



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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THE CHILD OF GOD AND GOVERNMENT

John Hall

We can be righteous under a righteous ruler, and we can be righteous under a wicked ruler. No civil government can force a Christian to do evil!

Be instant in the Political Season (2 Tim. 4:2). No one would deny that this year is a "political season." In fact, perhaps more so than most election years of the past, it has been the political season for some time now. It may be beneficial for Christians at this stage to spend some time meditating upon the word of God for some very important reminders.

Elihu asked Job and his friends, *"Is it fit to say to a king, Thou art wicked? And to princes, Ye are ungodly"* (Job 34:18)? Regardless of how accurate such a description may be, to what extent or through what avenue should a child of God protest wicked leadership? It is true that children of God should not call a wicked ruler good (Isa. 5:20; 1 Kings 22:13-14), and given the opportunity, a child of God should promote what is right and stand against what is wrong before a ruler. For example, John the baptizer took the opportunity to express the unlawful life Herod was living (Mark 6:18). In fact, if ever given an opportunity, a child of God should never turn down a chance to influence leaders toward righteousness. The Proverbs writer notes, *"Take away the wicked from before the king, and his throne shall be established in righteousness"* (Prov. 25:5). In reality, however, very few children of God will ever be present with the opportunity to so directly

influence their leadership as John the baptizer or Daniel did. Therefore, we are left with such indirect avenues as voting, writing and/or calling representatives, and more locally, influencing the world around us to seek righteousness and abhor evil.

What should be our attitude toward leadership? The law of Moses included, *"thou shalt not...curse the ruler of thy people"* (Exodus 22:28). David explained to his servants upon rejecting the opportunity to reach out and slay the wicked King Saul, *"The LORD forbid that I should do this thing unto my master, the LORD's anointed, to stretch forth mine hand against him, seeing he is the anointed of the LORD"* (1 Sam. 24:6). Jesus taught us to *"Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's"* (Matt. 22:21). Peter wrote, *"Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well"* (1 Peter 2:13-14).

Let us step back for a moment and observe what appears to be the over-arching message of God's word concerning the relationship between the child of God and civil government. We can be righteous under a righteous ruler, and we can be right-

eous under a wicked ruler. No civil government can force a Christian to do evil! The way God designed government, it is supposed to punish evildoers and praise those who do well. What if this very institution becomes a "terror to good works" (Rom. 13:3) instead of evil? What if the ruler promotes the shedding of innocent blood, and stifles godliness? Does the child of God "curse the ruler?" Does the child of God "stretch forth his hand against" the ruler? Does the child of God reject all civil law? No, the child of God continues to live righteously himself; and, continues to teach others to do so as well.

If the government "strictly commands not to teach in His name" (Acts 5:28), the child of God still teaches in His name. If that means being reduced to poverty, we can be righteous in poverty (Matt. 12:42-44). If that means prison, we can be righteous in prison (Acts 16:25). If that means death, we can be faithful unto death (Rev. 2:10). We can be as Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego who told their ruler, *"...O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thy hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee,*

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The Child of God and Government...



Editorial...

THE END #2

Garland M. Robinson

NATIONAL ISRAEL

The Jews (as well as many others today) refuse to see that the Old Testament has been replaced with the New Testament (Heb. 10:9; Gal. 3:24-25).

Physical, political, fleshly Israel in the days of the first century would not give up. They were hanging on to the Mosaical system for dear life. They refused to accept that Jesus was the Messiah. He was/is the Christ. He did not fit their preconceived idea. They were looking for a military-type leader who would rise up among them and overthrow the Romans, establishing the ancient kingdom as it was in the days of David.

Israel as a nation refused to see the truth! They were a great hindrance to the Lord's new and living way. God saw fit to bring the entire system down — taking it out of the way. In God's providence, the armies of Rome besieged the city of Jerusalem and destroyed it in 70 A.D. Once and for all, no Israelite family could trace their lineage back to Abraham. The system of Judaism was completely and forever abolished.

SIGNS OF THE DESTRUCTION

The apostles had asked for signs regarding the temple being destroyed (Matt. 24:3) and the Lord answers their petition. He says in Matthew 24:14 that when the Gospel had been preached in all the world, the end would come. The "end" here is not the end of the world (He will speak about the end of the world beginning in verse 36). The "end" He is speaking of in verse 24 is the end of Judaism, the Jewish economy, their political system, the priesthood, everything would be wrecked and annulled.

In Colossians 1:23, Paul exhorts the brethren in the church in Colosse to "...continue in the faith grounded and settled, and [be] not moved away from the hope of **the gospel, which ye have heard, [and] which was**

preached to every creature which is under heaven...." These words were thought to have been written about 62-63 A.D. which was only 7 or 8 years before the destruction of Jerusalem. The Gospel had been preached to every creature under heaven.

In Matthew 24:4-35, Jesus reveals some of the signs leading up to Jerusalem's utter destruction when not one stone of the temple would be left upon another. Verse 15 speaks of the "abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel" (cf. Mark 13:14; Luke 21:20). This occurred when the city was surrounded by the Roman army. Christians were told to flee unto the mountains — get out of the city — not delay their departure (vs.16-18)! Escaping the city would be more difficult for those with child and/or with small children (v.19). It obviously would be more difficult in the winter or on the sabbath day when the gates of the city would be closed (v.20). False christs and false prophets would show great signs and wonders. Jesus warns them not to be fooled (v.24).

The Lord ends the giving of signs with these words, "Verily I say unto you, *This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled*" (Matt. 24:34). "This generation" is the generation in which they were living. A generation is roughly 40 years. The Lord predicted the temple would be leveled in "that" generation. That was the answer to the disciples first two questions: 1) when shall these things be, and 2) what shall be the sign of thy coming? His coming was not his second coming at the end of time, but his coming in judgment upon the city and nation of Israel as he did through the Roman army.

The Lord predicted the coming of his kingdom would occur in that generation. "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). There were some in the audience to

whom the Lord spake these words that would not die until they see, observe, experience, the establishment of his kingdom, the church, his bride. If his kingdom was not established in that generation, then the Lord either lied or there are some of those people still living today! We absolutely know that neither of these options are true. The Lord did not lie and there are certainly no people living today that heard the Lord speak these words. The fact is, the kingdom/church was established in that generation just as the Lord said it would be. We read about it on the day of Pentecost in Acts chapter two. It's called the "church" (singular, Acts 2:47), and the "churches of Christ" (plural, Rom. 16:16).

The point is this, every "sign" given by the Lord in Matthew 24:4-35, Mark 13:5-31 and Luke 21:8-33, came to pass in "that generation." Every sign was fulfilled in their lifetime! If they did not come to pass, if they have not been fulfilled, then Jesus did not know what he was talking about. If the people of that generation thwarted (foiled, prevented) the Lord's prophecy of these things from coming true, then they are more powerful than God! Millions of people today are still looking for the fulfillment of these things, thinking the Lord is coming in the near future to establish his kingdom. If the Lord was prevented from fulfilling his prophecy in the first century, who's to say he won't be prevented again if he attempted it in the twenty-first century? Jesus did not lie and there are no people living today who are 2,000 years old!

THE FINAL END

What's of utmost importance to people's lives today is the second coming of Christ in the clouds when every eye shall see him (cf. Rev. 1:7). That event is likewise spoken of as an "end." At the Lord's second coming, "...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). None will be left on this earth.

"For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. **Then [cometh] the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the**

Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power” (1 Cor. 15:22-24).

There’s no such thing as a “rapture” as taught by millennialists. The general concept of this man-made doctrine is that the saved who are living will be raptured (caught up from the earth), leaving behind all who are not saved. Those remaining will wonder what happened to family members, working associates, friends, neighbors and loved ones. They envision cars running off the road because the driver disappears, planes falling out of the sky because the pilot was taken, running-backs disappearing on the 10 yard line, the ball left tumbling for others to claim. The world will be left in total bewilderment. Biblically speaking, the doctrine of the so-called rapture theory is absurd and preposterous!

When the Lord comes again, he will hand over the kingdom/church to God the Father, not establish it (1 Cor. 15:24). The eternal kingdom (church) exists NOW. Faithful Christians everywhere are members of it. We are members of it. The prophecy of Zechariah 6:12-13 that the Messiah would be both *king* and *priest* has been fulfilled in Jesus the Christ. He is “*king of kings and Lord of lords*” (1 Tim. 6:15). When he ascended into heaven *he sat down on the throne at the right hand of God*, all authorities and power being made subject unto him (Mark 16:19; Acts 2:33; Heb. 4:16; 12:2; 1 Peter 3:22).

Jesus is our great *high priest* making atonement and intercession for us (Rom. 8:34; Heb. 2:17; 3:1; 4:14-16; 7:26; 8:1-4; 9:11; 10:11-23). If he is not a king now, then he is not a priest now because the prophecy of Zechariah (6:12-13) said he would be both king and priest at the same time. Since he is a *priest now*, he is a *king now* and since he is a *king now*, he is a *priest now*. This point cannot be refuted without denying the Holy Scriptures.

A CLEAR DISTINCTION

In Matthew 24 and Mark 13, a clear and distinct contrast is made in the Lord’s answer to the disciples’ questions. They had ask (Matt. 24:3): 1) “when” shall these things be? 2) what “sign” will there be when these things will be fulfilled? 3) what “sign” will there be concerning the end of the world?

In Matthew 24:4-35 and Mark

13:5-31, Jesus gives sign after sign after sign they should look for that would signal the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple. The signs and destruction would occur over a period of “days” — an indefinite number (Matt. 24:19,22,29; Mark 13:17,19,20,24). BUT, beginning in verse 36 of Matthew 24 and verse 32 of Mark 13, the Lord speaks of “a day,” a single day, even to a specific “hour.” Matthew 24:36, “*But of that day and hour knoweth no [man], no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.*” Mark 13:32, “*But of that day and [that] hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.*”

All through the beginning of these two chapters there are “signs.” All of a sudden, an abrupt change is noticed when the Lord clearly says there are “no signs.” There are signs when He speaks of “days” (plural), but then there are no signs when He speaks of that “day” (singular). He cannot be speaking of the same event. And, he definitely is not. He is speaking of the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in the first part of the chapter and is speaking of the end of time, his second coming, in the remaining verses of the chapter and extending on through chapter 25.

CONCLUSION

With the Lord’s death on the cross, his resurrection from the dead, his ascension upon high to sit down at the right hand of God, the preaching of the Gospel on Pentecost (Acts 2) and then ultimately the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D., the END had come. The system of sacrifices prescribed in the law of Moses, along with the entirety of the law itself was abolished.

However, there is another END to come, the cession of life and all things material in the entire universe — the end of the world, the end of time. There will be no more opportunity to obey the Lord. No one will be given a second chance. There are no signs or warnings of that event. It will happen “*...in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised...*” (1 Cor. 15:52).

What will YOU do when that day, that time, that end, comes? Will YOU be ready? The only way to be ready is to be ready NOW, “*...for in such an*

hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh” (Matt. 24:44). “*...Behold, now [is] the accepted time; behold, now [is] the day of salvation*” (2 Cor. 6:2). Won’t you obey the Gospel today?

To be ready NOW, you must **BELIEVE** in Jesus as the Christ, the only begotten Son of God (John 8:24), **REPENT** of your sins (Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38), **CONFESS** that Jesus is the Son of God (Acts 8:37; Rom. 10:9-10) and be **BAPTIZED** in water for the forgiveness of your sins (Acts 2:38; Rom. 6:3-6,17-18; 1 Peter 3:21). Living **FAITHFUL** the rest of your life, you’ll be ushered into that final abode of heaven at the END.

Won’t you obey today?

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WHY I LEFT THE MORMON CHURCH #6 (PART 1)

Nathan Franson

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints is driven largely by a creed of thirteen “Articles of Faith.” To see our ongoing examination of these “Articles,” go to seektheoldpaths.com/stop2014.htm.

SIX 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

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The Child of God and Government...

(Continued from page 41)

O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou has set up" (Dan. 3:16-18, ASV).

Children of God should pray for their country — not necessarily that some righteous ruler will come along and save everyone, but that the Gospel will convict and save everyone. More importantly, children of God should pray for the remnant of faithful Christians to remain faithful no matter what the outcome of the "political season."

Take note of these Wicked Rulers who Reigned during the lives of Righteous People:

Pharaoh over Moses (Exodus 2:15),

King Saul over David (1 Sam. 24:16-20),

Nebuchadnezzar over Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego (Dan. 3:17-18),

Belshazzar over Daniel (Dan. 5:29-30),

King Ahab over Elijah (1 Kings 19:9-10),

Herod over John the baptizer (Mark 6:17-18),

Pontius Pilate over Jesus (Acts 4:27),

Caesar Nero over Paul (Acts 28:19-20).

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BAPTISM AND THE LAW OF THE EXCLUDED MIDDLE

Tom Wacaster

A major point of contention between the Lord's church and virtually every false system of religion that falls under the broad, man-made umbrella of "Christendom," has to do with the role that baptism plays in God's plan for man's salvation. I have had two debates with denominational preachers, and I can attest that the adamancy with which they attack such passages as Acts 2:38, Mark 16:16, 1 Peter 3:21, is a manifestation of their hatred for the truth and denial of one of simplest commands given to those desiring to become children of God. It may seem harsh to accuse someone of hating the truth simply because he does not believe, teach, or practice the Biblical position on baptism, but when men ridicule the God given command, they hate the truth. Or, to put it another way, "because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved" (2 Thess. 2:10).

The "law of the excluded middle" is a law in logic that says a thing either is, or is not. It exhausts the possibilities. For example, were I to point to an object and say that the object is either wood or non-wood, I have exhausted the possibilities. Both statements cannot be true, nor can both be false. The value of using "the law of the excluded middle" is such that if you prove one side of the two-side equation to be false, you have at the same time proven the other to be true, and *visa versa*. Prove that an object is wood, and you have proven it is not non-wood: it would not be plastic, steel, concrete, et al. With that, we are ready to apply the "law of the excluded middle" to the goal of learning the truth about the essentiality of baptism.

While there is sufficient scripture to prove the essentiality of baptism for remission of past sins, I will take a different approach and "go in through the back door" so to speak.

The "law of the excluded middle" demands that baptism is either for remission of past sins, or it is not for

remission of past sins. That statement exhausts the possibilities does it not? Both positions cannot, at one and the same time, be true, nor can both statements, at one and the same time, be false. Those who deny its essentiality have taken the later position, and thus it is their burden to prove their position. They have, however, taken upon themselves an impossible task for the simple reason that their position leads to an absurdity and/or contradiction; in fact it leads to several absurdities and/or contradictions. Let's pursue this a little further.

First, it leads to the absurdity that one can be "in" Christ and "out of" Christ at the same time. It is obvious that all spiritual blessings are "in" Christ (Eph. 1:3). Forgiveness of past sins is a spiritual blessing. Therefore, forgiveness of sins is located only "in" Christ, a spiritual state acquired prior to baptism as per the argument of those who advocate that baptism is not for remission of sins. But it is also true that baptism puts one "into" Christ as per Romans 6:3-5. Therefore, those who believe that baptism is not for remission of past sins must conclude that one is in Christ prior to baptism, but out of Christ at the same time because he has not yet been baptized into Christ.

Second, it leads to the absurdity that one has been raised from spiritual death to walk in newness of life prior to having been raised from spiritual death to walk in newness of life. In Romans 6:4 Paul wrote: "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." The argument is the same as above. Those who believe, embrace and/or teach the doctrine that baptism is not for remission of sins must believe they have already been raised to newness of life prior to burial in the grave of water baptism. But since we are "buried with him by baptism...so we

also should walk in newness of life," then those who accept the doctrine that remission of sins comes prior to baptism place themselves in the unenviable position of believing an absurdity: that they are, at one and the same time, walking in newness of life and are not walking in newness of life.

By the same line of reasoning we could show that those who believe that baptism is not for remission of sins imply that they have been saved while at the same time not being saved, they have been translated into the body of Christ while at the same time not being in the body of Christ, etc.

Now, let us return to the use of the "law of the excluded middle" and show the force of our reasoning. Since it is true that the "law of the excluded middle" does not allow something to "have" and at the same time "not have" the same qualities, we can only conclude that if someone believes he is in Christ while at the same time believing he is not in Christ, he has violated the "law of the excluded middle." If a person believes he is walking in newness of life and at the same time not walking in newness of life, he has violated "the law of the excluded middle."

Can you not see the absurd position they place themselves in? Is it not much easier to simply believe and obey the Lord's words: "*He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved?*" Indeed it is!

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Jesus said, "*He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved*" (Mark 16:16). Denominational preachers say, "He that believeth and is NOT baptized shall be saved" (no scripture can be given). Regarding the fruit of the forbidden tree, God told Adam and Eve, "*Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent (devil) said unto the woman, Ye shall NOT surely die*" (Gen. 3:3-4). Inserting the word NOT changes God's word and will cause you to lose your soul. Don't fall into the devil's trap! — gmr



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