke retells the scene (Luke 22:24–27) and removes the ransom clause altogether. Where Matthew has Jesus say at the Last Supper "this is my blood ... for the forgiveness of sins" (Matt. 26:28), Luke's version (Luke 22:19–20) omits that explanatory phrase.



By contrast, a loving parent's affection is steady even when the child fails. The child feels safe to try again, to learn, and to grow into goodness. Love does not excuse wrongdoing, but it **creates the trust that makes real change possible**.

This is the key: **coerced obedience can never produce morality**. True goodness must be chosen, not forced. Love must be given, not bought. Fear controls behavior, but only love can change the heart.

This is the revolutionary idea Luke's gospel proclaims, and which Joseph Smith never understood.

In contrast, atonement theology teaches that **God cannot forgive until someone suffers enough to "pay" for sin**. It makes God a cosmic accountant who trades blood for mercy, **ruling through fear instead of love**. It teaches that justice is not moral growth but debt collection.

This is upside down. **Fear-driven obedience erases freedom and destroys morality. Love-driven forgiveness restores freedom and makes morality possible**.

### [Luke's Theology of Forgiveness](#)

New Testament scholars have observed that the Gospel of Luke preserves an early strand of the Jesus tradition in which forgiveness is granted directly by God without the necessity of an atoning sacrifice. While some New Testament writings, particularly the epistles attributed to Paul, interpret the death of Jesus primarily through the language of sacrificial atonement, Luke frequently emphasizes forgiveness, repentance, and divine mercy without reference to ritual sacrifice. In Luke's narrative, reconciliation with God is repeatedly portrayed as the result of repentance and forgiveness rather than the payment of a sacrificial debt.

The moral vision attributed to Jesus in the Gospel of Luke stands in striking contrast to later religious systems built on ritual sacrifice and institutional obedience. The religious world of the Hebrew Bible centered on the Temple in Jerusalem, where reconciliation with God was symbolized through animal sacrifice and priestly mediation. Yet the Jesus portrayed in Luke repeatedly redirects attention away from sacrifice and toward forgiveness, compassion, and the transformation of the human heart.

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<sup>2</sup> **Luke's God of Mercy vs. Atonement's God of Fear.** Luke's Jesus forgives without payment.

- The prodigal son is embraced *before* repentance.
- The thief on the cross is promised paradise while still guilty.
- The sinful woman is forgiven without sacrifice.

Luke's Jesus dies not to *purchase* forgiveness but because he *embodied* it — and human powers killed him for it.

Luke preserves some of the clearest expressions of this ethic. In the parable of the **Parable of the Good Samaritan**, moral responsibility is shown not through religious status but through simple human compassion. In the story of the **Parable of the Prodigal Son**, forgiveness is granted freely by a loving father without any ritual sacrifice at all. Even at the moment of execution, Luke portrays Jesus saying, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.” In Luke’s narrative, reconciliation with God is not achieved through blood or priesthood authority but through forgiveness and the renewal of conscience.

This vision differs sharply from later theological systems that place heavy emphasis on institutional authority, ritual obedience, and the necessity of sacrificial atonement. When religion becomes centered on obedience to authority rather than the development of moral conscience, the spirit of Luke’s teaching is easily lost. The ethical message of forgiveness and personal responsibility is replaced with systems that demand loyalty to institutions claiming divine authority.

For individuals who conclude that such systems no longer align with their conscience, stepping away from institutional control is not a rejection of moral responsibility. On the contrary, it may represent a return to the deeper ethical principle that Luke repeatedly emphasizes that genuine spirituality is expressed through compassion, forgiveness, and the free exercise of conscience rather than through unquestioning obedience to religious authority.

There is a widely discussed theory among modern New Testament scholars that Luke may have intentionally softened or corrected some of the harsher sacrificial themes that appear in other parts of the New Testament. That scholarly debate gives me an even stronger intellectual foundation for the forgiveness-versus-atonement argument I believe is closer to the nature of the God we seek to understand.

The deeper idea is that we forgive our own children of their mistakes expresses a wholesome preference for forgiveness over sacrificial punishment. It reflects **something intrinsically good about most human moral intuition.**

### Joseph Smith’s Blindness to Luke’s Ethic

**Joseph Smith never grasped this difference.** When he “retranslated” Luke in his *Joseph Smith Translation*, he did not amplify Luke’s ethic of mercy, he erased it. He shows no sign of realizing that forgiveness must come before repentance or that **love must be unconditional to be real.** Instead, Smith recasts God as bound by law, contracts, priesthood keys, and blood.

The ultimate question is not merely whether particular historical claims about Joseph Smith are correct or incorrect. The deeper question concerns the kind of religion worthy of devotion. Religions built on obedience to authority demand loyalty over conscience, while the moral vision attributed to Jesus in the Gospel of **Luke** repeatedly points in another direction, toward compassion, forgiveness, and personal moral responsibility. When the Church claims authority over Truth, time, and conscience, individuals must eventually decide whether that authority is justified. For many thoughtful people, examining the historical evidence and reflecting on the ethical consequences leads to a simple conclusion: that spiritual integrity is better preserved by following one’s conscience freely than by submitting it to institutional control. Leaving under such circumstances is not a rejection of moral responsibility; it is an affirmation that conscience, compassion, and truth must ultimately stand above obedience to any human authority.



Luke's Prodigal Son is forgiven without Atonement. So too may a loving God.