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## **A Critique of Mormonism**

**Stan Schmidt**

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## Mormonism – A Major Religion Around the World

Mormonism (the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints) is a major religion around the world. To some it is just another Christian denomination. To the informed it is a religion of heretical teachings and practices. This thesis is not "Mormon bashing," it is simply informing the uninformed about the true nature of a religion. There is no animosity in these words for I care deeply about the person caught in the confusing web that is called Mormonism.

This paper is not an attack on Mormonism, it is merely doing what the Bible says to do, "contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints" (Jude 3).

## Attacks and Counter Attacks

On the flip side, many Mormon leaders of the past have brutally attacked Christianity in the vilest of words. Their leaders have said Christians are as clueless to the things of God as an animal, that they are fools and heathens groveling in darkness. They say Christians are destitute of all authority from God, that they are corrupt.

The *Book of Mormon* even says that other Christian churches belong to the Devil (1 Nephi 14:10). I would call that "Christian bashing." They believe, as Bruce McConkie said, "there is no salvation outside The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints" (*Mormon Doctrine*, p. 670).

## Defining Terms

I learned a long time ago to, "define your terms." In other words, Mormonism uses many Christian words and phrases that make it appear like they are Christians. However, when one researches the teachings of Mormonism they realize that those similar terms mean something very different than what the Bible says. They not only deny pretty much all major Christian doctrine but most of their theology is actually anti-Christ. Let us not be distracted by similar terminology.

## Founding of Mormonism

Mormonism was founded by Joseph Smith back in the 1820's. He, himself was born in Vermont in 1805. This man had a past of which most Mormons do not know. Smith was involved in occult practices (divining rods, magic talismans (of which he was wearing when he died) and divination). He was not highly regarded by those who knew him best. Theologically, Smith was

a heretic of the worst possible form. However, he obviously had some sort of writing ability to come up with the *Book of Mormon* (1829). Some would claim it miraculous that Smith, young in age, could write that book. However, he did have a Bible, other books and a vivid and creative imagination. It also has been said that it (*Book of Mormon*) was taken from another fiction writer named Solomon Spaulding (who wrote historical romances). Even more, it is said to be very similar to another book written before the *Book of Mormon* called *View of the Hebrews* written by Ethan Smith.

### **Smith's Untenable Claim**

Smith said that God the Father and God the Son materialized to him and said all Christian churches were apostate and he (Smith) was chosen to restore Christianity.

That is not possible since Jesus said that the gates of hell would not prevail against the Church (Mt. 16:18, Eph. 3:20-21). God has always had His people, a remnant. There was never a time when there were no true believers. He always has a witness. Even Elijah, when he thought he was the only one, God said there were 7000 believers besides him (1 Kings 19).

As an aside, even as the Catholic Church was burning people at the stake and defaming Christ's Name, there were still true believers around during that time. The earth has never been without true followers of God, which annihilates the claims of Mormonism.

Smith is just another impostor who did not believe that the Bible was sufficient enough. They believe that without a total apostasy of the church there would be no need for Mormonism. Alas, there is no need for Mormonism! Oddly, Mormonism says that not only John the apostle but other disciples that Jesus made on this continent (according to the *Book of Mormon*) are still alive (3 Nephi 28:7-8). So I guess there were still true believers all along.

### **The First Vision of Smith**

Furthermore, the first vision of Smith is very controversial. Smith's apparent vision does not line up with reality. He said the Father and the Son (two Gods) appeared to him. The problem is at that time he still believed in one God. Also, the story of the first vision did not come to light until years after as an afterthought. It was not until much later that Smith started preaching about God once being a man and progressing to Godhood and that man can become God. He must have made up his first vision story to try and augment his authority. The whole story was not even accepted by the Mormon Church until the 1880's. Even Brigham Young said that God did not appear to Smith. Although, there are some that do believe in the first vision.

There is no evidence that Smith claimed to have seen the Father prior to 1834. The circumstances surrounding his "apparent" vision are an inconsistent mess. He said there was a revival going on when he had seen his vision. History proves him wrong for there was no revival until four years later. Also, he said he saw the Father, when Mormon records show that he had

seen only an angel. Which was it? Furthermore, his second vision is confusing whether the angel was Moroni or Nephi--the records conflict.

It appears that Smith pushed back the reality of the first vision to make room for the second vision. To make room for the visit from Moroni, he had to fabricate his first vision as happening years earlier, back to 1820. Although history proves him wrong and exposes his charade (White, *Letters to a Mormon Elder*, p. 103).

In other words, if history says that his "first vision" could not have been until 1825, what does Smith do with his second vision with Moroni in 1823? Well, he must say his first vision was in 1820. But, again, history catches him in the act of fabrication. Now if the date of 1820, a date canonized in Mormon teaching, is wrong, then what kind of foundation does that lay?

On a further note, Smith said that God materialized to him in 1820. The problem with that is that Smith said that no one can see God without the Holy Priesthood. Oddly, Smith did not have the supposed priesthood until nine years after his "meeting" with God.

### **Smith Against Multiplicity of Denominations**

One issue brought against Christian churches by Mormons is that there are so many denominations.

However, all Christians, regardless of denomination hold to the same basic tenets of faith: the Bible is the Word of God, the Trinity, Jesus was both God and man, salvation by grace through faith, Jesus' bodily resurrection and the Virgin Birth.

Also, as McKeever points out, "there are approximately a hundred different factions of Latter-day Saints who accept Joseph Smith as a prophet of God and the *Book of Mormon* as the word of God" (*Answering Mormons' Questions*, p. 26).

### **Smith is Not the First "Prophet" to Criticize Christianity**

Smith is not the first "prophet" to come along and say that Christianity was all wrong and needed a new leader. That is a familiar mantra. Nonetheless, he claimed to have received golden plates from the angel Moroni written in reformed Egyptian (1827).

The problem is that there is no such thing as a reformed Egyptian language.

He also claimed that John the Baptist came to him in person to bestow upon him the Aaronic Priesthood (1829). This is all trivial since the Aaronic Priesthood was fulfilled when Christ came. That priesthood is not necessary any longer since it became obsolete in Christ. To reinstate the Aaronic Priesthood is to deny the finished work of Christ. When Jesus died the curtain in the Temple was torn in two from top to bottom (Mt. 27:51). The way is now open for anyone to

enter God's very presence through Christ. Anyone today who claims to be a high priest is usurping what only belongs to Jesus Christ.

Besides, Smith could not be a part of the Aaronic priesthood anyway because you must be a Jewish Levite to be part of that, of which Smith most certainly is not.

Smith also said that Peter, James and John appeared to him and bestowed upon him the Melchizedek priesthood. Again, that is not possible because only Jesus had that priesthood and it does not transfer because He lives forever (Heb. 7:24, 1 Tim. 2:5). It cannot be passed on to another because the same High Priest is still alive.

Biblically, all true believers are part of a royal priesthood (1 Pet. 2:9). We worship God and go to God on behalf of others. We minister to them and introduce them to the One Who forgives their sins--*that* is the priesthood, and all true believers have it.

### **Tragic End of Smith's Life**

Smith was eventually thrown in prison for inciting the destruction of a publication outfit that was criticizing him (*Nauvoo Expositor*). While in prison, a mob assembled and killed Smith (1844 in Carthage, Illinois), apparently as a result of the polygamy controversy (a supposed affair with another man's wife was going to be exposed in the *Expositor*). He was not a martyr, he was a criminal. Martyrs do not fight back with a smuggled pistol in hand, nor do they kill two people in such a fight. No matter the rosy picture that may be painted about Smith, history trumps the propaganda.

### **Brigham Young and Adam-God Theory**

Brigham Young took over after Smith was killed. He took them to the Great Salt Lake (1847) which became Utah. Young, as well as Smith, had some bizarre teachings. Young, for example, believed that Adam was God, even the "Ancient of Days." He said that Adam was the Father of Jesus Christ. He said that he did not give a sermon that could not be considered scripture. In other words, he did not say anything that could not be considered from God Himself. Not even the best Christian could claim such a thing, let alone a heretic like Brigham Young.

Present day Mormons deny the Adam-God theory, but it was given by one of their "prophets," so they actually paint themselves into a corner. Besides, Mormons believe in an unbroken succession of prophets so if they denounce Brigham Young's teachings they lose their authenticity.

### **Four Standard Works in Mormonism**

There are four standard works in Mormonism:

1. The King James Bible ("insofar as it is translated correctly"),
2. *Doctrine and Covenants*,
3. *Pearl of Great Price* (1880) and
4. *The Book of Mormon*.

## **The Book of Mormon**

The *Book of Mormon* tells of ancient civilizations that no archaeological evidence or history can verify. It is all simply a hoax. It speaks of the Jaredites who left the Tower of Babel around 2200 B.C. and emigrated to the Western hemisphere. They were eventually destroyed for their corruption and apostasy. The second group migrated to the Americas around 600 B.C. Bill McKeever sums it up this way,

It contains the story of a group of Jews led by a man named Lehi, who sailed to the Western Hemisphere from Jerusalem around 600 B.C. Lehi had two sons, Nephi and Laman. These two had a fierce argument, dividing the people. Since Laman was wrong, God showed His displeasure by darkening his skin. Years later, the hatred between these two groups erupted into a battle that annihilated all the followers of Nephi. Before all was lost, the leader of the Nephites, whose name was Mormon, gathered the records of his people and instructed his son Moroni to bury them. Moroni buried them on a small hill called Cumorah, and fifteen hundred years later, Joseph Smith found them there. (p. 11-12)

The Lamanites were American Indians apparently. Their skin turned dark because of their disobedience. However, this is not possible because the Indians could not have originated from the Hebrew settlers (Nephi). Indians are of a Mongoloid extraction and not Semitic at all. Besides, skin color has nothing to do with following God or being loved by Him, even though Mormonism said dark skin was a curse. It was simply a white supremacist bias. 2 Nephi 30:6 used the word *white* prior to 1980 and then changed it to *pure* (2 Nephi 5:21). They said that Cain was the progenitor of the Negro race, that his black skin was a curse. That racist attitude was eventually lifted by the Mormon Church in 1978 (people of African descent could now have the priesthood). However, this was all taught by their "God-sent" leaders. I guess God changed His mind. That is odd because the *Book of Mormon* says, "Now, the decrees of God are unalterable" (Alma 41:8).

Furthermore, the *Book of Mormon* contains thousands of words from the King James Bible. Basically, it was plagiarism. They also believe that Jesus came to this continent after His resurrection. He even established a church with twelve apostles here. Beyond that, the Mormon gives massive authority to their living "prophets," almost more than their written "holy books." Their dilemma is that their prophets don't always agree with each other or with their standard

works. Brigham Young so believed in the living prophet that he laid down the Bible, the *Book of Mormon* and *Doctrine and Covenants* in front of himself and said,

There is the written word of God to us, concerning the work of God from the beginning of the world to our day. When compared with the living oracles those books are nothing to me; those books do not convey the word of God direct to us now, as do the words of a Prophet or a man bearing the Holy Priesthood in our day and generation. I would rather have the living oracles than all the writing in the books. (McKeever in *Answering Mormons' Questions*, p. 32)

Our good news is that we *do* have a living prophet, and His Name is Jesus Christ revealed in the **only** holy book, the Bible. We have a great High Priest (Heb. 4:14), a Savior (1 John 4:14), a Lord (1 Cor. 12:3), and a King, (Rev. 17:14). He lives forever and He is all we will ever need. Anything that comes against the true nature and purpose of Jesus Christ is said to be evil.

### **Smith and the Book of Mormonism**

One further note is that many of Joseph Smith's strange teachings are not in the *Book of Mormon*, for he taught them after he wrote that book. His theology certainly changed over the years. Even more, there are teachings in the *Book of Mormon* that actually contradict Mormon theology such as the nature of God, polygamy and men becoming Gods (Alma 11:22-29, 44, 2 Nephi 31:21, Moroni 8:18, etc.).

The *Book of Mormon*, far from being "the most correct of any book on earth," has had many changes since its original edition. Furthermore, how did Mr. Smith translate this book? He did not even use the golden plates. He used a "seer stone." He would put that stone in a darkened hat and the words "from God" would appear. So Smith did not translate because translation is from the original Greek into English. He simply got his words by apparent inspiration.

Another problem with the *Book of Mormon* is that there are many things in it that make no sense. It speaks of animals (like horses), crops, products (like a compass or steel swords), concepts (like a synagogue) and clothing that did not exist at that time. It speaks of population numbers that cannot be possible. It even quotes parts of the Bible that were not even written yet. Mormon apostle Orson Pratt said, "This book (Book of Mormon) must be either true or false. If true, it is one of the most important messages ever sent from God....If false, it is one of the most cunning, wicked, bold, deep-laid impositions ever palmed upon the world, calculated to deceive and ruin millions" (*Divine Authenticity of the Book of Mormon*, Liverpool, 1851, p. 1-2). I could not have said it better. Oddly enough, the testimony of the three witnesses in the front of the *Book of Mormon* all apostatized from that faith.

All we will ever need is what God has already said in His Word. Modern day preachers and teachers simply expound on that wonderful truth. If someone comes along and says things that

are not in line with what God has already said we can know that person is not from God. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth and He will never contradict Himself (John 16:13).

### **The Pearl of Great Price**

Smith has some serious problems in the *Book of Abraham* which is in the *Pearl of Great Price*. He apparently "translated" his words from original papyri fragments. White says that Smith, "did not have the slightest idea about what was before him on the Egyptian papyri" (*Letters*, pl. 159). Smith made great mistakes in identifying the figures on the fragments. He explained what the pictures meant but anyone familiar with this type of Egyptian material realizes that Smith did not know what he was talking about. At the time, Smith did not have anyone who could disprove him for there were no experts around him, but today it becomes clear that it was all a hoax.

### **Mormon Belief in Many Gods**

Another heretical teaching in Mormonism is the belief in many "Gods." Mormonism is polytheistic--they believe in many "Gods." Now they may say that they only worship one God (*Elohim*), but they still *believe* in many Gods. That would make them henotheistic rather than polytheistic.

Brigham Young said, "How many Gods there are, I do not know. But there never was a time when there were not Gods" (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol VII page 333). Nevertheless, God makes it extremely clear in Scripture that there is only one God (Is. 43-45). Any other "gods" that the Bible may speak of are "so-called" gods, they are idols, not God by nature (Gal. 4:8). Satan is called the god of this world. Money is a god. Self can be a god. But all these are mere props of a sinful reality and not eternal Deity. That is so obvious that it is not worth mentioning (although I did).

Mormons believe that the Father is *Elohim* and Jesus is *Jehovah*--two separate Gods. The Bible, however, says that *Elohim* and *Jehovah* are the same God. They believe Jesus is the first creation of the Father--His first spirit child. That is not possible since Jesus Christ is the Creator of all that is, He is not created (Col. 1:16-17, John 1:1-10, Heb. 1:10). It is all merely an attempt to take away Christ's rightful status--a frightful venture indeed.

The Mormon's belief in more than one God forever separates it from biblical truth. They deny the Scriptural doctrine of the Trinity. They may believe that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are all God, but not one God--three Gods. They also believe that God the Father was once a man (a finite being who progressed to become a God) and that man can become God (*Mormon Doctrine*, p. 321). That is blasphemy. God has been God from all eternity (Ps. 90:2, Is. 40:28, 57:15). God is very jealous (Ex. 34:14) and He has told us who He is, "I AM WHO I AM" (Ex. 3:14).

### **How God Came to be God**

Joseph Smith said, "I'm going to tell you how God came to be God. We have imagined and supposed that God was God from all eternity. I will refute that idea, and take away the veil, so that you may see" (*Times and Seasons*, 1844). Furthermore, man can never become God, he is merely a redeemed sinner and there is only one God. Mormonism teaches that God and man are of the same race. Of course they would since they believe that we are on the same path as the Father was--just a progression from human to God. One of their famous lines being, "As man now is, God once was, as God now is, man may become." That is a crock. They believe that once a man becomes as God then he will rule his own planet with his own heavenly wives producing spirit children. We do ourselves a favor by remembering who it was that wanted to become as God. It was Satan. It is interesting that Satanism is not really the worship of the Devil, it is the exaltation of self.

They believe God the Father literally had sex with Mary to create Jesus. That stands to reason since they believe the Father has a body of flesh and bones (*Doctrine and Covenants* 130:22). With that, He cannot be but in one place, thus denying His omnipresence (Jer. 23:24, Ps. 139). Although, if the Father literally had sex with Mary then how can it be called a Virgin Birth? Furthermore, if the Father had sex with Mary, which would be one of His spirit children, then that is incest. That is, unless Mary was one of the Father's wives, which stretches spiritual common sense so far that it breaks. In addition, Mary was betrothed to Joseph at the time, so if the Father has sexual relations with her then He was fooling around with another man's wife. Mormonism is simply a coagulated mess of mismatching doctrines.

### **Satan Was the Spirit Brother of Jesus!**

They believe that Satan was the spirit brother of Jesus which goes in toe with their doctrine that Jesus Christ is not God from all eternity (*Gospel Through the Ages*, p. 15).

That is a lie understood by any study of the Deity of Christ (John 1:1, 8:58, Heb. 1:3-8, Micah 5:2). They believe that for this planet earth, *Elohim* (the Father) is God and all others are His spirit children which makes Jesus and Satan spirit brothers. Again, that is ludicrous because Jesus is not a created being, He is Creator.

They believe the Father (God of this planet) was once a man and had a God too (on another planet). That God was once a man who also had a God (on another planet), and on and on.

There is no eternal God in Mormonism, it is simply a progression of spirit child to man to God. The Bible says much the opposite. It says that God is the first and the last, the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end (Is. 44:6, 48:12, Rev. 22:13). He is one God from all eternity Who created all things. There is nothing or no one above Him. He says in Isaiah 43:10, "Before me no god was formed, nor shall there be any after me."

### **The Blood of Jesus**

Another issue in Mormonism is the blood of Christ. For the Christian, we believe that the blood

of Jesus is sufficient enough to atone for all our sins (Rom. 5:8-10, 1 John 1:9). Early Mormon leaders, like Brigham Young, denied that. He taught that for some sins we must shed our own blood to atone. That is a heretical slam against the sufficiency of Christ's sacrifice. Young said,

Will you love your brothers and sisters likewise, when they have committed a sin that cannot be atoned for without the shedding of their blood? Will you love that man or woman enough to shed their blood?...This is loving our neighbor as ourselves; if he needs help, help him; and if he wants salvation and it is necessary to spill his blood on the earth in order that he may be saved, spill it.... That is the way to love mankind. (*Journal of Discourses*, 4:219-220)

For those who think this was only taught in older times, Joseph Fielding Smith said the same in the 1970's. Sadly, they have missed the wonder of the work of Christ on the Cross. His blood is all we will ever need for the forgiveness and cleansing away of our sins (John 1:29).

Furthermore, how sacrilegious to teach that man's blood can atone for more than Christ's (Col. 1:19-20, 2:13-14, Rom. 3:24-26, 5:8-10). When Jesus said, "It is finished" (John 19:30), He meant just that. The ultimate and final sacrifice for sin was now complete.

### **Salvation and Eternal Life**

The topic of salvation and eternal life is another key point of discussion. They may say that they believe in salvation through Jesus. We believe, however, that means we are declared righteous by the work of Christ and we forgiven sinners will spend eternity with our Savior. Salvation in Mormonism is simply resurrection. They believe all people will be resurrected (because all people were worthy enough in preexistence to get bodies on earth), but then which level depends upon them. *Their* eternal life means exaltation to godhood in the celestial kingdom. The difference is night and day, or light and darkness.

Joseph F. Smith said, "Here, then, is eternal life--to know the only wise and true God; and you have got to learn how to be Gods yourselves....the same as all Gods have done before you" (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 346-347).

Furthermore, their eternal life is basically merited, not given by grace through faith. They earn it and Christians get it undeserved (Rom. 4:5, Titus 3:5). 2 Nephi 25:23 says, "for we know that it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do" (Moroni 10:32). I like what James White said, "we are not saved by grace *after all we can do*, but that we are saved by grace *in spite of all we have done!*" (*Letters*, p. 268). We are utterly dependent upon God's grace for our salvation (Rom. 3:23-25). Grace is getting what we do not deserve (salvation). Mercy is not getting what we do deserve (damnation).

As an aside, the Mormons believe that you can only attain eternal life through the Mormon

Church. That is similar to many false religions. The difference with Christians is that they do not promote a church or a denomination. They promote Christ as the only way of eternal life (Acts 4:12, John 14:6). Once someone says that you must be in *their* church to be saved, then red flags should be flying high.

### **Baptism for the Dead**

They practice baptism for the dead so the deceased can have a chance to accept Mormonism in the afterlife. Apparently this is a major activity in the Mormon Temples. Sadly, it is misguided. The Bible says that after death there is no more opportunities to be saved (Heb. 9:27, Luke 16:19-31).

They believe all humans existed near a planet Kolob as spirit children of God before coming to earth to become human (*Mormon Doctrine*, p. 589-590). They are of course spirit children from the Father and some of His heavenly wives, "All men and women are in the similitude of the universal Father and Mother, as spirits they were the 'offspring of celestial parentage'" (*Mormon Doctrine*, 589-590). I am not sure how a Father and heavenly wife with physical bodies can give birth to spirit children.

### **Practice of Polygamy**

Joseph Smith practiced polygamy and Brigham Young taught it. Smith had many wives and some of them were still married to someone else. The practice of polygamy was officially abolished by Mormonism in 1890. However, their founders believed in it and taught it.

Regardless if it is not practiced today, McKeever said, "While Mormons are not to practice plural marriage in this day and age, Mormon doctrine maintains it will be practiced when Jesus returns" (102). Again, Mormonism extols their leaders almost beyond Scripture so the Mormon of today cannot deny the polygamist history of their religion. Brigham Young said that only those men who enter into polygamy can become Gods. They taught that the Father was a polygamist. They even taught that Jesus was or will be married to more than one woman. He has to be married because that is the only way one can reach the highest level of heaven.

Orson Pratt said,

the great Messiah who was the founder of the Christian religion was a Polygamist....the Messiah chose to take upon himself his seed; and by marrying many honorable wives himself, show to all future generations that he approved the plurality of Wives under Christian dispensation....  
(*The Seer*, p. 172)

The early justification for polygamy was because there needed to be more humans born so the

spirit children could have bodies. The Mormon may downplay some of the controversial things in their history, but this is what their leaders, who they say are infallible, have taught. They cannot have it both ways. They cannot pick and choose which teachings of Smith or Young they choose to keep. If they were God's spokespeople, then what they said must be from God. Christians do not give infallibility to anyone. Even the greatest of teachers is put to the test to see whether their teachings line up with the Word of God. All humans are fallen and only the Bible stands as the foundation on which we trust.

Joseph Smith and his entourage said that the Bible was corrupt and not worth trusting. It must be stated that the Bible is *not* corrupt. Mormonism is just one more attempt in a line of belief systems that tries to downplay the authority of Scripture. The manuscript evidence does not tolerate those attempts. The manuscript evidence is so massive for the validity of the Bible that it is beyond dispute. What we hold in our hands is what was originally written. There is no corruption. That is all merely a smokescreen to validate some new religion. The Bible that we hold in our hands is the same as it was thousands of years ago. Any person who denies that has been overtaken by bias or subjective feeling.

Jesus most certainly validated the Old Testament. He quoted from it often and approved of it without ever insinuating that it was not translated correctly. Again, the New Testament has such an overwhelming amount of evidence to its authenticity that it will stand any criticism brought against it. It is a book written over fifteen hundred years by forty different authors with amazing cohesiveness. History, archeology, manuscript evidence, testimonies and literary expertise all confirm the validity of the Bible.

### **Joseph Smith's Translation of the Bible**

Joseph Smith made his own translation of the Bible. He even added a prophecy concerning himself at the end of Genesis. Although his own translation contradicts his theology. McKeever sums it up,

You would think that embarking on a new translation of the Bible would give Smith a perfect opportunity to clear up any apparent confusion on doctrine, yet we find that many of the Scriptures which condemn Mormon doctrine were left intact by the prophet. This is probably because in 1833 Smith had not fully developed his erroneous viewpoints. What he left unchanged were portions he still may have believed to be true. Nonetheless, he did tamper with the Word of God and changed many portions to fit his unsound theology--without any support of the Hebrew or Greek text. (48)

### **Need for Critical Thinking**

Sadly, the Mormon is not taught to think on their own. They are to simply believe what their leaders have said. That is no different than other cults around the world. Once we give up our critical thinking to anyone, we are bound for deception. Even Paul, the greatest Christian who ever lived, was challenged by those who heard him (Acts 17:11). It is our *duty* to think. No man is infallible, only the Bible has that status.

Even their test to see whether the *Book of Mormon* is true is based on subjective feelings, a "burning in the bosom" (Moroni 10:4). That is an accident waiting to happen. Every religion could do that. Every religion "feels" like their religion is true. 1 John 4:1 does not say to pray whether a religion is true, it says, "do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God; for many false prophets have gone out into the world." We do not need to pray so see if the *Book of Mormon* is right. Do we need to pray about whether to murder or steal? Do we need to pray whether the *Satan Bible* by Anton LeVay is true? God has already revealed His Word in the Bible, we do not need to pray to see if a counterfeit book is right. That would be an affront to God. Paul said,

But even if we or an angel from heaven should proclaim to you a gospel contrary to what we proclaimed to you, let that one be accursed! As we have said before, so now I repeat, if anyone proclaims to you a gospel contrary to what you received, let that one be accursed! (Gal. 1:8-9)

### **Conversion to Mormonism**

If we do not base our faith on solid objective evidence then we could end up anywhere. Along with that, sincerity does not constitute truth. No matter how sincere a person may be about their religion, that is not the issue.

Many who the Mormons convert to their religion are nominal "Christians" from other denominations. They can talk them into Mormonism because those people do not know how to discern truth. They are not solid enough in their beliefs to know a falsehood when they see it. So the growth of the cults is due, in part, to the lack of teaching in the evangelical church. It has been said that the more you become familiar with the original the more easily you can recognize the counterfeit.

### **Masonic Influence on Mormonism**

There is a Masonic influence in Mormonism as well. Smith and Young were both Masons. The Temple ceremonies were supposedly kept hidden from the foundations of the earth, but,

Signs, grips, oaths and tokens used in Mormonism are so close one can't escape the suspicion that Smith "borrowed" these Masonic practices. Smith himself became a Mason on March

15, 1842 according to the *Documentary History of the Church* 4:550-551. He knew of these ceremonies. In fact, the first three presidents of the Mormon Church were all Masons. You need only look closely at the Salt Lake City Temple to see many designs peculiar to Masonry. These include the All-Seeing Eye, the inverted five-pointed star (known as the eastern star), and clasped hands or grip. All of these were a part of Freemasonry long before Smith incorporated them. (*Behind Temple Doors* Mormonism Research Ministry)

### **Morality Does Not Validate Truth**

It may be noted that Mormons are moral and good people. That is fine. There are many atheists who can claim the same. Morality does not validate truth. Besides, it is not nice people who are going to heaven, it is saved people who are. It is those who believe and trust in the Jesus Christ revealed in the Bible. Again, let us not be fooled by the theological sleight of hand used by the Mormons. Their true meanings of commonly used Christians terms are drastically different than the Bible.

One Mormon leader said of Joseph Smith, "Mormonism 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 the world has ever seen" (Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, 1:188). I think the proof is in the pudding. The Bible speaks very clearly that such a "prophet" should not be listened to and that he does not speak for God (Deut. 13:1-3, 18:21-22).

I would like here to draw attention to something Brigham Young said. We know what the Bible says in 1 John 4:2-3,

By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. And this is the spirit of the antichrist.

Christians have always held this passage sacred, it is a bedrock confession to their faith. What did Brigham Young say?

Whosoever confesseth that Joseph Smith was sent from God to reveal the holy Gospel to the children of men, and lay the foundation for gathering Israel, and building up the Kingdom of God on the earth, that spirit is of God, and every spirit that does not confess that God has sent Joseph Smith, and revealed the everlasting Gospel to and through him, is of Antichrist....  
(*Discourses of Brigham Young*, p. 435)

That is a horrible statement. That is a false prophet inspiring people to follow after other gods. To even attempt to put Joseph Smith in the same arena as Christ is blasphemous.

### **Let Us Love Mormons**

With that said, we are to love the Mormons--they are people for whom Christ died. Satan is our enemy and he is the one who has deceived the Mormon (2 Cor. 4:4). Although, we must be aware that their apparent symmetry with Christians and the Bible is only apparent. They are not even close to being just another denomination. They are as far from Christ. We must see it for what it is, "another Gospel" (Gal. 1).

Mormon teachers are false prophets disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. Likewise, as Paul says again, "Even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. So it is not strange if his ministers also disguise themselves as ministers of righteousness" (2 Cor. 11). Henceforth, there are many in Mormonism that are innocently ignorant of what their religion really teaches and where it came from. We should feel for them and pray for them, but never fall for their deception.

I will close with a quote from Walter Martin, "it is the verdict of both history and biblical theology that Joseph Smith's religion is a polytheistic nightmare of garbled doctrines draped with the garment of Christian terminology. This fact, if nothing else, brands it as a non-Christian cult system" (*Kingdom of the Cults*, p. 243).

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