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NEWSLETTER ~ JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2012

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



FROM CHAR'S DESK

A brand new year ~ what are we going to do with it? Are we going to keep up our same old habits and rituals or are we going to ask God to show us what HE would have us do with "this brand New Year" He is giving us? Time is running out! I am reading Ruth Graham Lotz's new book "Expecting to See Jesus" and she said in the deepest core of her being she believes that her generation is the one that immediately precedes the return of Christ to the earth.

In my heart I know I must be bold in telling my Mormon friends and relatives that Jesus is coming soon and there is no time to try and earn your way into His presence. You must believe what the Bible says and not what a supposed living prophet tells you. Jesus said, "Except a man is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (Jn 3:3). This does not mean merely being baptized when you are eight and having hands laid on you to receive the Holy Spirit. It means to receive Jesus as your personal Lord and Savior as a free gift from Him through His amazing grace. Then He becomes your All in All! We must tell them, tell them, tell them, and this could end up being the greatest year we have ever had!

WHAT CAUSED JOSEPH SMITH TO STRAY SO FAR FROM HISTORIC CHRISTIANITY?

When Joseph Smith was a young boy there was no Mormonism. His mother was a Presbyterian and he leaned toward the Methodists. So how did he end

up with a new religion that was so drastically estranged from his boyhood roots? Recently, in reading one of my daily devotionals, I think I found the answer. A.W. Tozer said:

"Let a man question the inspiration of the scriptures and a curious, even monstrous, inversion takes place: Thereafter he judges the word instead of letting the word judge him; he determines what the word should teach instead of permitting it to determine what he should believe; he edits, amends, strikes out, adds at his pleasure; but always he sits above the word and makes it amenable to him instead of kneeling before God and becoming amenable to the word!" ("Renewed Day By Day", November 7th)

And I believe that is exactly what Joseph did to the detriment of millions of people who followed him. First, he questioned the inspiration of the scriptures when he said many plain and precious parts have been removed (1 Nephi 13:26-28). Next he said there is more than just the biblical scriptures and he began teaching and preaching his own brand of "Christianity".

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Thank You

Then he went even further and said the Bible was not translated correctly, so he proceeded to pen his own version. The late Mormon Apostle, Bruce R. McConkie, said: "...*the Prophet corrected, revised, altered, added to, and deleted from the King James Version of the Bible to form what is now commonly referred to as the "Inspired Version of the Bible"*". ("Mormon Doctrine", Second Edition, p.383)

This is exactly what Tozer warned would happen when a man started to question the inspiration of the scriptures. And it is amazing how slowly but surely one very charismatic (but dangerous) person can convince others that he is a prophet of God. The honest thing for him to have done would be to walk out on the Christian faith and put it behind him rather than lead so many away from the truth revealed in God's holy word.

~ Jenell's Jots & Tittles ~

THE "VERY WICKED" IN GLORY???

Early last year, Elder Dallin H. Oaks, "Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles", shared a teaching of Mormonism that is very unsettling to true evangelical Christians. He stated: "*The theology of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ [Mormonism] is comprehensive, universal, merciful, and true. Following the necessary experience of mortal life, all sons and daughters of God will ultimately be resurrected and go to a kingdom of glory more wonderful than any mortal can comprehend. With only a few exceptions, even the very wicked will ultimately go to a marvelous—though lesser—kingdom of glory.*" ("The Ensign", January 2011, p.27, my emphasis)

While Mormonism's theology allows for three heavens ("degrees of glory"), the Bible tells us there are only two destinations for the departed – "*Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgement.*" (John 5:28-29 NAS). Again in Matthew 25:46, we read – "*And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.*" (Also see Dan.12:2; 2 Cor.2:15-16; 2 Thess.1:7-10; Luke 16:19-26; Rev.20:15, etc.)

No where in the Bible (or the "Book of Mormon" for that matter), will anyone read of differing degrees of heaven. Mormons try and use 1 Cor.15:40-41 as a proof text for this, however, in verse 35 we read the question that leads up to the apostle Paul's response in the verses that follow: "*But someone will say, How are the dead raised? And with what kind of body do they come?*". So **the context** around verses 40 & 41 tells us that Paul is saying that just as there are differences between celestial bodies (sun, moon and stars), so there is a difference between our earthly (terrestrial) bodies and the ones we will have in the resurrection.

Another Bible verse they like to use is found in 2 Cor.12:2 where the apostle Paul says he was "caught up to the third heaven". Anyone familiar with Hebrew thought (and Paul was a Hebrew) knows that they believed in the same three heavens as Christians do today. The *atmospheric* heaven (Deut.28:12; Ps.147:8; Acts 14:17), the *starry* heavens (Gen.1:14; Gen.15:5; Deut.1:10; Isa.13:10) and the *highest* heaven which is the throne of God (Isa.66:1), the abode of angels (Matt.18:10; Matt. 22:30), and where all those who have received Christ will go (Heb.9:15, 24; Heb.12:22-23; Rev.21:1-4). In regards to the "three heavens" it has been said, "the first we see by sight, the second we see by night, and the third we see by faith".

Last, neither the Bible nor the "Book of Mormon" shares Mormonism's doctrine of the "very wicked" ultimately going to a "marvelous" place. Instead, we clearly read in the Bible that the guilty will not go unpunished (e.g. Ex.23:7, Ex.34:7; Nahum 1:3; 1Cor.6:9-10; Rev.21:8, etc.). And these words of Jesus couldn't be more clear: "*Enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide, and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and many are those who enter by it. For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life and few are those who find it.*" (Matt.7:13-14 NAS)

Sadly, there are many who join the Mormon Church because of these kinds of teachings: No permanent hell, can become a God or a Goddess, baptism for the dead, all will go to a wonderful place, families are forever, and of course many men are looking forward to polygamy in the next life. The only problem is that these beliefs are not of God and the next life will be too late to find that out. Please keep the Mormons in prayer as well as the various ministries that labor to reach them.

CITATIONS OF CONCERN (From LDS Leaders)

“In the words of Elder Bruce R. McConkie (1915-85) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “The Joseph Smith Translation, or Inspired Version, is a thousand times over the best Bible now existing on earth...The JST is a special gift given of the Lord. It is one of the great evidences of the Prophet Joseph Smith’s divine calling.” (June 1999 “Ensign”, p.21)

CONTRADICTIONS BETWEEN JOSEPH SMITH AND THE BOOK OF MORMON

It is recorded in Mormon scripture that the Book of Mormon contains the “fullness” of the gospel (D. & C. 20:8-9, 27:5, 42:12), however, words can be cheap. With just a little research, one can see that it not only does not contain Mormon doctrine and theology, it often **contradicts Joseph Smith’s own teachings**. Following are a few examples:

BOM: *“And this I know, because the Lord hath said he dwelleth not in unholy temples, but in the hearts of the righteous doth he dwell...” (Alma 34:36)*

SMITH: *“John 14:23 – The appearing of the Father and the Son, in that verse, is a personal appearance; and the idea that the Father and the Son dwell in a man’s heart is an old sectarian notion, and is false.” (D. & C. 130:3)*

BOM: *“...And now, behold, this is the doctrine of Christ, and the only and true doctrine of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, **which is one God**, without end. Amen.” (2 Nephi 31:21, my emphasis)*

SMITH: *Many men say there is one God; the Father, the son and Holy Ghost are only one God...All are to be crammed into one God, according to sectarianism. It would make the biggest God in all the world. He would be a wonderfully big God—he would be a giant or a monster.” (“Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith”, p.372).*

BOM: *“For behold, by the power of his word man came upon the face of the earth, which earth was created by the power of his word. Wherefore, if God being able to speak and the world was, and to speak and man was created...” (Jacob 4:9)*

SMITH: *“Now I ask all who will hear me, why the learned men who are preaching salvation, say that God created the heavens and earth out of nothing? The reason is, that they are unlearned in the things of God...Now, the word create came from the word baurau, which does not mean to create out of nothing; it means to organize; the same as a man would organize materials and build a ship.” (“Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith”, p.350)*

BOM: *“Behold, David and Solomon truly had many wives and concubines, which thing was abominable before me, saith the Lord.” (Jacob 2:24, also see Jacob 3:5)*

SMITH: *“David also received many wives and concubines, and also Solomon and Moses my servants...and in nothing did they sin save in those things which they received not of me.” (D. & C. 132:38, also see 132:1 where it says the Lord “justified” David & Solomon for “having many wives and concubines”)*

To find that Mormonism’s doctrine and theology is absent from the pages of the BOM is bad enough, but then to find that its founder and leader denies much of its teachings should be sufficient for them to want to dispose of it. Yet the LDS church goes to great lengths and expense to promote it. That this book serves mainly as a **proselytizing tool** aimed at the uninformed and unsuspecting, seems quite obvious.

SINNERS AT BIRTH?

The October 2011 “Ensign” (an official LDS magazine) shared the following statement from President Boyd K. Packer, “of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles”: *“[Some believe] that little children are conceived in sin and enter mortality in a state of natural corruption. That doctrine is false!...” (p.49)*. He goes on to share from Moroni 8:8-9 (Book of Mormon) which says, *“...wherefore, little children are whole, for they are not capable of committing sin...I know that it is*

solemn mockery before God, that ye should baptize little children”.

What is “false” is his assumption that baptism washes away sin, however, that remains another discussion for another day. The “some” (the first word in President Packer’s statement) who believe that little children are born with a sin nature, are all Biblical Christians, because this is exactly what our scriptures teach –

*“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon **all** men, for that all have sinned”* (Rom.5:12, also see vs.18-19)

*“Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were **by nature** the children of wrath, even as others.* (Eph.2:3)

“Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me. (Ps.51:5)

This is an important doctrine because **only** Jesus was born without a sin nature (hence the need for the “virgin birth - Matt.1:18 ff), and only by such a One could

mankind be redeemed. While we believe that babies are born with a sin nature, we do not believe they are held accountable until they can comprehend what sin is (e.g. Rom.4:15, 5:13, 7:7&9, etc.).

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“O praise the Lord, all ye nations: praise him, all ye people. For his merciful kindness is great toward us: and the truth of the Lord endureth for ever. Praise ye the Lord.” (Ps.117)

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SUPPORT GROUP MEETINGS

We hold monthly support group meetings at 7:30 p.m. on the 2nd Tuesday of every month. These gatherings include a mini-lesson, testimony of an ex-Mormon, a question and answer time, and 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. The address is 240 W. Chapman Avenue in Orange and we look forward to seeing you there.

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