



Seek The Old Paths

“Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths. . . and walk therein”
(Jeremiah 6:16)

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TRUTH: IT IS NOT CHANGEABLE AND VARIABLE

James W. Boyd

There is a rather widely held view regarding truth that is called *progressive revelation*. It contends that truth is not absolute and objective, but relative and subjective. What may have been true religiously and morally in the past is not necessarily true now. There is no body of eternal and unchanging truth. What may be true for people in one part of the world is not true for others. Truth varies and changes according to circumstances. So goes this position.

Those who hold to this *progressive revelation* philosophy consider those who hold to a definite and unchanging standard of truth as antiquated, old-fashioned, and certainly not of our time. For anyone to think that religious truth was established nearly twenty centuries ago and is still the standard today, is to them, unthinkable.

An example of this *progressive revelation* concept in religion is an event in New York when one Sunday the clergyman, finding attendance rather sparse in winter months due to weather and sparse in summer months due to vacations, changed the Lord's Day worship to Wednesday because nearly everybody was then in town and might attend. There are much worse examples in this era of "do your own thing as you think or feel." There being no right or wrong anymore, whatever anyone prefers becomes their personal standard and God is to accept it whatever

it is, especially if it is done honestly and sincerely.

THE ENDURING WORD

As we consider modern man's *progressive revelation* idea, aside from those who claim God is still speaking to them with special messages that others never hear, there are pertinent Scriptures that should be read. Proverbs 14:12, *"There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death."* John 17:17, *"Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth."* Matthew 24:35, *"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."* First Peter 1:24,25, *"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."* Second Timothy 3:16,17 affirms the infallibility, inerrancy, inspiration, authority and all sufficiency of the Scriptures and allows for nothing, more or less. Multiplied passages can be added and though much can be said of each one, it is certain that their theme contradicts the *progressive revelation* concept.

We shall be judged by the word of Christ (John 12:48). The apostles were guided into all the truth (John 16:13). The faith has been "once" delivered (Jude 3) and Peter said "all things" pertaining to life and godli-

ness has been given (2 Peter 1:3). There is no compatibility between Biblical teaching and *progressive revelation* presently advocated by some.

UNIVERSAL

God has two kinds of law: natural or physical and spiritual or moral. We can learn much about God's moral laws by studying His physical and natural laws. Let me explain. God's physical laws are universal, applying the same to all people, for all time, wherever they are on earth. The law of gravity is just as real today as in the days of Pharaoh. It applies in America and Africa, whether day or night. The same is true regarding the laws of mathematics, chemistry, etc. The point is sufficiently made: God's laws, rightly understood, have not changed. Therefore, we are not too surprised to find a universal, all-encompassing standard in His spiritual and moral laws.

NARROW

Even though many dislike it, the fact remains that truth is narrow. Many religionists have tried to expand it and have labeled all who are willing to accept God's standards as they exist, as bigoted, narrow, less than educated, and something undesirable. The way to heaven remains strait and narrow (Matt. 7:13,14) regardless of the attitudes of people

(Continued on page 20)

Truth...



Editorial...

FAITHFUL IN THE LORD #3

Garland M. Robinson

The Bible is filled with examples of the faithful. Our **Lord and savior Jesus the Christ** was faithful. “*But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep [you] from evil*” (2 Thess. 3:3). “*Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto [his] brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things [pertaining] to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people*” (Heb. 2:17). “*For such an high priest became us, [who is] holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens*” (Heb. 7:26). He is our perfect example! “*For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: ²²Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: ²³Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed [himself] to him that judgeth righteously: ²⁴Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed*” (1 Peter 2:21-24).

Abraham was faithful. “*So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham*” (Gal. 3:9). As a matter of fact, he is referred to as the father of all who are faithful (Rom. 4:16).

Moses was faithful. “*And Moses verily [was] faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after*” (Heb. 3:2,5). He goes down in history as the great lawgiver and leader of Israel. He appeared with Jesus on the mount of transfiguration (Matt. 17:1-6). He is a worthy example.

Timothy was faithful. “*For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach every where in every church*” (1 Cor. 4:17).

Epaphras was faithful. “*As ye also learned of Epaphras our dear fellow servant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ*” (Col. 1:7).

Tychicus was faithful. “*All my state shall Tychicus declare unto you, [who is] a beloved brother, and a faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord*” (Col. 4:7).

Paul was faithful. “*And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry*” (1 Tim. 1:12). “*Now concerning virgins I have no commandment of the Lord: yet I give my judgment, as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful*” (1 Cor. 7:25).

Silas was faithful. “*By Silvanus, a faithful brother unto you, as I suppose, I have written briefly, exhorting, and testifying that this is the true grace of God wherein ye stand*” (1 Peter 5:12).

Antipas was faithful. “*I know thy works and where thou dwellest, [even] where Satan’s seat [is]: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas [was] my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth*” (Rev. 2:13).

Onesimus was faithful. “*With Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother...*” (Col. 4:9). He was a converted slave (servant) of Philemon.

Christian masters (rulers, lords, over servants) were faithful. “*And they that have believing masters, let them not despise [them], because they are brethren; but rather do [them] service, because they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit*” (1 Tim. 6:2).

Christians everywhere, all around the world, are faithful. Ephesians was written to the saints at Ephesus, to the faithful in Christ (Eph. 1:1). The book of Colossians was written “*to the saints and faithful brethren in Christ*” (Col. 1:2).

THE FAITHFUL ARE REWARDED THE UNFAITHFUL ARE PUNISHED

There are only two categories of people in the world: the lost and the saved, the righteous and the unrighteous, saints and sinners, those going to heaven and those going to hell. As much as men might like to believe there is a third category, one that is neither good nor bad, a way that’s neither saved nor lost; the truth is, there is no other classification. These are the only two.

The Bible presents only two roads along which all humanity travels: one is Broad and leads to Hell, the other is Narrow and leads to Heaven. Jesus said, “*Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide [is] the gate, and broad [is] the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: ¹⁴Because strait [is] the gate, and narrow [is] the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it*” (Matt. 7:13-14).

At the judgment scene recorded in Matthew 25:31-46, Jesus pronounces sentence upon two classes of people. Notice these serious and sobering words: “³¹When 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: ³²And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth [his] sheep from the goats: ³³And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. ³⁴Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:... ⁴¹Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:... ⁴⁶And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.”

The faithful (Matt. 25:21), those devoted to the Lord (Matt. 6:33), who hunger and thirst after righteousness (Matt. 5:6), who do his will (1 John 3:22), will receive a **crown of life** — a garland of great reward. Read these grand words of the faithful apostle Paul nearing the end of his life. “*For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. ⁷I have fought a good fight,*

I have finished [my] course, I have kept the faith: ⁸Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing” (2 Tim. 4:6-8). The inspired James writes, “*Blessed [is] the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him*” (James 1:12). Peter records, “*And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away*” (1 Peter 5:4). John noted these words of Jesus, “*...be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life*” (Rev. 2:10).

Paul declared the Gospel of Jesus Christ — the good news of salvation from our sins (1 Cor. 15:1-3). Those with honest and good hearts will receive it (v.1), stand in it (v.1), keep it in their memory (v.2) and live it faithfully in their lives. Are YOU among that number? Have YOU received the saving Gospel into your heart? Will YOU obey it today? If you will, God will save you from your sins. You will be forgiven by the precious blood of the Lord and savior Jesus Christ (cf. Eph. 1:7).

Won't you:

- **BELIEVE** in Jesus, the savior, the Son of God (John 8:24; Mark 16:16)?
- **REPENT** of your sins (Acts 2:38; 17:30)?
- **CONFESS** faith in Jesus as the Son of God and savior of the world (Acts 8:37; Rom. 10:9-10)?
- Be **BAPTIZED** (immersed) in water for the forgiveness of your sins (Acts 2:38)? When you are raised up from that watery grave of baptism you will be a new creature (creation) in Christ (Rom. 6:3-4), old things will have passed away; behold, all things have become new (2 Cor. 5:17).
- Living **FAITHFUL** unto the Lord all your life, you will receive “*an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you*” (1 Peter 1:4).

BELIEVE and OBEY today. There's no other way to be saved except to believe and obey (cf. Matt. 7:21-23; James 1:22; Heb. 5:9; 1 Peter 1:22).

BEING A CHRISTIAN IS COSTLY

Marvin Weir

The devil would like nothing more than for one to believe that it does not cost to be a Christian. Some well-meaning folks will even declare that after one becomes a child of God, his troubles are over. Those who expect their problems and sorrows to disappear after obeying the Gospel are then discouraged when the devil attacks with all his fury. One must remember that the word of God warns: “*be sober, be vigilant: because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour*” (1 Peter 5:8). When Satan loses a soul because of one's obedience to the Gospel, he will unleash his fury in seeking to tempt the new convert to apostatize from the faith.

If people are taught and realize that Christianity is costly, it will be more difficult for Satan to sow seeds of discouragement. Let us consider some of the costs of becoming a Christian.

First, **one must be willing to give up the pleasures of sin.** Not all are willing to turn from certain sins. The devil will do all in his power to convince one to continue the wickedness that brings temporary pleasure. This is why many folks continue to live in and enjoy an adulterous relationship. They do not desire to forsake that which is pleasurable! The Bible, however, encourages all to imitate Moses. God's Word says, “*By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season*” (Heb. 10:24-25).

People need to see sin for the bad investment it is. God makes it clear that those who live in or practice sin will not inherit the kingdom of heaven (1 Cor. 6:9-10). The wages of sin is death (Rom. 6:23).

Second, **one must be willing to surrender to the will of God.** Even the majority of the “religious world” has no desire to turn from their man-made doctrines and surrender to God's plan of salvation. Jesus said, “*If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments*” (John 14:15). Countless thousands say they love Christ, but their actions speak louder than their words! So many claim to believe in and accept Christ but reject the

command to be baptized for remission of sins (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16).

The truth is that many people today are related to the Pharisees of Jesus' day. John stated, “*Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess [him], lest they should be put out of the synagogue: For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God*” (John 12:42-43). One must be a “doer” of the word and not a “hearer only” (James 1:22).

Third, **one must be willing to be separate from the world.** The apostle Paul said, “*But far be it from me to glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world hath been crucified unto me, and I unto the world*” (Gal. 6:14; cf. Gal. 2:20). Paul taught the brethren at Corinth: “*Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in [them]; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people*” (2 Cor. 6:14-17).

If a man is in love with the world, the love of the Father is not in him (1 John 2:15-17).

Fourth, **one must pay the cost of self-denial.** Many determine this is too high a price to pay as they will not say “No” to themselves. The Lord taught, “*...If any [man] will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me*” (Luke 9:23).

It is true that it costs to be a faithful Christian. But the costs are greater when one rejects Christianity. Can you afford to live your life in such a way that it costs you your soul, heaven, and eternal fellowship with God and those of like precious faith?

The cost is great to be a Christian, but the cost is far greater to be a servant of Satan.

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Truth...

(Continued from page 17)

concerning it. People do not and can not change God's laws.

People generally do not really object to the narrowness of correctness. They wish they could do as they please and think that if they "will it so," it is so. Suppose you wish, however, to dial a telephone number. Are you at liberty to dial whatever you feel is correct, in whatever order you might prefer? On a long distance call, we have to dial eleven consecutive numbers, being precise with each one, in proper order, to reach the desired place. Nobody really complains, but all understand. We know truth is narrow. This is but a trivial example.

DISPENSATIONS

Before we are too hasty, we must admit there has been a change in God's way of dealing with man. Depending upon the dispensation involved, the principle may remain constant, but the specific ordinances have changed. Under the patriarchs, some things were done, commanded and allowed that were forbidden the Israelites under the law of Moses. There is even more change for those of us who live this side of the cross and who are subject to Christ. But these changes are of God, designed of God, revealed by God. What we are considering in this study is whether there have been changes in truth since the will of Christ became operative with the establishment of His kingdom on Pentecost after His ascension (Acts 2). Let us consider a few matters. The points can be extended to almost infinity.

Has the Lord changed His will regarding *profanity* since the will of Christ began? Under the Mosaic Law, profanity of God's name was prohibited (Exodus 20:7). In the New Covenant, this same teaching is included (Matt. 5:34-37). We are not to speak profanely, not because of the authority of the Law of Moses, but because of the authority of Christ. Ephesians 4:29 says, "*Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth....*"

While modern man is hardly known for keeping his word, *lying* is in vogue if thought expedient, and

cursing and *profanity* commonplace. Where is there any Biblical evidence God has changed His mind about these things?

Under the Ten Commandments, *lying* was forbidden (Exodus 20:16). Those under Christ are also taught, "*Therefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor...*" (Eph. 4:25). Liars shall be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone (Rev. 21:8). Modern man offers all kinds of explanations for his deceptions and lies, but is that divine evidence that the truth on the matter has changed? The practice does not determine the standard. The standard should govern the practice. Here is where many go astray in their thinking.

STILL NO CHANGE

"*Thou shalt not steal*" (Exodus 20:5) is another Old Testament command and is also found in the law of Christ (Eph. 4:28). People tend to think shoplifting is not stealing, but only a disease. Taking what belongs to another without permission remains stealing. To excuse oneself with rationalizations that you have not been treated fairly, that others are richer than you, that it will never really be missed, does not diminish the sin of stealing. The embezzler may intend to "pay it back someday," but he is stealing. *Cheating* is stealing. God's laws have not changed just because more and more people have seared their consciences regarding right and wrong.

This same thing is true regarding *fornication*, *adultery*, and all manner of sexual perversity. Fornication is a broad term that includes *lesbianism*, *bestiality*, and *homosexuality*, as well as sexual intercourse between males and females who are not married to each other. The claim that these sexual drives are natural, and some quite unnatural, is no excuse for defying God's law. God knows of these drives, and God has regulated them and provided for their satisfaction in the framework of honorable marriage. Nobody will ever find *progressive revelation* in God's word that allows for this "new morality" binge upon which so many have embarked. To attempt to excuse it is an attempt to justify sin.

In no area has this *progressive revelation* attitude been more evident than in the attitudes and doc-

trines concerning *marriage*, *divorce* and *remarriage*. Matthew 19:9 and 5:32 still allow only one cause for divorce; and, that is *fornication*. God's law does not smile upon divorce, but contends marriage is for life. Some seem to think they can divorce for just any cause provided they do not remarry. This is wrong, wrong, wrong. Furthermore, *God's will does not allow the fornicator the right of remarriage*. Regardless of the many causes for divorce the state may permit, or even the permissive legality that does not even call for a cause, God's law is unalterable and the will of Christ remains the same as always.

SOURCE OF TRUTH

There really ought not be a difficulty for any of us to fathom the point this lesson makes. To learn the truth, consult God's Word. Whatever is not harmonious thereto is wrong before God. What is true now has been true since the Holy Spirit had Scripture to be written. It is the same truth under which future generations, if they exist, must also live and give answer before God. Man is not left to chart his course without God.

Some say, "I am keeping the spirit of the law if not the letter." How can one even learn the spirit of a law without the letter of it? Who has the right to dismiss the letter and declare the spirit to contradict the letter? Obedience is what is expected, not explanations for why you think you can disobey acceptably. To contend one is obeying the spirit but not the letter is to admit disobedience. Obedience requires doing the right thing with the right motive in the right way. When Uzzah reached out and touched the ark, he could have claimed a good spirit. But he was struck dead (2 Sam. 6:6-7). When the Pharisees prayed, they claimed the right action but the spirit was impure (Matt. 23:14). It takes both to be right before God. When Paul was talking about the letter and spirit, he was talking about the old Mosaic Law in contrast to the new law of Christ. He was not giving an "out" for failing to obey what the Lord commanded under the guise of obedience in spirit.

GOD'S RULE

What would you think of players

in a game who changed the rules to accommodate themselves as the game progressed? Could the game be played at all? Only when all participants subscribe to the same standard can there be any order or reason to what is done. The same principle stands in matters religious. It is not what we want, what we like, what

are most doing, how pleasing is it to us, nor anything of this kind. All that matters is, "What does God teach in His Word?"

God's laws are neither out-of-date nor irrelevant to our day. They have not changed since delivered through inspired men of the New Covenant. Christ is the authori-

ty and total authority, now and until He returns and the end of all things. This attitude of progressive, subjective, alternative, varying, changing revelation is of the devil and we must recognize it as Satan's deception to destroy the souls of unwary people.

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GOD'S AGELESS ULTIMATUM

Repentance is one of the great doctrines of the Bible. It is a foundation principle. The Bible says, "Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and faith toward God" (Heb. 6:1). **Repent or perish, turn or burn, is God's ageless ultimatum.**

Noah preached repentance (Gen. 7-9). God told Jonah to go to Nineveh and preach repentance. He refused at first, but after some convincing, he went and preached. As a result, they repented. John the Baptist preached repentance, "...Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. 3:2). Jesus preached repentance, "From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. 4:17). Our Lord repeated this in Luke's account, telling men to "repent or perish" (Luke 3:3-5). Peter preached repentance on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:38). Simon the Sorcerer was told to repent, "Repent therefore of this thy wickedness..." (Acts 8:22). The seven churches recorded in Revelation 2 and 3 were told to REPENT OR ELSE!

There are some things repentance is not.

Repentance is not conviction. Some folks will say, "I know I'm a sinner" but never do anything about it. A husband and wife were *living in adultery* and knew it. They cried, but they never repented. Many families living in adultery, rather than repenting and getting out of it, will find a congregation that will accept them. There was an uproar in a congregation over *The Masonic Lodge*. The men didn't repent and get out of it, they just found another congregation that would accept it. A *drunkard* may be sorry for getting drunk, but never changes. A husband will *beat his wife* and apologize hours afterward, but the next time he becomes angry he beats her again. Sin is often white-washed rather than repented of.

Repentance is not being sorry. As demonstrated above, a man may be sorry for beating his wife, getting drunk, stealing, etc. but until he changes his mind and action, repentance hasn't taken place. Now keep in mind what the Bible says, "godly sorrow worketh repentance" (2 Cor. 7:10). Being sorry can lead a person to repent.

Repentance is not fear. A person may become deathly sick; and, in the throes of death may decide to obey God. This must be followed up with repentance (Acts 17:30), confession (Rom. 10:9-10) and baptism (Acts 2:38). A negligent Christian may become ill unto death and decide to repent and ask God's forgiveness. God will forgive. I've had prayer with many Christians in the hospital who asked forgiveness and prayer. God forgives. If recovery takes place, that person must demonstrate that sincerity of repentance. The Bible says, "bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance" (Matt. 3:8).

What is repentance? REPENTANCE IS A CHANGE OF HEART THAT BRINGS ABOUT A CHANGE OF ACTION! Remember the parable of the two sons (Matt. 21:29)? The son repented and went. Preaching brings repentance. "They repented at the preaching of Jonah..." (Matt. 12:41). Peter preached on the Day of Pentecost. About 3,000 repented and were baptized after hearing his sermon.

God's ageless ultimatum is REPENT!

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Arlington C/C, McMinnville, TN	\$50
Del Brantley	\$50
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Beginning Balance	\$12,353.44
Contributions	\$2,825.00
Debits	
Postage	\$1,949.63
Supplies	\$490.06
Ending Balance	\$12,738.75

WHY I LEFT THE MORMON CHURCH #3

Nathan Franson

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints is driven largely by a creed of thirteen “Articles of Faith.” (See the January and February issues of S.T.O.P.)

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).

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...Michael Winborn, Crawfordville, FL.

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