

Saving Latter Day Saints

The Newest Evangelicals – Part IV

Mormonism's Bid For Christian Status

Selected Scripture

Introduction and Review

Today, we conclude our series of studies relating to the false teaching of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints or the Mormon Church.

I recently watched video material where members of the Southern Baptist Convention were interviewing people on the street. Over and over again, people were quoted saying,

- As one man said, "I think the Mormons must be Christians, since Jesus Christ's name is a part of the church title."
- One woman said, "Yes, I think they are a part of the Christian denomination, since they try to live right and they believe in God."
- Another said, "I believe the Mormons are another denomination of the Christian church."
- Another said, "The Mormon's encourage people to help others, by learning more about Christ – you not only get a good feeling through the commercials, but you're also encouraged to learn more about their religion."
- Another person said, "Sure they're Christians, they say so in the commercial."

The reality of Mormonism is far different.

Mormonism, in the last fifteen to twenty years, has made incredible advancement in the American culture. The devout Mormon author, Stephen

Covey, who wrote a best selling book entitled, *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, Senator Orrin Hatch, the Marriott Hotel chain, the largest privately owned university in America or Brigham Young, have all contributed to a tremendous amount of credibility and influence of the Mormon church to the average American. Mormonism is no longer viewed as a cult, but as another branch of Christianity.

Today, in fact, Mormonism has been accepted into the ecumenical religious scene. Mormons will cooperate with any other religion, if it will serve their image-shaping purpose. One newscast that I watched recently, opened with the story of a Mormon Christmas eve service that was actually going to include a Catholic Mass. The newscast showed clips of Catholics and Mormons taking Mass together. The news anchor said, "This is a sign that there is indeed cooperation between religions."

It is a sign indeed! It is a typical sign of religious pluralism. This is the belief that everyone is on his way to heaven – wherever that is; that all religions are equally sincere; that there are different paths, but they all lead to God – whoever He is. And, everyone picks his own brand of religion; everyone concocts his own belief system. You can pick a verse from the Bible, a verse from the *Book of Mormon*, a verse from the *Bagavad Gita*, a verse from the *Koran*, and simply create whatever God in whom you are the most comfortable believing. And, by no means is anyone allowed to question anyone else's belief as right or wrong, since everyone is right. Whatever you think is right is right, because it is right for you.

And, anyone who challenges you is being judgmental and non-Christian.

Yet, the Bible actually teaches something vastly different. In fact, the Bible commands us to test what we hear; to condemn the false teacher; to remove from our midst, those who believe false doctrine.

Listen to Peter, as he writes, in II Peter, chapter 2, verses 1 through 6, and verse 9,

But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves.

Many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned;

and in their greed they will exploit you with false words; their judgment from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep.

For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment;

and did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a preacher of righteousness, with seven others, when He brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly;

and if He condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to destruction by reducing them to ashes, having made them an example to those who would live ungodly lives thereafter;

Skip to verse 9.

then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment.

Did you hear the words, “condemned, heresy, judgement, punishment, hell, destruction”? Our tolerant society does not like the biblical description of this kind of God, so they create one that is more open and more tolerant.

Turn a few pages over to Jude and look at verse 3, where he warns the church,

Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that

you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints.

The word “contend” is an athletic word that could be translated, “wrestle or compete,” in order to win the contest. It is interesting to me that, while the truth originates with God, it seems to be our responsibility to earnestly keep the faith pure and free from error. And, by the way, whenever the word “faith” is preceded by the article “the,” it is referring to the body of doctrinal truth.

This is also a wonderful verse to show to your Mormon co-workers and friends. Did you notice that the truth, “the faith,” has already been delivered to the church? The saints did not have to wait 1900 years to get the real truth from Joseph Smith. This verse tells us that the saints were already given the truth and it was delivered, “once for all”. We have the truth – the church has the faith.

Now notice verse 4.

For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

One of the deceptions of Mormonism that makes it more devious than other religions of the world, is the fact that they have crept in, almost unnoticed, and have taken the terminology of the Bible and attached false, heretical definitions to those terms. They use our vocabulary, but they use a different dictionary. You would never know, at first glance, that:

- the God they say they believe in is a glorified man with flesh and blood, and who, with his many wives, procreates spirit babies;
- Jesus Christ is one of his millions of spirit babies and that he should not be prayed to nor worshipped;
- the Mormon heaven is really three heavens, and that you get into one of the three, based upon your good works and faithfulness to the Mormon Church.

Yet, in spite of that, Mormonism has successfully passed itself off to a gullible, biblically illiterate society as Christian. And, by the way, cults always flourish in cultures where a little of the Bible is known, but that culture is still virtually biblically illiterate.

So, they use familiar terms, with different definitions, while undiscerning, non-critically thinking people gullibly gobble it up.

Our Response to Mormonism

What is our response to be?

Remember the mission

1. First, let us remember the mission.

Turn to Matthew, chapter 28, verses 19 and 20.

Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.

That is our mission, to “go . . . and make disciples . . .”.

Notice that Jesus Christ did not command the church to go and make monotheists. Nor did He command the church to go and convince every Mormon that there are not millions of gods, but only one God, and, if they would just admit to that fact, they would be okay. They will not be okay.

Perhaps you have been thinking, “Well, I certainly don’t believe there are millions of gods, like the Mormons, I only believe in one God, for all of eternity, so I’m alright.”

James has a message for you that should startle your very soul. Look at chapter 2, verse 19,

You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder.

The demons know there is only one God, the demons do not deny it, they believe it! However, a demon will never get into heaven for simply assenting to a truth.

What is the difference between you and a demon? A demon will never surrender his will to Christ. A demon will never walk with Christ. A demon will never pray to Christ. A demon does not have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

Notice that our mission is not to go and make converts. A convert is someone who places his faith in Jesus Christ. That, however, is not the end of our mission.

We are to make disciples; that is, those who learn of Christ and who walk with Christ. Becoming a Christian takes a moment of time; becoming a disciple takes a lifetime.

Let us remember the mission.

The Mormons are building a temple nearby. We are going to make disciples out of people who used to call themselves Mormons.

I got a phone call from a Mormon leader, inviting me to the dedication of their temple. Unfortunately, I was not in to take the call. I always miss the good stuff. I would have loved to have told him that, according to the Bible, the temple no longer exists in the form of stone and wood; there is no such temple building today. But, if he would really like to see a true temple of God, he could come to my office and take a long look at me. I know that does not sound very exciting, but Paul said, in I Corinthians, chapter 6, verse 19,

. . . your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God . . .

Let us remember the mission.

Recover the message

2. Secondly, let us recover the message.

Look at I John, chapter 1, verses 1 through 4.

What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life

— and the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us —

what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.

These things we write, so that our joy may be made complete.

John is so excited that he can hardly sit still. We, according to verse 2, are proclaiming eternal life. We have discovered the truth, and, as verse 4 tells us, we cannot be satisfied and truly joyful unless we get it out of our mouths and into the hearts of others.

Ladies and gentlemen, the challenge is not so much to deliver the message, as it is for us to know the message. Peter said, in I Peter, chapter 3, verse 15,

. . . always [be] ready to make a defense [or give an answer] to everyone who asks you to

give an account for the hope that is in you . .

“Wow! I’m supposed to have an answer for that guy at work? I’m supposed to have an answer for that Mormon who stands on my doorstep? I should know the reason for my faith?”

How many have been asked a really tough question about Christianity and thought, “They need to call my pastor, he’d have the answer.”?

I Peter, chapter 3, verse 15, was not given to just the pastors, the professors, and the experts in religion; it was given to the church.

We need to recover the message; to know what we believe; and to be prepared to proclaim eternal life.

Reclaim the model

3. Finally, let us reclaim the model.

Does it bother you that the Mormon Church has cornered the market on being the brand of religion that believes in the family? The Mormon youth are poster children for morality. They do not believe in sex outside of marriage. The Mormons do not drink or smoke; they are committed to honesty and a high work ethic; they spend time together studying and playing. Is it possible that Mormons live like Christians better than Christians do?

These should be our values, so stop being dishonest. These are our moral standards, so stop having sexual relations with someone to whom you are not married. We are committed to the family, so stop divorcing and instead, spend time with your spouse and your children.

Do you see the problem? What is it about your life that would appeal to a Mormon? What can you deliver that they do not already have?

Let us reclaim the model that we are supposed to be to the world. We are the church of Jesus Christ. WE ARE THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST.

Conclusion

Let me make three closing comments. As you encounter Mormons, here are three things to keep in mind.

Identify with the Mormon as a person

1. First, identify with the Mormon as a person.

They are people who have needs; they have fears; they have frustrations; they have families; they worry

about the same weather and stock market. Identify with those things first. Do not hit them over the head with your Bible, call them heretics, and slam the door. They are people, and they are people who need the Lord.

Apply the Bible at every point

2. Secondly, apply the Bible at every point.

You do not have to know the *Book of Mormon*. Remind the Mormon that, since the *Book of Mormon* supposedly does not contradict the Bible, you can stick with using the Bible. And, remember Hebrews, chapter 4, verse 12,

. . . the word of God is living and active [or powerful] and sharper than any two-edged sword . . .

The word “powerful,” as used in the King James Version, is the Greek word “energes,” meaning, “energy, active, productive”. The word is used of activity which produces results and is often used for divine activity, which produces effective results. So, stay close to the Word.

Depend upon the Holy Spirit’s power

3. Finally, depend upon the Holy Spirit’s power.

When it is all said and done, remember, you cannot convince anyone to trust Christ; you cannot bring about salvation in anyone; you do not open their heart; you do not dispense faith, even if you have brilliant answers.

When my children were little, I would come home from meeting with people and, the next morning, they would ask, “Daddy, did you save them?”

I would explain that I cannot save anyone, as that is the work of Jesus Christ. Jesus said, according to Luke, chapter 19, verse 10,

. . . [I have] come to seek and to save that which was lost.

That is also the work of God’s Spirit, whom Jesus promised, in John, chapter 16, verse 8, would come and convince people of “sin and righteousness and judgement”.

That is the work of God. We are simply His instruments, used as His ambassadors, as Paul said in II Corinthians, chapter 5, verse 20, ambassadors of Christ to a lost world that is, in the name of religion,

deceived, cheated, defrauded, swindled, and ultimately, destroyed.

May God so use us to win Mormons to Christ that we will become known as a place where

Mormons discover the truth about God and where they are ultimately rescued for all eternity.

This manuscript is from a sermon preached on 8/29/1999 by Stephen Davey.

© Copyright 1999 Stephen Davey

All rights reserved.