

WHY I LEFT THE MORMON CHURCH

<http://seektheoldpaths.com/pdf/stop/stop114.pdf>

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Seldom is anyone led out of a denomination or religious affiliation quickly and without contemplation. Most of the time it involves a process in which one begins to question certain aspects, arriving at a conclusion and eventually leading to a final decision. It was no different for me.

As a youth growing up in Salt Lake City, Utah, I was excited to be part of something my mother and those adults surrounding me encouraged. I was baptized at the age of eight years old. I became a Deacon at the age of twelve and received the Aaronic Priesthood. "Passing the Sacrament" (assisting on the Lord's table) was an honor. Every first Sunday of the month was the tradition of "Fast Sunday" in which we would go without two meals that day. It was also the worship service in which members had the opportunity to stand in front of the congregation and "bare their testimony," or give an account of what they were thankful for and what God had done in their lives.

I was baptized for the dead. Eventually, I had the privilege of baptizing my younger brother. Social gatherings were a regular occurrence. It was a time of anticipating the age when we would be able to participate in a two-year mission, unknown where we would go until assigned by Church headquarters. Then things began to change.

Questions I had about different subjects and topics were answered with inconclusive, ambiguous, or simply unsatisfying replies. Some of it was kept concealed. I did not understand why others were not questioning the same matters or just accepted a vague response from teachers and the Bishop. Soon, the doubt set in as the more I studied and sought clarification, the more I felt dis-

connected. At the same time, I played the part of the rebellious teenager and about the age of twenty, I finally decided it was time to leave.

Through the course of events, I lost the friendship of some, while simply falling out of touch with others. Some attempted (unsuccessfully) to lure me back. There was never an angry criticism by anyone, nor was there a hostile attitude (at least to me). They simply stopped communicating. When I first started questioning their faith, I was eighteen years old and ready to graduate high school. That same summer I left the state to attend a trade school that padded the resentment felt. Around the same time, I had some religious friends who were not members of the Lord's church but were a source to discuss what I was feeling and questioning.

My mother took it the hardest. She questioned herself as to why she did not do an adequate job raising me. Our discussions would often morph into arguments. Being young and inexperienced, trying to reason through a subject as delicate as this, I see that my approach probably could have been better. However, I knew Mormonism would no longer be a part of my life. After leaving Mormonism, there were occasions where I was either non-religious altogether or grasping for some form of Bible understanding of which to make sense.

Several years passed before I started attending an Independent Baptist Church. While there, I started dating a girl whose uncle was a member of the Lord's church. At first I was apprehensive but started questioning the church of Christ. He invited us to attend a service. The obvious exclusion of

musical instruments caught my attention. When I started to ask questions, he stopped me and asked if I would be willing to read the book of Acts. He advised me to read it without anyone's outside thoughts or commentary and to just compare it to what I had been hearing. It was astounding how easy it was to comprehend and how different it was to everything I had ever been taught.

It was not too long after that I was baptized into Christ. The relationship with the girl did not work out and I soon moved to California, working as a Special Makeup Effects artist in film, television and theater. It was a field of which I loved and worked in for years. While there, I had an experience that caused me to reevaluate my priorities. I was working on a film called "Passion of the Christ" directed by Mel Gibson when I was involved in several discussions with other crew members. Most of them had a confused understanding about the life of Christ and it was at that point when it became evident how lost those in the world could be, especially about a subject most Christians consider so fundamental.

My wife and I had ties to the Memphis School of Preaching through friends and acquaintances, but being a Gospel preacher was still not being contemplated. We knew Keith Mosher, who once said something to me that made no sense at the time: "Do not be a preacher unless you absolutely have to." At first, I thought it was a poor way of trying to talk me into attending the school (in my opinion), but after pondering it, I started to realize how profound it was. I had to preach. My wife was supportive when approaching her, almost to the point that she knew this was the decision I would make but did not say anything until I was ready. She saw something I did not.

For a long time, I had animosity towards the Mormon faith. In my mind, if that was not the true church, then nothing could be, which is a common response from those who

have left. Several years passed before I was finally at a place in my life where I could discuss my background without allowing emotions to direct the conversation.

The upcoming series of articles will explain much of what was studied from living as a member of the Mormon religion. It will also provide a further inspection of what they teach on various issues. Many have questions and inquiries about something they hear or read and seek clarification. Some are simply curious.

Keep in mind that when approaching Mormonism and studying with its members, it is essential to make them define their terms. While some of their responses and teaching may appear to be the same as how the Bible words it, their definition may be considerably different.

THE "ARTICLES OF FAITH"

The **Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints** is driven largely by their "Articles of Faith" — a creed of thirteen statements that outline their fundamental beliefs. Youths were encouraged to memorize them. Adults were encouraged to teach them. Addressing each one will be the objective of this series.

The Articles of Faith are:

1. We believe in God the Eternal Father, and in His Son Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost.
2. We believe that men will be punished for their own sins and not for Adam's transgression.
3. We believe that through the Atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved, by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel.
4. We believe that the first principles and ordinances of the Gospel are: first, Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; second, Repentance; third, Baptism by immersion for the remission of sins; fourth, Laying on

- of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost.
5. We believe that a man must be called of God, by prophecy, and by the laying on of hands by those who are in authority, to preach the Gospel and administer in the ordinances thereof.
 6. We believe in the same organization that existed in the Primitive Church, namely, apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers, evangelists, and so forth.
 7. We believe in the gift of tongues, prophecy, revelation, visions, healing, interpretation of tongues, and so forth.
 8. We believe the Bible to be the word of God as far as it is translated correctly; we also believe the Book of Mormon to be the word of God.
 9. We believe all that God has revealed, all that He does now reveal, and we believe that He will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God.
 10. We believe in the literal gathering of Israel and in the restoration of the Ten Tribes; that Zion (the New Jerusalem) will be built upon the American continent; that Christ will reign personally upon the earth; and, that the earth will be renewed and receive its paradisiacal glory.
 11. We claim the privilege of worshipping Almighty God according to the dictates of our own conscience, and allow all men the same privilege, let them worship how, where, or what they may.
 12. We believe in being subject to kings, presidents, rulers, and magistrates, in obeying, honoring, and sustaining the law.
 13. We believe in being honest, true, chaste, benevolent, virtuous, and in doing good to all men; indeed, we may say that we follow the admonition of Paul — We believe all things, we hope all things, we have endured many things, and hope to be able to endure all things. If there is

anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy, we seek after these things.

It is with prayer and hope that the upcoming examination of these articles of faith will be able to reach not only those who may be studying with Mormons, but those in the Mormon faith themselves who may be struggling with answers or are curious as to why someone would choose to leave.

<http://seektheoldpaths.com/pdf/stop/stop214.pdf#page=4>

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints is driven largely by a creed of thirteen “Articles of Faith.” Every Mormon is encouraged to memorize and teach them. We want to examine each one in light of the Bible, God’s eternal truth. Jesus said, *“IF ye continue in my word, THEN are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free”* (John 8:31-32).

FIRST ARTICLE OF FAITH

We believe in God the Eternal Father, and in His Son Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost.

This was one of the principal teachings that were instrumental in causing me to doubt the Mormon faith. On the surface it seems harmless, but once they begin to define their terms, there are obvious differences from what the Bible teaches.

Mormons state that they believe God the Father is eternal, but is that really what they believe?

Joseph Smith once stated,

God himself was once as we are now, and is an exalted man...We

have imagined and supposed that God was God from all eternity. I will refute that idea, and will take away and do away the veil, so that you may see (*Smith*).

Lorenzo Snow, who served as Mormon Prophet from 1898-1901, coined the phrase “*As man is, God once was; as God is, man may become.*”

Orson Pratt, an original member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said, “*If we should take a million of worlds like this and number their particles, we should find that there are more Gods than there are particles of matter in those worlds*” (Pratt). This begs the question that if God is not eternal, who is the first God? Isaiah wrote, “...before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I, even I, am the LORD; and beside me there is no saviour” (Isa. 43:10-11). Pratt attempted to explain this by writing, “*One world has a personal God or Father, and the inhabitants thereof worship the attributes of that God, another world has another, and they worship His attributes, and besides Him there is not other; and when they worship Him they are at the same time worshipping the same attributes that dwell in all the personal Gods who fill immensity*” (Pratt). What he fails to concede is the rest of Isaiah’s words: “...I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God...Is there a God beside me? yea, there is no God; I know not any” (Isa. 44:6,8). If God were a man, He would know other gods, yet in His omnipotence and omniscience, He does not acknowledge any other, period.

Mormonism also falls short in identifying the nature of the Father and the Son. Smith wrote, “*The Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man’s; the Son also; but the Holy Ghost has not a body of flesh and bones, but is a personage of Spirit. Were it not so, the Holy Ghost could not dwell in us*” (Doctrines & Covenants 130:22). Like-

wise, this is how they were described in Smith’s “first vision.” However, the Bible describes the Father and Son differently. Jesus said, “God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24). After his resurrection, Jesus explained to His disciples that a spirit does not have flesh and bones (Luke 24:37-39).

Furthermore, Mormonism teaches that Jesus was not always with God the Father, but was created and then became a part of the Godhead, obtaining a heavenly body. He was the only person on earth to be born of a mortal mother and immortal father. But John clarifies, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us...” (John 1:1,14). The Word (Jesus) was God and with God for all time and then became flesh, showing that He was not always in physical form. Not only that, but He is the Creator, having created all things (John 1:2-3). Paul also identifies Jesus as the Creator: “For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible...And He is before all things, and by Him all things consist” (Col. 1:16-17).

The first line of the Mormon sacramental prayer reads, “Oh God the eternal Father...” How can God be finite and infinite at the same time? If one cannot distinctly understand the nature of the Godhead, how can anything else be viable?

Works Cited

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Smith, Joseph Fielding Smith. *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*. 1838.

SECOND ARTICLE OF FAITH

The second listed belief in the Mormon Articles of Faith written by Joseph Smith states,

We believe that men will be punished for their own sins and not for Adam's transgression.

On the surface, this may seem like an appropriate principle. However, further study will reveal that it is rather ironic based on how the Mormon Church views dealing with sin and particularly their teaching of a proxy salvation.

They impart the idea of what is commonly referred to as *baptism for the dead*. It is the belief that one may be baptized on behalf of another who passed away and did not have the opportunity to be baptized while living in this world. According to their doctrine, some never heard of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Others lived without fully understanding the importance of the ordinance of baptism. Some were baptized, but by someone without the proper authority to administer it. Mormonism teaches that one must be ordained to be eligible to baptize another.

The description on the main web page of the Mormon Church reads,

Jesus Christ taught that baptism is essential to the salvation of all who have lived on earth (see John 3:5). Many people, however, have died without being baptized. Others were baptized without proper authority. Because God is merciful, He has prepared a way for all people to receive the blessings of baptism. By performing proxy baptisms in behalf of those who have died, Church members offer these blessings to deceased ancestors. Individuals can

then choose to accept or reject what has been done in their behalf (www.lds.org).

As a young man in the LDS faith, it was an honor and privilege to participate in this ritual. Every Mormon temple contains a baptismal pool surrounded by twelve statues of oxen representing the twelve tribes of Israel. This is where the procedure takes place. Years ago, the person getting immersed would meet an older male who was "ordained" in the pool. A computer monitor was placed next to it with a list of numerous names. They would audibly state that they baptize the young man on behalf of a name on the screen "in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost for the remission of their sins" and immediately submerge them. As soon as they brought us up they straightway went on to the next name. It happened quickly and gave the participant just enough time to catch their breath for the next name. The whole routine was somewhat repetitive, as we would be immersed forty times or so for forty people who were supposedly deceased.

Mormons are careful to inform that when baptism for the dead is performed, those deceased are not being baptized into the Mormon Church against their will. Each person who has left this life still has the right to choose on the other side. Their salvation is still contingent on whether or not they accept and follow Christ while residing in the "spirit world."

According to Mormon teaching, the New Testament validates baptism for the dead and was restored with the establishment of the *Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints*. They claim the Apostle Paul was doing it when he said, "Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead" (1 Cor. 15:29)? What needs to be considered is the context of the

passage. If one carefully examines the entire chapter, Paul is describing the resurrection process. Notice the middle questions in verse 29: If the dead rise not at all, why be baptized? If there is no resurrection, what is the point of being baptized?

First, it must be understood who needs to be baptized, and why. Baptism is for the condemned (Mark 16:16; Rom. 6:23). It is personal for each individual. The one who sins is the one who must be baptized in order to take care of it. If the wages of sin is death, something must be done consciously on an individual's part to take care of that sin. Baptism is that commandment (Act 2:38; 22:16; 1 Peter 3:21). The Bible teaches man is responsible for his own sins (Ezek. 18:20). Therefore if man is "punished for his own sins" according to the Mormon article of faith, then how could anyone else be able to atone for them? Paul writes, "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, *work out your own salvation* [emphasis, NF] with fear and trembling" (Phil. 2:12). The inspired writer pens, "...it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Heb. 9:27). Death seals a person's fate.

It must also not be overlooked that man is held accountable for himself. Each person must *hear* for himself (Rom. 10:17). Each person must *believe/obey* for himself (John 8:24). Each person must *repent* of his own sins (Act 2:38). Each person must *confess* Christ himself (Matt. 10:32-33). None of these can be done on behalf of another. Neither can anyone be *baptized* for someone else.

Jesus made it clear in His account of the rich man and Lazarus that their destination was final. The Savior states, "And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf *fixed*: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence" (Luke

16:26). There was not so much as even a hint that someone still living could come to the rescue of the rich man. No living person can make preparations for those who are dead in order to escape eternal torment.

Jesus affirms, "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left" (Matt. 25:31-33).

The Lord proclaims, "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; *they that have done good*, unto the resurrection of life; and *they that have done evil*, unto the resurrection of damnation" (John 5:28-29).

Paul confirms, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that *every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad*" (2 Cor. 5:10).

Therefore, to have Mormonism teach that man is punished for his own sins, yet believe in a proxy redemption, is a contradiction in principle. One cannot have a foot in both camps. It is important for all to realize that the decisions made in this life will determine where the next one is served.

<http://seektheoldpaths.com/pdf/stop/stop314.pdf#page=6>

THIRD ARTICLE OF FAITH

We believe that through the Atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved, by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel.

As with any religious statement, one

ought to approach it with the intention of investigating its substance and have the source define their terms. To which laws and ordinances are they referring? Which gospel are they endorsing?

Paul's inspired writing should be considered and weighed when evaluating such claims as their third article of faith. He opens his letter to the Galatians by confirming himself *"an apostle, not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father..."* (Gal. 1:1). In other words, what he is about to tell them does not come from himself, but the One who is over him. Judaizers at that time had come in leading Christians astray. They wished to bind the Law of Moses on converts to Christ. This was a grievous problem in the first century.

One of the purposes of Paul's letter was to show the sufficiency of the Gospel for man's salvation. He continues by offering a loving salutation as he always did while clarifying the authority and reason for Christ (Gal. 1:3-5). He cared for the brethren and anytime he wrote or spoke it was out of love and wanting the best for them.

Paul turns to the matter at hand by writing, *"I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any [man] preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed"* (Gal. 1:6-9).

Consider the connection between the Gospel, grace, and Christ. The moment they turned to another "gospel" they were removed from the grace of Christ. Paul expected more out of them. The cost of turning to another gospel was to be "accursed" (*anathema*, Gk.). This is a much stronger

word than the English translation and literally means "devoted to destruction." When one tampers with God's word they will lose their soul. Later in the letter he writes, *"O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh? Have ye suffered so many things in vain? if [it be] yet in vain"* (Gal. 3:1-4).

John writes, *"Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds"* (2 John 9-11).

In his letter to the Galatians, Paul explains the Gospel that is to be followed by making a comparison. He writes, *"But before faith came, we were kept under the [old] law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus"* (Gal. 3:23-26).

Everyone must follow the Gospel of Christ. Anything other than the Gospel, God's word recorded in the Bible, even if it appears religious, is unacceptable. John warns, *"Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world"* (1 John 4:1).

UNRELIABLE USE OF SCRIPTURE

Careful examination of the Book of

Mormon shows the “laws and ordinances of the[ir] gospel” to be unreliable and contrary (in several areas) to God’s final revealed word (cf. 1 Peter 1:3; John 16:13). Mormon doctrine is not in harmony with the Bible. It is “another gospel” (of a different kind, not the same kind, Gal. 1:6-9). It is not the Gospel revealed in the New Testament.

The Book of Mormon records,

And because my words shall hiss forth...many of the Gentiles shall say: **A Bible! A Bible! We have got a Bible, and there cannot be any more Bible** [emphasis added, nf]. But thus saith the Lord God: O fools, they shall have a Bible; and it shall proceed forth from the Jews, mine ancient covenant people. And what thank they the Jews for the Bible which they receive from them? Yea, what do the Gentiles mean? Do they remember the travails, and the labors, and the pains of the Jews, and their diligence unto me, in bringing forth salvation unto the Gentiles?... Thou fool, that shall say: **A Bible, we have got a Bible, and we need no more Bible. Have ye obtained a Bible save it were by the Jews? Know ye not that there are more nations than one? Know ye not that I, the Lord your God, have created all men, and that I remember those who are upon the isles of the sea; and that I rule in the heavens above and in the earth beneath; and I bring forth my word unto the children of men, yea, even upon all the nations of the earth? Wherefore murmur ye, because that ye shall receive more of my word? Know ye not that the testimony of two nations is a witness unto you that I am God, that I remember one nation like**

unto another? Wherefore, I speak the same words unto one nation like unto another. And when the two nations shall run together the testimony of the two nations shall run together also. And I do this that I may prove unto many that I am the same yesterday, today, and forever; and that I speak forth my words according to mine own pleasure. And because that I have spoken one word ye need not suppose that I cannot speak another; for my work is not yet finished; neither shall it be until the end of man, neither from that time henceforth and forever. Wherefore, **because that ye have a Bible ye need not suppose that it contains all my words; neither need ye suppose that I have not caused more to be written** (2 Nephi 29:3-4, 6-10).

The problem Joseph Smith faces when writing these words is that he claims Second Nephi was supposedly written 550-545 B.C. There was no “Bible” (New Testament) at that time since it had not yet been written. The reason Smith downplays and minimizes the importance of the Bible is because he did not want emphasis placed on it. The effort of Mormonism is to deter and divert people from the Bible long enough to give the Book of Mormon the spotlight.

UNRELIABLE HISTORY

Mormonism’s “history” of Christians is questionable at best. The Book of Alma reads, “And those who did belong to the church were faithful; yea, all those who were true believers in Christ took upon them, gladly, the name of Christ, or Christians as they were called, because of their belief in Christ” (Alma 46:15).

While this seems adequate on the surface, it is inconsistent with Bible teaching. The Book of Alma supposedly took place in 73 B.C., well over a hundred years before the name “Christian” was given by God. Luke writes, “...*And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch*” (Acts 11:26). There is no mention of Christians in the Old Testament because Jesus the Christ had not yet been born. The disciples were called Christians because they followed the teaching of Christ the Savior. That could not happen until after Jesus lived, died, rose from the dead, the Gospel preached and the church begun. The Book of Mormon either overlooks this fact or deliberately ignores it.

Mormonism also has a skewed history of Christ’s church. Joseph Smith claimed the reason the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints had to be “restored” was because of the Great Apostasy, in which everyone fell away from the truth. James E. Talmage, one of the Mormon Apostles wrote,

The restored Church affirms that a general apostasy developed during and after the apostolic period, and that the primitive Church lost its power, authority, and graces as a divine institution, and degenerated into an earthly organization only. The significance and importance of the great apostasy, as a condition precedent to the re-establishment of the Church in modern times, is obvious. If the alleged apostasy of the primitive Church was not a reality, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is not the divine institution its name proclaims. (Talmage Preface, iii)

Perhaps he should have given more thought of some who were truly inspired by the Holy Spirit before making such a confident assertion. Daniel informs, “*And in*

the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever” (Dan. 2:44). Isaiah writes, “*The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever*” (Isa. 40:8). The Apostle Peter reiterates these words years later by writing, “*For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you*” (1 Peter 1:24-25). Jesus the Christ states, “...*upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it*” (Matt. 16:18, ASV). In the parable of the sower, Jesus said the seed (sown in the hearts of men) is the “*word of God*” (Luke 8:11). As long as that seed exists, the Gospel of Christ is alive and well. That seed, the word of God, always exists because it lives and abides forever (Isa. 40:8; 1 Peter 1:25).

Joseph Smith himself claimed to have read from the book of James (James 1:5), which allegedly led him to pray about which church he should join. Since he had access to the words of the New Testament, he had access to the New Testament church and the Lord’s teaching that guides it. Why not simply adhere to that?

Further, the Mormon Book of Mosiah states, “*They were called the church of God, or the church of Christ, from that time forward. And it came to pass that whosoever was baptized by the power and authority of God was added to his church*” (Mosiah 18:17). Smith asserts that this was written in 145 B.C. However, the church of Christ was not established until the preaching of the Gospel on the day of Pentecost, 50 days after the Lord’s death in 33 A.D. (Acts 2). If the “great apostasy” is true, then the word of

the Lord did not endure.

CONCLUSION

An unstable imparting of Scripture and an edited history of the church causes the laws and ordinances of the gospel to which Mormons refer to be fraudulent and thus unreliable. Salvation is contingent upon obeying Christ's doctrine and what the Bible instructs. Therefore to follow anything not in correlation with the Gospel (New Testament) is to "be accursed" (Gal. 1:6-9).

Works Cited

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<http://seektheoldpaths.com/pdf/stop/stop414.pdf#page=6>

FOURTH ARTICLE OF FAITH

We believe that the first principles and ordinances of the Gospel are: first, Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; second, Repentance; third, Baptism by immersion for the remission of sins; fourth, Laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost.

The first two items, "Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ" and "Repentance" were discussed in the February issue of *Seek The Old Paths*. This leaves two key items to be examined.

BAPTISM BY IMMERSION FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS

First it is significant to detail Mormonism's tainted approach to Baptism. While the LDS Church in general claims to teach Baptism for the remission of sins, their

tradition of what they accept as the age of accountability and why one is baptized and what happens, comes with polluted explanations. Unless one is converted later in life, the standard age to be baptized in the Mormon faith is eight years old.

The LDS website states,

Not long after Moroni was called to be a prophet, disagreements arose in the church about whether little children should be baptized. Moroni wrote a letter to his father, Mormon, asking for advice. Mormon prayed to Heavenly Father and received an answer: "Listen to the words of Christ, your Redeemer, your Lord and your God. Behold, I came into the world not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance; the whole need no physician, but they that are sick; wherefore, little children are whole, for they are not capable of committing sin" (Moroni 8:8). Mormon wrote back to Moroni, telling him, "It is solemn mockery before God, that ye should baptize little children. "Behold I say unto you that this thing shall ye teach repentance and baptism unto those who are accountable and capable of committing sin. "And little children need no repentance, neither baptism. Behold, baptism is unto repentance unto the remission of sins. "But little children are alive in Christ, even from the foundation of the world." (Moroni 8:9-12.) In our own time, the Lord revealed to Joseph Smith that children should be baptized at the age of eight. (See **Doctrine and Covenants 68:25,27** [D&C 68:25, 27]). Each year thousands of righteous children reach the age of accountability and are baptized into the Lord's church.

(www.lds.org, *“The Age of Accountability: Why Am I Baptized When I am Eight Years Old?”*)

There are several factors to weigh with these teachings. One, if children are not capable of committing sin, then why the need for baptism? It must be understood that Baptism is for the condemned. Baptism for the remission of sins means that sin is involved and baptism washes that sin away. Paul writes, “For the wages of sin is death” (Rom. 6:23). Something must be done to take care of it. Notice how their own doctrine changed and flip-flopped on the subject. Further, what do they mean by “baptism is unto repentance?” On the Day of Pentecost when the Jews were pricked in their hearts they asked, “What shall we do” (Acts 2:37)? Peter responded, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins” (Acts 2:38). Repentance was separate from baptism and yet of equal importance in order to receive the remission of sins. One cannot receive remission of sins without repenting. One cannot receive remission of sins without baptism. They involve different things. One does not automatically repent upon being baptized, just as one is not automatically baptized upon repenting.

Further, where in the Bible does it confirm that the age of accountability is eight years old? Children develop and understand differently from one another. The age of accountability indicates that one is fully aware of the decision between doing right and wrong. Scripturally, they must demonstrate a recognition of who Christ is. They must realize what repentance is and why it is imperative. They must recognize what will happen if they are not baptized. They must be willing to put God first. Baptism is a commitment. John writes, *“Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the*

law” (1 John 3:4). Is every eight year old child capable of understanding Christ’s law? This is the most important decision anyone will make in this life. Where eternity is spent is contingent on repenting, being baptized and knowing why.

The LDS website also states, “Baptism by immersion in water by one having authority is the first saving ordinance of the gospel and is necessary for an individual to become a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and to receive eternal salvation.” This is not what Peter taught. He explains, *“Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were **added unto them** [emphasis mine, NF] about three thousand souls”* (Acts 2:41). Acts 2:47 says, *“And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.”* No one can become a member of anything, as it is the Lord who adds them. One may be able to become a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, but if one wants to be part of Christ’s church, only the Lord can add them based on the commands given by Peter and other apostles.

Mormons also teach that “The person who is called of God and has authority from Jesus Christ to baptize, shall go down into the water with the person who has presented himself or herself for baptism” (*Doctrine and Covenants, 20:73*). However, not one conversion in the Bible attaches this command. If that were the case, baptism would depend on two people and not just one. What if no one had “authority” according to the Mormon definition? Would one’s baptism then be invalid? Would one be lost? There is no Biblical account that states one has to have any special authority to baptize another who has confessed Christ and repented and is ready to have their sins washed away.

LAYING ON OF HANDS FOR THE GIFT OF THE HOLY GHOST

It is difficult to get a satisfactory answer from anyone in the Mormon faith when asking about the gift of the Holy Ghost, much less the laying on of hands to receive it.

Joseph B. Wirthlin, a member of the LDS Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, writes,

The Prophet Joseph Smith explained: “There is a difference between the Holy Ghost and the gift of the Holy Ghost. Cornelius received the Holy Ghost before he was baptized, which was the convincing power of God unto him of the truth of the Gospel, but he could not receive the gift of the Holy Ghost until after he was baptized. Had he not taken this ordinance upon him, the Holy Ghost which convinced him of the truth of God, would have left him.” The gift of the Holy Ghost, which is the right to receive the Holy Ghost as a constant companion, is obtained only upon condition of faith in Christ, repentance, baptism by immersion, and the laying on of hands by authorized servants endowed with the Melchizedek Priesthood. It is a most precious gift available only to worthy members of the Lord’s Church. In the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord calls the gift of the Holy Ghost “the unspeakable gift.” (D&C 121:26) It is the source of testimony and spiritual gifts. It enlightens minds, fills our souls with joy (D&C 11:13), teaches us all things, and brings forgotten knowledge to our remembrance. The Holy Ghost also “will show unto [us] all things what [we] should do.” (Wirthlin)

None of this coincides with Bible explanation. The Holy Spirit has revealed what everyone needs to do through the inspired word. Those who received the Holy Spirit received it by the miraculous abilities. It enabled them to perform miracles. A good example of this is when Peter and John entered Samaria (Acts 8:14-17). Only the apostles had the authority to lay hands on others for them to receive miraculous gifts. Those who received the gift from the apostles were able to perform miracles. If anyone were to receive it the same way today, they would be able to do the same miracles as described in the New Testament.

The purpose of miracles were to confirm the word (Heb. 2:1-4; Mark 16:20). Under New Testament, the apostles had the ability given by God to lay hands on people in order to impart a miraculous gift. Miracles such as prophecy are like scaffolding to a building. Once the building is complete, there is no more need for scaffolding. Such was the case with prophets (Cates 27-29). Paul talked about wanting the best gifts (1 Cor. 12:31). However, there was coming a time when all of it would end. Paul wrote, “*Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away*” (1 Cor. 13:8). Notice that prophecy would fail. Tongues would cease. A supernatural type of knowledge would vanish away. The only thing still in effect when miraculous gifts ceased would be love. Paul continued, “*For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away*” (1 Cor. 13:9-10). That which is “in part” refers to the sharing of knowledge and includes prophecy, tongues, and miraculous knowledge. That which is “in part” will be done away. It would lead to the end of the miraculous gifts. Why? It is because they would no longer be needed. What was “done away” was the “in part”

system of delivering truth. The “perfect” (complete) word of God would be revealed and completely delivered. The “perfect” in this text is not the Christ, as Christ had already come and ascended back to heaven. Paul said that there would not always be a need for prophets. He then offered an analogy: *“When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things”* (1 Cor. 13:11). He put away childish things as the church would put away the needs of a prophet and miraculous gifts. *“For now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known”* (1 Cor. 13:12).

If the “first principles and ordinances of the [Mormon] gospel” are not viable, how can any of it be trusted? The Bible has always been consistent and agreeable with itself. The Mormon ordinances are nothing more than an attempt to redefine what the Bible has already made clear. Further study will expose even more irregularities in a system that has a pattern of changing. Paul writes, *“That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive”* (Eph. 4:14).

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<http://seektheoldpaths.com/pdf/stop/stop514.pdf>

FIFTH ARTICLE OF FAITH

The fifth item of the LDS Articles of Faith states,

We believe that a man must be called of God, by prophecy, and by the laying on of hands by those who are in authority, to preach the Gospel and administer in the ordinances thereof.” In other words, in order to preach the Gospel of Christ and be active in that roll, men serving in authoritative positions in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints must ordain or confirm him. When I was a teenager, it included being interviewed by the Bishop of the ward (congregation) to see if I was ready and worthy to meet such an important “calling.” He would ask personal and general questions before declaring me worthy.

Loren C. Dunn, who held a seat on the First Council of the Seventy, stated in a speech:

...This is part of the revealed procedure in the gospel of Jesus Christ, which takes place from the general to the ward or branch level and which allows every member the opportunity of sustaining a person who has been called to office...The Lord, then, gives us the opportunity to sustain the action of a divine calling and in effect express ourselves if for any reason we may feel otherwise. To sustain is to make the action binding on ourselves and to

commit ourselves to support those people whom we have sustained. When a person goes through the sacred act of raising his arm to the square, he should remember, with soberness, that which he has done and commence to act in harmony with his sustaining vote both in public and in private... A calling in the Church is both a personal and a sacred matter, and everyone is entitled to know he or she has been called to act in the name of God in that particular position. Every person in this church has the right to know that he has been called of God. If he does not have that assurance, then I would suggest he give his calling serious, prayerful consideration so that he can receive what he has a right to receive. (Dunn)

Mr. Dunn's speech is an adequate representation of the LDS beliefs on this subject. Notice the hierarchy, which determines the validity of the "calling."

Where is Bible authority for any of these procedures? Where is the command, example or implication for these things? If it is the case that God calls a man to preach as Dunn admits, then why is that not sufficient? Why is there more needed, and why is it necessary for man to "sustain" anything, especially in such a ritualistic format?

Christ simply and directly told His disciples, "...*All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world*" (Matt. 28:18-20). The disciples were given the calling: go and teach. What were they to teach? Jesus said they were to teach

everything He had commanded them. There was never a "confirmation" or "sustaining" ritual that preceded their preaching the Gospel or fulfilling the ordinances (laws). No one was called upon to lay hands on them. The only authority that was involved was Christ, and doing things in the name of the Godhead.

Consider the time after Christ defeated death and appeared to the eleven as they ate. He commands them, "*Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature...*" (Mark 16:15). There is no mention or hint of the need for anyone "in authority" laying hands on them to preach. Who would have such authority and where would they get it? They were sustained by the Word itself and the commandment of the Lord. Additionally, the only confirmation mentioned were the miracles they performed that confirmed, as genuine and authoritative, that which they preached.

The apostle Paul, who labored continuously for the kingdom of God, imparted sound teaching to Timothy: "*And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also. Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ*" (2 Tim. 2:2-3). There is nothing mentioned about "laying hands" on him, though he did teach him. There was no ceremony or ritual. Timothy was told to take what he had learned from Paul, which was the Gospel of Christ, and teach it to faithful men so they could teach others. The word "faithful" is derived from the Greek word *pistoj* (*pistos*) which means "trusting" or "agreeable". Certainly that is the case when the Great Commission is fulfilled today. The Gospel will not be received by those who are unwilling to hear and heed it.

In another part of the same letter Paul tells Timothy, "*Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine*" (2 Tim.

4:2). There was no ritual, no formality, no special ceremony. Paul told him to preach and Timothy was expected to do it. The only authority came from the One whose doctrine he was to preach.

There are so many instances throughout the inspired writings of the New Testament that allude to preaching and teaching, yet none require someone in an authoritative position to “lay hands on” and “confirm” men before they are able to preach and teach. Individuals were simply taught and became Christians upon their repentance, confession of Christ, and being baptized into His name, they were added to His church (Acts 2:38, 41,47). The only time laying on of hands is mentioned in the New Testament (in an evangelistic context) is when the apostles would bestow miraculous gifts to one or more. Its purpose was to confirm the glory of God and God’s power. Since the days of miracles have ceased (1 Cor. 13), we must be careful not to add something to God’s word that is not there.

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SIXTH ARTICLE OF FAITH

The sixth item in the Mormon *Articles of Faith* reads,

We believe in the same organization that existed in the Primitive Church, namely, apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers, evangelists, and so forth.

The LDS Church ordains and installs

into their Church many of the positions found in the Old and New Testaments. They also acknowledge and occupy the Aaronic and Melchizedek priesthoods. However, Scripture must be inspected and evidence weighed to see if these responsibilities and priesthoods are authorized today as they were in the past. Therefore, we will make a careful investigation of the LDS Church’s organization and compare it with the Bible.

MORMON OFFICES AND FUNCTIONS

Elders are ordained by Mormon authorities and refer to any holder of the Melchizedek Priesthood, especially male missionaries. Young men are confirmed at eighteen or nineteen years of age. *Doctrine and Covenants* (one of the books they consider inspired) describe the duties of an elder which include administering their Sacrament, baptizing, leading meetings, and confirming those who are baptized into the Mormon Church (*D&C* 20:38-45).

The Bible says *elders* serve in local congregations of churches of Christ today (Acts 20:28; Phil. 1:1), but not at all like they are designated and used in the Mormon Church. They are in error regarding both their qualifications and work.

When Paul left Titus in Crete he instructed him to, “*set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee: If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly. For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God*” (Titus 1:5-7; see also 1 Tim. 3:2,4). These are but a few of the qualifications of elders that are contrary to what the Mormon Church practices.

Are the young elders/missionaries in the Mormon Church married? Do they have children that are faithful Christians? Since they are not married and do not have

believing children, why are they labeled as “elders?” When asked this question, most either do not know or say it is just a title. But why do something different than what the Bible explicitly authorizes?

Some in the Mormon Church attempt to argue that an Elder and Bishop are two separate positions. However, a study of the context and usage of the original language will settle the discussion. There are three words in the New Testament that describe the same position/office: Elders, Bishops, Pastors. They all apply to the same individuals, each describing different aspects, qualities and responsibilities of their work.

Elders (Titus 1:5; Acts 14:23; 1 Peter 5:1) comes from the Greek word *presbuteros* and describes those who are older, showing experience, maturity, wisdom. These characteristics only come with age. A form of the word is translated *presbytery* in 1 Timothy 4:14.

Bishops (1 Tim. 3:1; Acts 20:28) comes from the Greek word *episkopos* and describes those who are overseers. They have authority to take charge, control, oversee, superintend the local congregation of which they are members (cf. 1 Peter 5:1-2).

Pastors (Eph. 4:11) comes from the Greek word *poimen*. It identifies those who shepherd, tend, watch, care for, supervise, guide, protect. The word is used in Luke 2:8 where it refers to shepherds keeping watch over their flock.

The *Enhanced Strong's Dictionary*, *Easton's Bible Dictionary*, and *Vine's Expository Dictionary Of New Testament Words* all confirm that the three words are used interchangeably in the New Testament. The *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* states, “That ‘elders’ and ‘bishops’ were in apostolic and sub-apostolic times the same, is now almost universally admitted; in all New Testament references their functions are identical.”

Deacons are installed at the age of twelve years old in the Mormon Church. They are given the responsibility to prepare the Sacrament every Sunday morning. It is also at this age when they are ordained with the Aaronic Priesthood. It is considered a great honor to be acknowledged as a Deacon and those young men who serve understandably feel a sense of purpose.

What does the Bible say about deacons and their qualifications? Paul writes, “*And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being [found] blameless. Even so [must their] wives [be] grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things. Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well*” (1 Tim. 3:10-12). Young boys at the age of twelve are not married, do not have children, and do not rule their own houses. This inconsistent and erroneous disregard for Bible authority cannot be ignored if one wishes to follow the New Testament.

In Mormonism, one man holds the office of President of the Church, also referred to as the Prophet. Members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (LDS) place unconditional trust and valued reverence in its leaders. Through the years, Mormons have appointed different Prophets. Each generation has one who speaks for the Mormon Church. He is also the president of the Melchizedek Priesthood and sustained as prophet, seer, and revelator. Mormons believe he receives revelation for their church, in addition to the whole world. When he dies, another is chosen to take his place. He is recognized as the Prophet over the whole earth. He is the only one “authorized” to speak for God to all God’s people. He is viewed the same as the prophets in the Bible. Those who assist him are called the *First Presidency* and the *Quorum of the Twelve*, also known as modern day “apostles”. When there is no

Prophet on the earth, the Mormon Church calls it an apostasy. It is a time of darkness, and God must call a prophet to restore His church.

There is nothing in the Bible concerning the office of the President or the Prophet of the church. Instead, it condemns it (1 Tim. 6:14-15; Eph. 1:20-23; Matt. 23:8-12). No man can legislate or rule for God.

According to Mormonism, Joseph Smith was called just like Moses was called. He was their first Prophet and esteemed highly in their organization. John Taylor, a member of the Council of the Twelve, wrote:

Joseph Smith, the Prophet and Seer of the Lord, has done more, save Jesus only, for the salvation of men in this world, than any other man that ever lived in it. In the short space of twenty years, he has brought forth the Book of Mormon, which he translated by the gift and power of God, and has been the means of publishing it on two continents; has sent the fullness of the everlasting gospel, which it contained, to the four quarters of the earth; has brought forth the revelations and commandments which compose this book of Doctrine and Covenants, and many other wise documents and instruction for the benefit of the children of men; gathered many thousands of the Latter-day Saints, founded a great city, and left a fame and name that cannot be slain. He lived great, and he died great in the eyes of God and his people; and like most of the Lord's anointed in ancient times, has sealed his mission and his works with his own blood; and so has his brother Hyrum. In life they were not divided, and in death they

were not separated! (*D&C*, 135:3)

The following citations are displayed at *Temple Square* on various plaques throughout its visitor center in Salt Lake City, Utah. The merit of this praise has been debated among many historians.

We revere Joseph Smith as a prophet who testified of Jesus Christ and taught us to worship Christ as our Savior. ... Just as prophets before him, Joseph Smith and his successors received revelation from the Lord that became scripture. Some of these revelations are found in two books of modern-day scripture called the Doctrine and Covenants and the Pearl of Great Price. These books of scripture show us that God continues to give revelation to guide His children. ... Just as in Bible times, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is led today by living prophets and apostles. They receive revelation from God, perform His work, and teach the gospel of Jesus Christ. ... God continues to call prophets. God continues to guide followers of Jesus Christ in our day through modern-day prophets. The Lord chose Joseph Smith to be a prophet and revealed to him the plan for His children. Like Moses, Isaiah, and other biblical prophets, Joseph Smith also saw God and was called by Him to preach His word.

In various articles, **Joseph Smith has been described as being a money digger (treasure hunter) and a troublemaker.** He had pending lawsuits and warrants for his arrest because of swindling, and was arrested and tried for his disorderly conduct

by the state of New York. Peter Ingersoll, a close acquaintance of Joseph Smith, appeared before Judge Thomas P. Baldwin of Wayne Country Court in Palmyra, New York on December 9, 1833. He testified in a sworn affidavit and affirmed under oath:

One day he [Joseph Smith] came and greeted me with a joyful countenance. Upon asking the cause of his unusual happiness, he replied in the following language, 'As I was passing, yesterday, across the woods, after a heavy shower of rain, I found, in a hollow, some beautiful white sand, that had been washed up by the water. I took off my frock, and tied up several quarts of it, and then went home. On my entering the house, I found the family at the table eating dinner. They were all anxious to know the contents of my frock. At that moment, I happened to think of what I had heard about a history found in Canada, called the golden Bible; so I very gravely told them it was the golden Bible. To my surprise, they were credulous [gullible, nf] enough to believe what I said. Accordingly I told them that I had received a commandment to let no one see it, for, says I, no man can see it with the naked eye and live. However, I offered to take out the book and show it to them, but they refuse to see it, and left the room.' Now, said Joe, 'I have got the damned fools fixed, and will carry out the fun.' Notwithstanding, he told me he had no such book and believed there never was any such book, yet, he told me that he actually went to Willard Chase, to get him to make a chest, in which he might deposit his golden Bible. But, as Chase would not do it, he

made a box himself, of clapboards, and put it into a pillow case, and allowed people only to lift it, and feel of it through the case. (Ingersoll)

Eventually Joseph and his brother Hyrum ended up in jail in Carthage, Illinois. On June 27, 1844 an angry mob stormed where they were held and murdered both of them. It is difficult to convince those grounded in their Mormon beliefs of accepting Smith's controversial past. Most of them consider it merely propaganda. Instead, they choose to believe another history.

In order to determine whether there are prophets living today, it is imperative to know the purpose of a prophet and if any more revelations from God are needed. A prophet was both a forthteller (things present) and foreteller (things future). We learn that God spoke in the Old and New Testaments by and through prophets (Hosea 12:10; cf. Heb. 1:1-2). God used them to deliver His message. Their inspired writings make up the books of the Bible (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

God revealed to Moses concerning the Christ to come — the one and only supreme prophet. *"I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him"* (Deut. 18:18-19). This was fulfilled in Jesus the Christ (Acts 3:22-23).

Prophecy was by divine inspiration. Under the New Testament, miracles were performed to confirm the word (Heb. 2:1-4; Mark 16:20). The apostles had the ability given by God to lay hands on people in order to impart miraculous gifts (Acts 8:18). Miracles, such as prophecy, are like scaffolding that is necessary in building. Once the building is complete, there is no longer the need for scaffolding. Such was the case with prophets (Cates, 27-29).

Paul wrote about desiring the best gifts (1 Cor. 12:31). However, there was coming a time when they would end. He wrote, *“Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away”* (1 Cor. 13:8). Prophecy would fail (stop). Tongues would cease. Supernatural knowledge would vanish away. The only thing to continue is charity/love (v.13).

Paul continued, *“For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away”* (1 Cor. 13:9-10). In the early church, the apostles and other inspired teachers delivered the Truth/Scriptures “in part” through miraculous means such as prophecy, tongues, miraculous knowledge. When that which is “perfect” (completed revelation, the New Testament) had come, then the miracles that delivered the Truth would cease. Why? They would no longer be needed. The “perfect” in verse 10 is not the Christ since Jesus had already come and ascended back into heaven. The “perfect” is the completed revelation of God’s word for the Christian dispensation — the New Testament.

Paul said there would no longer be a need for prophets (v.10) once the Truth was completely and fully revealed (cf. 1 Peter 1:3; John 16:13). He then offered an analogy: *“When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things”* (1 Cor. 13:11). He put away childish things just as the church would no longer have the need of prophets to deliver the Truth. *“For now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known”* (1 Cor. 13:12).

Mormonism ordains modern-day Apostles. The Quorum of the Twelve Apostles (aka “First Presidency”) are given

all the keys. However, the President of the Mormon Church is the senior Apostle and is the only one able to use all of the keys given — according to them. The other Apostles act under his directorship.

Does the Bible authorize the appointment of men to the position of apostles today? The answer is no. Further, Jesus promised his apostles that after He left them, the Comforter (Holy Spirit) would teach them all things, and bring all things to their remembrance (John 14:26). Since the Holy Spirit revealed “all things” to the Lord’s twelve apostles, there is nothing left to reveal. Second Peter 1:3 makes clear that God has *“given unto us all things that [pertain] unto life and godliness.”* There’s nothing more to give — no further revelations from God!

By the time Jude wrote that Christians must *“earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints”* (Jude 3), the faith (Gospel, Truth, New Testament) had been completely and forever delivered. There was no room for any other doctrine to be integrated with it — including the *Book of Mormon, Pearl of Great Price* and *Doctrine and Covenants*. There would be no more revelation from God, no more apostles to reveal truth. The world had what it needed to live faithful to God. To add anything to it would be too much. To take anything from it would be too little (cf. Rev. 20:18-19).

Joseph Fielding Smith (Joseph Smith, Jr.’s nephew) wrote, “Mormonism, as it is called, must stand or fall on the story of Joseph Smith. He was either a prophet of God, divinely called, properly appointed and commissioned, or he was one of the biggest frauds this world has ever seen. There is no middle ground” (Smith). Joseph Smith has been proven to be a fraud as examination of his life in comparison with the Scriptures clearly shows.

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Part 2 examining article 6 continues next month

<http://seektheoldpaths.com/pdf/stop/stop714.pdf#page=4>

This installment began in the June issue and continues to examine Mormonism's sixth article of faith which says

We believe in the same organization that existed in the Primitive Church, namely, apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers, evangelists, and so forth.

AARONIC PRIESTHOOD

There are two priesthoods in the Mormon Church, the Melchizedek and Aaronic which includes the Levitical (D&C 107:1). The lesser of the two in terms of authority is the Aaronic, which functions under the direction of the Melchizedek. A male member at the age of twelve may receive the Aaronic Priesthood, which consists of the offices of Bishop, Priest, Teacher, and Deacon.

The Mormon Church teaches that the Aaronic Priesthood was removed

from the earth as part of their "Great Apostasy" doctrine, but was restored at a later date. A plaque titled *Restoration of the Aaronic Priesthood* located on the grounds of Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah reads:

On May 15, 1829, Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery went into the woods to inquire of the Lord concerning baptism. As they prayed, "a messenger from heaven descended in a cloud of light" (Joseph Smith — History 1:68). This messenger was John the Baptist, who had baptized Jesus Christ in the River Jordan and was now a resurrected being. He laid his hands on Joseph and Oliver and conferred upon each of them the Aaronic Priesthood. This priesthood, which had been absent from the earth for many centuries, includes the restored authority from God to baptize for the remission of sins.

There are several factors to consider in this claim. The priesthood of Aaron was never connected to baptism for the remission of sins. It had to do with the Mosaic Law. It was not lost to the "Great Apostasy." It was absent because Christ removed it and there was a reason. Paul writes concerning the Law of Moses, "*Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross*" (Col. 2:14).

The writer of Hebrews contends, "*If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need [was there] that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron? For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law. For he of whom these things are spoken*

pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar. For [it is] evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood” (Heb. 7:11-14).

If only those who are priests of the tribe of Aaron have the authority to baptize (according to Mormonism), then why is there nothing said in the New Testament about it? The apostle Paul was not an Aaronic priest. He was of the tribe of Benjamin (Phil. 3:5), yet he was able to baptize (1 Cor. 1:14-16; Acts 19:1-5). In fact, there is no genealogical proof that any of the other apostles held any kind of priesthood or were of the tribe of Levi, yet Christ commanded them to “*teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*” (Matt. 28:19). This is because baptism for the remission of sins was never connected to the Levitical duties.

Mormonism’s alleged history involves a discrepancy regarding tasks. The responsibilities of the Levitical priesthood included the teaching of the Law (Lev. 10:11), offering sacrifices (Lev. 9ff), tending to the Tabernacle and Temple (Num. 18:1-3), officiating in the Holy Place (Exodus 30:7-10), inspecting those who were ceremonially unclean (Lev. 13–14), and adjudicated disagreements and arguments (Deut. 17:8-13).

The Book of Mormon attaches Nephi and his offspring to the tribe of Joseph, not Levi:

And thus my father, Lehi, also found upon the plates of brass a genealogy of his fathers; wherefore he knew that he was a descendant of Joseph; yea, even that Joseph who was the son of Jacob, who was sold into Egypt, and who was preserved by the hand of the Lord, that he might preserve his father, Jacob, and all his household from perishing with famine (1 Nephi

5:14).

Just prior to this they claim that this same tribe (Joseph) “did offer sacrifice and burnt offerings unto the Lord; and they gave thanks unto the God of Israel” (1 Nephi 5:9). This was obviously a contradiction of the tribe who was authorized to function as priests.

There are several references to the severe consequences of those who defied God’s strict laws pertaining to the Israelites’ functions. Why wasn’t Nephi or Lehi or any of their children punished? Not only that, but where in the Biblical list of genealogies for the different tribes is Nephi or Lehi listed? They are not found. God was very specific in who would do what. Did He purposefully or conveniently leave them out?

Additionally, the priesthood of Aaron could only be held based on genealogy — those who were of the lineage of Levi, descendants of Aaron. Ezra discusses an account where some were stripped of the priesthood because they could not prove their lineage. He writes, “*And of the children of the priests: the children of Habaiah, the children of Koz, the children of Barzillai; which took a wife of the daughters of Barzillai the Gileadite, and was called after their name: These sought their register [among] those that were reckoned by genealogy, but they were not found: therefore were they, as polluted, put from the priesthood” (Ezra 2:61-62).*

For argument sake, if it is the case that the Levitical priesthood could be held after the death of Christ (which the Bible plainly shows otherwise), then when Mormons claim Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery had the Aaronic Priesthood given to them, every person holding the Aaronic Priesthood in the Mormon Church today would have to be the descendants of Smith and/or Cowdery. It is of course absurd to accept that all members of the Mormon faith are somehow related to

one of the two families. This is further evidence of the inconsistent and chaotic reasoning to try to reestablish a priesthood that was taken out of the way by Christ.

MELCHIZEDEK PRIESTHOOD

Those in the LDS Church may also hold the Melchizedek Priesthood. The *Doctrine and Covenants* reveals,

Why the first is called the Melchizedek Priesthood is because Melchizedek was such a great high priest. Before his day it was called *the Holy Priesthood, after the Order of the Son of God*. But out of respect or reverence to the name of the Supreme Being, to avoid the too frequent repetition of his name, they, the church, in ancient days, called that priesthood after Melchizedek, or the Melchizedek Priesthood. All other authorities or offices in the church are appendages to this priesthood. But there are two divisions or grand heads — one is the Melchizedek Priesthood, and the other is the Aaronic or Levitical Priesthood. The office of an elder [not a missionary, NF] comes under the priesthood of Melchizedek. The Melchizedek Priesthood holds the right of presidency, and has power and authority over all the offices in the church in all ages of the world, to administer in spiritual things. The Presidency of the High Priesthood, after the order of Melchizedek, have a right to officiate in all the offices in the church. High priests after the order of the Melchizedek Priesthood have a right to officiate in their own standing, under the direction of the presidency, in administering spiritual

things, and also in the office of an elder, priest (of the Levitical order), teacher, deacon, and member (*Doctrine and Covenants* 107:2-10).

Mormonism teaches that the Melchizedek Priesthood, also called the “Holy Priesthood,” was first held by Adam and continues through all generations (*D&C* 89:6-17). However, they also claim it was removed from the earth for a period of time. Joseph Smith proclaimed that he and Oliver Cowdery received the “restoration of the Melchizedek Priesthood.”

A plaque at Temple Square reads:

The Melchizedek Priesthood is the authority of God to lead His Church, give the gift of the Holy Ghost, and perform other saving ordinances. This authority has been on the earth whenever the Lord has revealed His gospel. It was lost from the earth after the death of Jesus’s Apostles, but it was restored in May 1829, when the Apostles Peter, James, and John conferred it upon Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery. In the ordinances of the Melchizedek Priesthood, “the power of godliness is manifest” (*D&C* 84:20).

These assertions made by Smith illustrate either a confusion or ignorance in his knowledge of the Melchizedek Priesthood. David writes concerning Christ, “*The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek*” (Psa. 110:4).

Hebrews 6:20-7:4 clarifies, “*Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec* [emph., NF]. *For this Melchisedec, king of*

Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him; To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace; Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually. Now consider how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils."

Notice that Christ is Priest after the order of Melchizedek. "After the order" in the original language means *concerning the same style or nature* as Melchizedek. In other words, like Melchizedek, He is a Priest appointed without lineage. Christ is simply being compared to him. However, it was never intended to be for all time as the *Doctrine & Covenants* purports. The Melchizedek priesthood belonged to Christ and no other.

Again, the Hebrews writer makes clear, *"If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron? For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law. For he of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar. For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood"* (Heb. 7:11-14).

There is no authority today for the Melchizedek Priesthood to exist in the church. Why would God withhold something so vital for so long if it was lost? Notice the authority was for Christ. The book of Hebrews emphasizes the superiority of Christ and His priesthood over the Levitical priesthood.

If the Mormon Church wants to bring back the Levitical Priesthood which operated under the Law of Moses, they must bring back all the Mosaic Law according to Galatians 3:10 and 5:3. Further, where in the Bible was there ever the authority to live under multiple priesthoods? The Israelites certainly had no authority to do so; nor do we.

The Bible teaches that all Christians are priests (Rev. 1:6) and operate under the priesthood of Christ. We offer up spiritual sacrifices through Jesus, our high priest, who is the mediator between God and man (Rom. 12:1; 1 Tim. 2:5; Heb. 8:6). Peter writes concerning all Christians, *"Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. ... Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy"* (1 Peter 2:5,9-10).

CONCLUSION

The Mormon system of offices and priesthoods is a tangled mess of inconsistent rules and guidelines. Their books contain many commandments on which a Mormon's hope to reach the Celestial Kingdom (the highest level of their depiction of Heaven) is contingent, but a close examination makes it a futile hope. God on the other hand has always been organized and precise in His plan. There is no room or liberty given to muddle its simple structure.

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SEVENTH ARTICLE OF FAITH

The seventh item in the Articles of Faith reads,

We believe in the gift of tongues, prophecy, revelation, visions, healing, interpretation of tongues, and so forth.

This teaching is actually quite common to much of the religious world and deserves a certain amount of attention. However, for the sake of not being redundant, it is recommended to examine the material printed in the previous two articles found in the June and July issues of *Seek The Old Paths*. The same information prescribed by the Bible for prophets is to be applied to this. There is also a thorough analysis of "tongues" in the August, September, and October issues from 2013.

EIGHTH ARTICLE OF FAITH

The eighth Article of Faith reads,

"We believe the Bible to be the word of God as far as it is

translated correctly; we also believe the Book of Mormon to be the word of God."

The Mormon faith does not abandon the Bible entirely, but they put more emphasis into how they perceive the reliability of the Book of Mormon. There are some things to consider with their statement. First, either the Bible (Genesis to Revelation) is the complete and only inspired word of God or it is not. If it is, then no religion has authority to teach or practice from any other source. If it is not the only inspired text, then the religious world must accept that there may be other forms of inspired writings. If that is the case, then the Book of Mormon may be what Joseph Smith declared it to be. However, when making a claim that the Bible is the word of God "as far as it is translated correctly," they are implying that the Bible, unlike the Book of Mormon, may have some unreliable texts. It is important to realize then that the burden of proof is placed on the shoulders of those making such an accusation. In other words, prove where the Bible is not translated correctly or is unreliable in terms of being the word of God. Their statement also places a significant rank on a book that no other religion accepts as inspired canon.

Peter emphasizes, "*For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you*" (1 Peter 1:24-25). The Gospel to which he refers is the same Gospel preached throughout the Bible — not the Book of Mormon. In order to answer whether or not one can get to heaven obeying the Book of Mormon, one must examine if the Book of Mormon is inspired.

AUTHORSHIP OF THE BOOK OF MORMON

The first edition of the Book of Mormon was released in the year A.D. 1830. Controversy surrounds the authorship, beginning with how it was published. On the title page of the original version, Joseph Smith is listed as “Author and Proprietor” when he registered the first edition in New York. If the Book of Mormon was indeed inspired by the Holy Spirit, why did Smith claim to be the author? Mormon apologists contend that the copyright laws in New York, where the Book of Mormon was produced, stated that one must list himself as such in order to prevent plagiarism. However, a careful study will reveal that the law actually states, “Author” or “Proprietor” was sufficient. (Bracha)

Further, this law certainly did not apply to the printed testimony of eleven witnesses who attested that Smith was both Author and Proprietor in the early edition of the book. Present day editions have deleted those testimonies. Eventually “Author and Proprietor” was replaced with “Translator” on the title page a few years later. So which is it? There is a vast difference between the role of an author and that of a translator. Why not just simply identify himself as “Translator,” which was legal to do? If Smith was the author, then it ceases to be divine. If he was not, why did the eleven witnesses say differently? How can they be trusted? When a sworn testimony is changed, it becomes invalid or questionable at best. Three other assumed witnesses would be added: Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, and Martin Harris.

More controversy would follow the authorship by way of a man named Solomon Spalding. Spalding was ordained a Congregationalist preacher in 1787 and later tried his hand at writing novels in the early 1800s. He was never successful, but in 1816 he wrote an unpublished historical romance

about the lost civilization of the mound builders of North America titled *Manuscript Found*. It was authored fourteen years **before** the Book of Mormon was released. Its plot and character names are almost identical with the ones found in the Book of Mormon. Because of this, many accused Smith of plagiarism, using Spalding’s work as the theme of the Book of Mormon.

Those in defense of the Book of Mormon have always stood firm that it was nothing more than an attempt to discredit the Book of Mormon. For years the LDS Church was successful in dismantling most of the dispute. However, those who knew Spalding launched their own investigation claiming he was the source. Unfortunately, Spalding died before he had an opportunity to defend his work.

In 1976, three men, Wayne L. Cowdrey, Howard Davis, and Arthur Vanick wrote a book titled *Who Really Wrote the Book of Mormon?* They exposed the original manuscript and had a handwriting analysis performed to see if the original copy of the Book of Mormon matched the original handwritten draft by Spalding. Many pages were confirmed as Spalding’s, written verbatim into the Book of Mormon. Names, plots, and places were a match. There were also some significant persons who came forward to confirm the allegations.

John Spalding, brother of Solomon Spalding, attested,

He then told me he had been writing a book, which he intended to have printed, the avails of which he thought would enable him to pay all his debts. The book was entitled the “Manuscript Found,” of which he read to me many passages. — It was an historical romance of the first settlers of America, endeavoring to show that the American Indians are the descendants of the Jews, or the

lost tribes. It gave a detailed account of their journey from Jerusalem, by land and sea, till they arrived in America, under the command of NEPHI and LEHI. They afterwards had quarrels and contentions, and separated into two distinct nations, one of which he denominated Nephites and the other Lamanites. ... I have recently read the Book of Mormon, and to my great surprize I find nearly the same historical matter, names, &c. as they were in my brother's writings. I well remember that he wrote in the old style, and commenced about every sentence with "and it came to pass," or "now it came to pass," the same as in the Book of Mormon, and according to the best of my recollection and belief, it is the same as my brother Solomon wrote, with the exception of the religious matter. — By what means it has fallen into the hands of Joseph Smith, Jr. I am unable to determine. (Howe 279-280)

Martha Spalding, the sister-in-law of Solomon, declared,

I was personally acquainted with Solomon Spalding, about twenty years ago. I was at his house a short time before he left Conneaut; he was then writing a historical novel founded upon the first settlers of America. He represented them as an enlightened and warlike people. He had for many years contended that the aborigines of America were the descendants of some of the lost tribes of Israel, and this idea he carried out in the book in question. — The lapse of time which has intervened, prevents my recollecting

but few of the leading incidents of his writings; but the names of Nephi and Lehi are yet fresh in my memory, as being the principal heroes of his tale. They were officers of the company which first came off from Jerusalem. He gave a particular account of their journey by land and sea, till they arrived in America, after which, disputes arose between the chiefs, which caused them to separate into different lands, one of which was called Lamanites and the other Nephites. Between these were recounted tremendous battles, which frequently covered the ground with the slain; and their being buried in large heaps was the cause of the numerous mounds in the country. — Some of these people he represented as being very large. I have read the Book of Mormon, which has brought fresh to my recollection the writings of Solomon Spalding; and I have no manner of doubt that the historical part of it, is the same that I read and heard read, more than 20 years ago. The old, obsolete style, and the phrases of "and it came to pass," &c. are the same. (Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled* 280-281)

John N. Miller, an employee of Solomon Spalding in 1811 asserted,

I have recently examined the Book of Mormon, and find in it the writings of Solomon Spalding, from beginning to end, but mixed up with scripture and other religious matter, which I did not meet with in the "Manuscript Found." Many of the passages in the Mormon Book are verbatim from Spalding, and others in part. The names of Nephi,

Lehi, Moroni, and in fact all the principal names, are bro't fresh to my recollection, by the Gold Bible. When Spalding divested his history of its fabulous names, by a verbal explanation, he landed his people near the Straits of Darien, which I am very confident he called *Zarahemla*, they were marched about that country for a length of time, in which wars and great blood shed ensued, he brought them across North America in a north east direction. (Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled* 283)

In 1833 Aaron Wright, a Justice of the Peace in Conneaut, affirmed,

I first became acquainted with Solomon Spalding in 1808 or 9, when he commenced building a forge on Conneaut creek. When at his house, one day, he showed and read to me a history he was writing, of the lost tribes of Israel, purporting that they were the first settlers of America, and that the Indians were their decendants. Upon this subject we had frequent conversations. He traced their journey from Jerusalem to America, as it is given in the Book of Mormon, excepting the religious matter. The historical part of the Book of Mormon, I know to be the same as I read and heard read from the writings of Spalding, more than twenty years ago; the names more especially are the same without any alteration. He told me his object was to account for all the fortifications, &c. to be found in this country, and said that in time it would be fully believed by all, except learned men and historians. I once

anticipated reading his writings in print, but little expected to see them in a new Bible. Spalding had many other manuscripts, which I expect to see when Smith translates his other plate. In conclusion, I will observe, that the names of, and most of the historical part of the Book of Mormon, were as familiar to me before I read it, as most modern history. If it is not Spalding's writing, it is the same as he wrote; and if Smith was inspired, I think it was by the same spirit that Spalding was, which he confessed to be the love of money. (Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled* 284)

Spalding's work was not the only text that was copied. There are also over forty plagiarisms that Smith lifted directly from the *King James Version* of the Bible. These are not just similar passages of content, but are verbatim. They are blatantly duplicated passages, yet taken out of their original context. Consider that the translators of the KJV were not inspired, nor did any of them claim to be such. Smith on the other hand was adamant that he was inspired when he translated the Book of Mormon from "reformed Egyptian" contained in the "gold plates" into English.

The Book of Mormon allegedly covers a historical period from 600 B.C. to A.D. 421. It quotes directly from the KJV that was translated in A.D. 1611. Only one of two conclusions can be made from this. Either the KJV translators copied from the Book of Mormon or the Book of Mormon copied from the KJV translators. Since the Book of Mormon would come into existence 200 years after the KJV was translated, the first theory can be eliminated. Mormon apologists claim that God gave the same revelation in the Book of Mormon as He did in Palestine. Smith held his position of being an inspired

translator, and that God was using him to translate directly from “reformed Egyptian” into English. But why would God help him translate it into King James English? That was not the language in Palestine. It was also not the language in the 1830s in America.

Newsroom, a website for LDS resources, lists itself as the official resource for news media, opinion leaders, and the public. The website states, “It [Book of Mormon] has been described as the “keystone” of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. From the beginning, Church members have accepted it as scripture. This does not mean the Book of Mormon replaces the Bible as scripture for members of the Church.” (www.mormonnewsroom.org) Perhaps it does not replace it because it attempts to duplicate it. How peculiar it is that the Bible does not contain one passage verifying any historical evidence in the Book of Mormon, yet the Book of Mormon is full of Bible content. The reason is that if the Bible is true, then there is no room for Mormon doctrine or history.

“TRANSLATION” AND “REVELATION” OF THE BOOK OF MORMON

Joseph Smith supposedly translated the Book of Mormon from a heavy tome made of gold, commonly referred to in the LDS Church as the “gold plates.” He claimed it was written in “Reformed Egyptian” hieroglyphics, a language that no credible historian has ever validated. In order to translate it, he said he would need the help of the *Urim and Thummim*.

The official Mormon website indicates it was “*an instrument prepared of God to assist man in obtaining revelation from the Lord and in translating languages.*” (www.lds.org) While the Urim and Thummim is found in the Old Testament, the Mormon description of them are completely different, as nowhere

is it mentioned that the Urim and Thummim were used as translating devices. The *New Illustrated Bible Dictionary* defines them as “Gems or stones carried by the high priest and used by him to determine God’s will in certain matters.” Additionally, there is no record of them being used after the reign of David. Also, Smith and his family were accused on many occasions of being involved in occultic practices.

David Whitmer, one of the Book of Mormon’s supposed three main witnesses, would later describe how Smith actually claimed to have received his translating ability. It was by looking at stones from a well in which letters would appear in English. Whitmer wrote, “...*Joseph Smith would put the seer stone into a hat, and put his face in the hat, drawing it closely around his face to exclude the light; and in the darkness the spiritual light would shine...*” (Whitmer 12). God’s methods of revelation never endorsed an occultic practice of translation. Moreover, why or how would an archaic form of an Egyptian language end up on American soil? No Egyptian hieroglyphics have ever been connected to the American continent, the language was never used, and certainly not a fabricated version of it.

THE “WITNESSES” OF THE BOOK OF MORMON

Located at the front of every Book of Mormon is a written testimony supposedly signed by Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, and Martin Harris. They supposedly saw the “gold plates” first-hand and according to Mormon beliefs corroborated Smith’s revelation. Mormon officials and members vow that these testimonies have never changed. However, an investigation will show otherwise. Relevant is the fact that credible witnesses must have sound judgment, not be easily swayed, their character and reputation must be unquestionable, and all state-

ments must agree over time. Otherwise, they are untrustworthy. Consider that all three witnesses were excommunicated from the Mormon Church at different times. Two of the three later returned, but their testimony could not be trusted. All three accounts varied over time. (Groat)

Eight other witnesses are also listed in the front of the Book of Mormon. What is important to realize is that they were all either family members or close friends of the Smith and Whitmer families. All eight apostatized from the LDS Church. By 1847, none were a part of it. All eight had questionable accounts outside of what the Book of Mormon lists. They were known to be superstitious, believing in divining rods and magic. Later on, they all said they saw the plates with “eyes of faith” but never actually saw the tangible plates. Smith even referred to them at one point as counterfeiters.

David Whitmer wrote,

If you believe my testimony to the Book of Mormon; if you believe that God spake to us three witnesses by his own voice, then I tell you that in June, 1838, God spake to me again by his own voice from the heavens, and told me to separate myself from among the Latter-Day Saints, for as they sought to do unto me, so should it be done unto them. (Whitmer, *An Address to All Believers in Christ*)

Contemporaries of Martin Harris described him as having unstable religious convictions. (Groat)

CAN THE BOOK OF MORMON BE TRUSTED?

Joseph Smith confidently contended, “*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.” (Smith 461) If Smith really was inspired while translating and God was the author of the English production, there would certainly be no changes needed. But there were changes, in fact, four thousand of them since the 1830 version! The Book of Mormon has undergone quite a makeover through the years including doctrinal and grammatical modifications. If deity truly inspired a prophet, why would there be a need to change anything?

The final chapter of the Book of Mormon contains a “test” to confirm inspiration. It reads, “*And when ye shall receive these things I would exhort you that ye would ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true; and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost. And by the power of the Holy Ghost ye may know the truth of all things.*” (Moroni 10:4-5)

Mormons urge prospective converts to pray and ask God if it is true. The problem is that it is a loaded approach. Many have read and followed their formula, only to conclude that the Book of Mormon is false. Those in defense of the Mormon faith will simply say that one does not have enough faith and to pray more. But their judgment is only viable if it is assumed that the Book of Mormon is the authority.

CONCLUSION

If the Book of Mormon is not the divine revelation that Smith and his church claim it to be, then the entire foundation of Mormonism crumbles under its own error and will get no one to heaven. The Bible on the other hand, is God breathed. Paul writes, “*All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for*

correction, for instruction in righteousness” (2 Tim. 3:16). Paul also writes, “*There is one body [church, NF], and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism*” (Eph. 4:4-5).

Books of Mormon theology can only be true if their doctrine is unmistakably in unison with what the Bible teaches. Otherwise there is not “one body” or “one faith.” The “one faith” provides hope of eternal salvation. The “one faith” enables people to be correctly added to the “one body.” The “one faith” keeps people in the grace of God as long as they remain obedient. The “one faith” has been tested and proven to be true time after time. It is the Bible and the Bible alone (2 Peter 1:3; Gal. 1:6-9).

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NINTH ARTICLE OF FAITH

The ninth Article of Faith proclaims,

We believe all that God has

revealed, all that He does now reveal, and we believe that He will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God.

Setting aside the obvious error that exists with Mormonism truly believing all that God has revealed, it is apparent through careful examination that if one really believes all that God has revealed in the past, then there would be no reason or need to believe that God is still revealing things now or in the future.

In his second letter to the early Christians, Peter writes, “...to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ: Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, According as **his divine power hath given unto us all things that [pertain] unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust**” (2 Peter 1:1-4).

Notice how Peter readily accepts and teaches that God has given us everything that pertains to life and godliness. In the same letter, Peter emphasizes the characteristics one must possess in order to obtain that life and live in a godly way. The recipients of his letter were members of the Lord’s church and understood that it was the Lord who added them to the church (Acts 2:47). They had been baptized, after having repented of sins and confessed Christ, and thus added to the Kingdom of God. Now that they were in Christ, they were given instruction on how to continuously live faithful to the Lord. The same message was to be applied for all disciples for all time. In other words, if we do what they did, we will be

what they were, faithful Christians.

Jude writes that additional revelation was no longer needed since the “faith” (Gospel) had been delivered. *“Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints”* (Jude 3). The tense of the words “once delivered” shows it was delivered “for all time.” There was always just one faith which was/is synonymous with the Gospel. Once it was revealed how one is added to the church of Christ and how to remain faithful, there would be no new revealed information (other than the examples of those who followed the Scriptures). Once the Scriptures were completely revealed (2 Tim. 3:16-17), there would be no need for anything more to be revealed in how to behave. The New Testament Scriptures furnish us completely unto every good work.

One of the most prominent arguments made by the **Mormon Church** in teaching that God is still revealing his will, comes by way of their belief and teaching of their “Great Apostasy.” This is the teaching that after the death of Christ and His apostles, His church and doctrine was wiped from earth by man. The LDS website (www.lds.org) contends, “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 (unknown).” As a result, Joseph Smith claimed he was visited by God the Father and Jesus the Son in fleshly tangible forms to instruct him to re-establish the true church.

Joseph Smith wrote, “I was one day reading the Epistle of James, first chapter and fifth verse, which reads, ‘If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not: and it shall be given him.’ Never did any passage

of scripture come with more power to the heart of man than this did at this time to mine. ... I reflected on it again and again, knowing that if any person needed wisdom from God, I did.”

Smith wanted people to believe how God had given him revelation pertaining to the Church and that he would be the one to “restore” it. His downfall comes by way of the very source he was trying to use to lure so many people into this heresy. Smith quoted the Bible, which was obviously in existence at the time the Mormon Church was established. As such, **God’s word never left, and His kingdom was never in jeopardy of being removed.**

Since Joseph Smith had the word of God in his possession, why would he need any further revelation of how to restore the church of the New Testament? By his own actions he acknowledges that the word of God and “all things that pertain unto life and godliness” were never lost. Thus, he condemns himself. He would later pen the *Doctrine and Covenants* and *Pearl of Great Price* in which his so-called revelations would not only contradict previous “revelations,” but habitually change as time goes on. This is one of the dangers in accepting new revelations. They not only get tangled with what has been already truthfully written, but they can change with the seasons to entertain new ideas not prescribed in the Bible.

Peter assures us, *“Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel*

is preached unto you" (1 Peter 1:22-25).

Peter did not say the word of the Lord will continue to be revealed, but that what has been written will endure forever. God has said everything He needs to say about living godly lives and going to heaven. His word does not need changing. It does not need updating. Certainly it does not need to be revealed in any new way, especially with Scripture that contradicts the Bible.

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TENTH ARTICLE OF FAITH

The tenth *Article of Faith* states,

We believe in the literal gathering of Israel and in the restoration of the Ten Tribes; that Zion (the New Jerusalem) will be built upon the American continent; that Christ will reign personally upon the earth; and, that the earth will be renewed and receive its paradisiacal glory.

We will examine this in two parts. The first part in this issue and the second part next month.

The Mormon Church holds a *Postmillennial* view. This means they believe there will be an age of peace and prosperity on the earth, after which the coming of Christ will occur at the end of the millennium. *Pre-millennialism* on the other hand, is the belief that Christ will physically and literally come to earth before his 1,000 year reign in peace

on the earth. The entire Millennial system fails for a number of reasons that contradicts Bible history.

Context is imperative when examining the *land promise* made to Israel. Millennialists contend that the land of Canaan was unconditionally promised to the descendants of Abraham. They claim that since the promise was never completely fulfilled (in their minds), Abraham must be raised from the dead and the Jews must be restored to their land so the Abrahamic covenant can be fulfilled. However, the Bible reveals the fulfillment of the land promise to Abraham through his descendants (children of Israel).

First, there were six cities of refuge mentioned in the Bible. Moses writes, "*And if the Lord thy God enlarge thy coast, as he hath sworn unto thy fathers, and give thee all the land which he promised to give unto thy fathers; If thou shalt keep all these commandments to do them, which I command thee this day, to love the Lord thy God, and to walk ever in his ways; then shalt thou add three cities more for thee, beside these three*" (Deut. 19:8-9). Joshua also makes clear there were six cities (Josh. 20:7-8). Since there were six cities, it is clear God kept His promise.

When David was king, he recovered the land which had been taken by their enemies (2 Sam. 8:1-3). How could David recover something without it first having been possessed and then lost?

The Scriptures show that Solomon reigned over the land promised to Abraham. Moses writes, "*In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates*" (Gen. 15:18). First Kings 4:21 confirms that "*...Solomon reigned over all kingdoms from the river unto the land of the Philistines, and unto the border of Egypt: they brought presents, and served Solomon all the days of his life.*" It is further stated in

the book of Second Chronicles: *“And he reigned over all the kings from the river even unto the land of the Philistines, and to the border of Egypt”* (2 Chron. 9:26). How could Solomon reign over a land which they did not possess?

Moses records the promise made by God to the children of Israel. *“And I have also established my covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their pilgrimage, wherein they were strangers. And I have also heard the groaning of the children of Israel, whom the Egyptians keep in bondage; and I have remembered my covenant. Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, I [am] the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments: And I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God: and ye shall know that I [am] the LORD your God, which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. And I will bring you in unto the land, concerning the which I did swear to give it to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; and I will give it you for an heritage: I [am] the LORD”* (Exodus 6:4-8).

Joshua confirms the promise was fulfilled: *“And the LORD gave unto Israel all the land which he swore to give unto their fathers; and they possessed it, and dwelt therein. And the LORD gave them rest round about, according to all that he swore unto their fathers: and there stood not a man of all their enemies before them; the LORD delivered all their enemies into their hand. There failed not ought of any good thing which the LORD had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass [emph, FF]”* (Josh. 21:43-45).

The promise by God that the land was given to Israel is validated in numerous places in the Bible (cf. 1 King 8:56; Neh.

9:7-8). However, possessing the land on a continual basis was conditional. If they disobeyed God they would lose it. Joshua writes, *“When ye have transgressed the covenant of the LORD your God, which he commanded you, and have gone and served other gods, and bowed yourselves to them; then shall the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and ye shall perish quickly from off the good land which he hath given unto you”* (Josh. 23:16). Moses had given the same caution (Deut. 8:19-20; 30:15-20).

Just as they had been warned not to do, the nation of Israel forgot God and He caused it to perish. Through Jeremiah, God prophesied the nation would never be made whole again (Jer. 19:11). Christ made the same declaration six hundred years later to His apostles (Matt. 21:33-45). This was settled in A.D.70 upon the prophesied destruction of Jerusalem (Matt. 24). A future restoration of Israel to the land of Canaan (Palestine) is not possible because all records, including the Ten Tribes, were destroyed. In order for the restoration of the Jews to be accomplished in returning from Babylonian captivity, they were required to establish descent, family, tribe and estates, without which Ezra said they could not be restored (cf. Ezra 2:59,61-62).

Millennialists fall short in their alleged prediction since the promise was fulfilled long ago. Whereas the children of Israel lost their land when they were taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar, they later came out of captivity and possessed the land. This restoration occurred during the reign of Cyrus, King of Persia when he defeated Babylon.

Ezra writes, *“Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and*

[put it] also in writing, saying, Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The LORD God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which [is] in Judah. Who [is there] among you of all his people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which [is] in Judah, and build the house of the LORD God of Israel, (he [is] the God,) which [is] in Jerusalem” (Ezra 1:1-3).

Jeremiah writes, *“And this whole land shall be a desolation, [and] an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years. And it shall come to pass, when seventy years are accomplished, [that] I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith the LORD, for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans, and will make it perpetual desolations. And I will bring upon that land all my words which I have pronounced against it, [even] all that is written in this book, which Jeremiah hath prophesied against all the nations” (Jer. 25:11-13).*

Nehemiah prayed for the children of Israel to be restored according to the promise made unto Moses (Neh. 1:8-11). God answered that prayer in Nehemiah’s day. Millennialists constantly try to find passages to corroborate their confused theology. They argue that Isaiah’s prophecy will be fulfilled with the establishment of the “millennial kingdom.”

Isaiah writes, *“And it shall come to pass in the last days, [that] the mountain of the LORD’S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem” (Isa. 2:2-3).* Paul clarifies

years later that the “house” under consideration is Christ’s church (church of Christ). He writes, *“But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth” (1 Tim. 3:15).* Peter spoke of the last days as beginning on Pentecost (Acts 2:16-17). Notice, Peter did not say we are in the “next to the last days.”

Millennialists also argue that Isaiah’s prophecy refers directly to a future kingdom by using Isaiah 11:1-16. However, Daniel identifies the “holy mountain” as the church (Dan. 2:35,44). Furthermore, Isaiah 11:10 is quoted by Paul in the New Testament in reference to the acceptance of Gentiles coming into the church. He writes, *“And again, Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles trust” (Rom. 15:12).*

In order for true restoration to occur, several things would need to be in place. First, there would need to be an identification of all tribes. Since all records were lost in the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, it is impossible to establish that. Second, there would need to be a division of the lands according to the Old Testament. Third, there would need to be a reestablishment of the Levitical priesthood. With this there would also need to be a return to the method of worship under the Old Testament. Finally, there would need to be a full restoration of the Law of Moses. Consider that all of this would nullify the work Christ did and destroy the entire Gospel system. The Law of Moses was taken away, being nailed to the cross (cf. Heb. 10:9-10; Col. 2:14).

In the next issue of STOP, we will continue examining their *Tenth Article of Faith* by addressing their belief that there will be a “New Jerusalem” on the American continent. We will also examine if Christ will personally reign upon the earth and if the

earth will be renewed.

<http://seektheoldpaths.com/pdf/stop/stopn14.pdf#page=5>

This article will continue to address the tenth Mormon Article of Faith which reads,

We believe in the literal gathering of Israel and in the restoration of the Ten Tribes; that Zion (the New Jerusalem) will be built upon the American continent; that Christ will reign personally upon the earth; and, that the earth will be renewed and receive its paradisiacal glory.

The topics of *premillennialism* and *postmillennialism* are not new to the religious world. A man named Cerinthus in A.D. 100 was an early premillennialist who taught that Christ would establish a kingdom on earth, centered in Jerusalem, followed by the millennium to be spent in wedding festivities. Since then, it has developed into the doctrine that Christ will reign on earth at His second coming. This teaching contradicts what the Bible teaches, but religions such as the **Mormon Church** have, none the less, adopted it into their faith system.

ZION ON THE AMERICAN CONTINENT?

The belief that Zion will be reestablished on American soil is connected to the Mormon teaching that Christ literally walked on the American continent during His earthly ministry. The Book of Mormon states, “*And it came to pass in the thirty and sixth year, the people were all converted unto the Lord, upon all the face of the land, both Nephites and Lamanites, and there were no contentions and disputations among them, and*

every man did deal justly one with another.” (2 Nephi 4:2)

An article on the official LDS website declares,

The remarkable community of Zion described in 4 Nephi was established on the American continent sometime between the 34th and 36th years after the birth of our Lord. Discipleship in Christ was the foundation of that community. All social progress and goodness centered in Jesus Christ, whose visitation to America after His Resurrection established an age of righteousness lasting about 165 years. Every individual was wholly converted to the Savior — to His ideas and exemplary behavior... (*Skinner*).

A plaque located at Temple square in Salt Lake City, Utah reads, “*During His ministry in the New World [America, nef], Jesus Christ taught the people, ‘Ye are they of whom I said: Other sheep I have which are not of this fold’*” (3 Nephi 15:21).

This is a teaching incorrectly based on the words of Christ. John writes, “I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. And **other sheep** [emph. mine] I have, which are not of **this fold**: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be **one fold**, and one shepherd” (John 10:14-16). Consider that Jesus’ audience when He made this decree were Jews. In other words, He had “other sheep...not of this [Jewish, nef] fold.” The only other sheep at that point not of the Jewish fold were Gentiles.

Christ came to set up a universal system for salvation and His point was that both Jews and Gentiles would become “one” under

his system. Paul affirms this in his letter to the Corinthians, “For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit” (1 Cor. 12:13). He further writes, “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise” (Gal. 3:28-29).

Micah prophesies, “But in the last days it shall come to pass, [that] the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it. And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem (Micah 4:1-2).

Jew and Gentile would become one flock, i.e. one church. There is absolutely no evidence in the Bible or anywhere else that supports the false claim that Christ set foot on the American continent. In fact, the Mormon Church is the only religious organization to make such a statement, and certainly to the degree that it will even be restored as the “New Jerusalem.”

WILL CHRIST REIGN PERSONALLY UPON THE EARTH?

Neither the premillennial nor postmillennial teaching that Christ will physically walk on the earth at His second coming can be found in the Bible. Rather, the Bible reveals an opposing description.

Paul writes, “But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe

that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive [and] remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive [and] remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord” (1 Thess. 4:13-17).

Nowhere does it mention that Christ will set foot on earth. What it says is that we will meet Him “in the air.” This will happen “in the twinkling of an eye” (1 Cor. 15:52). There is no reason for the Son of God to be on earth. His kingdom was established once and for all (Acts 2), and is a kingdom that will last forever (Dan. 2:44). It was/is a kingdom that fulfilled prophecy and is now the hope of eternal glory. Jesus told Peter, “upon this rock I will build my church” (kingdom, Matt. 16:18-19). Both John the Baptist and Jesus preached “the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (meaning near, close, Matt. 3:2; 4:17).

Some premillennialists claim that Jesus *thought* the kingdom was “at hand,” but that He did not expect to be rejected. Paul disagrees. He writes, “Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins *according to the scriptures*; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day *according to the scriptures*” (1 Cor. 15:1-4).

Mark writes, “And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste

of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power” (Mark 9:1). If the kingdom has not already been established, some to whom the Lord spoke are still alive today! However, an examination of history verifies that those who heard these words of the Lord, including all the apostles, are indeed deceased. Paul states that when Christ comes, the kingdom will be delivered up to the Father, not established on earth (1 Cor. 15:23-26).

Premillennialism and Postmillennialism implies certain things about the Christ. First, it implies that He is not powerful enough to do what He came to do, i.e. set up His kingdom. Second, it implies that His omnipotence is called into question. Finally, if He was unable to set up His kingdom the first time, what assurance is there that He will not fail again? It further implies that the church was an after-thought or a stop-gap measure rather than a part of the eternal plan of God as Ephesians 3:8-11 says. The thought that the Savior is limited like this is not only ludicrous but also profane.

WILL THE EARTH BE “RENEWED?”

Numerous religious groups who believe there will be a “new earth” have adopted this concept. However, the Bible once again declares the truth on the subject.

Peter writes, “Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, *reserved unto fire* against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men” (2 Peter 3:6-7). That judgment will come quickly and suddenly.

Peter continues, “But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in *the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up*. Seeing

then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein *the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat*” (2 Peter 3:10-12).

First, it is significant to notice that Peter never said there would be a new refurbished earth for the Lord or anyone else to inhabit. No Biblical writer attests to this because it is simply not true. John writes, “And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband” (Rev. 21:1-2). “Heaven” and “earth” refer to places of existence. John was describing a realm for the saved. Again, there is absolutely no mention of a physical earth. Jesus proclaimed, “Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal” (Matt. 6:19-20). There is no room in His vivid description about a physical earthly paradise.

CONCLUSION

Mormonism falls short in capturing the glory of Heaven by, once again, trying to substitute man’s error for Bible truth. Eternal glory awaits everyone who is faithful to the teaching of Christ and who is added to the church that He very successfully and carefully planned before the foundation of the world. As the hymn indicates, “How beautiful Heaven must be.”

ELEVENTH ARTICLE OF FAITH

The eleventh Article of Faith declares,

We claim the privilege of worshipping Almighty God according to the dictates of our own conscience, and allow all men the same privilege, let them worship how, where, or what they may.

A statement like this not only infers a belief of situation ethics, but defies what the Bible explicitly teaches about the command and nature of worship. Nadab and Abihu learned the consequence of worshipping God according to the dictates of their own conscience. While the Bible cannot control “how” man worships or where his heart is when he does so, it does give instruction regarding worship. Christ states, “*God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth*” (John 4:24). This is a far cry from allowing man to worship “how, where, or what they may.”

In the transcript taken from a session of the LDS General Conference, Robert D. Hales (member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles) stated,

...Each of us has agency to choose. As the eleventh article of faith states, “We claim the privilege of worshipping Almighty God according to the dictates of our own conscience, and allow all men the same privilege, let them worship how, where, or what they may.” In matters of personal belief, how do we know what really is true? I testify that the way to know the truth about God is through the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost, the third

member of the Godhead, is a personage of spirit. His work is to “testify of [God]” and to “teach [us] all things.” (Hales)

Mr. Hales cites John 14:26 as a reference for his statement. Perhaps he should have acknowledged the verses surrounding it. John writes (14:15-27), “If ye love me, keep my commandments. ¹⁶And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; ¹⁷[Even] the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. ¹⁸I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. ¹⁹Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also. ²⁰At that day ye shall know that I [am] in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you. ²¹He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. ²²Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? ²³Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. ²⁴He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father’s which sent me. ²⁵These things have I spoken unto you, being [yet] present with you. ²⁶But the Comforter, [which is] the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. ²⁷Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”

Christ was discussing His departure

from the apostles, but not without a word of encouragement. His profound statement in verse fifteen is an acid test. If a person loves the Lord, he will obey Him. This includes obedience for all things, including worship. Many claim to love the Lord, but will not do what it takes to worship Him “in truth” or follow what the Bible says. Jesus was going to return to the Father and prayed for perfect unity among his disciples (John 14:20). He explains that He has given them how to live, and that when He is gone, the Holy Spirit will reveal to them what they needed to know.

Guy N. Woods writes, “The statement of verse 25 puts in contrast what the Lord had said to them while yet with them, and that which would be revealed to them through the instrumentality of the Holy Spirit in the days to come. ... Soon the Spirit would make all these matters clear to them...Him the Father would send in the name of Christ, i.e., in harmony with his will, and in keeping with his plan.”

Mr. Hales not only sidesteps the context, but also avoids the substance of the Article of Faith itself. He admits the need of instruction from the Holy Spirit but at the same time attempts to give a defense of the Article of Faith. In so doing, he forfeits the claim of “worshiping Almighty God according to the dictates of our own conscience.”

There are evidences all throughout Bible history that lend themselves to the principle of not doing things according to our conscience. Moses writes, “*And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them. According to all that I shew thee, after the **pattern** of the tabernacle, and the **pattern** of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it*” (Exodus 25:8-9). The Hebrew writer adds, “*Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the*

pattern shewed to thee in the mount” (Heb. 8:5). Not only was Moses given unequivocal directions in how to build the tabernacle, but the Israelites were given how to worship God in respect to it. The same principle has always applied to worship of the Almighty.

It is not left up to man to decide for himself, based on His own conscience, nor in deciding which church to join.

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TWELFTH ARTICLE OF FAITH

The twelfth item in the LDS Articles of Faith reads,

We believe in being subject to kings, presidents, rulers, and magistrates, in obeying, honoring, and sustaining the law.

On the surface, this seems like a respectable ideology and one certainly in cooperation with the Bible. Paul writes, “*Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation*” (Rom. 13:1-2). However, an honest investigation will expose the hypocrisy of such a statement, originated, defended and encouraged by Joseph Smith their prophet, who ultimately violated it. Most in the Mormon religion will dismiss such claims as “propaganda,” but

facts are facts regardless of how much they attempt to rewrite history.

Evidence will reveal that Joseph Smith was the subject of numerous criminal charges and arrests. He and his contemporaries (at the beginning of the Mormon organization) were not the martyrs as they have been portrayed. In 1826, in South Bainbridge, New York, Smith was arrested, tried, and convicted for the misdemeanor crime of pretending to find lost treasure. Wesley P. Walters, a Reverend in the United Presbyterian church in Marissa, Illinois, who was critical of the Mormon Church based on his investigations, uncovered records verifying the case in the basement of the sheriff's office in Norwich, New York. A historian further discovered that Joseph Smith had been in fact arrested on four occasions in the mid 1820s. (Spencer)

In 1830 in New York, Smith was arrested and tried for disorderly conduct when he tried to perform an exorcism in Colesville but he was acquitted. In May 1837 in Kirtland, Ohio, Joseph Smith was accused by Grandison Newell of a plot to have him killed. Smith was acquitted, but Wilbur Denton and Sidney Rigdon both testified that the alleged conspiracy took place in April or May of 1835. (unknown)

In 1838 in Kirtland, Ohio, a warrant was issued for the arrest of Smith based on a charge of banking fraud. Fawn M. Brodie (1915-1981), a biographer and one of the first female professors at UCLA, offers much insight into this affair based on her extensive research. Brodie writes,

All that was required to start a bank in the West was an unlimited amount of nerve and the necessary capital to pay the engraver and printer for making the notes. One bank in Ohio was chartered as an Orphan's Institute; another was founded on the charter of a moribund library association, its total assets a

remnant of dog-eared books. The number of authorized banks operating in the state had jumped from eleven in 1830 to thirty-three in 1836.

Besides these there were nine unauthorized institutions also issuing money... The bank was said to have been established by a revelation from God, and rumor skipped through the town that the prophet had predicted that like Aaron's rod it would swallow up all other banks "and grow and flourish, and spread from the rivers to the ends of the earth, and survive when all others should be laid in ruins." From its beginning the bank had been operating illegally.

The toppling of the Kirtland bank loosed a hornets' nest. Creditors swarmed in upon Joseph armed with threats and warrants. He was terribly in debt. There is no way of knowing exactly how much he and his leading elders had borrowed, since the loyal Mormons left no itemized account of their own claims. But the local non-Mormon creditors whom he could not repay brought a series of suits against the prophet which the Geauga county court duly recorded. These records tell a story of trouble that would have demolished the prestige and broken the spirit of a lesser man. Thirteen suits were brought against him between June 1837 and April 1839, to collect sums totaling nearly \$25,000. He was arrested seven times in four months, and his followers managed heroically to raise the \$38,428 required for bail. Joseph had many additional debts that never resulted in court action.

One by one the weak in faith left the ranks... Joseph threatened to excommunicate any Saint who brought suit against a brother in the church... (Brodie)

Smith and Rigdon fled to Missouri. It was there on November 1, 1838, that Smith surrendered to 2,500 state troops and agreed to leave the state after forfeiting their property. Smith was court-martialed and was almost executed for treason, but his attorney, Alexander Doniphan, insisted that he was a civilian. This sent Smith to state court in which several of his former allies turned state's evidence against him. Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, and four others were charged with "overt acts of treason," and awaited trial in the jail at Liberty, Missouri. They escaped jail by bribing the sheriff and fled the state to Illinois. In 1844 in Nauvoo, Illinois, he was arrested for burning the building of the *Nauvoo Expositor* and destroyed a printing press after an article was written about Smith's polygamy. (Pangburn)

Joseph Smith's arrests became a pattern for his behavior. His life was filled with illegal activity that can be accessed by searching public records.

The belief to honor and sustain the law obviously did not have any effect on him or several of his accomplices. Eventually, Joseph and Hyrum Smith faced trial for treason against the state of Illinois, which was punishable by death in the United States at that time. They found themselves in a jail in Carthage, where they would never live long enough to see the court. A mob of 200 stormed the jail and killed both of them.

The Mormon Church is careful to edit the history of their founder. They paint him as a faithful servant of God, claiming he was martyred for his daunting work to restore Christ's church and faced immeasurable opposition. But a sincere and honest analysis of historical evidence will prove otherwise. Those who come across the truth are faced with the decision to either accept it and act upon it, or willfully overlook it.

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THIRTEENTH ARTICLE OF FAITH

The *Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints* is a dishonest and fallacious religion that has deceived many good souls.

The thirteenth and final clause in the Mormon Articles of Faith reads,

We believe in being honest, true, chaste, benevolent, virtuous, and in doing good to all men; indeed, we may say that we follow the admonition of Paul — We believe all things, we hope all things, we have endured many things, and hope to be able to endure all things. If there is anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy, we seek after these things.

The ideologies mentioned here certainly generate behavior by which everyone should

abide. In our examination of article 13, we want to call attention to the word “honesty.” Honesty is imperative in the pursuit and presentation of truth. It will also lead to exposing error and deception. This is why it is somewhat ironic that a religion with such a controversial history and disregard for Bible authority would tout such an attribute at the conclusion of its faith-based statements.

A considerable amount of the duplicity (cunning, deception) of the teachings and works of Mormonism, as compared to the infallible Bible, has been discussed throughout our series of 14 articles (beginning in Jan/2014). Yet there is one more compelling piece of evidence (and perhaps the most convincing) that challenges the honesty and integrity of the LDS Church (Latter Day Saints). That proof comes by way of their numerous prophecies that have utterly failed to be fulfilled.

In Deuteronomy 18:21, God anticipates Moses asking a relevant question pertaining to prophecy, “...*How shall we know the word which the Lord hath not spoken.*” In other words, how will we know if what someone prophesies is true or false? God answers, “*When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him*” (Deut. 18:22) In short, when one gives an accurate prophecy, he may be trusted. If not, then he exposes himself as fraudulent.

In 1969, a scientist named Peter Stoner wrote an article in the magazine *Science Speaks* in which he examined the validity of Bible prophecy. He first took eight prophecies as recorded in the Old Testament and wrote,

We find that the chance that any man might have lived down to the present time and fulfilled all eight

prophecies is 1 in 10 to the 17th power...take 10 to the 17th power silver dollars and lay them on the face of Texas. They will cover all of the state two feet deep. Now mark one of these silver dollars and stir the whole mass thoroughly, all over the state. Blindfold a man and tell him that he can travel as far as he wishes, but he must pick up one silver dollar and say that this is the right one. What chance would he have of getting the right one? Just the same chance that the prophets would have had of writing these *eight* prophecies and having them all come true in any one man.

Stoner then considered 48 prophecies and writes, “We find the chance that any one man fulfilled all 48 prophecies to be 1 in 10 to the 157th power.” These are certainly staggering odds. Now, consider that there are more than 300 prophecies in the Old Testament that were fulfilled exactly *when, how, and where* the prophets said they would. Every one of them was fulfilled (33 in one day)! No other book of religious antiquity provides such explicit prophecies with precise results. However, it does not take long to see how Mormon prophets have fallen short.

FAILED PROPHECY IN THE “BOOK OF MORMON”

The **Book of Mormon** states, “And behold, he [Jesus] shall be born of Mary, at **Jerusalem** [emphasis, NF] which is the land of our forefathers, she being a virgin, a precious and chosen vessel...” (Alma 7:10) This prophecy can be immediately dismissed as false. John writes, “*Hath not the scripture said, That Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of **Bethlehem**, where David was*” (John 7:42)? Matthew writes,

*“Now when Jesus was born in **Bethlehem** of Judaea in the days of Herod the king...”* (Matt. 2:1). Likewise, Luke describes the time and setting of the Savior’s birth as being in **Bethlehem** (Luke 2). Jerusalem and Bethlehem are five miles apart. In order to try to reconcile the book of Mormon’s false assertions, Mormon apologists claim the New World knew little of Old World geography. However, John’s account clearly refers to geographic details at the time of David. This Mormon prophecy utterly fails.

FAILED PROPHECIES IN THE “DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS”

A prophecy was given regarding a **Mormon temple** that would be built in Missouri. Joseph Smith writes,

Hearken, O ye elders of my church, saith the Lord your God, who have assembled yourselves together, according to my commandments, in this land, which is the land of Missouri, which is the land which I have appointed and consecrated for the gathering of the saints. Wherefore, this is the land of promise, and the place for the city of Zion. And thus saith the Lord your God, if you will receive wisdom here is wisdom. Behold, the place which is now called Independence is the center place; and a spot for the temple is lying westward, upon a lot which is not far from the courthouse. (*Doctrine & Covenants 57:1-3*)

This prophecy declares there would be a Mormon temple erected in Independence, Missouri. However, to this day there has never been one built nor is there any authorization from the government to establish one. This Mormon prophecy fails.

There was a prophecy regarding the

Civil War. Smith predicts,

Verily, thus saith the Lord concerning the wars that will shortly come to pass, beginning at the rebellion of South Carolina, which will eventually terminate in the death and misery of many souls; And the time will come that war will be poured out upon all nations, beginning at this place. For behold, the Southern States shall be divided against the Northern States, and the Southern States will call on other nations, even the nation of Great Britain, as it is called, and they shall also call upon other nations, in order to defend themselves against other nations; and *then war shall be poured out upon all nations* [emphasis, NF] (*Doctrine & Covenants 87:1-3*)

The Civil War was fought between the North and South and isolated in the United States. It never extended beyond the border of America, certainly not to all nations. This Mormon prophecy fails.

OTHER FAILED PROPHECIES

In Smith’s *History of the Church*, he gives a prophecy pertaining to **Lyman E. Johnson**, one of their modern day apostles at that time. Smith writes, “...he [Lyman E. Johnson] shall live until the gathering is accomplished, according to the holy prophets; and he shall be like unto Enoch; and his faith shall be like unto his...and he shall see the Saviour come and stand upon the earth with power and great glory” (*Smith*). Smith claims Johnson would be alive to see the Lord return. This was written in February, 1835. However, Johnson was excommunicated in 1837 and drowned in 1856. This Mormon prophecy fails.

Also in *History of the Church*, Smith prophesied about **William E. McLellin**, another modern day apostle. Smith writes, "...his life shall be spared in the midst of pestilence and destruction, and in the midst of his enemies. He shall be a prince and savior to God's people. The tempter shall not overcome him...and his days may be prolonged until the coming of the Son of Man." This was also written in 1835. However, McLellin was excommunicated that same year and died on April 24, 1883. This Mormon prophecy fails.

The LDS Church claims that the reference to two sticks in Ezekiel 37:15-22 was a prediction of the **uniting of the Book of Mormon and the Bible**. However, an examination of the text clearly explains that the two sticks refer to Judah and Israel. The two would become one. It is a prophecy relating to the spiritual restoration of Israel in Christ and His church (vs.23-28; Luke 1:30-33; John 10:11-16; Heb. 13:20). This Mormon prophecy fails.

There is a rather humorous prophecy regarding **inhabitants on the moon**. In the *Journal of Oliver B. Huntington*, Joseph Smith is quoted as saying that there are inhabitants on the moon. He expands by saying these "moon men" stood nine feet tall and were dressed in Quaker-style clothing. They also lived to be one hundred years old. Remember at that time, space exploration was still science fiction, which is precisely what Smith's prediction was. This Mormon prophecy fails.

Another prophecy centered around Smith trying to **sell the copyright of the Book of Mormon**. At that time, Canada was known to purchase religious material and Smith wanted a part of it.

In *An Address to All Believers in Christ*, David Whitmer explains,

Joseph looked into the hat in which he placed the stone, and received a

revelation that some of the brethren should go to Toronto, Canada, and that they would sell the copyright of the Book of Mormon...Well, we were all in great trouble; and we asked Joseph how it was that he had received a revelation from the Lord for some brethren to go to Toronto and sell the copyright, and the brethren had utterly failed in their undertaking. Joseph did not know how it was, so he enquired of the Lord about it, and behold the following revelation came through the stone: "Some revelations are of God: some revelations are of men: and some revelations are of the devil." (*Whitmer*)

Consider how absurd this reasoning is. It implies that any false revelation could be explained away by simply saying it was of the devil or from man. No prophecy in the Bible reasoned its authenticity in this manner, yet many in defense of Mormon scripture fall for this nonsensical logic. Remember Deuteronomy 18:22, "*if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that [is] the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, [but] the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him.*" This Mormon prophecy fails.

Brigham Young, the second leader of the LDS Church wrote,

I will tell you who the real fanatics are: they are they who adopt false principles and ideas as facts, and try to establish a superstructure upon a false foundation. They are the fanatics; and however ardent and zealous they may be, they may reason or argue on false premises till doomsday, and the result will be false. If our religion is of this character we want to know it; we

would like to find a philosopher who can prove it to us. (*Young*)

Perhaps if Mr. Young was alive long enough to see this bold proclamation backfire, he would have recanted his confident remarks. Many more failed prophecies can be found with timely research, but it only takes one to correctly expose a false prophet. Several are listed for the sake of identifying the ***Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints*** as being a dishonest and fallacious religion that has deceived many good souls.

CONCLUSION

One should not merely accept something just because he believes it to be accurate. Christianity is based on evidence. Paul writes of the Bereans, "*These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so [emph., NF]*" (Acts 17:11).

Most who defend Mormon doctrine are genuinely sincere. However, sincerity does not automatically initiate truth. One who is

honest with their research will unveil the facts. That is not to say those who do it will ultimately accept it, but the hope remains that all will come to Christ.

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