

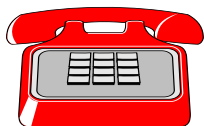


NEWSLETTER ~ November/December 2013

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OUR FAITH WILL WORK BY LOVE OR IT WILL NOT WORK AT ALL



FROM CHAR'S DESK

Thanksgiving is past and Christmas is on its way. I was thinking of what I would like for Christmas. As I reflected on it, I realized that there was nothing I would rather have than for Christians to start bringing their Mormon loved ones and friends into the Visitors Center like they used to years ago. Mormons will often come in with someone they know and trust. How can Mormons ever find out the truth about their faith if no one tells them? In the Center we have a large LDS library where they can research their faith out of books written by their own apostles and prophets. As we lovingly guide them through this, they soon find out that they have not been told the truth about their Church. Through this process, we have seen many Mormon's eyes open and they leave the LDS Church and come to faith in the true Jesus Christ and His gospel.

Because the Mormon Church today has watered down their true beliefs and made them sound more "Christian", many think Mormonism is just another Christian denomination. This is far from the truth. The past LDS president, Gordon B. Hinckley said the following: *"Those who observe us say that we are moving into the mainstream of religion. We are NOT changing. The world's perception of us is changing. We teach the SAME doctrine. We have the SAME organization."* (The Ensign/November 2001, p.5, my emphasis)

I challenge the Christians who read our newsletters to start bringing those of the Mormon faith into our Visitor's Center again and through the power of the Holy Spirit, we will reveal the truth about Mormonism

and lovingly lead them to faith in the real Lord Jesus Christ, to the glory of God. Will you accept our challenge? MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A BLESSED NEW YEAR FROM YOUR FRIENDS AT EX-MORMONS FOR JESUS!

~ Jenell's Jots & Tittles ~

THE DANGERS OF LEGALISM

To me, the word legalism raises many red flags, such as bondage, fear, oppression, depression, guilt, judgment, pride, loss of identity, etc. These are some of the things Satan would love for us to suffer and in Mormonism (as with most cults), they are all too common. In her book, "Loved into the Light", La Vonne Earl shared the following from her experience as a Mormon:

"With so many written and unwritten inconsequential rules in the Mormon Church, there is a culture that breeds judgment from one member upon another. It

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Thank You

also causes you to become a hypocrite because you can never obey all the rules, but feel you must look like you do...Manmade rules create an atmosphere where appearances are more important than spirituality. The effort to keep up the appearance of being perfect causes the believer to become more of an actor instead of being authentic. The fear of what other Mormons may think will cause many to exaggerate, lie, and project false enthusiasm and zeal—all in an effort to keep up appearances...” (p.109)

In our ministry, we have talked with many others who have left Mormonism and share similar stories and feelings. However, when these same people come to know the real Jesus and receive God’s grace, they then experience just the opposite, such as joy, peace, freedom, love, acceptance, security, etc. Not surprisingly, this is what the Bible says **will** happen when one turns to Him and away from legalism: *“But now we have been released from the Law, having died to that by which we were bound, so that we serve in newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter.”* (Rom.7:6, also see Gal.5:19-23)

Other dangers of Legalism is that it keeps people so busy that they have no time to pursue God while at the same time shuts the door to grace, God’s unmerited favor. Yes, legalism undermines the power of the cross by saying man can do something to put himself in right standing with God if he just tries hard enough. But not so says God:

*“For all of us have become like one who is unclean, and all **our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment...**”* (Isa.64:6)

*“And may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of **my own derived from the Law**, but that which is **through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith.**”* (Phil.3:9)

“But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace.” (Rom.11:6)

“For by grace you have been saved through faith; and

*that not of yourselves, it is **the gift of God**; (Eph.2:8-9)*

Of course grace is not a license to sin. When I was a Mormon, I was taught that this is what Christians believed, but nothing could be further from the truth. All born again Christians who have accepted God’s free gift of grace (Jesus paying their debt of sin) experiences a changed heart that only wants to please Him. In fact, the Bible addresses this very issue:

*“What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? May it never be!... But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you **became obedient from the heart** to that form of teaching to which you were committed, **and having been freed from sin, you become slaves of righteousness.**”* (Rom.6:15-18)

Legalism (trying to become righteous by a set of manmade rules) may make one feel good about themselves, but it is not what God requires and is, in fact, an **insult to Him**: *“how much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and **has insulted the Spirit of grace?**”* (Heb.10:29). Please stop and take a moment to pray that these precious Mormon people will become aware of this danger!

Note: all scriptures in this article are from New American Standard Bible.

IS MORMONISM’S SALVATION BY GRACE OR JUST AN ILLUSION?

In Mormon literature, it is common to find statements (or articles) that stress Christian orthodoxy, such as – “we believe all men are saved by grace alone without any act on their part”. This can be confusing when Christian’s are trying to properly decipher LDS beliefs.

The problem arises from a person attempting to make a point based on just one or two isolated statements. For example, anyone can take a scripture from the Bible, out of context, and introduce it as a proof-text for almost any absurd belief. But as most Christians know, the *whole* word of God must be considered in order to

reveal its intended meaning.

Mormonism can be like a chameleon, for it can change color to accommodate the place upon which it finds itself. When addressing a Christian audience, we might hear a statement like the one above, but amongst their own they are taught quite differently. For instance, the late Mormon Apostle Bruce R. McConkie stated that salvation by “grace alone without works” was the “second greatest heresy” of Christendom (“What Think Ye of Salvation by Grace?” BYU Devotional Address, 1/10/84). Again McConkie stated, “*Grace is granted to men proportionately as they conform to the standards of personal righteousness.*” (“Mormon Doctrine”, p.339, my emphasis)

LDS Apostle Boyd K. Packer stated: “*Ordinances and covenants become our credentials for admission into [God’s] presence. To worthily receive them is the quest of a lifetime. To keep them thereafter is the challenge of mortality.*” (Ensign/May 1987, p.24)

One last quote I will share is found on page 16 of the 1999 “Ensign”: “*The first saving ordinance is baptism. Thus, with baptism, to use the Prophet Joseph Smith’s metaphor, we step onto the ladder. Once on the ladder, there are more steps to take. Climbing the ladder requires many things: the saving grace of our Savior, our own faith and repentance and good works, and the assistance of the priesthood (see D&C 84:19-22). In particular, our own good actions are aided by additional enabling power that comes through priesthood ordinances: first baptism, and eventually the temple endowment and sealing. In effect, we are helped up the ladder by the grace of Christ ‘after all we can do’ (2 Ne.25:23). There is no other way (see 2 Ne.31:21).*” (my emphasis)

Years ago, when “Ex-Mormons For Jesus” (and other like ministries) started to expose Mormonism, it was a much easier task. Back then Mormonism seemed proud of the differences between them and Christianity, but now they have realized it is easier to make converts when the lines are blurred. In earnestly contending for the faith (Jude 3), Christians must consider the whole of Mormonism’s teachings from the Mormon authorities. After all, it is they who claim

a “restored gospel” with prophets and apostles who hear from God, so “cherry picking” statements from these leaders should be shown for what it is - dishonest!

MORMONISM & RACISM

The September 2000 “Ensign” magazine (an official Mormon publication) had an interesting article by Elder Alexander B. Morrison of the Seventy. It was entitled “No More Strangers” and gave a quality message regarding the “*sin of racism*”. His discourse included many good arguments from the Bible, as well as the Book Of Mormon, as to why “*racism is an offense against God and a tool in the devil’s hands*” (p.16). But further on in this article he made a statement that made my jaw drop. He stated: “*How grateful I am that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has from its beginnings stood strongly against racism in any of its malignant manifestations...*”.

Could it be possible that Elder Morrison didn’t know of his church’s past teachings or was he merely hoping his readers were uninformed regarding this issue? It is a pretty well known fact that for many years, Mormon leaders taught that the black people were inferior and cursed by God. Mormonism founding prophet, Joseph Smith, once said: “*Had I anything to do with the negro, I would confine them by strict law to their own species, and put them on a national equalization.*” (Church History, Vol.5, pp 217-218).

Another example comes from their second prophet, Brigham Young as follows: “*You see some classes of the human family that are **black, uncouth, uncomely, disagreeable and low in their habits, wild, and seemingly deprived of nearly all the blessings of the intelligence that is generally bestowed upon mankind.***” (Journal of Discourses, Vol.7, p.290, my emphasis).

Some Mormons might like to say, “well, that is then, this is now”. However, proof that this ungodly teaching has filtered down to more recent times comes from statements like this one from LDS Apostle, Bruce R. McConkie (1915-1985): “*Those who were less valiant in pre-existence and who thereby had certain spiritual restrictions imposed upon them during mortality are*

known to us as the negroes. Such spirits are sent to earth through the lineage of Cain, the mark put upon him for his rebellion against God and his murder of Abel being a black skin. (Moses 5:16-41, 7:8, 12, 22)...**The negroes are not equal with other races where the receipt of certain spiritual blessings are concerned**, particularly the priesthood and the temple blessings that flow therefrom, but this inequality is not of man's origin. It is the Lord's doing..." (Mormon Doctrine, 24th Printing, 1978, p.527, my emphasis). NOTE: Shortly after this publication, the Negroes were allowed to receive the Mormon priesthood so McConkie had to withdraw much of this in subsequent printings.

Again we read from a Mormon "prophet", Joseph Fielding Smith (1876-1972): "Not only was Cain called upon to suffer, but because of his wickedness he became the father of an inferior race. **A curse was placed upon him and that curse has been continued through his lineage and must do so while time endures.** Millions of souls have come into this world **cursed with a black skin** and have been denied the privilege of Priesthood and the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel." (The Way To Perfection, p.101, my emphasis)

We are grateful that Mormon leaders no longer openly preach such harmful and unbiblical things, but this brings little consolation for the wrongs of their past. I use the word "openly" because **their scriptures** still teach that a whole race of people were "cursed" with a black skin for sins committed before they came to this earth and because of Cain. If they truly wish to be considered a non-racist people, common sense dictates that they not only remove these LDS scriptures (e.g. 2 Nephi 5:21, 3 Nephi 2:14-15, Moses 7:8, 22), but also admit that their past leaders **were indeed** racists, and that these leaders were sorely lacking Divine guidance. Of course this would brand them as false prophets and teachers but honesty leaves no other options!

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GRACE IS LOVE WITH TEARS UPON ITS FACE
SAYING "COME HOME" –

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CONFUSION IN "INSPIRED" LDS REVELATIONS

In "The Pearl Of Great Price", we read: "...*I am the Beginning and the End, the Almighty God; by mine Only Begotten I created these things; yea, in the beginning I created the heaven, and the earth upon which thou standest.*" (Moses 2:1, my emphasis)

However, the book of Abraham (the very next book) repudiates this monotheistic view and states:

"And then the Lord said: Let us go down. And they went down at the beginning, and they, that is the Gods, organized and formed the heavens and the earth." (Abraham 4:1, my emphasis)

There are about forty references to "the Gods" in the book of Abraham, and the Mormons themselves seem unable to give any concrete explanation as to this clear contradiction.

SUPPORT GROUP MEETINGS

We hold monthly support group meetings during the year, however, we will not be meeting in the month of December. We will resume these meetings on the 2nd Tuesday of January 2014, at 7:30 P.M. at our regular location, the Fellowship Center of Plaza Bible Church at 240 W. Chapman Avenue in the city of Orange. Starting out the new year, we will be having a very interesting meeting as our speaker is a former Atheist turned Pastor. His topic will be Christianity vs Atheism.

At the end, there will be a question and answer time, followed by refreshments. All are welcome - those who have a burden to reach the Mormons, those who want to learn more, those who need support, and the Mormons themselves. We look forward to seeing you there (bring a friend).



