

Place Lurgan Baptist 4:11:2008

THE CHAOS OF THE CULTS

Reading: 1 Timothy 4:1-2

3. MORMONISM- THE LATTER DAY SAINTS

The Holy Spirit according to the apostle Paul explicitly said “ *that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith.*” (1 Tim 4:1) Now if the Holy Spirit clearly says something you best pay attention to it. This particular prophecy has never more fulfilled than in the Mormon Church. Paul said that “ *in the latter times,*” or you can translate it “ *in the latter days.*” It’s interesting that the Mormons are known as the “ *Church of the Latter Day Saints.*” I like what Harry Ironside said when he was talking to a Mormon once. The Mormon said, “ *Excuse me, Sir, I am a member of the church of the latter day saints, what are you ?*” Harry Ironside replied, “ *I am a member of the church of the former day saints.*” What he was saying was, I am a member of the church of the saints who go back strictly and only to the New Testament. We are going to find that Mormonism is one of the most vicious and pernicious aberrations of the Christian faith that you can possibly find.

Now there are some people who get upset when you talk about the faith of other religions. But I want you to realise that Christ would get upset if we didn’t. Do you recall what the Saviour said ? “ *Beware of false prophets which*

come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.” (Matt 7:15) You see, anyone other than orthodox believers who profess to be Christians are indeed wolves in sheep’s clothing. Now I stress again we are not dealing we are not dealing with the **deportment** of the average Mormon, we are dealing with their **doctrine**. We are going to discover that the cornerstone of their religion is a man, just as the cornerstone of our faith is a man. The cornerstone of our faith is Jesus Christ, while the cornerstone of their religion is Joseph Smith. John says, “ *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.*” (2 Jn 9-10) You see, the basic question that we come down to again is this, “ **What think ye of Christ ?**” (Matt 22: 42)

Now did you know that Mormonism or “ *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints,*” has more than 11 million members and is growing at the rate of more than 1500 people per day ? One baptism occurs in the Mormon church on average every 1 minute 55 seconds. Brigham Young University President , Merrill Bateman, predicted in the year 2000 that by 2025 the number of Mormon missionaries will have more than doubled, rising from about 60,000 to 125,000. It is possible that by that year 2025 there could be more than a thousand or more temples in the world. This requires constructing 36 new temples each year, which is feasible given the fact that 35 temples were dedicated in 2000. Today “ *The Church of*

Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints,” is one of the wealthiest cults in the world. It possesses between 25 and 30 billion dollars in assets alone. (Mormon America: The Power and the Promise 1999 xvi, 115) *The church controls at least one hundred companies worldwide including the Marriott hotel chain.* Three million dollars a day is raised by the tithes and offerings of its members. In fact, all who join the church must agree to give a compulsory tithing of their income. Of course their headquarters are in Salt Lake City in the state of Utah in the United States of America. Now these facts and figures are impressive in themselves. But when we consider the unusual and often turbulent history and beliefs of this group, their growth is even more remarkable.

(1) THE HISTORY OF MORMONISM

“ I asked the personages who stood above me in the light, which of all the sects were right and which I should join. I was answered, that I must join none of them for they are all wrong.” (Writings of Joseph Smith 2:18,19 in Pearl of Great Price) Thus begins the fantastic account of the history of one of the largest religious groups in the world today. Now in order to simplify their history, I want us to think about,

(a) THE INITIAL REVELATION:

Mormonism was begun by Joseph Smith who was born in Vermont on the 23rd December 1805. He was the fourth child of Lucy and Joseph Smith. Joseph senior was known as a money digger and his mother was a highly

superstitious person. As a child he was confused by the numerous versions of the Christian church to be found in his home area of Sharon, Vermont. In the spring of 1920 this 14 year old boy was kneeling in the woods in New York state praying concerning this very matter when he claimed to have a vision of two persons, the Father and the Son. Smith recounts how “ *the Son,*” instructed him not to join any of the churches for they were all wrong.

“ *The Personage who addressed me said that all their creeds were an abomination in his sight.*” (J. Smith History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints Salt Lake City Deseret 1973 1:17, 19) Thus as Harold Berry says **“ *Mormons would have us believe, that with one vision given to a 14 year old boy, God wiped out 18 centuries of historic Christianity.*”** (The Truth Twisters p 100) Now we are immediately presented with a problem here because the Bible says, “ *No man hath seen God at any time.*” (Jn 1:14) Moreover Paul describes God as the One “ *who only hath immortality dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen, nor can see.* “ (1 Tim 6:16)

So not only Joseph Smith’s contradict the Bible, we are asked to take his word against that of the apostle John and the Paul as to the substance of his vision. But there was not only, (a) there were,

(b) THE CONTINUAL REVELATIONS:

For three years later on the 21st September 1823 when Smith was seventeen years of age, an angel called

“ **Moroni**,” appeared to him. Now this angel was supposedly the son of Mormon, the leader of a people called the Nephites who had lived in the Americas many years ago. It was claimed that Joseph Smith was chosen to translate the book of Mormon which was written by Moroni over a thousand years earlier, and that within the book of Mormon “ *was the fullness of the everlasting gospel as delivered by the Saviour to the ancient inhabitants.*” (Writings of Joseph Smith 2:34 In Pearl of Great Price p 51) The book was written on golden plates, which were hidden near where Joseph was then living, in Palmyra, New York. Although he wanted to see these plates immediately he was told in another alleged appearance by Moroni that he would have to wait four years before retrieving them. Exactly four years later he returned to the hill Cumorah, and not only obtained the plates but stones Urim and Thummim, stones used in the Old Testament to ascertain the will of God. What would happen was this. As Smith gazed through the stones, the “ *reformed Egyptian characters*,” would appear to him in English. He would then read the translation to a man called Oliver Cowdery who would then record it.

During this translation work Smith and Cowdery were supposedly visited by John the Baptist who told them to baptize and lay hands on each other thus ordaining them into the Aaronic priesthood. Later Peter, James and John supposedly appeared to them and ordained them into the Melchizedek priesthood. *Smith maintained that the golden plates of the original Book of Mormon were taken away by the angel.* They have not been seen since, so no one can check the validity of Joseph Smith’s claims as to the

existence and content of the Book of Mormon. Matthew Slick says,

The Book of Mormon is supposedly the account of a people called the Jeredites, who migrated from the Tower of Babel in the Middle East to Central America, where they perished because of their own immorality. It also describes some Jews who, led by a man called Nephi, fled to America as a result of persecution in Jerusalem. The Jews divided into two groups the Nephites and Lamanites and these two groups fought each other. Having defeated the Nephites in 428 AD, the Lamanites lived on and are known as the American Indians. The Book of Mormon is the account of the Nephite leader, Mormon concerning their culture, civilization and appearance of Jesus to the Americas. (Right Answers for Wrong Beliefs Matt Slick p 75, 76)

You see, according to the Book of Mormon Christ after His resurrection, came to the Americas to preach to the American Indians , the Lamanites, and there He established His church in the Americas as He had in Palestine. Now let me quickly a few observations.

- Linguistic scholars are agreed that “ *reformed Egyptian characters do not exist*, yet Joseph Smith claims that God revealed to him the English translation of these reformed Egyptian characters.
- There is no proof that the Nephite and Lamanite peoples ever existed.

- There is no evidence that the native American Indians were descendants of the Israelites.

Now after the publication of the Book of Mormon in 1830 the cult began to grow. Because their religion was so different from Christianity that is, plurality of gods, polygamy, persecution soon forced them to move from New York to Ohio, then to Missouri and finally to Nauvoo, Illinois. After breaking some laws in Nauvoo, Joseph and his brother Hyrum ended up in jail. A mob later broke into jail and killed Joseph and his brother.

(History of the Church Vol 6, p 618) After his death, the Mormon church divided into two groups, one led by Joseph Smiths and went back to Missouri, the other group which was led by Brigham Young, went to Utah, eventually ending up in Salt Lake in 1847 and founding Salt Lake City. Now we are not finished with out history lesson yet. For I want you to think not only about (a) (b)

(c) THE MORAL REVELATIONS:

You see, one of the reasons the Mormons were persecuted was because of polygamy. It's not known how many wives Joseph Smith had, estimates range from 28 to 84. He himself said, *“ If any man espouse a virgin, and desire to espouse another, and the first give her consent, and he espouse the second, and they are virgins and have bowed to no other man, then he is justified, he cannot commit adultery for they are given to him, for he cannot commit adultery with that that belongeth unto him and unto no one else. And if he have ten virgins given unto him by this*

law he cannot commit adultery, for they belong to him and they are given unto him, therefore he is justified.”

(Doctrine and Covenants Sec 132, pp 4, 61, 62) His successor Brigham Young was no less explicit for he says

If any of you will deny the plurality of wives and continue to do so, I promise that you will be dammed.

The Mormon Church has since changed its teaching on polygamy, what does that mean then for modern Mormons ? You see, nowhere does the Bible teach polygamy. Although some men in Bible times had many wives this was not God's will according to (Deut 17:14-18) Instead of polygamy the Bible teaches the commitment of one man and one woman to each other until death. (1 Tim 3:2, 12 Titus 1:5-6) I agree with Mark Twain on the issue of polygamy. A Mormon once approached Mark Twain and said, *“ can you show me any verse in the Bible that would speak against polygamy.”* Mark Twain said *“ I certainly can,”* and he said, *“ No man can serve two masters.”* (1)

(2) THE AUTHORITY OF MORMONISM

Where does the authority of Mormonism lie ? Let me suggest to you that it lies in,

(a) A NEW CHURCH:

Let me tell you what Mormon doctrine says.

The true gospel was lost from the earth. Mormonism is its restoration. (Mormon Doctrine by Bruce R. McConkie (pub) p 635) They teach that there was an apostasy and the true church ceased to exist on earth. They say,

If it had been for Joseph Smith and the restoration, there would be no salvation. There is no salvation, outside the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. (Mormon Doctrine p 670)

In striking contrast to that listen to the words of the Saviour, “ *I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*” (Matt 16:18) My the church was never lost from the earth. Rather its founder the Lord Jesus died and rose again, and then sent the Holy Spirit and baptized individual units into the body of Jesus Christ and on the day of Pentecost the church of the Lord Jesus was formed. You know Mormons claim they are Christian and do not go around condemning other religions as “ *anti-Mormons,*” do. They say that they are forgiving, tolerant, good Christian who don't have anything against anyone. Is that so ? Well, listen to what they think of us.

We talk about Christianity, but it is a perfect pack of nonsense myself and hundreds of the elders around me have seen its pomp, parade, and glory and what is it ? It is a sound brass, and a tinkling symbol, it is as corrupt as hell, and the Devil could not invent a better engine to spread his work than the Christianity of the 19th century. (John Taylor Journal of Discourses Vol 6, 1858, p 167)

Do you recall that we discovered that one of the marks of a cult was being exclusive ? Cults believe that they alone have the truth, that they are the only true church and as far as the rest of us are concerned we are apostates and damned.

(b) A NEW BIBLE:

A counterfeit Bible, the Book of Mormon. Do you know what the Mormon church claims ? That the Book of Mormon is more correct than the Bible. (History of the Church 4:461) The Mormons place all of their scriptures including not only the Book of Mormon, but also Doctrine and Covenants and the Pearl of Great Price above the Bible in authority. Wallace Bennett has said, “ *We recognize the Bible's limitations as well as its value. We do not ascribe final authority to any of its statements because we believe that God has reestablished the authority to speak in His name, and has given it again to righteous men. Obviously we do not accept the idea that with the adoption of the present contents of the Bible, the whole canon of Scripture was closed for all time.*” (Bennett Why I am a Mormon p, 159) That means the Mormons reject the Bible as being the infallible Word of God.

Did you know that in the Book of Mormon over 200 quotations are taken from the King James Version of the Bible ? Whole chapters are taken from the Book of Isaiah yet the golden plates were supposedly written twelve hundred years before King James authorized that version.

I suggest to you this that the Bible alone is the Word of God and as such it is trustworthy and powerful.

(c) A NEW PRIESTHOOD:

You see, Joseph Smith said that John the Baptist conferred on him the Old Testament Aaronic priesthood, later he said that Peter, James, and John appeared to him and conferred on him the priesthood of Melchisedec. But do you know what the Bible says ? “ *this man (Christ) because he continueth ever hath an unchangeable priesthood.* (Heb 7:24) Do you see that word “ *unchangeable* ?” It can be translated as “ *untransferable.*” My There is only priest after the order of Melchisedec the Christ who died and rose again. So the authority of the Mormons lies in these three areas, a new church, a new bible, a new priesthood. (1) (2)

(3) THE THEOLOGY OF MORMONISM

What is their creed ? What do they say about,

(a) GOD:

1. They say God is an Exalted Man:

He has flesh and blood. Joseph Smith believed that God “ *was once what we are now, and is an exalted man.* (Cited by Walter Martin The Kingdom of the Cults p, 202) Matt Slick says,

Mormonism teaches that God has a body of flesh and bones and according to Mormonism he has a goddess wife. Since they are both exalted persons they each possess physical bodies. In their exalted state as deities they have sexual relations and produce spirit children that grow and mature in the spirit realm. The first spirit child born was Jesus and afterwards came the devil and all other spirit creatures. After the spirit children are born to god and his goddess wife in heaven, they come down and enter into the bodies of babies that are born on earth. During this ‘ compression,’ into the infant state, the memories of their pre-existence are erased. All people were according to Mormonism, born in heaven first and then on earth, where they are to grow, learn and return to god. (Right Answers for Wrong Beliefs p, 76)

Mormons say God must have a physical body after all Moses spoke to God “ *face to face.*” (Ex 33:11) But surely that is simply a figurative way of saying “ *personally, directly, intimately,*” but not physically. The Lord Jesus says, “ *God is spirit,*” (Jn 4:24) and a spirit does not have flesh and bones. (Lk 24:39) But it gets worse.

2. They worship many gods:

They state,

We believe in the plurality of gods. (Mormon Doctrine of Deity p, 11) *There are many gods* (Mormon Doctrine p, 163) They say that the Bible teaches that there are many

gods. Paul says, “ *For though there be that are called gods.*” (1 Cor 8:5) Mind you it says “ *that are called gods.*” It does not say they really are gods. The Bible recognizes that there are false gods (Gal 4:8) But it flatly denies the existence of any other gods. Scripture declares, “ *I am the Lord and there is none else, there is no God beside Me.*” (Is 45:5)

(b) CHRIST:

1. They say that Christ was actually produced by a sexual relationship between a resurrected Adam God and Mary:

Brigham Young stated “ *He Christ was not begotten by the Holy Ghost Jesus our elder brother was begotten in the flesh by the same character that was in the Garden of Eden, and who is our Father in heaven.*” (Journal of Discourses Vol 1 pp 50, 51) Clearly, Brigham Young taught that Christ was conceived when Adam (who had become a god) had sexual relations with Mary. Let me give you a quote, “ **God had sexual relations with Mary to make the body of Jesus.**” (Journal of Discourses vol 4 1857, p 218) What blasphemy. Moreover, this teaching is directly opposed to the Biblical teaching that the Lord Jesus was conceived by a direct act of the Holy Spirit. Do you recall the words of the evangelist ? “ *Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.*” (Matt 1:18) The angel said that He would be called Emmanuel which being interpreted is, God with us. But the Mormons don't stop there in bringing dishonour to the Lord Jesus.

2. They say that Christ was a Polygamist:

“ *We say it was Jesus Christ who was married at Cana to the Mary's and Martha, whereby He could see His seed before He was crucified.*” (Orson Hyde Journal vol 2, p 80) “ If He was never married,” they say “ *His intimacy with Mary and Martha, and the other Mary also, must have been highly unbecoming and improper, to say the best of it.*” (Orson Hyde Journal vol 4 p, 259) So they teach that the wedding in Cana of Galilee was the wedding of Christ Himself, and that the Lord Jesus not only took a bride He took brides. You see, in the Mormon scriptures it is “ *revealed,*” that unmarried people and couples whose marriages are not sealed by the temple endowments can become only “ *angels in heaven.*” (Doctrine and Covenants 132:16) If their marriages are sealed “ *Then shall they be gods.*” (Doctrine and Covenants 132:20) It follows from this then, that if Christ had not married in this life, He would not have been able to rise above the position of an angel in the next life. Do you see what they are doing with your wonderful Saviour ?

They are degrading Him, dishonouring Him, devaluing Him. I mean what atonement could a polygamist make ? In any case they say that “ *Jesus' sacrifice was not able to cleanse us from all our sins.*” (Journal of Discourses vol 3 1856, p. 247) Brigham Young said, “ *Your own blood must atone for some sins.*” (Journal of Discourses vol. 3, p. 247) But do you know what the Bible says ? “ *Without shedding of blood is no remission.*” (Heb 9:22) Of course the Mormons believe that,

(c) SALVATION:

Is by works. They say.

Good works are necessary for salvation (Articles of Faith, p. 92) Redemption from personal sins can only be obtained through obedience to the requirements of the gospel (Mormon ceremonies) and a life of good works.

(Pratts Works, Paper 1) They say, there is no salvation without accepting Joseph Smith as a prophet of God.

(Doctrines of Salvation vol. 1, p. 188) But the Bible says, “ By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves it is the gift of God, not of works lest any man should boast.” (Eph 2:8-9) We become the children of God by receiving Christ as Saviour. Now obedience and god works are evidence that a person has been saved, but they are not the means of salvation. Salvation is by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. Closely linked to the Mormons belief that salvation is by works is their doctrine of,

(d) BAPTISM:

You see, they believe that baptism is necessary to salvation. (Talmadge, Article of Faith p. 130) Indeed they teach that baptism for the dead is necessary. Thousands of people are baptized every year in the Mormon church for their ancestors who have died before them without being baptized. You see, they believe that a person can be baptized for a dead relative and secure that dead persons salvation. Thus in the afterlife the “ newly

baptized person,” will be able to enter into a higher level of Mormon heaven. (Doctrines of Salvation vol. 2, p.141 House of the Lord, p. 77) So what are they saying ? They are saying that people have a chance to be saved even after death, that is the teaching of Mormonism. Now the Word of God does mention baptism for the dead. (1 Cor 15:29) Let me make several observations.

1. This difficult verse has many interpretations.

2. Other Scripture passages, however, clarify what it does not mean. It does not teach, that a dead person can be saved, by another person’s being baptized on his behalf, because baptism never has a part in a person’s salvation.

(Eph 2:8 Rom 3:28) One explanation is, that they

“ which are baptized,” refers to living believers who give outward testimony to their faith in baptism by water, because they were first drawn to Christ by the exemplary lives and faithful witness of Christians who had subsequently died. Paul’s point is, that if there is no resurrection, and no life after death, then why are people coming to Christ to follow the hope of those who have died ? In no way does Paul advocate baptism by proxy for the dead.

Yet the Mormons have taken this obscure verse and built a whole doctrine around it. You see, what they are trying to teach is that you can actually be a Saviour for someone else. My I don’t need a sinner to be baptized for my sin, I need a Saviour to be crucified for my sin. There is no salvation after death. The Bible says, “ It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.”

(Heb 9:27) My your only opportunity to trust Christ as Saviour is while you are alive for there is no second chance after death. In relation to,

(e) THE FUTURE:

They believe that there are three levels of heaven, telestial, terrestrial and celestial. (Mormon Doctrine, p. 348) The verse they use to prove this is found in (1 Cor 15:40) where Paul says “ *There are also celestial bodies and bodies terrestrial, but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another.* ” Note,

1. This verse does not even mention “ *telestial,* ” and is therefore disqualified as support for the idea that there is a telestial kingdom.

2. The context makes it clear that Paul was comparing the resurrection body we receive (celestial) with the early body we now have (terrestrial) He does not mention anything about three levels of heaven. Harold Berry says, “ *Regarding hell Joseph Smith changed his original beliefs. He soon adopted the teachings of the universalists that all mankind will eventually be saved.* (Truth Twisters p. 110) My when you stand back and look at this system you have to conclude that

1. The Mormon Church have forsaken the Bible as their only rule of faith and practice.

2. They have blasphemed God by denying His sovereignty, His spirituality, His Trinitarian nature.

3. They have denied the deity of the Lord Jesus and called Him a polygamist.

4. They have created a system of salvation by works. There is no identity whatever between the gospel of the grace of God and that of the Mormons. It is without doubt “ ***another gospel.*** ” The command of Scripture concerning such is clear, “ ***From such, turn away.*** ” (2 Tim 3:5)